



# Snake Bites

2015 E-Edition

MCVO Newsletter  
Spring-Summer  
Articles

## Presidents Corner

**Jim Bielenda**

Summer has officially ended, but we are still in full swing for upcoming events like the Fall Color Tour, Tech Day, Cruise nights and some impromptu events that will be e-mailed out as we work our way through the fall calendar. We have had some great events so far this year though. The cruise nights have been a great success. While we do some track events for our members who like to race or spirit drive their snakes, we also plan at least one cruise night event per month for those liking the more relaxed atmosphere, looking at the cars, socializing with members and have something good to eat.



New Members  
Cruise Nights  
Prefix Tour  
MCVO Spring Brunch  
Ubly Cruise & Drag Race  
Jefferson North Plant Tour  
FCA Scoop JNAP  
CAAP Tour  
Half Shaft on a Gen 1  
Cruise for a Cause  
Autocross  
CEMA  
2015 Nationals  
Viper Winter Storage  
Concours d'Elegance

Woodward on Thursday night was picture perfect weather and a record turnout of cars. The food was great and our Vipers made TV and many articles on the event. MCVO shared a site with the local Corvette Club this year on Saturday's Woodward event. Over 50 Vipers attended. Not only MCVO members, but Viper owners from Ontario, Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania were there. We plan to repeat both Woodward events next year. Stay tuned in the next newsletter for the complete stories. If you have any ideas for an event, don't be shy, just drop us a line or talk to one of the officers. We are always looking for new things to do. We will have officer nominations for all the positions e-mailed out to members shortly. Always looking for new blood in these positions and the director positions as well. If you attended a great event with your Viper, be it an MCVO event or another one, write up a short story and include some pictures. We are always looking for additional material for the newsletter. Keep watching your e-mail for upcoming event notifications or check out the website calendar. [www.mcvo.net](http://www.mcvo.net)

*Jim*



### **Our Cars**

**98 GTS**

**95 RT/10**



### **Editor's Column**

For the past 8 years MCVO has been fortunate to have Ted and Joanne Gray keeping SnakeBites interesting, entertaining and a valuable asset to the club. One, if not both of the Grays attend most events. It can only be guessed how many hours they have given to MCVO over the years. As with all clubs, people volunteer for the various jobs and in time these tasks are passed into new hands. Please join with us and the Board of Directors in expressing a heartfelt and sincere thank you to both Joanne and Ted. Their beautiful new PURPLE Viper was recently delivered and is sure to be at many future MCVO events.

Gary and I have wanted to give back to the club and hope working on SnakeBites will be a good "fit". At the September Board Meeting everyone felt the best way to get this issue out quickly, while we were "learning the ropes", was via the Internet. We've never used publishing software, so please forgive the blunders and or omissions.

MCVO is looking for photos! Please send pictures of interest: your car in a local parade, the delivery of a new Viper, the first time your spouse drove one of these great cars. A photo of you and your car would be great!

Please explain what the photo is about, the where, when, why and include your name. If you're in the photo, make sure to identify yourself. Photos must be yours to give and sending a photo grants MCVO permission to use it in club publications.

Sadly it is time to start thinking about when to put the cars into winter hibernation. There are many sunny days left, but a light jacket is needed for the evening ride home.

Gary & Ann Rappaport



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Photo Credits: Maureen Hackney, Sam Milana, Bob Swartz, Jim Richards, Val Saph,

Ann Rappaport, Marc Rozman, Gary Rappaport

**MCVO would like to extend a warm welcome  
to these new members:**

Frank Ailor - Columbia Station, Ohio

John Rex Allen - Taylor Michigan

Eric Bartlett - Whitmore Lake Michigan

Al Deane - Oakland Township Michigan

Waseem Qureshi - Trenton Michigan

Jack Sensiglio - Macomb Michigan

Jim Weaver - Goshen Indiana



Please check our web site for the current schedule and our Facebook page for discussions, locations and times for caravanning to the next event.

### *Spring Brunch*

Our annual Spring Brunch was another success this year. The event was held at the Meadowbrook Country Club and for once we had a beautiful sunny day and all of the Vipers came out of hibernation.

With 81 members in attendance, we enjoyed a delicious buffet of scrambled eggs, eggs benedict, bacon and sausage, hash browns, fresh fruit, pastries, Michigan chicken, and bread pudding. Members had time to shop all of our apparel and take advantage of some closeout sales and new items.

Following brunch, our guest speaker Chris Cowland, Director of SRT talked about the Hellcat. He was very informative in his presentation of the performance levels of the various cars that offer the Hellcat option. Following Chris, Ted Gray gave us a walk down memory lane with a slide show of all of our events since the last Brunch. It was fun looking back and hopefully encouraged more members to come out and join us.

This year we did something different in that everyone who attended received a goody bag filled with Dodge items. We also had some great raffle items and last but not least we gave away our coveted centerpieces, a Viper clock and small Viper model. We had some additional ones to sell that were quickly scooped up. Our grand prize was a flat screen TV that was won by Jason and Fawn McHenry.

