# Shake Bites

Volume 21 Issue 3

A Motor City Viper Owners Publication

CEMA @ WPCM

JNAP Tour

Cruise Nights

Cruise for a Cause

Snakes Unite

Mopars @ Gilmore

CAAP Tour

Gratiot Cruise

Concours d'Elegance

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Eyes on Design

WDC Viper Pit

High Octane Cars & Coffee

Road Kill





Summer 2016

#### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well, Viperholics, our summer season was in full swing this year. We hope you were able to participate in many of our club events or the related events of interest. We've heard from some that the packed calendar and steady flow of e-mails was sometimes hard to keep up with! Our goal was to offer you plenty of chances to enjoy your special set of wheels. Unfortunately, some of our club events have had to be limited in the number of participants, but we've tried to have plenty of alternate events so that no one was left out.

As we move into the fall season and start planning our events for the coming year I want to share with you an overview of the accomplishments by your dedicated and hardworking Board Members.



After an unfortunate three year delay, we got the new By-laws, Operations Manual, and Code of Conduct adopted and posted on the website for all to have ready access. We reinstituted the MCVO Calendar. We've scheduled a packed agenda of fresh new club events and related events of interest, averaging about ten a month over this summer. We've expanded our program of meeting with other car clubs, including the Alpha Romeo, Cobra, Corvette Clubs, Detroit Area Modern Mopar (DAMM) and CEMA (Chrysler Employee Motorsports Association). Our new newsletter editors have continued the outstanding quality of Snake Bites and at a reduced production cost. We're working to update and enhance our website and computer operations. Last but most importantly membership has grown to the highest numbers in recent years. It's been a fast paced season but I believe everyone has had a great time, judging from many happy faces and laughter at our events.

Please let us know what you liked or didn't like as well as suggestions for new events to consider. We also encourage volunteers to host, lead or staff events. 2017 will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Viper and unfortunately the last year of its production. Let's make it a year of celebration, both for the great tradition and for the launch of a whole new chapter in the ownership of our steeds.

#### Bruce Heckman

On a personal note, a few of you may know that I recently started battling cancer. We caught it early and the prognosis is good, but treatments can be tough. Rest assured, I'm still actively attending to the administrative duties of the club. It's a pleasure to serve you members and having a chance to continuing to do so is one of the things that keeps me going!

#### Editor's Message

All it took was one weekend. The temperature dropped to a comfortable high 70's low 80 degrees and the "magic spell" we northerners have been living under, was broken. The majority of our summer has been hot and steamy, a perfect reality. Which car to

drive became, at least to me, a serious question, roadster or coupe? I work outside and almost always chose the coupe! Now the certainty that soon shorts will be put away, UV wide brimmed hats will be swapped for knitted caps and we will have to wear a coat is just.....depressing.

During our driving season we go to events, spend time with friends, meet new people, listen to exhausts and in general become kids playing with toys. Once the cars are parked, winterized and covered for the season, we have just as much fun attending club events. Gary and I can't imagine owning a Viper without being MCVO members.

#### Ann Rappaport-lead editor



### Calendar of Events

#### **September**

1 MCVO club meeting

18 MCVO Chelsea Autocross

21 Cruise Night

24 MCVO at Stahl's Auto Museum

#### October

1-2 Joint Illinois-Michigan Fall Cruise

6 MCVO club meeting

19 Cruise Night

23 Past Tense Cider Mill & Frankenmuth

#### <u>November</u>

3 MCVO club meeting

16 Cruise Night

#### **December**

3 Holiday Party



During the driving season we often have more events than shown here, please check the website calendar for the latest information. Please note: details for club events are emailed to members.

Club Board Meetings are on the 1st Thursday of each month. Please check the website for time and locations. Everyone is welcome.

#### **Motor City Viper Owners**

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Advertising is available in Snake Bites, please send a request for further information.

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#### **Spring Brunch Follow UP**

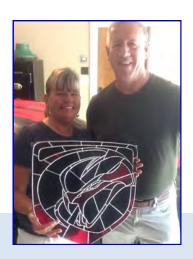
#### Sam Milana

For the last few years, I've hung some of my Viper stained glass pieces in the banquet room windows of the Meadowbrook Country Club as decoration for our spring brunch. Every year somebody jokingly says "oh are those the door prizes"? For this year's brunch, I decided to give away a custom handmade Viper piece as a door prize.

