

BACK TO THE BEACH: A TEN YEAR MILESTONE

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Photography by Jim Martley

What were YOU doing in 2004? Watching Sean Penn earn the Academy Award for Best Actor in *Mystic River*? Listening to Usher sing Billboard's #1



song of the year "Yeah!"? Or maybe you were naming a baby Jacob or Emma, the #1 names for children that year. Well, Ralph Quaglietta and Sandie Bergeron were busy inaugurating an event that has become a much-loved staple of the Corvette community in the Northeast: Back to the Beach!



That's right! Back to the Beach turned ten this year, and just like little Jacob or Emma, it has grown by leaps and bounds in those ten years. (Just FYI, "Jacob" lost out to "Liam" in the 2013 most popular names poll, but "Emma" held her own and is still #1.)

So, let's take a look and see what other changes have happened since June of 2004, when 32 couples gathered in Old Orchard Beach, Maine for the first Back to the Beach. George W. Bush was President, and *Lord of the Rings-Return of the King* took the Oscar for Best Picture. Putting a gallon of gasoline in your 2004 Corvette would have cost you an average of \$2.03, causing waves of indignation! If you had bought the most popular Corvette that year,



your ride would have been Le Mans blue and would have set you back around \$44,535. The median price of a home that year was \$215,700.

If you attended that first Back to the Beach you ate your meals at the Cascades Restaurant and participated

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participated in a small display of your Corvettes on their spacious lawn. Sadly, The Cascades burned down in 2008. Your motel was the East View, the Wagon Wheel or the Blue Point.



Wagon Wheel Motel 2004



You would have had a chance to purchase some first rate Corvette clothing from Galli Shirts and Sports Apparel, who have been at every Back to the Beach, including the 10th anniversary in June of 2013.

By contrast, June of 2013 saw a capacity crowd of 130 couples squeeze into the banquet room and overflow into the dining rooms at the Captain's Galley, "meeting central" for the last nine years. The friendly service and the great food have been a large part of the weekend's continued success.



Perhaps you drove your 2013 Corvette into the parking lot for the Saturday morning display. If you bought the most popular color, your car is white, and you probably paid right around \$49,600 for it, and filling the tank cost you about \$3.54 per gallon. (The indignation remains!) The cost of the Corvette went up, but the cost of a

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house went down: median price in June of 2013: \$208,000. (A tip of the hat to Paul Pearson for the Corvette statistics!)

The President is Barack Obama, the Oscar for Best Movie went to “Argo”, and Daniel Day-Lewis earned his Academy Award for a stunning portrait of “Lincoln.” If you listen to pop music you’ll know that the #1 tune in June 2013 was “Can’t Hold Us” by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis.



Those 260 people who brought their gorgeous rides for the welcoming folks of Old Orchard Beach to check out checked themselves in to the Atlantis, the Executive, the Sea Drift, the Sandpiper or the Windsong motels, all different from the 2004 locations.



Some things, though, didn’t change. It rains in Maine. In June. On the weekends. On OUR weekend! On our CORVETTES! Welcome to New England weather.

Another constant is the fine photography of Jim Martley, who has recorded every Back to the Beach since the first one, and whose great photos grace the Back to the Beach website, and this article! Thanks, Jim...keep up the wonderful work! Want to see all his Corvette work? Take a look at the website set up and maintained by the equally wonderful work of webmasters, Bob and Odie Verrier at www.back2thebeach.net



Wonderful work: that's another thing that stays the same. Ralph and Sandie work all year long to make a terrific weekend for us. All of our fun is based on their tireless planning and their ability to handle the dozens of problems, large and small, that inevitably arise when setting up a multi-day, multi-lodging, multi-meal event for 260 people! The wonder is not that they succeed, but that they keep coming back for more and doing it again, year after year.

And that's the major thing that has not changed in the ten years that Back to the Beach has graced the Corvette community's calendar: the generosity of Ralph Quaglietta and Sandie Bergeron, who give so much of their time and energy to putting together a four-day event that not only begins the Corvette season, but for many people is also its best. They are special people, and deserve a very special thanks!

Plan your trip "Back To The Beach" June 6-8th, 2014



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