This event could not be possible without the help of the Board members who worked tirelessly throughout the day: Jim Bielenda, John Begian, Mike Kelly, Rose and Joe Klutz, Zach Thompson, Ted and Joanne Gray, Sam Milana, Val Saph, Shawna, and my husband Jess who has to put up with all of my pre-brunch craziness. If you missed this event please join us next year on the first Sunday in May.

*Maureen Hackney*

## Monthly Cruise Nights Recap

*Maureen Hackney*

Our cruise nights have been very popular all year long and the summer has brought even more members out along with their Vipers.

In May we went to one of our old favorites, Bullfrogs in Ortonville. While it was too cold to be out on the deck, we enjoyed lively conversation inside. We had 22 in attendance, and one brave person, Jason Hallberg who conquered the Monster one pound burger!

Our June cruise night took us to Deer Lake Inn in Clarkston, and while things started out a little hectic, it ended with some great food and lively conversations. There is never a dull moment when we all get together. We had twenty six in attendance and while we did not have reserved parking as they were very busy that night, the snakes could be seen here and there around the parking lot and drew a lot of attentions as they pulled in.

Our July cruise night, by far the largest so far at Tin Fish in St. Clair Shores found 36 members in attendance and a long line of Vipers in the parking lot along the lake. What an awesome sight!

If you have a favorite spot that would make for a great cruise night please let us know as we are always looking for somewhere new to go.

## CRUISE NIGHT TO WHITE HORSE INN

*Sandi White*

**We decided to try something different in August for Cruise Night, so we took a cruise in the country on our way to the location. We met at Great Lakes Crossing and cruised north through Hadley on our way to Metamora. We had dinner at the White Horse Inn.**

**It's a 165 year old inn that was originally a stage coach stop. It was Michigan's oldest continuously operating restaurant until it closed in 2012 because the owners couldn't afford to make the extensive repairs that were necessary to keep the business operating. A couple who lives in Metamora that own 2 other area restaurants decided to bring the Inn back to life with the help of local artisans. The results are amazing. There's a tree inlaid into the floor and huge paintings of horses on the walls. They've even started offering horse carriage rides around the town. A visit there is like taking a walk backward in time to 1850.**

**They have an outstanding gourmet chef who creates some unusual twists to standard restaurant cuisine. We enjoyed some unusual appetizers, great meals and the best company. Twenty four members came out for the event.**



## **Drag Race and Country Cruise**

The day started out with a severe downpour, gratefully the radar map showed sunny skies in Ubly, MI. I contacted members; both Tim Sutherland and Jason Pontello still planned on going. Jason was having issues with his car, but he was happy to ride along with me. Tim had planned to go regardless of the turnout or weather, so he swayed me to continue the event even though only 2 cars were going.

We met Tim at M-59 & 23 Mile Rd in Shelby Twp. and headed north through the countryside. The ride was quite interesting with Hoosier R6 race slicks on all four corners. This was an opportunity to both get a feel for wet traction and also gauge Jason's confidence in my driving abilities. Nonetheless, we made it to Ubly safe & sound.

The event at the track was a streetcar shootout, which also had a low turnout. This gave us the opportunity to hot-lap if we so desired. Tim and I both made multiple passes at the track, honing our launching skills of our V-10 beasts. Although it didn't rain in Ubly it was still very humid that day. With traction issues for both cars, I was able to run 11.8 in my Gen3 and Tim ran 12.05 in his Gen V. We enjoyed driving to Ubly as much as the track time and hope more members attend Motorsports events in the future.

**Val Saph**



## **July 12th Alfa Romeo Autocross**

Another event where early morning rain deterred some members from participating. Despite the overcast skies Dave Buchesky, Dave Coletti and I attended and were glad we did!

Dave Coletti, a seasoned autocrosser, killed it with a 4th place finish of 59 entries with his Gen 4 Coupe. I was close behind, locking in 6th place with my Gen 3 Roadster. Dave Buchesky made a few hot laps and did very well too!

This was my very first autocross event ever. I encourage all members to consider participating in autocross events, they not only teach you how to apply the power, but they also prepare you to react in emergency situations!

Thanks to Dave Small from the AROC group for hosting the event. This was their final AROC autocross event for the year, but we are always looking to participate in other Motorsports events. Watch our calendar.

**Val Saph**

## JNAP Plant Tour

I would like to thank everybody who attended the Jefferson North Assembly Plant tour. We had a dry and sunny May morning to cruise into the city to get to JNAP. We were met at the guard shack and then escorted into the plant atrium where we parked our Vipers. The first group went out on the plant tour while the others listened to Erica Crane (JNAP communication director), who spoke about the facility. When the tour group returned, we all enjoyed lunch and walking around talking about our cars with JNAP employees. After lunch the second group went out on the plant tour and the first group went with Erica. A group photo was taken upon everybody's return and we all signed a MCVO banner that is now hanging on the mezzanine railing in the atrium. I have worked at JNAP for the past 23 years and I felt proud to show our club members the facility and have them meet some of the fine men and women I work with. The plant was very excited to have us come in and they would like for us to do it again next year. So for those of you, who couldn't make this event, look for the JNAP tour on next year's calendar and register early, because space will be limited as it was this year

**Sam Milana**



# The Scoop

A WEBSITE FOR FIAT CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES



DODGE

CHRYSLER

Jeep

SRT



## ‘Sea of snakes’ tours Jefferson North

June 4, 2015, 8:00AM

The sound of thunder echoed through Jefferson North Assembly Plant’s body shop atrium as a caravan of 14 Motor City Viper Owners Club Dodge Viper cars slithered in.