The lucky ticket holder was Bob and Diane Drost from Boyne City. They own a black with red stripes 2015 GTS Viper. I don't work on glass projects as much during the summer months so they had to patiently wait until August for me to complete their black/red Stryker with a snakeskin green eye.

Here's a letter of appreciation I received from them:

Dear Sam;





#### Member Spot Light

#### Ann Rappaport



was needed you contacted us to ask things like color combinations and the color of the pupil of the eye. We will look upon and watch over your creation for many years to come. Thank you Sam.



Bob and Diane Drost



I wanted to reach out to you to let you know how thrilled Diane and I are to have won and now have in our possession the Stryker stained glass art piece. It seemed like waiting for Christmas day. We know, as we look at this fine piece of art, that you meticulously thought through each cut. In fact, each time a decision

Many members have interests that are not directly part of the Viper world. Last April a few metro Detroit members were invited by Jim Burr to bring our cars by and show to them to a friend of his who was in town all the way from Australia. Jim and Dave Virgona knew each other through a collectors forum and were able to finally meet in person!

In addition to parking a bunch of MOPARs together on Jim's drive, we toured his basement. Tour is the only real word to use. Jim collects die casts and auto memorabilia. His knowledge is encyclopedic. Model, year, options or colors, no question was a problem. In fact he would show you the car immediately, he has an amazing memory. We had heard about his collection in the past but had no idea it was as extensive or complete.









#### **CEMA Charity Car Show**

#### **Lori Emerling**



The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual CEMA Charity Car Show, held on the grounds of the Walter P. Chrysler Museum, was a huge success. The weather had been forecasted as very unfavorable (read this as heavy thunderstorms) all the way until the early morning hours of show-day, June 11<sup>th</sup>. The inclement weather never appeared and everyone enjoyed a very sunny and very hot day for celebrating the "Class of 1966" vehicles, featuring the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dodge Charger. There was an amazing display of Chargers, from 1966 to 2016, that filled half of the main parking lots. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jeep was also recognized, and there was a great presentation of Jeep concept and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary vehicles on display.

The morning started with a Dodge "Charger Parade" which circled the entire Chrysler Complex – the parade included just under 100 Chargers and they were led by several Charger Pursuit vehicles that ran with full sirens and lights all the way! Each Charger in the parade had a fantastic photo opportunity as the car stopped in front of the HQ tower – check out the CEMA website (www.cemaclub.org) to view these photos, plus many others from the entire day. The show had its official start as the Charger parade made its way onto the grounds – it was a fantastic sight!!

We knew it would be a busy day when a record 345 vehicles were pre-registered for the show. After day-of-show registrations – there were 468 amazing vehicles on display – cars were parked on every available bit of the museum grounds. There were also nearly 2,200 visitors that toured the museum. Mark Trostle and several design engineers from the FCA Design Studio gave a presentation on the history of the Dodge Charger. The Design Office also created a beautiful car-show poster which commemorated the show. The poster was the second in a series, and with hints of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Viper as next year's show feature ..... the poster should be equally as amazing ..... hint, hint – save the date (June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

In addition to beautiful cars, meeting new friends and spending time with old ones, CEMA was able to donate \$6,000 to the Leader

Dogs for the Blind. They were overwhelmingly grateful.





#### Snakes Unite—June 18th

#### **Bruce Heckman**

You could hear the rumble of exhaust early in the morning as big block sports cars began to assemble in three locations spread out in the metropolitan area. Cars with the DNA of Caroll Shelby and Bob Lutz reunited with their soul brothers at the Chrysler Museum, Starbucks in Shelby Township and the Lingenfelter Collection in Brighton. They stirred the emotions of

kids of all ages as they rolled along in powerful morning cruises to Motorwerks in Commerce Township – 56 amazing cars in all.

Once arrived, the 87 passengers strolled among the assembled cars, admiring them and making new and old acquaintances among the owners and guests. It was a reunion that had never been held before, but one among cars and owners that were supposed to be together and finally found each other. Even though there were differences in the machinery, the ages, orientations, and basic appreciations of American sports cars all merged. Bob Lutz had originally planned to join the group, but illness prevented him from doing so. He sent his sincere regrets.

