

SPACE AGE STAR

APRIL 2016



**IN THIS ISSUE: MEMBER CARS - 1963 IMPALA SPORT COUPE
AND 1957 BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE - PLUS 1977 "DOWN-SIZED"
CHEVROLETS**



Editor's Notes: You'll notice the debut of a Table of Contents in this issue. I finally figured out how to use the headers and footers feature of the software. This will make the newsletter easier to follow.

Spring has arrived, and I hope everyone has a chance to drive and enjoy their "Space Age" Chevy. Winter was less severe on Long Island this year so I had the 1965 Impala out a few times. As long as there's no salt on the streets and my back doesn't bother me too much, I try to take the Impala out for a ride.

Thanks to region members Tom and Nancy Trame and Don Pickles for submitting stories and photos about their wonderful cars. Also, thanks to Bob Parrish for the information about the 1962 four-door, four-speed 1962 Impala.

Eldon Frisk suggests two links that members should enjoy. The first is a "Back to the '50's" video: <http://safeshare.tv/w/hooJXpBIjK>
The second video link covers a unique 1955 Chevy: https://www.youtube.com/embed/oJ_M-fdyKpw

Thanks go to Eldon for his suggestions.

Don Allen emailed me about the February 3, 2016 *Old Cars Report* Car of the Week, a 1958 Delray with a 348 engine and a four-speed stick shift. Don questioned if this combination was actually available in 1958 (the article states it was added late in the model year). Most Chevrolet history and literature indicates that a four-speed wasn't available on Passenger Cars until 1959. When I asked John Mahoney about this car he replied, "I also was under the thoughts that a four speed was not available, this discussion was on the VCCA website and apparently it was.....but I do question if that engine was available in a 'fleet' car I am pretty sure that was a 235 or a 283." If other members have thoughts or information about this issue, please share them in a future newsletter. You can link to the *Old Cars*

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Reports at <https://report.oldcarsweekly.com/>

CLASSIFIED ADS:

Car For Sale: 1961 Bel Air Sport Sedan Arbor Green, 63,000 miles. 283, Powerglide, power steering. Body good, original paint retains some shine, minimal rust. Needs transmission resealed, wiper motor rebuilt, front seat recovered and radio serviced. Remainder of interior in good condition. Car has been sitting due to health issues. Contact Russell Heim at jetsmooth61@optimum.net or 516-735-0939 for information. \$6000



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TOM AND NANCY TRAME'S 1963 IMPALA SPORT COUPE



Our 1963 Chevrolet Impala was bought new in Sylvania, Ohio by Gertrude Knisley, my great aunt. She traded in a red 1954 Chevrolet Bel-Air. The purchase took place on August 8, 1963.

A widow, she drove the car sparingly, although not just to church on Sunday. Her brother, my grandfather, Edward Trame, lived in Lima, Ohio, some 70 miles away. She visited frequently. Since we also lived in Lima at that time, we not only saw her but saw the Impala as well. This is where I entered the picture.

I have always liked cars, and this red Impala really caught my eye. She and I agreed that I would have first opportunity to buy this car when she was ready. That time came in 1978. She was in failing health but thought of the “deal” we had made so many years before. When I received the letter from her, I immediately went to Ohio to buy the Impala. At this time she had driven it a total of 36,000 miles. We completed the deal after a grand total of \$50 changed hands. She said she couldn’t just give it to me since there were other nieces and nephews in the family.

Most everyone who knows Nancy and me is aware of our Impala. Equipped with a 230 cubic inch inline 6 cylinder engine, it actually gets great gas mileage. This feature also makes this Impala a pretty rare survivor as this engine isn't seen in Impalas very often. Other interesting facts include that is a radio delete car so no speakers were installed. I still have the floor mats from the dealer, not reproductions, and the date coded plug wires are still working just fine. The bias ply B.F. Goodrich Silvertown tires keep our car true to original. The car, never wrecked or rusty, was professionally repainted in 2007.

We frequently drive it and have taken it to Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Virginia and North Carolina for tours and shows. Our Impala won its First Junior in AACA judging in 1998. We have also shown it in VCCA (Vintage Chevrolet Club of America) judged events where it has won Preservation status. We are now content to just drive it and enjoy the monthly events with the East Tennessee Region.

