

## CCND MEMBER OF THE MONTH by Bruce Lipphardt, Jr.

I became a Corvette lover in July 1983 when I purchased a red 1976 Corvette coupe just prior to starting my senior year as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy. It was my primary transportation for many years, and made a trip to Mardi Gras in New Orleans and a drive on the sand in Daytona Beach, Florida.



In 1996 I met Mike Lupia at Stallion Corvette in Virginia Beach, and he taught me quite a bit about Corvette evaluation and restoration. I decided to sell the 76 coupe and purchased the 1972 Ontario Orange roadster that I drive today. I had quite a bit of restoration ahead before I could get it on the road, though, since the body was stripped to bare fiberglass and most of the interior had water damage.



Mike helped me by doing all of the body and paint work on the car (including a fresh layer of gelcoat and Glasurit base/clear paint), as well as all of the mechanical restoration, including an engine rebuild and replacement of all suspension components, even the front springs. I did a lot of the interior restoration myself, using parts that Mike suggested.



When I bought the 72, I wasn't too sure about owning a roadster, especially an *orange* one. After seeing the restoration through to completion, however, I've become a real fan of chrome bumper cars, especially roadsters, and I'm pleased to own a car of such an uncommon color. It sure turns plenty of heads when I drive it!

My love of cars and restoration comes from the example set by my father, Bruce Sr., who has been a machine repairman at the General Motors pressed metal plant in Parma Ohio since 1950. That's my dad pictured behind the wheel of my 72 roadster during a recent trip to Ohio over Labor Day 2002 to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.



*Bruce, it looks like your dad is not quite ready to return your car. Hope I look as good in a Vette when I am 70 as your dad does in yours... Joe DeSanta*