The club, established in 1994 with more than 150 members, was invited to the plant in Detroit to see where the Dodge Durango and Jeep® Grand Cherokee are manufactured. About 25 members from different parts of Michigan drove an assortment of Viper cars into the plant and were greeted by Cecelia Burdett, WCM Body Shop Specialist.

Sam Milana, vice president of the club and also a Jefferson North employee, was there to greet the group as well.

“I wanted to show our members what the only major assembly plant in Detroit looks like,” Milana said. “We recently went on a tour at Conner Avenue Assembly Plant, where they hand-build Vipers, but at



The event ended with a group photo of the members and their Vipers.

Jefferson North we are producing more than a 1,000 SUVs each day. It’s an incredible sight to see, and I was proud to share it with them.”

The visitors learned about the plant’s history, the people who make it possible and the production operations that help produce thousands of Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee SUVs each week. The group then proceeded to the shop floor, leaving their Viper cars on display in the atrium for employees to admire while they experienced the manufacturing process firsthand.

The day also included lunch in the body shop and a group photo staged in front of the Viper cars to capture the moment.

“This facility is impressive to say the

least,” Jesse Hackeny, Motor City Viper Owners Club advisor, said. “Manufacturing is the soul of the Motor City, and I’m thrilled we were invited to this plant. I have a passion for cars and seeing the assembly process from start to finish was a great treat.”



Members of the Motor City Viper Owners Club parked their rides in the body shop at the Jefferson North Assembly Plant while they toured the facility.





Here's an item you may want to add to your annual inspection checklist-

## **Drive Shaft U-Joint Straps and Bolts**

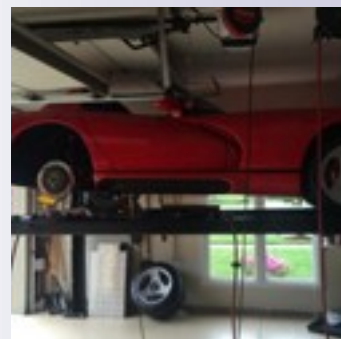
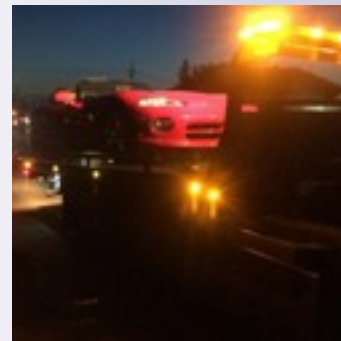
**Sam Milana**

I know I'll be adding these checks to my list as to prevent what happened to our car this past spring. On May 28th, we decided to take a little cruise to get some ice cream. On the way home we were stopped at a traffic light and as the "Christmas Tree" turned green, I proceeded to apply a large amount of torque to the rear wheels. As the torque was transferred to the wheels and I launched from my resting spot, the most horrendous sound came from the right rear of the car. We pulled over and with help from Tim Sutherland who was driving behind me; we pushed the car up into a driveway and out of the street. Looking under the car, I could see the right rear half-shaft had separated from the wheel hub/yoke. We proceeded to have the car towed home where the next day I was able to get it up on the lift for an inspection.

What I found was one corner of the splined yoke, where the shaft u-joint attaches, snapped from the torque. Now these are designed to withstand much more torque than what I'm putting down, so how could it have snapped?

There are two u-joint straps and four bolts that secure the shaft to the yoke and as you can see in the photo, the lower right bolt is missing. There was no way the u-joint was going to stay in place with only one bolt securing the strap. The torque created an excessive amount of force on the one bolt that was securing the strap and as a result that corner snapped off. Once the right strap broke free the left strap did all it could to hold the u-joint in place but was mangled. With the end of the drive shaft broken free, the horrendous noise we heard was it spinning around and taking out the rear toe link assembly, upper ball joint, and upper control arm.

The aftermarket Unitrax racing half shafts on my Viper were purchased by the previous owner and installed at a reputable Dodge dealership about 8 years ago. I'm not placing blame on anyone, but these bolts are not supposed to fall out. Loctite is to be used on the threads and they are to be torqued to 320 in. lbs. (26.5 ft. lbs.). New u-joint straps must be used when they are removed. The straps slightly deform when torqued in place. Reuse of the old straps may result in reduced clamp load



Since I was making an assumption that a bolt loosened and fell out or the original straps were possibly reused, I decided to check the four straps and eight bolts that secure the driver's (left) side half shaft. To my surprise I found three out of the eight bolts were loose.

I ordered one new half shaft from Unitrax as well as all new straps and bolts for both right and left shafts. Chuck Tator had most of the other parts I needed to put her all back together.

