

GEARHEAD GAZZETTE



"IT'S ALL THE *GEARHEAD* NEWS YOU CAN USE"

VOL No. 9

DECEMBER 2009

ISSUE No. 12

EDITOR: JIM BRANDAU PUBLISHED: WHENEVER I CAN DO IT OR ONCE A MONTH MOST OF THE TIME

ROAD RUMBLINGS...

GREETING's CHRISTMAS SHOPPER's

It is that time of year again...Where did the whole year go??!!
It sure flew by if you ask me. Seems like just last week I started to list all the Cruise Nites and shows and BAM...they're over and done for 2009. I hope your Christmas shopping is going well..HA!!

We have an action packed issue for the last one of 2009. You have on your PC or in your hand if you printed it, issue # 12 for 2009. LOTS of GEARHEAD stuff to go see and do even though the weather has cooled down.

It is the indoor car show season, and there are more than a couple that are only a couple of hours away. Couple of the Biggie's are listed too, like the Grand National Roadster Show in LA with the award for Americas Most Beautiful Roadster and the Detroit AutoRama with the Ridler Award. I have said it before and I will say it again, if you have not been to these 2 shows, you owe it to yourself to go see them. They are just too cool.

Around the Middle Tennessee area, we will kick off the indoor season with the 2010 version of the "FROSTY WHEELS" show. John McGee and his team will be setting up the show for all of you to check out the weekend of Jan 8-10 at the Williamson County AgExpo center in Franklin Tn.

This month we have 2 articles that were sent in to us by Brian "milk carton kid" Baker, and Gary "GW" Falls. They both were at SEMA this year for the whole week and took in all the action and festivities that is SEMA. Gary wrote about being a "1st Timer" at SEMA and how you see everything from state of the art equipment to the ultimate in low tech. Doesn't mean its bad...IT's SEMA.

Brian has a unique opportunity after SEMA was over to participate in some high speed fun. As CEO of GATEWAY MUSTANG's, he got to put one of their recent builds thru its paces after a couple of training laps. He has captured the excitement in a great article that I know you will enjoy.

Thanks to Brian & Gary both for taking the time to write and share with us their experiences. If you want to submit an article, feel free to send it in with pictures if you have them and we'll share it with all the other GEARHEADS.

I want to take a minute to recognize Tom Akers of the Bellevue Cruiser's. Tom and his team did a great job hosting 80 plus cars and car owners at the 2009 version of the KRIS KRINGLE INVITATIONAL CAR SHOW. Tom makes it interesting as each year there are no repeat vehicles shown from the previous year. The variety is great and with all the different cars, you never know what you will see. Head over to the "COOL HAPPENING IN YOUR GARAGE" Section of this issue and hit the link that will take you to see LOTS of pictures of this year's show and what you missed if you didn't come out..

As I said in last months issue, I was going to take all the cruise nite listings down, unless I heard from you folks that a certain one or 2 were going to continue on during winter. Now as soon as you get the 2010 schedule for your cruise nites set, send us the info so we can get it listed for you.

If you hear of a show or event that you think the GEARHEADS would enjoy in 2010, send it to us so we can share it out too.

While you are celebrating this Christmas Season, please keep our Gearhead Buddy Dan Lucas in your thoughts and prayer. Dan and his wife Marilyn recently lost their 24 year old daughter, Ashley to H1N1.

Some Good news for you Camaro Fanatics. If your desire is to own a new style Camaro (2010) but want a convertible, you will be able to buy it. GM will start building them in 2011 as a 2012 model. I saw a Black SS Convert....Looks Good!!!

For all our Corvette friends, do you wish GM would bring back the Split Rear Window styling like 1963 again. Guess what?? Looks that is one design cue that GM will be using on the next generation Vette's.

It's the end of the year...again, and as I look out my Editors office window from the top floor on a chilly day, I think how truly lucky and blessed we all are. While we sometimes get focused on one issue that just makes us mad as hell, when you look at the big picture, for most of us things aint too bad. Keep all the military folks in your thoughts and prayers each day. It's especially hard to be away from home at this time of year. They are out there putting their lives on the line for all of us. Say thanks when you see them. Please don't drink and drive this Holiday Season or for that matter anytime. Please buckle up and make sure everyone in your car is buckled up.