After the initial socialization, the attendees were treated to a series of technical presentations. David Colletti, MCVO member who represents Pirelli Tires, provided a superb talk on tire basics and the things that owners need to know about tires on high performance cars. Dave was followed by the surprise arrival of FCA's and MCVO's Ralph Gilles, who talked about the early days of Viper and his interactions with Bob Lutz and the originators of the Viper and Cobra concepts. His perspective was fascinating. Finally, Satish Tummala, the owner of Motorwerks, made a presentation on Load Force mounting and balancing of

high speed tires. Many MCVO members have had their tires dialed in by Motorwerks over the years.

Following the presentations, the rumbling horsepower assembled again and struck out on a backroads cruise to Zuckey Lake Tavern in Pinckney. Necks craned and cars honked as the colorful sports cars caravanned in long strings along the route, everyone with big grins on their faces. The lakeside restaurant provided a great setting for more car gazing, story swapping and terrific food. As the cars began to drift away in the midafternoon, many expressed a strong consensus that "We have to do this again!"











#### **Concours d'Elegance**

#### Joanne Gray

Ted's 2015 GTC Stryker Purple Viper had the honor of being invited to show off again; this time at the Concours d'Elegance of America at The Inn at St John's in Plymouth on the last day in July. The actual show was Sunday but the entire weekend was full of car events.



On Friday there was a Battle of the Brands. The goal was to get the most of one brand car to display. I have no idea where everyone was because not only were we the only Viper there, we were the only Dodge! The Porsches took home the ribbon for the most in attendance. As exhibitors we were invited to a reception among the cars that would be auctioned off the next day by RM Sotheby. Quite a collection – there was even a yellow Viper, but Bruce's was nicer.

Saturday morning there was a cars and coffee. At this event a couple more Vipers and more Dodges showed up, and FCA products – even in the rain. There were a lot of GT40s which got a lot of attention. In between the raindrops we checked out more cars and made friends with other car lovers who were not afraid of the rain. Then we were off to watch the big spenders bid on the cars. Nope, no new cars were added to our garage.

Bright and early on Sunday we took our car to its' showplace for the day. The Viper was part of the *Super Cars* display. While our Viper was the most beautiful (of course), it was in great company with a Bugatti Veyron on one side and a Porsche GT4 on the other. We walked around prior to the official 10:00 am opening to look at the beautiful cars but it was more fun to sit in the shade with other super car owners and the volunteers watching people look at the cars. Garry Tripp came by (with a glass of champagne from the Ferrari tent) and also Bob Swartz. Maurice Lang was also there, collecting several awards for the Viper Quarterly magazine, at the Brembo tent next to our display. Brembo sponsored the *Super Cars* display and we were given a very nice crystal memento in

recognition and a thank you for bringing our car.

It was a very fun, car filled weekend. Probably the most fun, though, was showing off the Viper to people and hearing the nice things they had to say about it.

These beautiful photos are courtesy of Ted and Joanne Gray

#### **Conner Plant Tour**

#### **Bob White**

On June 24, MCVO once again toured the Conner Avenue Assembly Plant. And as in the past, all of the allotted spots on the guest list filled quickly.





The day was perfect and the lawn dry enough that we were allowed to park in front of the main entrance. It was a great photo op. and many of us grabbed our cameras and cell phones to take a picture. Those picture have graced not only our own and the VOA's Facebook pages, but both websites as well. In a special way, they make a statement about the bond between the club and the plant

We gathered a big pile of canned goods for the Plant's charity and then filed into the media room for orientation and safety talks. We immediately noticed new material showing on the video screen. In the past that was all information about the plant and the car. For the first time the pictures and video clips were from a Viper Club event! With big smiles, Chad Quick, Plant Manager, spent a few minutes talking about his experiences at NVE2 in New Orleans the month before. It was great seeing the excitement on his face, that is usually on ours, when he talked about his track experiences there. We all know that Ralph "gets it". Now we know that Chad "gets it" too!

The video presentation continued with Viper ads and information details about the plant. Then there was the obligatory safety instructions and we were soon outfitted with safety glasses and heading out into the plant.





We stopped for a few minutes to look at the collection of Vipers near

the plant entrance. This seems to be overflow from the museum collection near the end of the Final department. Some of the racing greats can be found here. Then it was off to the engine line, and then to the main assembly line itself.

We stopped at each of the significant stations along the line where Chad presented details and answered questions. It was a casual, unhurried and very informative walk down the line.

