

Mississippi Corvette Club Travels to Biloxi Saturday, August 12th

Well, if you missed the Club's trip to Biloxi you missed a super trip!!!!

The officers of the club put together an outstanding trip to Biloxi on Saturday August 12th that enticed 10 spit and polished cars and a whole bunch of fun people. The safari started bright and early on Saturday morning departing from the Kroger parking lot in Richland at about 8:15am. Blue skies and a starting temp of 82°F set the precedent for a supreme day. Good weather, good friends and outstanding cars made the recipe for a classic trip. While the caravan formed up in the parking lot Sherry went to work with her camera capturing the moment and the small gatherings of folks get acquainted for the trip. Some folks popped the top while others sought comfort from the humidity with their enclosed cabin and the AC.

Those in attendance included Ron and Mary Gaddy; Jean and Paul Jones; Kirby and Janie Wilson; Tim and Sherry Hollis; Joe and Jakki Mazola; Jack and Becky Bradshaw; Freddie and Mary Jones; Craig and Debbie Henry; Barry Thompson; Linda Muha; Larry and Judy Parker; Ed Robinson and friend, Susan. (They missed the road trip down but met us at Mary Mahoney's, as we began to order. Ed and Susan had arrived the night before and were staying for the weekend.)

It was a colorful trip with a convoy dominated by C5's and 3 C6's including a brand new 2007 Victory Red coupe driven by Freddie and Mary Jones. Sherry and Tim arranged for the 11th car, a 50th Anniversary Vette, driven by Becky and Jack Bradshaw to meet us in Hattiesburg on our way to this historic and highly touted restaurant in Biloxi. The well-orchestrated plan led us to Mary Mahoney's Old French House Restaurant built circa 1737 <http://www.marymahoneys.com/home.html>. Of course we hoped the food was not of the same vintage and that it had no "remaining flavor" of Katrina.

Of course Sherry had the Club's website informative as usual which provided a full set of detailed directions just in case anyone got separated or a rogue member elected to meet us there. The Henry's led off the trip in their 2000 Millennium Yellow Coupe (complete with the fuzz buster). A good (but safe) pace was set and the convoy remained together down to Hattiesburg until Sherry and Tim took over to make the rendezvous with the Bradshaws. The stop was brief but allowed the folks to use the necessary facilities, take a smoke for some (Ron and Kirby) and pick up some snacks. Then off we went; ready to have a memorable lunch at Mary's before noon!

En route the Gaddis car took over the lead since Ron new a short cut. This made it crucial for us to stay together since we were bound to break off of Route 49 South somewhere thus lessening the value of our web-derived written directions. Craig (yes, he actually came home to see his hard working wife and his college bound son Todd, plus the dogs) and Debbie had the top off and had the Beach Boys supplying the optimum driving atmosphere through the Bose speakers. Along the way, a Lincoln truck jumped in amongst us and broke up the convoy. Craig felt the *need for speed* (soundly encouraged by the Beach Boys) and identifying the breach, rapidly down shifted to 3rd and broke from the pack. The Beach Boys

got louder and the C5, 5.7L spoke up to claim it's place in the fast lane. Now just a little ahead of the convoy, the Yellow Vette, encountered this convoy breaking Lincoln truck that wanted to play. So off they went ahead of the pack. It wasn't long before Ron's black Vette was a speck in the rear view mirror and the fuzz buster sounded the alarm. Craig quickly elected to allow the Lincoln to have a false sense of success and overtake the Millennium Yellow Vette. Rapidly decelerating Craig and Debbie fell behind while being called by Jackki that the convoy was turning off of 49.

Within seconds the State Trooper made the u-turn just in front of Craig and Debbie. Craig double checked the heads-up-display, verified the legality of their forward motion and proceeded to use the same cross over to go in the opposite direction of the Smokey. The Vette won the battle and the Lincoln lost the war as evidenced by the blue lights providing appropriate direction for the Lincoln truck driver. Oh how sweet it was!!!!

Meanwhile Debbie was properly chastising her driver and was attempting to define the new road necessary to rejoin the convoy. It only took a few minutes to catch up and hang a right on state road 67. True-blue were the members who pulled over briefly to allow the renegade yellow Vette to reinsert itself into formation as the "tail end Charlie". Thank goodness for hand held radios and cell phones.