For me, it is MERRY CHRISTMAS!! . I don't have a "HOLIDAY TREE" or go "HOLIDAY SHOPPING". I do think a Manger scene in a person front yard this time of year is nice to see. They are CHRISTMAS CAROLS, not holiday songs. If this offends anyone, oh well!! It's a short line to leave this great country...don't let the door hit ya in the Butt on the way out.

MERRY CHRISTMAS to all of you!!!

Until next issue... "FLOOR IT AND HANG ON!!!!" We're gonna do it again in 2010!!

Jimmy B.

As always, if you want the **GAZZETTE** direct instead of forwarded 2nd hand, let us know. All you need to do is send me an email at gearheadgazzette@aol.com. You can also always check out the current issue of the **GAZZETTE** on line at www.gearheadgazzette.com

"Remember...we're here for a good time...not a long time...Enjoy the Ride".

"CRUISE NITE FUN" FOR 2010

FOR ALL OF THE CLUBS & CRUISE NITE HOSTS, OR IF YOU KNOW OF A CRUISE NIGHT HAPPENING IN **2010**, BE IT WEEKLY OR MONTHLY, SEND ME THE INFO. SEND THE COMPLETE INFO TO ME AT gearheadgazette@aol.com

TUESDAY NITE CRUISIN':

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WEDNESDAY NITE CRUISIN':

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FRIDAY NITE CRUISIN': THESE CRUISES ARE HELD EVERY FRIDAY NITE:

•

1ST FRIDAY NITE OF THE MONTH CRUISIN':

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SATURDAY NITE CRUISIN': THESE CRUISES ARE HELD EVERY SATURDAY NITE

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1ST SATURDAY NITE OF THE MONTH CRUISIN':

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2ND SATURDAY NITE OF THE MONTH CRUISIN':

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3RD SATURDAY NITE OF THE MONTH CRUISIN':

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4th SATURDAY NITE OF THE MONTH CRUISIN':

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2009 SHOW INFO AT A GLANCE

- **DECEMBER: LOOKS LIKE NOTHING BUT CHRISTMAS SHOPPING THIS MONTH!!!**

2010 SHOW INFO AT A GLANCE

- *JAN 8 & 9: NASHVILLE TN: SPRINT SOUND & SPEED EVENT.*
- *JAN 8-10: FRANKLIN TN: 11TH ANNUAL FROSTY WHEELS CAR SHOW.*
- *JAN 8-10: CHATTANOOGA TN: 42ND ANNUAL O'REILLY AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS CAR SHOW*
- *JAN 8-10: CINCINNATI OH: 50TH ANNUAL KOI AUTO PARTS CAVALCADE OF CUSTOMS*
- *JAN 29 -31: ATLANTA GA: 35TH ANNUAL O'REILLYS AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS*
- *JAN 29-31: L. A CALIF: 61ST ANNUAL GRAND NATIONAL ROADSTER SHOW.*
- *FEB 7: NASHVILLE TN: 22ND ANNUAL NASHVILLE AUTOMOTIVE SWAP MEET - STONES RIVER AACA*
- *FEB 12-14: BIRMINGHAM AL.: 39TH ANNUAL O'REILLYS AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS SHOW*
- *FEB 19-21: LOUISVILLE KY: 48TH ANNUAL CARL CASPER CHAMPIONSHIP CUSTOM AUTO SHOW*
- *FEB 26-28: DETROIT MI: 58TH ANNUAL OREILLY AUTOPARTS AUTORAMA*
- *MAY 21-23: NASHVILLE TN: 5TH ANNUAL NASHVILLE NATIONALS GOODGUYS SHOW*
- *JUNE 5-11: MID-AMERICA: 2010 HOT ROD POWER TOUR*
- *JUNE 11-13: INDIANAPOLIS IN: 22ND GOODGUYS HOT ROD NATIONALS*
- *JULY 9-11: COLUMBUS OH: 13TH GOODGUYS PPG NATIONALS - "THE BIG ONE"*
- *JULY 16-18: BOWLING GREEN KY: NATIONAL CORVETTE HOMECOMING*
- *AUG 27-29: PLEASANTON CA: 24TH WEST COAST NATIONALS*
- *SEPT 25-26: LEBANON TN: 21ST ANNUAL MUSIC CITY MOPAR CLUB SHOW*
- *OCT 15-17: BOWLING GREEN KY: 3RD NOSTALGIA NATIONALS*

"WAY COOL STUFF TO DO".