The first thing I did was remove the splined yoke from the hub assembly. Then I removed the damaged Unitrax half shaft. To remove the toe link ball joint and the upper control arm ball joint, I rented a puller, free of charge from my local O'Reilly Auto Parts store. I needed to remove the rear shock in order to access the pivots bolts of the upper control arm for its removal. Once all the damaged parts were out I installed all the new parts. My 1994 Viper Service Manual definitely came in handy for this project as well as having a good left side to compare everything to.

The original 5/16" hex head bolts for the u-joint straps are very difficult to torque down because of the angle. The socket needs to stay square to the bolt to keep from slipping off and as a result, stripping the head of the bolt. The new strap bolts I ordered are 6mm allen head. With the use of a 6mm ball end allen socket, which allows for a greater angle to the bolt, I was able to easily torque them down. After all the bolts were torqued to specification, I used a paint marker to match mark all the bolts. This will make it easy to visually inspect them to see if any have moved.



**Dave "Bo" Buchesky & Sam**

Since I had to replace my rear toe link assembly, one of my concerns was the rear toe alignment. I placed a call to MCVO member Dave "Bo" Buchesky, one of the original Team Viper engineers, for some advice. I would like to thank Dave who came to my house with his toe link alignment tool and taught me how to set the rear toe to the factory specification of  $+0.10^\circ$

Although it was an inconvenience to be without our car for the month of June, we were very fortunate as to when and where this happened. Luckily we were only about a mile away from home and I was not driving at a high rate of speed. A few weeks earlier I had planned on attending our MCVO drag race event in Ugly, 75 miles away. I decided not to go that day because of the morning rain. Somebody must have been looking out for me because more than likely it would have broke that day on the drag strip.

## CAAP TOUR

On Friday, July 31st, faithful Viper owners visited Conner Avenue Assembly Plant. It was yet another pilgrimage to the shrine that produces our wonderful, powerful Vipers. Since the plant is here, in the Motor City, our club tries to visit the plant annually. However, no matter when we visit, it's always a thrill to see how our wonderful "babies" are put together.

Members arrived at 8 am and enjoyed donuts and juice or coffee outside the front door. A canned goods collection started when the members arrived and were taken into the Plant Conference Room for distribution to the needy later that day. Promptly at 9 am we were escorted into the Plant Conference Room and the official tour started. Conner has done a new video that they show before the tour. It was awesome and made us all want a new car. Eric Dosenberger, one of the plant engineers, escorted us through the plant on the tour. Since the 1 of 1 program began many changes to the plant floor have taken place. More material is stored off line and brought to the line in kit form.

We were then allowed to get into the Conner Store to buy the latest and greatest Viper apparel. After the tour ended, many members continued on to Camp Ticonderoga to have lunch together.

Many thanks to the efforts of Gary Rappaport for initiating the event and for getting all of the work completed in conjunction with actually putting on the event.

Jim Richards provided MCVO with the excellent photos, Thank You Jim!

**Sandi White**





**CRUISE FOR A CAUSE - An Outing for Vipers Too!**

Held on July 16 in Waterford at the Central United Methodist Church, the 12th annual Cruise For A Cause Car Show offered delicious food, entertainment and trophies! Church staff personally prepares all the food including baking the deserts.

This year’s Cruise For A Cause continued to improve which resulted in BIG payoffs. We were able to increase attendance (happily many were Vipers) and make a big donation to the MS Society.

Good things, indeed

Okay gang, here are the highlights on what turned out to be a great day for the MS Society, the Viper folk who attended along with the crowd of other “Cruisers”. I’ll dispense with the usual “everybody had fun, was good company, worthy cause, etc.” You know all those good things so now let’s get down to superlatives:

-Over \$6,000.00 raised for the MS Society. That’s a record breaking WOO HOO for all of us. Thank you contributors!

-A record 135 show cars. Of course the Vipers were the real stars there :)

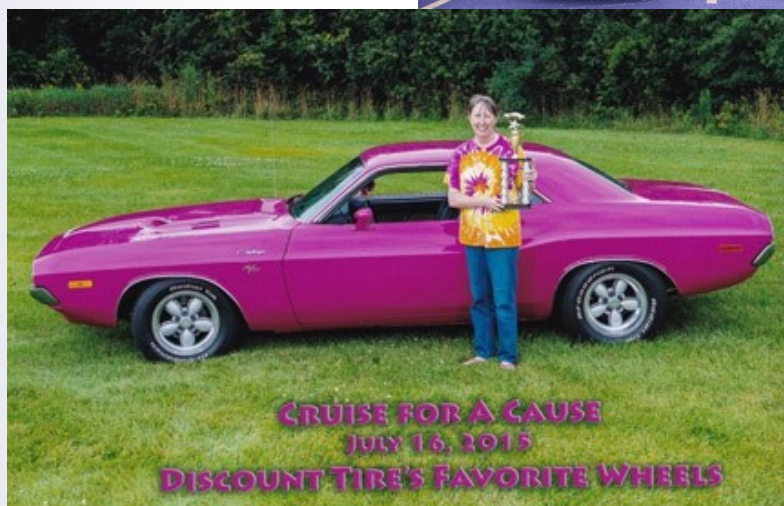
-A record 400 attendees; drivers and spectators combined!