The alternate road was scenic, complete with cows and horses and even some curves providing for the opportunity for a little "G-force" entertainment. It wasn't long before we hit I-10 and pulled into Biloxi. Ron really knew the road and delivered us right at the Beau Rivage (renovation opening date August 29th, 2006), which was just across the street from Mary Mahoney's. We pulled into the parking lot just about 11am.

Much of route 90 revealed severely damaged buildings including ones around and including Mary Mahoney's. To our initial surprise, as we strode toward the restaurant, we encountered a large sign indicating that Mary Mahoney's was Closed Indefinitely for Repairs. For some members, red flags went up and the horizon was being searched for a McD's. However, we were committed and forged onward into a lovely re-landscaped brick courtyard with an impressive 2000-year-old Live Oak towering above the path leading us to the Slave Quarters Lounge.(see photo) (Linda Muha even had her picture taken with it.) Upon entering the lounge it was quite evident that the restaurant was partially refurbished in lovely décor including recent photos depicting the wrath bestowed upon the humble historic establishment by Katrina. The innkeeper was prepared for our party and as we strode up the short stairs to the dining area most were quick to see the two watermarks on the wall above the doorway indicating how much of Katrina came to visit. The photos revealed the walls behind the bar had been taken away leaving gaping holes through the thick brick walls. The walls held numerous photos of influential people (Colin Powell) and including some movie stars such as Mark Harmon.

The waitress sat us in a lovely long dining area surrounded by glass overlooking a short driveway servicing other local buildings being reconstructed. (see photo) The members were overwhelmed by the large selection offered by this world famous restaurant. Mary

Mahoney's menu had numerous seafood entrees including their world famous seafood gumbo, which could be purchased in various quantities including a gallon for only \$48.00. Many made their choice from their luncheon entrees that provided overly ample portions with a nice salad, fresh bread and most importantly an endless supply of sweet tea! Without question the homemade bread pudding with rum sauce brought a fabulous close to a great meal at Mary Mahoney's. The bread pudding brought back memories for some (Ed) of their youth eating bread pudding while sitting in the living room on a Sunday with the air conditioning running watching TV. Others were questioned whether they were old enough to eat it (heavy with the Rum) (Jakki). All toll, Mary Mahoney's sat 22 members for lunch on this fine Saturday in Biloxi. Our dining time was about 1.5 hours and the service was excellent. Without question hats off the chef and the trip planners!!!! After lunch, we held a quick 50/50 and luck was once again with Kirby, winning \$30 and raising \$30 for the treasury. We all departed the restaurant overstuffed and in need of a stroll. A short stroll was in order due to the 96°F mid-day heat.

The plan quickly became evident and we drove a short distance down to a parking area on the beach side of route 90 and pulled in just in front a large lighthouse draped with a large American flag. Again Sherry whipped out her camera and began to snap group photos. Many took advantage of the close proximity of the water to get their toes in the sand and the Gulf. It was clear that a great deal of debris still resided in the beach despite significant efforts by the municipality to screen the sand as they recaptured the beachfront lost to Katrina.

We then elected to drive leisurely down route 90 westbound to the end of the road where the bridge was out. Along the way there were large numbers of properties up for sale. Some FEMA trailers could be seen dotted along the way along with reconstruction efforts by some casinos and local residents. Without question it will be a long time before Biloxi can say it's back to *normal*.

Ron led us back to route 49 north. Once we regrouped it was time to feed the machines at the long fueling depot. For some folks sufficient time had elapsed to create a craving for an ice cream. (Good deals on \$0.39 ice-cream sandwiches.) Soon we were on the road making tracks for Jackson. Along the way we passed a lot of families with kids on vacation. As we stopped in Hattiesburg to bid farewell to some, a teenage girl with her family had to capture the Club on film and her Dad videotaped her standing next to one of the Vettes, a dream come true for her vacation. As we traveled back into Jackson our convoy finally diminished to just 2 cars as we approached I-20 and most were certainly home by 6pm.

Overall it was a fantastic day with good food, good friends and fun cars.
Until the next trip, drive safe and remember, Corvettes rule!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Submitted by Craig and Debbie Henry