

Under the Palms In Punta Gorda

By Bob Amos

Many of our car hobby friends back in Maryland have survived a rather light winter, from all the reports that I've received. But the antique car show active car season is in full bloom here in sunny Florida during the winter. Besides the full time residents in the hobby, many folks from up north come south to winter over and bring antique hobby cars along.

This year, I decided to attend and judge at the AACA Southeastern Winter National

Scenic entrance to the show field from the host hotel >>



Meet in Punta Gorda, FL, held February 22nd to 24th. The Peace River Region was the host and Larry Kappauf was the Show Chairman. What a great and successful show the Region put together. There were more than 225 cars on the show field under the palm trees on Saturday. The host hotel was the Great Western adjacent to beautiful Charlotte Harbor.

This was the third Winter National Meet held in Punta Gorda; the others were in 1995 and 2001. I've judged at all three meets, both as a field judge and team captain. This year I judged engines in Class 27G, as assigned by my team captain Earl Beauchamp. To date I've earned 64 judging credits. This is one part of the hobby that I can actively participate in and enjoy, even though I don't have a car anymore.

Punta Gorda is about one hour and 45 minutes south of Tampa down I-75 on the west coast. The town is on the south shore of the Peace River across from Port



1927 Rolls Royce Brewster Bodied Playboy Roadster

Charlotte. It's a beautiful place, but it suffered severe damage during Hurricane Charlie in 2004 and the area is still recovering.

Dottie and I stayed with our Chesapeake Region friends Julie and Ron Siegrist, who have a beautiful winter place in Punta Gorda about ten minutes from the show field. They very graciously hosted us as they did for a prior National Meet. The Siegrists keep cars in Maryland and in Punta Gorda. They have three antique cars in Florida, a 1946

Chevrolet, which won a Senior award in Class 26A, a 1976 Cadillac Eldorado, which won a First Junior in Class 27L, and a 1952 Oldsmobile that is currently undergoing a second complete restoration.

Ron and Jean Mummert, longtime friends of the Siegrist's and owners of a 1955 Oldsmobile, joined us at the Siegrist's home. He is Norman Mummert's brother, whom many CR members

know, especially if they're in the Thunderbird Club. His Olds won a First Junior in class 27A.

On Friday, there was a tour of a local Chevrolet collection of 162 vehicles, which was mostly Corvettes of every year and color, plus a number of other nicely restored Chevrolets. Saturday started with the Judges Breakfast and a Continuing Judging Education seminar. Believe it or not, there were just about an equal number of judges as there were cars in the show. In some classes there were only one or two cars. The meet ended with a very nice Awards Banquet at the hotel.

Other Chesapeake Region members at the Winter Meet included Mary Jane and Lou Fritz. Mary Jane was a judge and Lou worked in judging administration. They drove their motor home to the show. Also, Anne and Tom Kenney attended the show on Saturday, coming down from their vacation in Sarasota.



1909 Sears - Good Looking For a Mail Order Car