THE NEW STUFF IS LISTED IN ITALIC'S

DECEMBER 2009:

- CHRISTMAS SHOPPING FOR ALL THE GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS

JANUARY 2010:

- *JAN 8 & 9: NASHVILLE TN: SPRINT SOUND & SPEED EVENT. BEING HELD AT THE NASHVILLE AUDITORIUM. FAN AUCTION, jam-packed day of driver and artist autograph sessions, legends storytelling hour, Q&A with the stars of country music and NASCAR, as well as sponsor displays and 2010 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series show cars! Driver appearances include Dale Earnhardt Jr., Tony Stewart, Kasey Kahne, Michael Waltrip, Denny Hamlin, Reed Sorenson, Aric Almirola, David Stremme AND MORE! FOR MORE INFO GO TO www.soundandspeed.org*
- *JAN 8-10: FRANKLIN TN: 11TH ANNUAL FROSTY WHEELS CAR SHOW. TO BE HELD AGAIN THIS YEAR AT THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY AgExpo CENTER LOCATED RIGHT OFF I-65. THERE WILL BE COOL CARS, VENDORS AND A CAR CORRAL. FOR INFO ON SHOWING YOUR RIDE OR A VENDOR SLOT CONTACT JOHN McGee AT classven@aol.com .*
- *JAN 8-10: CHATTANOOGA TN: 42ND ANNUAL O'REILLY AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS CAR SHOW. BEING HELD AT THE CHATTANOOGA CONVENTION CENTER. FOR MORE INFO OR TO SHOW YOUR CAR CALL ERIC MILLIANS AT 706-861-4555 OR e-mail milliaeno@aol.com*
- *JAN 8-10: CINCINNATI OH: 50TH ANNUAL KOI AUTO PARTS CAVALCADE OF CUSTOMS. BEING HELD AT THE DUKE ENERGY CENTER. FOR MORE INFO OR TO ENTER YOUR CAR CALL GREG McDANIEL @ 859-282-0624 OR EMAIL TO mcdaniel@worldofwheels.com .*
- *JAN 29 -31: ATLANTA GA: 35TH ANNUAL O'REILLYS AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS. BEING HELD AT THE GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS. FOR MORE INFO RO TO ENTER YOUR CAR CALL CHAS SYDNEY @ 770-270-0175 OR EMAIL TO Sydney@worldofwheels.com*
- *JAN 29-31: L. A CALIF: 61ST ANNUAL GRAND NATIONAL ROADSTER SHOW (FORMERLY THE OAKLAND ROADSTER SHOW). Over 500 show vehicles will compete for awards inside all of the Fairplex buildings. Another 400-800 vehicles will join the event Saturday & Sunday for the GNRS Drive In parked in between the buildings and walkways. THIS IS IT!!! THE GRAND DADDY OF ALL CAR SHOWS!! IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN YOU OWE YOURSELF TO GO SEE THIS ONE. FOR MORE INFO GO TO www.rodshows.com .*

FEBRUARY 2010:

- *FEB 12-14: BIRMINGHAM AL.: 39TH ANNUAL O'REILLYS AUTO PARTS WORLD OF WHEELS SHOW. BEING HELD AT THE BIRMINGHAM-JEFFERSON CONVENTION COMPLEX. FOR MORE INFO OR TO SHOW YOUR CAR CONTACT SONNY McLEAN @ 205-655-4950*
- *FEB 19-21: LOUISVILLE KY: 48TH ANNUAL CARL CASPER CHAMPIONSHIP CUSTOM AUTO SHOW. BEING HELD AT THE KENTUCKY EXPO CENTER. FOR MORE INFO OR TO ENTER YOUR CAR CALL RON RAWLINS @ 502-689-2034 OR E-MAIL TO showcars@bellsouth.net .*
- *FEB 26-28: DETROIT MI: 58TH ANNUAL OREILLY AUTOPARTS AUTORAMA PRESENTED BY MEGUIARS. BEING HELD AT THE COBO CENTER. FOR MORE INFO OR TO SHOW YOUR CAR CALL 586-771-7110 OR E-MAIL TO michhotrod@aol.com. THIS IS ONE OF THE BIG SHOWS THAT YOU READ ABOUT ALL THE TIME! MAKE IT A POINT TO SEE IT AT LAST ONCE!!! HOT RODS & THREADS FULL SERVICE HOT ROD SHOP WILL BE DEBUTING AN ALL NEW RIDE THIS YEAR. WHY NOT HEAD TO THIS ONE AND HEVE SOME FUN!!*
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COOL STUFF YOU MIGHT WANT, NEED OR SWAP FOR