-Picture perfect weather.

Now time for Cruise PICTURES!

CU soon; hopefully at a “den of Vipers” event.

**Bob Swartz**





## **2015 Nationals**

This year's theme was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1965 model year as well as the tribute the Dodge Challenger T/A & Plymouth AAR 'Cuda. Over 2800 cars and 40,000 diehard Mopar Enthusiasts were in attendance. The weather was perfect as participants were able to race, enter the judged show or fun field, shop the Swap Meet & Manufacturer Midway and take a thrill ride in a Challenger Hellcat or Dodge Viper. The Ohio region of VOA makes this an annual event and boasted over 35 Dodge Vipers in attendance. Some were racing, some were being judged and others were just on display for the weekend of everything Mopar. This year's winner in the Viper Shootout was Rich Kautz from Murryville, PA with his 2002 Viper out running David Rauske of Rocky River, Ohio in his 1994 Viper.

## **Jim Bielenda**



## 2015 CEMA Charity Car Show



On June 6th, Chrysler Employees Motorsport Association (CEMA) held their annual Charity Car Show, on the grounds of the Walter P. Chrysler Museum (WPCM).

This year's theme was "Jet Age of Automotive Design". The grounds were filled with the sights and sounds of classic cars from every generation on a beautiful summer day, with record attendance of 400+ show cars. This is the only day the museum is open to the public.

Unfortunately Ann and I had a previous out-of-town commitment and were unable to attend.



I spoke with Roe Green, CEMA Internet Director, who gave me some interesting facts from the 2015 show:

There were slightly over 450 cars registered, and of those, were about 27 Vipers from MCVO and surrounding states.

This year CEMA selected Leaders Dogs for the Blind as the benefactor. A generous check was given to their representatives, at the CEMA Woodward Dream Cruise dinner, which is also held as a way to thank the many volunteers, who helped at the show.

Save the date! – Next year’s Car Show is June 11, 2016. The General Theme of the Show will be “The Class of 1966 - 50th Anniversary”, with a Special Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Dodge Charger! Let’s see if we can break our record, of Vipers in attendance, at the upcoming show. I know Ann and I will be there. Hope to see you too.

**Gary Rappaport**

These beautiful pictures were provided by CEMA member Marc Rozman



**St. Joseph Concours d’Elegance Car Show**

A spirited group of 31 MCVO members traveled in 17 Viper cars to St. Joseph, Michigan for the 11th annual St. Joseph Concours d’Elegance car show held during the weekend of August 7, 8 and 9. Nine other people driving five Vipers from the Illinois Viper Club also joined us for the weekend festivities.

Roy Sjoberg, otherwise known as “Father Viper” was honored as the featured guest at this year’s 2015 St. Joseph Concours d’Elegance car show. Roy and Peg Sjoberg are charter members of the MCVO and both cheerfully welcomed all who attended. Roy is the former Chief Engineer of the original Team Viper which launched the original 1992 model year Dodge Viper at Chrysler. Roy spoke Friday evening at the formal charity dinner event about Team Viper and described the early design and development and eventual production of the original Dodge Viper. The charity dinner supported the Hospice Care of St Joseph. The prestigious Concours d’Elegance car show was held at Lake Bluff Park overlooking beautiful Lake Michigan on Saturday in downtown St. Joseph, Michigan.





Bob and Mariann Litznerski of St. Joseph were our gracious hosts for the weekend. Bob and Mariann were nice enough to ensure that our group always found our way from our hotel in South Bend, Indiana to St. Joseph. It also provided us with a good excuse to drive our cars to and from our hotel. Not only that, but Bob and Mariann hosted our entire group for dinner and some adult refreshments on Saturday night at their home after the car show. Sunday morning began with a spirited ride through the hills and winding roads of beautiful southwest Michigan ending up at a local burger and milk shake shop before getting back on the road to head home. A perfect weekend !!

Thank you to all who participated in the weekend activities and took the time to come out and meet and honor two of our own, Roy and Peg Sjoberg.

## Mike Cipponeri





# Viper Winter Storage Tips

By Jim Bielenda

**Improperly storing your Viper for the winter does not have to be a concern. By following some easy steps & procedures you can rest assured that your snake will be road ready come Spring.**

*In Michigan we are typically storing our vehicles for 4-5 months only and therefore a lot of the storage requirements are not needed, like Stabil for the fuel or oil fogging the engine. These would only be recommended if the storage of the vehicle were going to be long term (6 months or more and depending on storage environment. Storage times over a year should have the fuel tank drained, battery removed, etc.)*