Then we visited the area set aside as a museum with its collection of Vipers and autographed hoods. It should be noted that this sort of space is very unusual in an automotive assembly plant. No other Chrysler plant I ever visited had one, and I've been in all of the U.S. and Canadian plants.



(In the past I've spent all of my time looking at the cars, but this time I forced myself to look at the hood collection. These are mementos from events reaching all the way back to the earliest Viper Club gatherings. It was fun finding signatures of friends who had signed

the hoods many years ago.

Too soon we were making our way back to the front offices, past the water test booth, the emissions, electrical, body alignment and rattle testing equipment. Then we visited the store (another special space among automotive plants) to pick up the latest Viper goods. After some closing comments, another plant tour was ended.

We wanted to stay the day, even come back again the next day if possible, but there were anxious customers waiting and the priority here has to be to build Vipers.



We all understand that it's a manufacturing facility and that we can be a distraction when visiting, but WOW, it's always great being allowed to see how our snakes came to be. And I'm sure the plant personnel understand the crazy passion that we have about our Vipers, and how important our plant visits are. So, a Big "Thank-You" goes to Chad Quick, Plant Manager and Jenn Hazard, Mfg. Operations Coordinator, for being great hosts and working us into their busy schedules!













#### Eyes on Design 2016

Joanne Gray



On Father's Day, Eyes on Design 2016 was held at the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores. Ted Gray's 2015 Stryker Purple and Sam Milana's 1994 RT10 Red Vipers were shown together. This is an invitation only event focusing on design. Eyes on Design benefits the blind and visually impaired. Not only were the cars wonderful but the setting along Lake St Clair was beautiful.

It was a hot sunny day and the four of us (Angelika and I got to come along) had a great time. Besides wandering the grounds, which is an event in itself, we walked around and saw some amazing and unique cars-almost 300 total! As exhibitors we were fed a continental breakfast and a box lunch. We did spend a lot of the day in our chairs under a huge shade tree people watching!





Sam and Ted were entered in the *Supercars: Progress of Power* category. This was a retrospective look at top performing Supercars displaying six decades of performance car evolution. Thus, all entries were displayed and judged as pairs. A "that was then, this is now" look at the cars. The Vipers won the Design of Distinction award! Congratulations Ted and Sam!

A picture of the hood from Ben Keating's winning Viper at the Detroit Grand Prix. He was the only Viper entered and he *beat all comers* in the GT Daytona class - *Porsches, Ferraris, Austin Martins*, and best of all, *Corvettes* at the

Chevrolet Belle Isle Grand Prix (their home turf!). Ben owns Viper Exchange, the largest Viper dealership and his crew are known as the Crus'in Monkies!

**Bruce Heckman** 

#### **JNAP Plant Tour**

#### Sam Milana

Soon after last year's Jefferson North Assembly Plant tour in May, I was inundated with the same question from JNAP employees. "When will the Vipers be back?"

We returned to JNAP on July 11th. After parking our cars in

the atrium of the body shop we were welcomed by the plant manager Tony Hill, Conner Ave. plant manager Chad Quick, and





#### Red Ox

#### Sandi White

Our July 20th cruise night took us to The Red Ox Tavern in Utica. This is a tried and true venue for our club and many members turned out to enjoy the beautiful evening, views of our snakes from the patio and to visit with their friends. 31 members showed up and had a GREAT time.....as usual socializing and sharing car stories.





#### **Gratiot Cruise**

#### **Jason Pontello**

Baker College once again invited MCVO members back to attend Macomb County's largest cruise on Sunday, August 7th. The weather for the 14th annual Gratiot cruise was absolutely perfect! It's estimated that over 140,000 people attended the cruise and we had 16-20 members come out with their cars. We even had a Dodge Ram SRT-10 that came and hung out with us for a while as well! Baker hosted four different car clubs onsite and provided a great place for everyone to sit back and enjoy all the cruising activities. The cruise went from 14 mile to 16 mile and kicked off with a special VIP parade that included sixty nine cars. Everyone that came out had a great time and Baker looks forward to seeing everyone next year!





# CRUISE FOR A CAUSE - July 28th Wrap-Up

#### **Bob Swartz**

WE DID IT!! Weather delayed and all.

And it was a GREAT Cruise Benefit!

Both for the MS Society as well as Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs. Here are the high points:

- Over \$6,000.00 raised for the MS Society and Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs
   WOO HOO!
- Over 100 show cars (the best were the Vipers, of course :)
- About 250 additional spectators!
- Beautiful weather (finally)
- and some well deserved, friendly recognition for all the Veterans attending.