Send Ad Info to gearheadgazzette@aol.com

ADS RUN FOR 2 MONTHS

FOR SALE: 1966 Pontiac 326 Engine. Motor is complete with Intake, carb, Air Cleaner, oil pan, valve covers, etc. The motor was pulled a 1966 LeMans in Feb 2009. Engine was running fine when pulled. Reason for pulling motor was to install bigger motor in car. \$600.00 o.b.o. Call Dan at 615-522-1696 (10/09)

FOR SALE: BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY. MOBILE HAWAIIAN SHAVED ICE TRUCK. SELF CONTAINED AND READY TO MAKE \$\$\$ TODAY. ASKING \$6000.00 O.B.O. FOR MORE INFO CALL 931-309-9040. (10/09)



WANTED: LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO DO LOUVER WORK FOR ME. IF YOU DO THEM OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT SNRFSC@aol.com. (10/09)

WANTED: NEED A 37 FORD LEFT FRONT FENDER. COULD ALSO USE THE LEFT & RIGHT INNER FENDER PANELS AND A LEFT REAR FENDER. MAIN PART NEEDED IS LEFT FRONT FENDER. CALL TED AT 615-754-7632 OR CELL 615-364-3360. (11/09)

SHOW OPPORTUNITY: During the Midnight Rodders Fall Color Cruise They stopped for gas and a restroom break at the Exxon Tiger Mart on the corner of highway 50 and 431 in Lewisburg. The manager sent them an e-mail saying how much they loved the cars and invited them to do a car show at their location next year, with the EXXON Tiger Mart providing the trophies and prizes. The Midnight Rodders don't put on car shows, so they are passing on the opportunity. If any of you Gearheads know someone around the Lewisburg area interested in doing a small one day show at their store (lots of room) contact Kathey Barge. Her e-mail is pkbarge@hotmail.com Thanks to Marty Crain of the Midnight Rodders for passing this along. (12/09)

FOR SALE: As much as I hate to send this email I have to let one of my babies go. For sale is my 1974 Plymouth Duster since this is my most recent purchase it will be the first to go, and I wanted to make it available to ya'll first. Here are the details..... It has a running 225 slant 6 with a 3 speed 904 automatic transmission, with a 7 1/4 rear end with highway gears in it. It is the classic 70's olive green, with green interior. I was able to salvage the original broadcast sheet from under the back seat and it is almost completely in tact, and is framed for the new owner. All receipts of all purchases on this car are also available. I have recently repaired the floor pans and put in brand new black molded carpet from ACC down in Anniston, AL. For those of you who know Mopars this has the typical A-body rust on the bottom of the rear quarter panels, nothing serious, the car also has some rust around the top of windshield due to a vinyl top at some point in its life. The body is extremely straight with just a couple of dings. I will list the new parts I have either put on this car or that will go with it below, I will also list what the car will need.

New Items

Tires, Front and Rear Shocks, Carpet, Carb has been rebuilt, but would recommend a new one, Back Quarter Window Glass (Comes with car not installed) OEM Mopar Slant 6 plug wires, OEM Duster Emblems with correct white paint, OEM Taillight Bezel to repair broken one, Brand new waterproof custom fit car cover.

Car will need

Dash and cluster wiring harness, Engine wiring harness, Interior Paint and cosmetic.

If you are interested or know someone that is please pass this information along, you can email me or give me a call at 256-466-3443. I am asking \$1500. Well I only had one pic and I have done alot of work since this was taken, all the surface rust is gone and it has been primed and had a coat of color put on it.

Thanks,
Justin Larsen



WANTED: Primarily interested in a '55 2 dr. post driver. I would rather have a complete original with some modifications (engine, trans., rearend, wheels, etc.) or an almost complete. David M. Edwards
First Vice President
First Farmers & Merchants Bank
931-840-3867
Fax 931-490-5920
Email Address: david.edwards@fandmbank.com (12/09)

FOR SALE: The truck is a 1997 Chevrolet , Solid White, blue interior, V-6, 5 speed, with 23,000 miles on a new crate motor, 116,000 miles on the truck. Regular short bed with liner. New hydraulic clutch slave cylinder and throw out bearing. Belonged to my son-in-law who was the second owner. Power steering, brakes, air, no cruise or electric windows. A good tight truck. Never been wrecked. Priced at \$4275.00
Chuck Massey, 615-895-4535
chuckisthename@bellsouth.net



(12/09)



COOL HAPPENINGS IN YOUR GARAGES...