1. **Wash and wax the vehicle.** Wash, thoroughly dry and wax prior to storage. Use a good quality wax. You never want to store a wet or damp car, so before putting the car cover on or bagging a car, make sure it has had ample time to dry out after its wash/waxing. Pay particular attention to the wheels as you do not want the corrosive brake dust eating your nice rims all winter. Make sure to clean ALL the brake dust off the rim (front & back) to stop corrosion and wax all areas. If you have access to a hoist, waxing the bottom of the car is a great idea. I highly recommend using a good quality car cover. Placing a clean cover over the clean body minimizes the risk of scratches.
2. **Interior.** The interior should be vacuumed and all leather cleaned with a suitable cleaner / protector. Once cleaned, leave both windows open a crack under the car cover to relieve pressure on the weather-stripping and to vent the interior, however if rodents are an issue, seal them up and place a few dehumidifying packages placed on plastic on the floor of the car. Remove floor mats and store them indoors. The rubber backing can trap moisture under the mat and deteriorate your carpet and form rust on your floor boards. Door, window and top seals can be conditioned with Murphy's Oil soap or a similar product to retain their flexibility and preserve the life of the seal. If you have a Gen I or II roadster and are storing the vehicle with the hardtop installed, you should consider not latching the front or rear to keep from deforming the rubber seals.
3. **Engine Oil.** You need to get on a schedule where at the end of the year is the time your oil is changed. You don't want your engine sitting for 4-5 months with old oil in it. Old oil contains contaminants, and these can actually soften the crank shaft metal with time. If your mileage is getting up there you might want to consider doing an engine oil sample just to check on the condition of your engine.
4. **Fuel.** I do not recommend using a gas treatment as the storage time is short enough to not need one. Using winter blend fuel (available starting in late September), in cold weather gas does not deteriorate as fast as warm weather, plus many gas treatment brands contain silicon which will play havoc with the oxygen sensors. Depending on if you store the vehicle in a heated environment or not may influence how much fuel you store the vehicle with. Heated storage, I would have ¼ tank of fuel, thereby allowing you to have ¾ fresh add come spring. Cold storage, while plastic tanks don't usually sweat and cause condensation (read water) in the fuel, it might be better to store with a full tank to be safe.
5. **Fluids.** As our vehicles get older you must remember to change the various fluids. Anti-freeze should be changed every two years if using the regular stuff, or 3-4 when using the life formulas. Brake fluid should be changed every two years or when you start to see the fluid discolor. It is typically clear when new and changes to dark brown as its gets older. If you can see it... change it. This also applies to the hydraulic clutch fluid. Rear Diff, transmission and power steering fluid should be changed every three years or sooner depending on vehicle usage (Racing). Check that the radiator coolant level of protection is to at least -20°F (-29°C). Verify that your windshield washer fluid has suitable low temperature protection.
6. **Tires.** If storing the vehicle on the ground, tire pressures should be raised to the maximum psi listed on the side wall. Cut blocks of plywood about the same size of the tires. Cover each block with carpeting and place them between the tires and floor. This will prevent tire flat spotting. Securely block the wheels as you want to

leave the car in neutral over the winter because the rubber insulating boot underneath the leather shifter boot will take a set if left in a gear position and make the first day or two of spring driving a bit odd as the set rubber resists as you shift into in any gear other than the one it was in all winter. If the vehicle will be raised off the ground (jack stands) it is better to support the vehicle by the suspension so it is at ride height rather than leave the suspension suspended. If your removing your tires, good idea to super clean the inside of the rim for all the brake dust and apply a good coat of wax for protection. Storing the tires in a plastic bag is a good idea to extend their life. Most companies don't recommend coating the tires with Armorial or like materials during storage. Always store your tires away from electric motors (Furnace, etc., that produce ozone).

7. **Battery.** The Viper battery is one of the most abused components on the car. Our vehicles tend to not be driven as often our other vehicles and the electrical drain on the system is higher on a lot of models. When storing your viper it is highly recommended to purchase a battery tender (not a trickle charger – but one that monitors the state of charge and will turn on and off). Depending on the type of battery you have (wet cell, dry cell, etc.), the amount of charging current is critical to the life of the battery. **NOTE:** Disconnecting the battery causes the engine control system to lose memory of some "learned" functions. After reconnecting the battery, the engine may run rough until the control module "relearns" these functions. Using the Battery Save Feature or a battery tender will prevent the engine controller from losing its memory. It is not necessary to remove the battery, but if it's been over a year since you have looked at it, I would take a peek. Corrosion can occur especially if your using an after-market or non OE battery. The batteries that came with your Viper have internal venting and thus do not spill acid. Replacement batteries almost without exception are externally vented and therefore will emit gases and will leak acid especially on the earlier Gen I & II vehicles. If you see any signs of corrosion, surfaces should be cleaned and repainted. The Battery trays are welded in place and therefore extremely critical that they are kept in good shape as who wants to weld in a new battery tray. This is one good reason to purchase a gel cell when your battery dies as you will not have to worry about acid spillage and gel cells will stay charged longer than a wet cell.
8. **MISC.** Place the windshield wiper arms on a piece of foam or wood or anything that will prop the arm up so the blade is off the glass. This will stop the blades from conforming to the glass shape and extend their life. It is highly recommended that you do not start your Viper over the storage period UNLESS you will be able to run the engine long enough (over 45 minutes) to properly heat up the engine and exhaust to evaporate the moisture that will be formed during the initial startup phase. This of course is more an issue for cold storage rather than heated. If the vehicle is on jack stands it's a good idea to turn the rear wheels every month or so to allow the ring gear to be coated in diff oil and protect it from possible rusting. If not on jack stands you can just push the car forward a few feet and then back. Remember to grease your suspension components (tie rods, ball joints, etc.,). Do not apply parking brake. Remove important papers from the car/glove box. Leave the HVAC system in OFF mode to help keep critters out.
9. **EXHAUST.** One trick used by many car collectors is to spray a little oil in the exhaust outlet and stuff an oil soaked rag into the opening. This will stop moisture from forming in the exhaust and on the open cylinders and keep "creatures" from entering the exhaust and forming nests.
10. **CREATURES.** Many items have been tried to keep rodents out of the interior or engine compartment. Moth Balls and Coffee grounds have used in the interior which are reported to work but they have the unpleasant odor issue that seems to remain for a period of time. Charcoal Briquettes are awesome for removing odors, so if you use mothballs in the interior this will work to remove the smell. Oil of spearmint placed on a number of cotton balls placed on rubber floor mats (not carpet) will keep the interior smelling nice for a long while, as well repelling mice. Dryer sheets smell great and seem to have the same effect in keeping the rodents out and the odor is not an issue. In the engine compartment, you can use the moth balls or the dryer sheets. If using moth balls, I would place them in a plastic bowl or suitable container to keep the chemicals from staining any metal components/carpet. It's a great idea if your garage is a pet/kid free zone to have traps or bait to catch any intruders before they even realize there is a Viper there. Always place in corners or along walls as they follow these paths the most.

