
Lessons to be Learned ***by Patrick Ofenloch***

Recently I had a business trip scheduled to be in the vicinity of Bowling Green, Kentucky. I asked my business colleague whom I would be working with, how far we would be from the Corvette museum? We all work hard and put in many hours, sometimes you need to stop and smell the roses. He scheduled our meeting time so I could visit the museum.

Going to the museum has been my dream for many years. I thought this might be a great opportunity to also drive my Corvette to its birthplace. I know most people probably don't give their cars human qualities or even talk to them, the way I do. But for me this was truly a sentimental journey and a great homecoming for a car that my wife and I love. I felt I owed it to the car.

After departing from a rest stop I hit the edge of a pothole. Next, I heard something scrapping the road. At first I thought it was the exhaust, or maybe even a tire. To my dismay I saw the rear suspension of the car dragging on the road. I wondered if my car was mad at me. Was the car upset at being in the rain or did the car just not want to go home?

As my beloved car limped to the next exit, I pulled into an oil change station. I found the term "Southern Hospitality" really is still alive. The employees were so concerned for me and had me bring the car into one of their bays out of the rain. They made me feel so welcome. A call was made to a local towing company and repair facility. A flat bed was arranged and on it's way.

The car was taken to a shop where the problem was diagnosed. Eventually my car and I were back on our way. I had missed that day's

business meeting but did get into Bowling Green later that evening. The following day we were able to meet with our clients.

The much anticipated and life long dream to visit to the Corvette museum and assembly plant tour was finally complete.

Dan and the employees of "Valvoline Instant Oil Change" were so helpful. They blocked one of three bays on a very busy morning. Dan the owner, spent time talking to me about his Corvettes as well as his trip to the Corvette museum. He shared photographs of when he and his son visited the museum. I thought at that time this would be as close as I could get to visit the museum, given my cars current condition. Some photographs on a computer, and some friendly conversation. I was reassured by one of the employees, "It will be alright, sometimes bad things happen to good people." They generously offered a piece of their own life experiences as well as sodas and lunch. I was treated as if I was a guest in their home. Dan gave me his phone number and told me if you need another car to continue on your trip let me know, you can use mine.

In the pouring rain and lightning Dan helped Mike, (the flat bed operator) load my car onto the flat-bed.

Mike told me of his experiences as a previous Corvette owner. The shop that repaired my Corvette was talented enough to fix the suspension with fabricated in house parts. The passenger side suspension was also at this time

diagnosed with a missing cotter pin. Which was probably what caused the drivers side suspension to fail. I was reassured by Mike, Brian and the owner Jude you will be safe with this repair. You will make it to Bowling Green and back home to Dayton, Ohio. An unnecessary apology was given to me for the repairs taking so much time. The bill was for a tow and ½ hour labor.

You are probably waiting for the moral is to this story. What did I learn from all of this? Why was everyone so kind when they didn't even know me? Was it the fact that I was in a Corvette? Was it the fact that the people I met were Corvette owners? These business owners knew I was from out of town. They had nothing to gain from me as far as a becoming a long-term customer. But still, they were honest, professional, courteous and most of all caring.

I am very humbled and grateful for meeting these honest people. I wonder if I was in their position if I would have extended that amount of concern, helpfulness and hospitality.

This story I felt had to be passed on. Sometimes we don't stop to smell the roses. We sometimes miss seeing how many truly nice, friendly people there are all around us. Many times we only hear about the bad in people. I know if I can help good people who sometimes have bad things happen to them I will take the time to help.

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Lessons to be Learned (con't) by Patrick Ofenloch

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I'm not quite sure how to thank these business people and extend to them my sincere thanks, so I am including their address.

Valvoline Instant Oil Change

Daniel Childress

2000 Declaration Dr.

Independence , Kentucky 895 358-4500

Judes Custom Exhaust

Brain and Mike

11273 Taylor Mill Road

Independence, Kentucky

The other lesson: Take the time to visit the Corvette museum and assembly plant. Before you leave on your adventure to Bowling Green, I would suggest you take a look under your C-4 and see if the cotter pins are all securely in place.