SEND THE PICTURES AND INFO ON YOUR RIDE OR YOUR FRIENDS RIDE AND WE'LL SHOW IT OFF RIGHT HERE!!

We have a lot "COOL STUFF" sent in this month to share with you GEARHEADS, so check it all out!

> Here is a link, (you will have to type it in your browser address line) that will take you to the 2010 KRIS KRINGLE Car Show Pictures. Enjoy!!

<http://www.ecsmagazine.com/Shows/2009/kriskringle09/index.html>

> Here is a brief piece of the magazine article on Brian Baker's "TOO COOL" Torino!! Way to go Brian!!! Looking Good!!!!

The Long Love Affair

You can take the boy out of the car but you can't get the car of his head



Text by Brian Baker ■ Photography by Micah Nehring

Early in 1979, I had just sold the 1969 VW Beetle my parents had literally dragged home and given me for my 15th birthday a year and a half earlier. I was proud that I had taken this "present," got it running, fixed it up, drove it for a year and a half, and then sold it making a handsome profit. Sixteen, with cash in hand, and an appreciation for Fords, my search began.

Living in South Florida in the late seventies, I was exposed daily to some great cars. I had been lucky enough to work for a company whose owners were serious car guys. They let me polish their "beets", a 1956, '63, and '67 Corvette (the '67 was a 427/450hp four-speed), a '73 Pantera and finally a brand new Lamborghini Countach! At fifteen I had driven not only the '63 and '67 'Vettes, but the Pantera! I didn't get to drive the Lambo but I did ride in it many times. Needless to say, this influence, heaped on top of my already unhealthy love of cars, was not what my parents wanted for a sixteen year old. So, when I went looking for a car, I knew what I wanted but it did not match up very well with what my parents wanted for me. Fortunately for me, it was my hard-earned money that was being put up and I wanted a Mustang!

Cruising the local car lots, I ran across this great looking white fastback with just 43K miles on the clock. It was a Torino GT, not a Mustang. Same Mustang fastback shape, all the right options and BONUS...It was bigger than a Mustang. All the better to haul my three little sisters around (I convinced my parents). A test drive, a short haggle with the dealer, and I drove it home. I was in love.

All through high school I made a lot of great memories in that car: Saturday night street racing (yeah, I know, it was wrong), the drive-ins, the weekend trips to wherever when we could find the gas money to get there. I had to work three jobs to keep gas in it and buy tires. Back in those days, you just didn't know what you didn't know, ya know! I remember swapping the engine one weekend because I misdiagnosed a bad starter as my engine being seized. Needless to

> John McMurtrie sent in some cool shots of his 71 Dodge Dart and some history on his toy. Thanks for sharing it with us John!!

Here's my 1971 Dodge Dart GT I found on eBay in June, 2006, and purchased from a gentleman in Texas who had been diagnosed with inoperable cancer.

His family did not want the car and he had a friend list it for him on eBay, where I subsequently found it. About a month after I bought the Dart the previous owner passed away from the cancer.

The reason I wanted this car was because it was as close as I could find to the one I drove to high school in 1974. My parents owned a 1970 Dodge Dart Swinger, pictured in the fourth attached photo with our family 1965 Chrysler New Yorker. Can you tell we are Mopar People?

The Dart GT is one of 1,255 made that year, and has a fender tag "A65" code designating it as such. It has bucket seats, center console automatic, 340 ci engine with a Holley 650 4bbl carb on top of an Edelbrock Performance intake manifold. My plans are to rest-mod it, by keeping the original look but improve the handling and performance with modern components.

John S. McMurtrie



WHATS IN YOUR GARAGE??? Send us some pics and info (gearheadgazette@aol.com) and let everyone know what kind of cool ride you are building or tooling around in everyday.

Tire Pressure at 140

By

Brian Baker

Rolling out of bed at 4:30 after a week of 20 hour days, miles of walking and countless meetings at SEMA, is really hard. I think the only reason I could drag myself out the door was the rush of thinking about what we were about to participate in on this beautiful day in southern Nevada in November; The Optima Batteries Ultimate Street Car Invitational at Spring Mountain Park in Parhump, Nevada. Have you ever seen the sunrise over the desert? Add this to your bucket list.