11. **Storage Area.** Store the vehicle in a dry, well-ventilated indoor location. If storing your vehicle in a cold concrete floor environment, it is a good idea to place a 5 mil thick plastic sheathing down on the bare concrete to keep moisture from collecting on the underside of the vehicle. The vehicle can be parked on the plastic or 4x8 sheets of plywood placed over the plastic so the vehicle is parked on top of wood. Wood will absorb all the moisture. Note: Come spring you will want to remove the plastic off the concrete as it will start to deteriorate over time due to the moisture. The Omni-bag or other bag storage devices are GREAT alternatives as they will keep your car moisture & dust free and guard against rodents, the perfect solution. The bag solution is greatly recommended if you will be using the garage during the winter where there will be constant temperature and humidity changes as a wet and salty vehicle will be going in and out of the garage all winter long.

## **Battery Save Feature**

For those 2003 and newer Vipers that have the Battery Save feature that conserves battery power when storing the vehicle, here is the procedure to place the vehicle in the save mode. This feature allows for up to three months of storage time without losing radio and engine controller memory, plus reduces the electric load so a battery tender will not have to work as hard to maintain proper battery voltage.

### **To Activate the Battery save Feature**

1. Insert the key into the ignition switch.
2. Cycle the ignition switch from OFF/LOCK to ACC four times. Leave the switch in the OFF/LOCK position after the fourth cycle.
3. Push the driver's power door lock switch in the up direction. A single chime will sound and the horn will chirp to indicate that the process has begun.
4. Remove the key from the ignition switch and exit the vehicle. The Battery Save Feature will be enabled 45 seconds after all doors are closed.

### **NOTE:**

Turning the ignition switch to the ON/RUN position at any time will cancel activation of the Battery Save Feature.

The Remote Keyless Entry (RKE) and the exterior passenger door handle will not work when the Battery Save feature is enabled. Enter the vehicle by using the key to unlock the door manually and by using the exterior driver door handle to open the door. The Vehicle Security Alarm is disabled when the Battery Save Feature is enabled. Therefore, the vehicle is not protected when the Battery Save Feature is enabled.

The exterior and interior lighting functions will not work when the Battery Save Feature is enabled.

### **To Deactivate the Battery save Feature**

1. Press the exterior driver's door handle once to wake up the vehicle. Then, press the handle again to open the door.

**NOTE:** If the door does not open (vehicle is armed), press the RKE UNLOCK button to unlock the vehicle.

2. Insert the key into the ignition switch.
3. Turn the ignition switch to the ON/RUN position. The Battery Save Feature will turn off. **NOTE:** If the ignition switch is NOT turned to ON/RUN position, the Battery Save Feature will be enabled 45 seconds after the driver's door is closed. Check the battery

every four to six weeks to ensure that the voltage is above 12.40 Volts. The voltage will drop more rapidly in hot temperatures. If battery voltage drops below 12.40 Volts, follow the battery recharge procedure in the Service Manual.

**NOTE:** To help prevent the battery from discharging during shorter periods of inactivity, perform the following:

1. Make sure that the trunk/liftgate, hood, doors, windows, and convertible top are completely closed.
2. Make sure that Remote Keyless Entry (RKE) transmitter is operating and that the battery is good.
3. Make sure that the HOOD, TRUNK/LIFTGATE, and DOOR switches are in adjustment. Perform the quick

system check, which follows: Use the remote transmitter to set the alarm. If the alarm SET light comes on and flashes, the system is operating properly. If not, there is a problem with a switch or the system. See your authorized dealer for service.