And most important of all:

THANK YOU to all who made it such a grand success. Yes, we were also honored to wonderful support from the MCVO represented by the many members attending and volunteering their Viper driving contribution to give a Veteran an "interesting" little ride: Pat Combs, Ed Gatt, Ted Gray, Bruce Heckman, Mike Kelly, Ann & Gary Rappaport, Steve Mariani, and John Wright,

And please excuse me for this personal note: I'm lucky that this year was so successful as I finally decided that it's time to "retire" from this car cruise business. We've had 13 awesome cruises and have raised over \$60,000 for the MS Society while establishing many friendships and community alliances in the process.

So again, thank you for tolerating and encouraging this illogical pursuit for a good cause and making it a fantastic finale.











#### MCVO extends a warm welcome

#### to our newest members:

Pete Ermel - Brownstown Twp.

Jeff Rice - Macomb

Rick Sheeran - Auburn Hills

Don Badaczewski - Grosse Point Park

Fuzz Parker - Whitney Point, N.Y.

Tim Joyce - Macomb

Ilie Mihaesi - Dearborn Heights

Jason Howell - Linden



A special *welcome back* to a Charter Member who is once again a Viper owner!

Bill Gill - Troy







## MOPARS AT THE RED BARNS Gilmore Car Museum

#### **Bob Swartz**

Saturday, July 30th started out wet but turned into a wonderful event enjoyed by Jerry Carrico, Mike Kelly, Gary Rappaport, Mike Sutton, and myself. We were lucky enough to run into, who else but, Marc Rozman snapping pictures and pleased to include some of his photos here.

We knew that if you added several hundred MOPAR products to the Gilmore's many classic cars and Red Barns it would be a success!

We immersed ourselves in the opulent array of vintage automobiles all dry and shiny in the similarly vintage Red Barns. These cars are, of course, flawless and really too numerous to mention here. The knowledgeable and helpful docents attending the various exhibits were a real plus to the whole experience. They were most approachable for any question or comment.

When the skies finally decided we'd survived enough rainfall we were treated to a field offering most any flavor of MOPAR you can imagine. Muscle, classics, pickups, as well as great highway cruisers from every era. Of course the Chargers turned out in force for their 50th anniversary.

When the day was done, so were we, but in a good way! Everyone agreed they were glad to have made the trip through scenic country roads to The Gilmore. "Gary said. . . he was wet but he enjoyed it." That says it all folks!

#### **High Octane Detroit Cars and Coffee**



#### **Gary Rappaport**

On July 17<sup>th</sup> I attended an unusual Cars and Coffee in Birmingham. Darakjian Jewelers, in association with M1 Concourse, sponsored a Sunday, cars and coffee that not only served coffee, bagels and donuts, but started at 10am, which gave me much needed time to sleep in.

What made it more unique was rather than being held in parking lot, the cars were actually parallel parked on Willits Street in downtown Birmingham. There was a beautiful display of exotic cars – Ferrari's, Lamborghini's, BMW's, and Vipers (of course).



Jason Pontello and I met Ilie Mihaesi there and after hearing what a great club we belonged to he joined soon after! Unfortunately, the next Darakjian/M1 Cars and Coffee event coincided with the Gratiot Cruise and we were unable to attend.

We made up for our absence at their September Cars and Coffee. MCVO had a respectable turnout, with Vipers in full force. We garnered about 8 vipers out of approximately 24 cars.



At the end of the event, many of the exotics were revving up their engines as they left. I may be a little biased, but I think the Vipers sounded meaner and louder, especially Paul Pasternak's new Viper.



There was one more on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. I hope MCVO took over the entire street. Unfortunately, Ann and I missed attending since we were at the Tail of the Dragon in our cute little yellow Crossfire.









MCVO Dream Cruise Party -

#### North Woodward Shopping Center

#### **Maureen Hackney**

What more could we ask for...a beautiful summer evening, a prime spot on Woodward and Thirteen Mile, great cars and even better friends. This describes our Thursday evening Dream Cruise event. We were again the guests of FCA at their display for which we are very appreciative. The event was catered by Union Joints and our meal consisted of pulled pork tacos, turkey panini sandwiches, salads, soft drinks and an ice cream cart. We had 113 in attendance with 64 Vipers, the event was covered by many newspapers and was on the front page of the Detroit News on Friday following the event with several of our members quoted.