The track opened at 6:30 for the 52 participants, haulers, chase cars and spectators. Nothing like the smell of 114 octane early in the am to get you moving. After a tech inspection, each participant is challenged in four areas: Styling, Road course, Fast Autocross and 0-60-0 Speed Stop challenge. The rules this year were tight. The styling was judged by renowned car stylist Murray Pfaff. The 0-60-0 Speed Stop Challenge was exactly what it sounds like. Each car is timed in a straight line using a G-tech windshield mounted wonder tool. You get three runs; when the red light on the G-tech illuminates indicating you have reached 60mph, hit the brakes. The autocross was a really fast course that included room to drift if you dare including a circular finish line! The circular finish line was a very small diameter turn- about that you must exit after doing a tire smoking 360. Three runs, no practice. Finally, the 2.2 mile, very technical (ask me how I know) road course. The field of cars were broken up so multiple events happened simultaneously. Remember I said the rules were tight? If you put up any dust on the road course with your tires (remember this is the desert) at the edge of the track, you instantly get a 3 minute lap time! Cars were given 10 minutes at about 9:30 to make a couple 60 mph laps for practice. The road course competition consisted of one warm up lap, three timed laps and one cool down lap. No pressure here for a bunch of mostly amateurs competing. For exhibition, Paul Tracey was there driving a new specially prepared Camaro and Tanner Foust was driving the Magnaflow Mustang designed by Foose that you may have seen on MuscleCar TV recently. But with the exception of 2 semi pro and one ex-pro drivers, it was all amateurs. During one of the early morning timed runs, David Frieberger, editor of Hot Rod magazine earned the nickname "Cupcake" by wadding up the new Factory Five 32 coupe you've seen them building in Hot Rod over the last few months. They needed a flatbed for that one. It delayed things an hour. It's a very technical track, his misfortune was proof. My palms are starting to sweat now. Our Gateway team has spent the last few months designing and manufacturing a new line of suspension components for vintage Fords. 3 link rears, coil over strut front suspensions, steering racks, braking etc. This was the first time out for our 68 Mustang with "hot off the CNC machine" prototype spindles and coil over struts, Baer brakes, Eibach springs and a new rear sway bar set up. Not to mention, I had never driven our car at speed. So 10 minutes to practice on a new track, in a new car and prototype suspension components ...before representing the team while being filmed for Speed TV, was nerve racking for an amateur like me. No pressure.

Our team at Gateway has the good fortune of some really terrific relationships with our vendor partners like Mothers waxes and polishes. It just so happens that Jim Holloway (one of the owners of Mothers) is driving the chase car complete with video camera ...all day. I begged for a ride in his factory fresh, unmodified ZR1. It still has that new leather smell. Nice.

