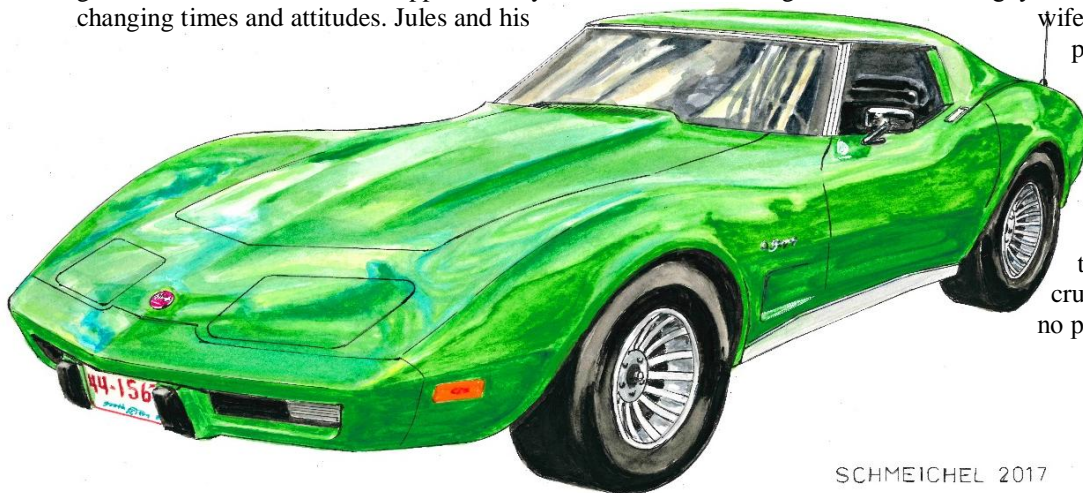


Now or Never Then

By Bob Schmeichel

We are blessed in America to have so many freedoms and choices even with the way things are today with technology advancing faster all the time. Everything seems to be a continual learning curve requiring keeping up or being left behind and struggling. So much has changed in just the last 30 years that really makes you wonder where it is going to take us or stop. I think the majority of us have seen or witnessed big changes in automobiles since their infancy from the early 1900's thru to today. That is underlined more so today when you see where the auto manufactures have come in the very recent years since the introduction of computerized technology, design, and machine work. Because of that vehicles of today are more trouble free than ever with big horse power while getting pretty decent gas mileage which is becoming more common place any more. That is a pretty cool thing since cars from not that long ago where lucky to get 10 to 20 miles per gallon with 250 to 425 horsepower that needed way more attention to keep them performing the same way all the time. I am sorry to say that a lot of today's auto manufactures are working towards creating self-driving electric automobiles that will enable people to physically unhook from driving long distances. There still may be some driving required to get you out onto the highway, but once you get to what might be considered main stream traffic, you'll be able to engage an auto pilot system like an airplane and let the computer in the car with its GPS take over driving you to your destination. This may allow you to you work or play on your I phone as so many already do , watch the country side, or sleep without worry of watching what is in front of you. Sound far-fetched? Watch! There are already self-stopping and parking cars, and even some are being dialed in to drop you off at your office front door, then go park itself in a parking lot. I think autos in general are expensive today, but I am thinking autos will become so much more expensive in the future because of technology that no one will own a car anymore, but just pay for rides like a taxi cab with your finger print. I guess that is why I relish the independence associated with old cars, where I can completely control with my driving actions and continue to enjoy the natural adrenalin rush when I chose to step on the gas pedal more than necessary. I would hate to see this self-control experience for my grandkids disappear and just accept a ride for where ever they need to go. But I guess it is just what you grow up and old with, and how things never stay the same.

Jules Haper grew up in the 60's and 70's as most boys did then, with dreams of having a Corvette someday. He was telling me when he was younger he would get advertisement brochures at the dealerships on new Corvettes and wear them out after a week of paging thru them. Let's face it, the Corvette has been the most desired American made car since its beginning with all ages. It has maintained its iconic status with continual design changes every year, more horsepower recently with smaller engines, and today almost an unattainable window sticker price for an average person. It is impossible to not look at one of the newer Corvettes even if you know you can't afford one. For me with the way I think as a former package designer. It's fun to see the slick changes with new lines on the outside that lend to new ideas in interior design. Everything works together visually. Jules told me he bought his 1975 Corvette Sting Ray more because of a midlife crisis thing he felt 22 years ago thinking if he didn't buy it then, he probably never would. He got enthused about this unusual green Corvette sitting in at Frank Stinson Chevrolet car lot that needed a paint job and exhaust. To Jules the work needed wasn't a big deal and bought the car. After having the car for a while and getting most of the small stuff corrected back to new, he had Lonnie Bueker repaint the car its original bright green metallic paint. I am not sure if Jules realizes it or not, but the green color on his Corvette was only painted on 1664 Corvettes produced in 1975 out of 34,531 total Corvettes built that year. I think it makes this car rare considering I painted Corvettes back the 70's for a living for a couple years and never saw one that color. The other things that make his Corvette unique are the options, T-Tops, black leather interior, air conditioning, power steering, power windows, automatic trans, posi rear end are just a few that make the car unique to itself. Back then you could order a car with specific options or not if you didn't want them. It was your choice. Most new cars today come from the factory loaded with everything, which is considered standard today with no real choices whether you want it or not, you just pay for it. Jules mentioned he was kind of soured with the stigma he felt after having his Corvette for a while and the way public viewed Corvette owners. He has gotten over that but thinks it happens to anyone who has something new that the next guy doesn't have, human nature I guess with changing times and attitudes. Jules and his



wife Marilyn have driven their Corvette pretty much all around the country with no real issues that ever left them stranded. He still calls the car ,“old reliable” fun even with Jules adding, “I’m getting older and with gravity setting in, it just gets a little harder to get out of the Corvette , but it still keeps the blood flowing when you are in it cruising down the road in front of you with no particular place to go.”

