

A HISTORY OF THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY STREET RODDERS
BURLINGTON, VERMONT

In the spring of 1981 Harry Rathburn of Ferrisburg, VT called some of his "Brothers of the Wheel" together every once in awhile to talk cars and cruise around a bit. It didn't take too long for him to see that there was a definite interest in street rods among the group and perhaps he had a good nucleus for the establishment of a street rod club! There was unanimous agreement among the 10 or so guys that lived in the greater Burlington, Vermont area and thus another street rod club was formed!

First things first. A name for the club was in order right away. Many names were tossed around but Al Hutchins' suggestion of "Champlain Valley Street Rodders" seemed most fitting since all of the initial members lived within a "short cruise" of Lake Champlain, the large body of water that separates Vermont from New York State.

The small group of rodders didn't hesitate to vote in favor of putting on their first rod run that August. (The height of naiveté??) Despite many obstacles, the first two runs were located at The Moncton Coon Club (backwoods Vermont atmosphere!) The word was out that this was a good run to go to--the third year's run was at the New Haven Rod and Gun Club which saw a record 178 cars attend but Mother Nature played a terrible trick on the attendees and thus was born "The Great Mud Run of 1983". Apparently rodders' memories of dirt and water are good, as the record of 178 cars still stands although there was never a reason that serious not to attend since.

Eight years of successful rod runs followed at a new location, the Lone Pine Campsites in Colchester. The grounds offered excellent camping, swimming, showers and the club offered their kitchen, games, cruises and a live band. A car show on Sunday was added in 1987 with all special interest vehicles invited.

June of 1992 found the rod run in a new location, the Addison County Fairgrounds in New Haven, Jct. just north of Middlebury. Back to the "Vermont country atmosphere" with good camping, a huge pavilion building for headquarters and the band, food by the local Grange and grass drags and a "smoke show". The event was not without embarrassment though as someone went the wrong way on the ice cream run and introduced a dozen nice rods to Vermont country dirt roads! (This wouldn't happen again!)

The annual CVSR Rod Run returned to the Lone Pine Campgrounds for the '94-'96 seasons. The rod run was dropped after the 1996 run due to financial constraints as well as there being other car shows in the area that seemed to be attracting people.

More than 100 members of the club have come and gone with the present membership standing at 22. Our first president, Harry

Rathburn, retired from the club in 1982 and has been succeeded by twelve presidents since then. Ken Bucklin, Bob Brunette, Glenn Turner and Gary Bruening served three years. Roger Kendrew, Mike Perras, and Ev Peyrat served two years. The present President is Larry Tyler and Tim Sargent is Vice President. Secretary is Art Stultz and Treasurer is Bob Brunette.

Art Stultz, our Secretary is also the State Representative to the National Street Rod Association (NSRA) and a member Everett Peyrat, is state NSRA Safety Inspector.

The club has gone to many rod runs and car shows in the New England area as well as attended the Nats East and several NSRA National events as a club.

To raise the ever needed money to put on various events, the club has sold "fleas" at flea markets, had wood raffles (ticket for a cord of firewood-\$1.00) and even constructed several blue tarp tents that were rented. We are very proud to have raised \$3,000 that we presented to the Make A Wish Foundation of Vermont in conjunction with Rod Run '92. The money was given to a young local boy with cancer and his family for the boy's wish of a trip to Walt Disney World in Florida.

The club has operated the Street Rod Repair Shop and the Poker Run at the annual Northeast Street Rod Nationals which is held at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction the last weekend of September each year.

Our meetings are held twice a month in the summertime and once a month in the winter with meetings being held at members' homes. For many winters the meetings were held at The Center for Technology, Essex, Automotive Technology classroom. In addition to the business component, our meetings often feature one of the club members who presents a brief lesson on some aspect of street rod building or modification or perhaps a speaker or guest from outside the club that has something of interest to offer the club. We open the floor to anyone with technical questions regarding how to build a street rod.

The Secretary gets out the club newsletter "The Regulator" once a month. It gives members information on what happened at the last meeting, what will happen at the next, where the meetings will be held, what events in the area may be of interest to the members, etc.

The club is a tax-exempt corporation.

The club members have a dozen nice street rods on the road and several more under construction. Our membership continues to grow and there are more car events than ever to attend so we're going to continue to enjoy our hobby for a long time to come!

Submitted by Art Stultz, Secretary (May 2009)