At the starting line, I get instructions from Bud Bruttzman's production crew on how and when to turn the in-car camera on and off. It's my first time in a ZR1. She starts gently singing to me as we head off the starting line. We are chasing Corpala. A 63 Impala built on Vette suspension components and power. During our warm up lap Jim explains that he is a semi-pro driver with a Mazda ride and thousands of miles behind the wheel...at Parhump alone. The ZR1 has 6700 miles on it...all at Parhump. This could be fun. Using my watch I time the first couple laps behind the Corpalla at 2:20 and 2:15. Good times for an amateur I am told. "So Jim," I ask (hollering through our helmets)" what's a good lap time on this course?" "1:50 or so is really good with some seat time" he informs me. "What about you and the ZR1?" I ask. Very humbly he replies, "With good tires, I can do low 1:30's in the ZR1." "Holy Crap!" I think, because following the Corpala seems fast. Corpalla has finished now, we pull back to the starting grid. Jim wants to wait for the car that is on the track on its warm up lap to come by. It's a car I have not heard of but everyone seems to know all about it. It's driven by a GM engineer and (I am told) a Nuremburg Ring record holder and designer of some of the C6 elements. It's a yellow 69 Camaro called "Jackass". Jim knows Mark Stielow pretty well apparently. The Camaro flies by on the front straight. Jim puts the hammer down. Jackass has already pushed out of sight into turn 2 of the 10 turn course. Holy Crap! Comes to mind again as Jim hits turn one and the helmet bag from the back of the car hits my helmet and distracts Jim for a split second.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are now in the marbles at about 100 and in a frantic 4 wheel drift. Jim never flinches. Down shift, tap the brakes, set the front end, rotate left into turn 2. We're all gathered up now. Traction control is in "sport" mode. The street Michelin's are starting to howl at us. Turn 2 is a double apex with a long second exit. Barrump. Great, he's using the rumble strips now. I can see Jackass again. I've managed to get the helmet bag under my left foot and stand on it. No more distractions. Jim's line is perfect (not that I would know mind you, but we are hauling the mail for sure). A couple more turns, a short straight and I can now read the tag on Jackass. I have never seen a 69 Camaro run like this. Man, that guy can drive! 1850 Foot back stretch, I glance at the speedo as it rapidly passes 140. Downshift, set the front end, hard right, we're now on Jackass's beautiful chrome bumper. That thing sounds good. Two more quick left rights and we're crossing the start finish heading to where "Cupcake" waddled up the 32 this morning. I hit my stopwatch as we cross the start finish. Into turn one, full four wheel drift. I love that feeling. Jim is really driving now. He sets the front end for turn 2 and we have another distraction. The car cover he was also storing in the back is now beating us both in the helmet. Jim goes deep into turn 2 and hoses up the double apex but still manages to come out on top of Jackass. I now have to let go of the seat bracket I've been holding on to with my left arm so I can keep the cover in the back where it belongs. It's now that I see the real wisdom in Jim's line. It's a little different than Jackass but it works really well and the ZR1 is not even working hard yet. We cross the start finish. I hit the stop watch. As near as I can tell in all the commotion, we just did a 1:50 lap. I tell myself to study his line. I'll need this later when it's our turn. Jackass has picked up the pace it would appear. Jim's hitting all his marks and Jackass is getting away. Jim starts pushing the buttons on the dash scrolling through the display on the speedo. Oh, I see. He just turned off the traction control between turns three and four. That yellow picture of a tire cross section is glaring at us now from the middle of the speedo indicating traction control is off. This should be interesting. We start gaining on the Camaro. That's why he turned off the traction control, now Jim's in complete control. Cross the finish line, last lap, hit my stop watch. This is a beautiful experience for a car guy. I'm in love with this ZR1. Now Jim starts using the rest of the track while we are all tucked up behind the 69. These will be great camera shots. Turn 8, Jim starts screwing with the dash again. Now what's he doing? I see...checking the tire pressure of all things. We're on the back stretch passing 140 mph again. Jim casually informs me the tires have gained 5 psi since we turned off the traction control. We hit the finish line in what feels like a really fast lap. Hit the stop watch before we do the cool down lap (yea right!). It looks like a 1:48 lap to me as I enjoy the "cool down" lap. Jim pulls back into the pits. The brakes aren't even warm yet on the ZR1.

The Challenge drivers are limited to the builders /owners of each car to keep teams from hiring pro's like Jim to spank the rest of us. For our team, that is Jason, Lonny and myself. So we divide up the driving. Jason did an awesome job on the Autocross posting a 45 second pass, as I recall. You would have thought Lonny was a pro bracket racer with his 8.6 time in all three runs in 0-60-0 Speed Stop Challenge. I suppose it helps that Jason and Lonny used to race monster trucks. Jason drove Grave Digger and Lonny drove Bigfoot for several years before they started Gateway. Both of them are talented drivers for sure. Since I have the most road track experience, I get to drive the big course. No pressure.

It was a long afternoon waiting for my turn. A ventilated Rat in a 72 Camaro, transmission pieces from an Infinity and lots of desert dust on several cars that went exploring off track made for a long day. I hate waiting. I don't know how many times I studied the course lines on the paper in my pocket. "It's not helping" I think to myself. Bud's camera crew sticks a camera in my face on the starting line. I can hardly hear them over the idle of our car and the radio that is plugged into both ears. I think he asked me how we're going to do. All I can think to say is what's on my mind. "We're just going to try not to wad it up". Now I love a challenge and I can typically operate well in stressful conditions, but now I know I am nervous, my voice sounded two octaves high. I don't want to hurt our \$150k development car but I need to score well to carry the flag for the team. Time to go. I hit it hard, spinning well through second. Let's heat those tires up. "Try to hit Jim's lines on the practice lap but make it snappy." I tell myself. I realize how crappy I am doing. The team is encouraging me on the radio and I see that red ZR1 in the mirror. Jason is riding shotgun. No pressure. Turn 10, front straight, build some speed, get ahead of the clock. Crap, I can't seem to find 3rd gear. Thanks Autometer for the rev limiter! There it is, third gear, no time for fourth. I'm near 100, coming into turn one. I hit the radio button...I hope no one but the team was listening to what I just said, it was not PC - I'm not happy with myself. Now I proceed to hose-up turn 2, I didn't set the front end well enough, the car didn't rotate. It's pushing. Let up, then hammer it, we're in second. That's more like it, rear wheel steering courtesy of Roush. Thanks Jack. Here come those rumble strips on the short straight between turns two and three, third gear. Oops! Should not have grabbed third. Got a little cocky trying to go fast, gunna miss turn three I think.

