

Northstar Chevelle Club

Yellow '64 El Camino

September 2004

www.northstarchevelles.com



Modifications

- 383 cu. In. "Stroker" smallblock.
- TH350 Automatic Transmission.
- Narrowed 12-bolt rear.
- 3.88 rear gear ratio
- Posi-Traction
- 4 wheel disc brakes.

John Delke

During the hours spent at Car Craft, and the subsequent time on University Ave. watching some fabulous "stuff" roll or walk by - our Club president asked for some material for a future newsletter, so here goes.

Most of the club members know my car, the (being kind) "rough" yellow '64 El Camino. I got the car in the summer of '90. I was looking for a replacement project car for a '79 Malibu that suffered some major structural damage due to the stout 383 that I built and installed. The 'Camino was bought from a guy in Lakeville, who had one too many projects going for \$1800.

Details on the car are sketchy at best. According to the VIN it is a V8 car, "Custom" trim level, built in Van Nuys, CA, and the 38012th produced. The cowl tag is long gone, the clutch pedal is gone, and any remnants of the original powertrain are absent, so those clues are missing. The existence of late '70's era speed parts, and the .040 stamping on the wheezer 350 in the engine bay gave some clue to its history. The holes in the floor indicate a bolt-in roll cage sometime in its past, later model buckets, a hacked B&M shifter install, and the (bonus) fact that a narrowed 12 bolt with Mark Williams axles and no "C-clips" lend me to think it has made more than its fair share of passes down the ¼ mile. There's a 1988 South Carolina DMV inspection sticker on the windshield, so at least it was "roadworthy" at that stage of its life. The guy I bought it from did nothing to it. Enter me, the current owner.



The car was my primary transportation for 3 years. Trust me, it was a death ride. The front suspension was wiped out, 3.88's and posi-traction in winter, and relying on the original single piston master, drum brakes, and this rusty syrup that used to be brake fluid wasn't fun. But I got where I was going (albeit sideways a lot). About now the "kids/family" thing kicked in, house remodeling, no time or \$\$ and "old yeller" got parked - until the spring of '02.

Early '02 I discovered "Team Chevelle", and got my blood pumping again. My wife gave me a summer's reprieve on house projects, and became a garage hermit for about 4 months. The decision was made to get the car mechanically sound before making it pretty. Off came the front clip, out with the engine and transmission, removal of the front suspension, and dropped the rear end. Waiting for me were 3 big boxes of PST and MP-Brakes stuff. After sand-blasting and painting everything from the cowl forward the reassembly started. About this time the Minnesota TCr's had decided on a date for our first gathering (when the Northstar Chevelle Club was formed) so now I had a deadline!

Continued... **Yellow '64 El Camino**

I *would* be driving my El Camino to the meeting!

All new polygraphite bushings were pressed in the various suspension arms, the rear control arms were boxed, new front spindles installed for disc brakes, and all the steering linkage was replaced. All new brake lines were bent to mate up with the new power disc system, and the necessary modifications to the rear end done for the disc brake conversion. Believe it or not the system bled on the first attempt! During all of this parts were scrounged and the car converted from manual steering to a High Ratio power system from a '79 Trans Am.

The 383 that had been in the '79 Malibu was sitting "pickled" on a stand for years, collecting dust. A fresh paint job ("Chevy Orange" from it's previous "Corporate Blue" sleeper duty) and a carb rebuild later and it was ready. I hoped it wouldn't tear up this car. The trusty TH-350 that had been behind it got a once over and some new seals, and bolted the two in their new "home". Back on with the front clip.

After double checking the electrical connections, and welding in some new collector to exhaust pipes, bending fuel lines and tranny cooler lines, the time came to see if it would run. I used a pre-oiler and got pressure, stabbed the distributor back in, filled the fuel bowls and turned the key. Oh Yeah - nasty small block sounds filled the garage. After checking things for leaks, setting timing and idle/mixture, we went out for the maiden voyage. Only two parts fell off! A fender well bolt I'd only finger-tightened, and the driver's side dust cap off the wheel hub (which I spent 15 minutes trying to find after it zinged over the curb into someone's lawn). I scheduled an alignment in the next few days, and have been driving ever since. All in all things have gone well. The only maintenance has been an oil change, a fuel pump, and replacing the accelerator pump diaphragm at Pan-O-Prog this year.

Luckily I'm fortunate enough to possess the skills (so far) to do all the work thus far on this beast myself. The budget has never allowed for outside labor, so I have to "do it myself", or purchase the tools, learn how to do it and make some mistakes. With the exception of the machine work on the block (which I made a PITA of myself during) and the alignment (again being a major PITA), I can humbly claim that all of the work on this car has been done by myself in our garage.