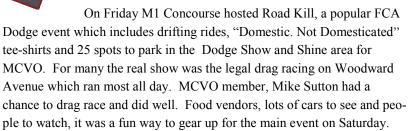
While the event was lively, it was also saddened by the fact that 2017 will be the last year for the Viper and our prime location at 13 and Woodward will become a hotel. But we all know that our love for the car will prevail no matter where we are.

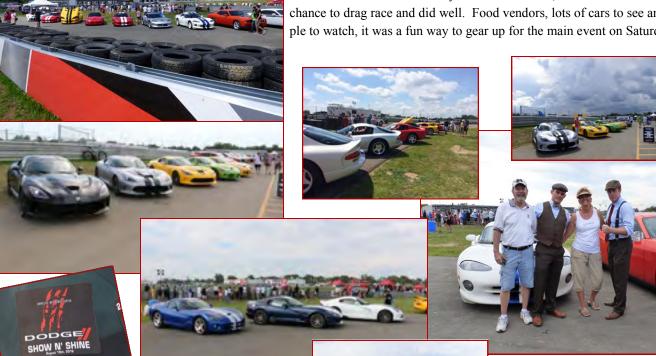






#### **Ann Rappaport**







#### **Woodward Dream Cruise**

#### Saturday at the Viper Pit

#### Sam Milana



For the second year in a row, we hosted a Woodward Dream Cruise event at the Birmingham Masonic Temple. With so much positive feedback about this location after last year's event, it was a no brainer to reserve the space again this year and we've already booked it for next August. The location provides us with plenty of parking on Woodward, large trees for shade, and an air conditioned building with bathroom facilities. 52 cars registered for this year's event and most showed up throughout the day. One of the benefits to this location is there's plenty of room for cars to come and go if you choose to cruise around and come back. You're not trapped in for the day. The Dodge Brothers (Horace and John) stopped in to hand out bumper stickers and pose for pictures. A big thank you goes out to MCVO and Birmingham Masonic Temple member Bill Gray, who arranged to have a DJ playing great hits all day. I would also like to thank the members who volunteered to check cars in and assist with parking. The threat of late afternoon thunderstorms started chasing cars out and by 6pm the party was over.

We hope to see you all again and even more for next year's cruise on August 19, 2017.



#### Welcome home ACR!

#### **Dave Poelke**



Our love for Vipers started in 2009 with a pre-owned 2005 Commemorative Edition, white with blued stripes convertible, then a new 2010 white with blue stripes coupe was added to the stable. In June we welcomed the latest addition.....a 2016 ACR Extreme. What color? Well, it had to be white with a black center stripe and a red driver stripe!

Wendy and I have been "bit" bad. Our trio of Vipers sit comfortably together in the garage right next to the white Corvette and the white with blue stripes AC Shelby Cobra, at our home in Sarasota Florida. Several things make this latest Viper extra special. Besides the Gen 5 being the best Viper built, and the ACR Extreme being an outrageous performance automobile, we had the unique experience of seeing this car before delivery during a plant tour and meeting some of the folks who created it for us.

Thanks to John Gastman for being such a great guy to deal with in the purchase of it, our great friend Sam Milana, VP of the MCVO, and Chad Quick, Conner Ave plant manager. We had the pleasure of touring CAAP and seeing where our new baby was born. John Gastman is a prince. He always has time to spend with a customer and is willing to do whatever it takes to make Viper owners comfortable with their new car. Sam is passionate about Vipers which becomes evident when you spend some time with him and see his devotion to the club. Enough cannot be said about Chad Quick.....such a busy man to be sharing his time and the plant with us.

It all goes to show you....Viper folks truly are family. The Gen 5 is happy in its new home and I'm a happy camper pampering this new toy. What can we say - life is good when you own a Viper.





JUNE CRUISE NIGHT

Sandi White

Even though June 15th started out rather cloudy, the faithful snake charmers turned out for our regularly scheduled cruise night. This month we went West to Diamond Jim Brady's Bistro. This was a new venue for us, but the food was extremely good, the service good, and the company was awesome, as usual. Only 20 members showed up as there was some talk of rain that night. Many members ventured out to enjoy socializing and dinner on the porch. It was another wonderful opportunity to visit with our friends.