I call on the 4 wheel 6 piston calipers, they answer instantly via the BFG R1's. The pavement complains now, too much brake, get off 'em stupid and turn right. Nope, not going to work like that today, it's too late. The back end is now going faster than the front. You better get back on those Baer brakes, that gravel will not help things. @#\$%%! It swaps ends and I back into the gravel and dust. Now I can't see because of the desert dust and I have pebbles in my pants! I hit the radio button while I restart the small block. "I'm OK" is all I can get out. Lonny (my spotter) tells me later, how much this comment surprised him. They couldn't see this part of the track. I'm rolling now, pebbles everywhere and I can hardly see for the dust on the inside and outside of the windshield and my helmet. 2nd gear, hard acceleration. I hit the Radio: "Car's fine; I looped it". All right I think to myself, get back on the horse. I neglected to remember the now sad condition of my tires. Dust and pebbles imbedded in soft rubber do not make for great traction. I'm back in the groove or so I think. Turn 5B is a tight right hander that if you hit your marks will let you get the car straightened up half way through and gently 4 wheel drift to the left rumble strips; that is, if you hit your marks without too much speed and clean warm tires. My 4 wheel drift took me back into the desert again. No loop this time, just keep the small block singing. Then I remember we changed the front brake pads before practice and installed Hawk racing compound on the front 6 pistons but not the rears because they sent the wrong pads. We had to keep the street pads on. No wonder the binders are killing me. I need more rear brake bias. Reach over and give the brake bias adjustment a hard clockwise spin. Back stretch, now, 5th gear, 130 mph or so. Lonny is talking me off my adrenalin rush really well. Turn ten, start finish whizzes by. I found third gear that time; feels good. I'm settled back down now. Concentrate. The brakes are dreamy now and this road race prepped close ratio 5 speed is amazing. "Now, use what you learned from Jim". Check the mirror: it's full of Mothers Red ZR1. I tell myself not to look again. Lonny reminds me to be gentle with the steering. He watched me make the car flinch going across the start finish. The steering is set at 1 turn lock to lock: great for the autocross but not at 130 mph. The remaining 2 timed laps went much better. What a feeling and a rush. The announcer has no idea I looped it on lap one. All he says is "I think his first timed lap must have been another warm up lap 'cause he has really put the hammer down on lap 2. Well, at least that comment makes the Gateway team *sound* good!

In the end, the Jackass Camaro got third place with a 1:49. Second was a 147.9 posted by Ryan Mathews of Detroit Speed in their 69 Camaro. Who won? An 800hp aluminum original 1966 427 cobra driven by an ex pro driver Bruce Cambern. He looked to be about 70 years old. His road course time was 1:46. I didn't see his 0-60-0 but rumor was he barely got off the starting line. His time was 6.7. An amazing car. And how did the out of the box yellow 68 do on the road course? After the spin on the first lap, we posted a 1:58 on lap 2. Our best lap, the last one, was a 1:56, which put us seventh overall out of 52 cars. We're happy with that. I just hope the team will let me drive it again!



SEMA 2009 New Products Review

By

Gary Falls

I had an opportunity this year to attend the SEMA show. Now let me tell you for the people that have never attended, there were cool cars beyond comprehension. There were tools beyond comprehension and there were models beyond comprehension (I just had to keep reminding myself there are some younger than my grandkids).

Anyway this write up is about the show. I was blown away at some of the new tools they were demonstrating. There was this tire changer for big rigs that you rolled the tire and wheel into the nest and the changer took it from there. It deflated, dismounted and pushed the old tire aside, picked up the new one and mounted it and inflated it and balanced it and rolled it back to you. Now that seemed low tech compared to the transmission jack I found. I sent a picture for you guys to Oooooooooooooo and Ahaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa over. Now mind you this was at SEMA and THIS IS FOR REAL!! You will see a little of everything at SEMA.



Some words of wisdom for all the "Car Guys & Gals":

"You only need two tools in life:

WD-40 and Duct Tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40.

If it shouldn't move and does, use the duct tape.

AND...If you can't fix it with a hammer, you've got an electrical problem"

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