### **Quick Winterization Checklist:**

Full fuel tank  
44 psi tire inflation pressure  
Plastic sheet completely under car  
Tires resting on plywood and carpet to minimize flat spots  
Fresh engine oil, possibly brake and clutch fluid too

Engine antifreeze level verified  
Windshield washer antifreeze checked  
Clean interior and exterior  
Battery tray and battery terminals inspected and cleaned  
Battery Tender connected  
If needed, mouse traps & dehumidifier bags placed, otherwise windows opened slightly

### **Spring Checklist:**

Don't forget to adjust tires down to 29 PSI before driving and observe the inflation pressure prior to adjustment. Are all tires equal or is one low? Could be a slow leak that'll require watching.

When starting the vehicle back up after storage, remove all your covers, bags over pipes, intakes, humidity bags (pans of charcoal), make sure the battery is fully charged and check all fluid levels. If possible disable the ignition/fuel and let the engine crank to build oil pressure. A few cranks at slow speed with no oil pressure is much better than the first few cranks at 3000 rpm with no oil pressure. Let the engine idle until it reaches operating temperature. Wait till you hear the cooling fan cycle. It confirms the fan runs and your at proper temperature. Shut the engine down and check for leaks. It is pretty normal on Gen I & II vehicles to have a small anti-freeze spot under the engine as the spring clamps have a tendency to relax over time. When driving, remember your tires are cold and you want to travel the first mile or so at slow speed and keep the rev's low till things warm up. Test the brakes before you get on the highway. The disks may have some rust spots unless your car was stored in a sealed bag, the noise will go away after the first few stops.

**The story on Tires:** Don't store a vehicle with weight on its tires for extended periods of time. Long-term inactivity is more harmful to tires than short weekly drives that flex the tires and help maintain oil dispersion within the rubber compounds.

DO NOT APPLY ANY TIRE DRESSINGS. Tire compounds are formulated to resist ozone cracking or weather checking.

Keep the tires out of direct sunlight. The sun's ultraviolet rays and radiant heat are detrimental to rubber. We have used a pyrometer to measure tires that were simply sitting in direct sunlight on a parked vehicle. Surprisingly those tires' temperatures were 135° Fahrenheit on their surface.

Place each tire in its own large, opaque, airtight plastic bag (such as lawn and garden bags) for storing. Avoid allowing any moisture and remove as much air as practical (some drivers even use a vacuum cleaner to draw out as much as possible). Close the bag tightly and tape it shut. This places the tire in its own personal mini-atmosphere to help reduce oil evaporation.

If you choose not to store white letter or white stripe tires in plastic bags, it is important they be stored or stacked "white-to-white" and "black-to-black" to prevent staining the white rubber. The black rubbers used on the inside and outside sidewalls of white letter and white stripe tires are compounded differently. The black sidewall uses standard rubber, while the tire's "white" side uses a top layer of non-staining black rubber over the white to prevent oils in the tire from migrating into the exposed white rubber and discoloring it. Stacking all tires "white sidewall up" will allow the oils from the black sidewall to migrate into the white rubber.

Place the tires in a cool, dry location. It is better to place tires in a dry basement than outdoors or in a hot garage or attic. The basement temperatures will tend to remain cooler and more stable, while outdoor, garage and attic temperatures will often become hot and face daily fluctuations in temperature.

Keep the tires away from sources of ozone. Electric motors that use contact brushes generate ozone. Keep your tires away from the furnace, sump pump, etc. While tires will age somewhat regardless of what precautions are taken, these procedures will help slow the process compared to not doing anything.



## **MCVO visits PREFIX**

MCVO was invited to tour the PREFIX facility this past April. PREFIX is the OE supplier that paints all the panels of the Dodge Viper. They have an outstanding reputation as being a premiere paint facility that also paints other OEM vehicles and components. They have another facility that will paint any vehicle or component you can imagine. 23 MCVO members were in attendance to participate in the tour which consists of viewing each stage of the paint process from incoming panels, prep, sanding, prime, painting, polishing and shipping out to Connor Avenue where the Viper is assembled. As soon as you arrive in the facility you are taken back by its cleanliness and attention to detail throughout the process of painting the various panels of the Viper. One of the tour highlights was seeing the all new Viper Stryker Purple color that would be offered soon.

PREFIX over the past few years has expanded its services and even entered into offering limited low volume versions of the Dodge Viper. Their first offering was the Medusa, which was a convertible version of the Gen V Viper. They are currently offering a Targa version of the Gen V. PREFIX more recently joined forces with Arrow Racing to come under the PREFIX umbrella of companies and will be offering various high performance upgrades to later GEN Vipers.

### **Jim Bielenda**



MCVO VOA members mark your calendars for the  
next national gathering!



National Viper Event #2 (NVE2)

When: May 11th 2016 - May 14th 2016

Where: New Orleans, LA

Join us for our second national gathering as we party hearty Viper-style in New Orleans. There will be a Mardi Gras party, track time at NOLA Motorsports park, plantation tours, a scenic drive, and yes, some lucky attendee will go home with a new Viper! You do NOT want to miss this event.

Details to come, but mark your calendars now!

