

# What Really Matters...The story of our 1976 "Stingray"

**CCND MEMBER OF THE MONTH** by Andy Rumford

In the spring of 1979, at the age of 22, I had an opportunity to drive my first Corvette. She was a real beauty owned by a good friend of mine at the time. We took her on an extended cruise to his Alma Matter, Virginia Tech. I can still feel the car fly as we sped down I-95 in the early morning hours. I was "HOOKED". A year later, another close friend purchased a 1975 Vette. I would drive past his house each day just to LOOK at the car he



had parked in his driveway. Did I long for a Vette? ABSOLUTELY!! Well, 1981 saw me graduate from College with a Teaching degree. I quickly entered the education system as a full time teacher. With a new wife to support and with teachers being grossly underpaid at the time, it looked like my yearning for my "dream car" would never come to fruition. For the next 20 years, Married life and the raising of 2 children to their teenage years took up my time and money. In the winter of 1997, my wife Donna suffered a major stroke. She quickly lapsed into a coma and underwent experimental brain surgery at Christiana Hospital to save her life. It

took 3 months in the hospital before she was ready to come home. It was all I could do to raise our 2 children and care for Donna each day while still holding down my job as a Programmer. This incident proved critical and was a MAJOR life changer for Donna and I. I quickly learned that if I was to aspire to do something and or purchase anything, I better not wait, as tomorrow may never come. I had always wanted a Corvette and my wife, I love her so, fueled my desire for a car by saying "why not purchase your Vette...you've always wanted one". Well, with the wife's blessing I started my search in the spring of 2002 and purchased our 1976 Yellow Stingray from its current owner outside of Chicago, Illinois. At the time, I was actively searching for my "Vette" through local newspapers, corvette clubs and on the Internet. I had sold and purchased many items on Ebay; so I decided to give it a look see for Corvettes. I was overwhelmed at the number of Vettes available across the country within my price range and



desired year. I finally located an auction that was quickly ending. The auction had no bids...probably because there were no pictures posted of the vehicle. At the close of the auction, I forwarded an email to the current owner. We started a dialogue, which lasted 3 weeks. We talked about many things, the Vette just being one of them. I felt very good about the transaction and the caring that the owner provided for the car over the previous 26 years. I had an opportunity to view at least 25 pictures of the car along with carfax reports, which in my opinion at the time was crucial to the transaction. The car had 60,000 original miles and the body looked in great shape. All previous records were intact and the car was mechanically sound. We agreed on a selling price of \$8,000.00. That weekend he was headed to Erie, PA. to a friends home. He agreed to flatbed the car up to Erie. A friend of mine from high school owns a local Sunoco gas station (across from the Booths Corner Farmers Market). He went and picked up the car and

flatbedded it back home to Kennett Square. He's been a mechanic all his life and has owned several Vettes so I felt confident he would not pickup the car and deliver the final payment if there was even one problem with the vehicle. My wife and I were quite thrilled when the car finally arrived. It was in better shape than we had expected. Over the last year, we have had quite a good time going to car shows and just trying to upgrade and replace parts on our "Vette". She may undergo a



new paint job, new front and rear bumpers, new carpeting and other changes shortly, which will make this "Stingray" a truly special car in our eyes. It took a life altering event for me to finally realize what's REALLY important in life...Hopefully all of you will be able to meet Donna at CCND functions and meetings in the future. She's the push behind my purchase of a lifetime!!!