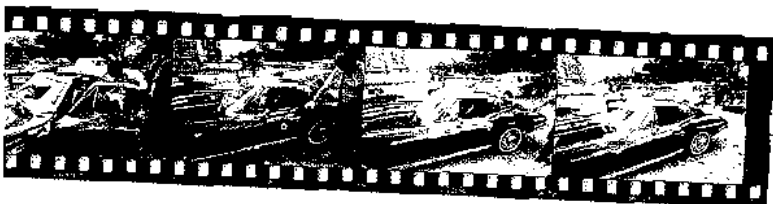


BY TONY HOSSAIN



## BARRY'S RIDE



**POLITICIANS CRAVE POWER.** No surprise there. And that may explain why — over the years — there have been more than a few Corvette enthusiasts in the halls of Congress.

It's a bipartisan thing, too. Delaware's Senator Joe Biden has treasured his Sting Ray convertible since the day he got it in 1967. Before enlisting in the Navy, Senator John McCain was a Corvette owner. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and former Secretary of State Colin Powell are both Corvette guys. But did you know Barry Goldwater's trademark ride was a Tuxedo Black Corvette split-window coupe he purchased new in 1963?

Goldwater, the conservative Republican five-term senator from Arizona, was highly regarded on both sides of the aisle. He was looking forward to running against his good friend President John F. Kennedy in the 1964 presidential election, and they had actually discussed campaigning together, using Air Force One for a jet-age whistle-stop tour.

Those dreams died on November 22, 1963.

Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson ascended to the presidency and trounced Goldwater in the 1964 election.

But Senator Goldwater's black Sting Ray remained a common sight around Washington, D.C. The split-window was fitted out with enough gauges and gadgets to make it look like the Faith 7. *Time Magazine* in a contemporary account, Goldwater, a huge shortwave radio fan, had the Corvette equipped with state-of-the-art ham radio equipment. His vanity Arizona license plate carried his call letters, "K7UGA."

And the Sting Ray was cool — as in factory air conditioned. But in '63, an air conditioned Corvette was a real rarity. It was the first year for the \$422 option, and it reached production very late in the model year. Of a record 21,513 Corvettes built in 1963, just 278 had factory air.

Let the record show that Senator Barry Goldwater loved cars. Before the Vette, he owned a rare 1956 Continental Mark II, and afterward, a 1966 AMX.

Goldwater passed away in 1998 at age 89, at his Paradise Valley, Ariz., home. While the status of his 1963 Sting Ray is not known, it certainly would be a fascinating collectible today. ■

Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater was famous in Washington for his black '63 split-window with ham radio.