Chuck Clemans – a true friend – past member of TC

We've all lost a very special friend, a member of Team Continental in the 60's, and ICSCC President 70-71. Many know Chuck for his contribution to the community, his work in support and fundraising, his leadership and significant role at Clackamas Community College, a family man, or for his love of the outdoors and sports. Here are a few stories about the latter.

We met in 1968. Chuck was very involved in sports car racing at that time, and he was my race driving instructor. Chuck had a 1960 Porsche 356 Roadster, and wanted to show off his driving skills during one of the sessions at PIR. The only problem was that he had broken his right ankle skiing and was in a cast. That didn't stop him. We got in the car, and he proceeded to turn some very fast laps, with one very busy left foot and the other one propped up on the tunnel. He was always fast. Chuck just happened to know of a Porsche like his that was for sale so we became good racing buddies with the twin cars. We ran the same class for a year, but the only way I could beat him was to move up to the next engine size, and to the next class. Over the years, we had different cars and were successful doing some co-driving at endurance races here and in Canada. I'm still trying to figure out why we were always sharing my car and wearing it out, while his stayed home in his garage. So, he was not only faster, but smarter too!

As time went on, Chuck and Nancy moved on to boating, and of course more skiing. We later moved to boating as well - both big boats, but his boat is faster. When we were running past Campbell River a couple of years ago, we got his Commander cruiser – powered by special ordered twin turbo-charged Volvos – up to 33 knots. He was always faster, but at least this time we were using his equipment.

That was a fishing trip to be remembered forever. Chuck and Nancy were doing a tag-team summer with family and friends in Alaska and Canada, and it was our turn to take a 10-day leg together. We met in Ketchikan, and the two of us fished all the way down the Inside Passage, crossed over to Vancouver Island, the San Juans, and eventually down to Olympia. The fishing was fantastic. Chuck's boat has a huge freezer, which we were doing a good job of filling. Each time we caught another fish that we couldn't eat, Chuck would look in the freezer and decide what we didn't need. One day he'd throw out the crab bait, next day the ice jugs for the other cooler, everything gone but the salmon. We had to quit fishing after Port Hardy - freezer full. What a relief it was to see Chuck's son Dean at the dock at the trip's end - he carried the fish lockers to the car.

Chuck has always been an avid and good skier - I'm not. But we did ski together at times, with Chuck ripping down the hills, and me trying to at least keep him in sight. On one run, he blasted down a mogul run and I followed, crashing near the bottom. He said "are you OK?" I said I was fine, then he said "one of your sunglass lenses is missing, and you're bleeding", no I'm fine. A few weeks ago, we talked about getting up on the slopes later this winter. I was sure it wouldn't be black diamond this time – but he probably still would have outrun me.

How lucky we all have been.

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