Hopefully this fall/winter I'll be able to start on bodywork. I'm contemplating building a rotisserie, and doing a "frame-off". This won't be a restoration, just a thorough cleanup and reconditioning. Having the body off the frame, and the underside accessible would only make the process easier. Visually, the only major work is the rear wheel openings, inner wheelhouses, and lower extensions. Luckily the windshield and rear glass openings appear solid and rust free - but I'll find out. Another learning curve and some new tools are on the

Northstar Chevelle Club News - Day at the Track - by Derek Kiefer

First off, I'm aware that this newsletter is one full month late, and I apologize for that. In case you're wondering what I've been up to, September was extremely busy for me. The month started with my Chevelle being in multiple pieces. I finally got off my bum and installed that 3.08:1 posi '66 Oldsmobile 10-bolt rear that has been occupying valuable garage floor-space for over a year. At the same time, I also did a rear-disc brake conversion using custom brackets and off-the-shelf parts-store components. I couldn't just stick a new rear in with trick 4-wheel discs with that same old suspension could I? Nope. A pair of SSM lift bars that I acquired nearly 2 years ago, and a sway-bar I've had for 3 years all went in shortly after pressing in my new PolyGraphite upper control arm bushings. I wasn't done yet, I had a 1 1/8" front sway-bar on the shelf with 4 years worth of dust on it. (notice a pattern here???) 2 weeks labor, some cuss words, cuts, bruises, scrapes, and a 12-pack later, and it was in and operable. The following week, wasn't very productive and the 2-lane blacktop road north of town has the black stripes to prove it. Who wants to do any work when you just found out your car can do 60' burnouts? Not me. The following weekend was the least productive of any. The 18th was my Sister's wedding, and the 19th (my birthday) was spent recovering. Time was ticking and I had one week to get the car ready for our club's meeting at Rock Falls Raceway. Armed with a list of requirements for tech inspection, I got busy. Being the procrastinator that I am, I finished installing the last thing on my to-do list, a tach, at 1:00 Saturday morning. A half hour of testing for weak parts north of town again, and the car was ready to go.

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Continued... **Northstar Chevelle Club News - by Derek Kiefer**

Saturday morning I arrived at the track and met up with Tony Hoffer, Keith Anderson, Jim Roy, and Darren Arnold who also raced their cars. Tony ran the fastest time of the day, a 12.34 @110.68 mph. Keith and Jim both ran high 12s, Darren 14.60s, and I had the slowest but most consistent times running 15.04 @ 89 mph which was good enough for a 2nd place trophy in the 15.0 bracket with a red-light in the final round. Not too shabby for a first-timer if I must say so myself. Everyone had fun, and it looks like we're planning another outing at Rock Falls on Oct. 23rd weather permitting.

Derek Kiefer, Northstar Chevelle Club President



Unfortunately, my -.108 red-light gave the "win" to the Corvette shown in the background in the final round. I went 0.4 seconds quicker.

NEW!!! We now have our own interactive forum on our website, www.northstarcheves.com

Thanks to Al and Dot McKenzie of "Team Chevelle", www.chevelles.com, we now have a pop-up/advertisement-free web forum to use as we wish for the low-low price of free. Post your classifieds, ask about upcoming events, ask questions about your car, or just share a good joke in one of our 4 forums. The password for the members section is currently "chevelle" and will change every few months. New passwords will be posted in the newsletters. You will need to register to post, but can read the topics without registering.

Fall Cruise

Sunday, October 10th 9:00 a.m.
Red Wing, MN to Fountain City, WI
Elmer's Auto and Toy Museum

Upcoming Events:

Directions: From the Cities following HWY 61 heading SouthEast
In Red Wing, Turn **RIGHT** on Plum St./Hwy 58 (go 5 blocks) Turn **LEFT**
on East 7th St (go approx. 1/2 mile) Turn **RIGHT** into "Memorial Park"
follow curvy path up hill to lookout to meet with the group. This is a great op-
portunity for a photos, so be early! Total Cruise Approx 75 miles

We will depart at 9:30 and follow the very scenic HWY 61 to Winona where we will stop for a quick lunch. We will cross into Wisconsin and head up to Elmer's Auto and Toy Museum to check out a fascinating collection of muscle-cars surrounded by a salvage yard with interesting classics all overlooking the Mississippi River during the most colorful weekend of the fall!

October 10th: (Sun.) Northstar Chevelle Club FALL

CRUISE beginning in Red Wing MN and ending at Elmer's Auto and Toy Museum in Fountain City, WI.

October 23rd: (Sat.) Rock Falls Raceway, Rock Falls, WI.

November 19th: (Sat.) Northstar Chevelle Club November meeting Location TBD.

Contact Derek Kiefer for shows, cruises, etc that you would like the club to attend. (507) 438-8907 or derek@northstarcheves.com

Free Classifieds: call or email Derek Kiefer to list your items.

Wanted: 1 15x7 factory steel SS rim. Must be strait. Pair of bucket seats to fit 71 SS. Will consider any shape but frame and springs must be good.
Mark Weber, 952-469-6578

72 Chevelle SS - #s matching 402, A/C, complete unmolested original, rusty.

69 El Camino SS - very nice body, no engine or transmission

70 El Camino - has nice front clip, rear tub not very nice

71 Malibu Convertible - needs floors and trunk floor, has new top

71 Chevelle 4-door - California car *Bruce Tscheida, 651-459-9194 (h)*

Wanted: 70-72 SS "bulge" hood, El Camino/wagon front fenders, RH El Camino door, El Camino qtr panels, outer wheel houses, inner rear panels from box floor to bottom of qtr panel, and SS or Monte Carlo non A/C dash insert. (do not need cluster).
Harlan Kemper, 651-674-8360