By Tom and Nancy Trame



DON PICKLES' 1957 BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE

On August 30, 1966, my 21st birthday, I purchased my first car...a 1957 Chevy convertible for \$400. It was Onyx Black with a red and silver interior, automatic with a 283 engine. I was so proud of that car, but I had to sell it when Uncle Sam came knocking in 1968 during Viet Nam. I sold it for \$350. I had such great memories about that car... transportation at college and dating the love of my life who eventually became my wife (my wife knows who my real first love was, however).

Forty-five years later I was cruising the Internet when I came across an ad for a black 1957 convertible that was available for sale in Florida (I live in Missouri). This car was identical in every way to my first car, and I just had to have it. My wife and I drove down to Florida to check it out. It was beautiful...frame off restored and

perfect in every way with 83,000 original miles. Before the day was over, we put a deposit down on it and eventually had it shipped home.

During the year, weather permitting, we have the car in as many car shows as possible and have received several "Best in Class" and "Best in Show" awards. However, the best part of showing the car is meeting people who have had a '57, or whose parents have had one, and oh my the stories. As you can tell, I really love my '57 Chevy. (By the way, my license plate reads 1ST LOV, with my wife's approval and understanding, of course).

By Don Pickles



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Russell,

Thanks for the newsletter, I always enjoy receiving them, From my point of view, why don't you leave the Region operating the same way for the time being.

I want to tell you about an unusual 1962 Chevy Impala. I have known Herman Fletcher for over 20 years and he had told me about his 1962 Impala he had ordered new. What makes this car different is the fact that it is a 4 door sedan that was ordered with a 327/250 hp and factory 4 speed and he still has all the supporting documents. I was with Herman yesterday installing the Officers of his AACA Region. He is 90 years old and drove the car to this event.

I took a couple pictures that I am sending along.

Keep up the good work.

Bob Parrish (2/1/2016)



1977 - THE NEW “DOWN-SIZED” CHEVROLET - BY RUSSELL HEIM



Chevrolet's introduction of their full-size 1977 models signaled the end of the “longer-lower-wider” automotive era. “Our world is changing. Running out of room. Running out of natural resources,” according to an introductory Chevrolet salesmen's brochure. It continued, “So for 1977, our full-size New Chevrolets are designed to help conserve our natural resources.”

The brochure identified the main goals in the new car's design:

- To design a line of totally new full-size cars that would give more miles per gallon.
- To provide the comfort, quiet and security expected from full-size cars.
- To give the new cars aerodynamically clean lines and reduced wind resistance, while retaining the feeling of interior spaciousness and comfort that full-size Chevrolet owners were used to.

The new cars were greatly reduced in size and weight from the previous year's models. Reducing the exterior dimensions and weight, without sacrificing passenger space and comfort was a great engineering feat that earned the car Motor Trend car of the year.

See the chart below for a dimensional comparison between 1976 and 1977 models.

SEDAN EXTERIOR DIMENSIONAL COMPARISON				
		1977 CHEVROLET	1976 CHEVROLET	DIFFERENCE (INCHES)
WHEELBASE		116.0	121.5	-5.5
OVERHANG	FRONT	39.9	42.3	-2.4
	REAR	56.0	58.9	-2.9
LENGTH		211.9	222.7	-10.8
HEIGHT		57.4	55.1	+2.3
WIDTH		75.4	79.5	-4.1
TREAD	FRONT	61.7	64.1	-2.4
	REAR	60.7	64.0	-3.3

While front leg room was reduced by .2 inch. The new cars featured more front and rear head room, along with more rear seat leg room. Shoulder room in the new cars was slightly less than before. See the chart below for a comparison.

SEDAN INTERIOR DIMENSIONAL COMPARISON			
	1977 CHEVROLET	1976 CHEVROLET	DIFFERENCE (INCHES)
FRONT SEAT			
HEADROOM	39.0	38.5	+ .5
LEG ROOM	42.2	42.4	- .2
SHOULDER ROOM	61.0	64.0	-3.0
REAR SEAT			
HEADROOM	38.0	37.8	+ .2
LEG ROOM	39.5	38.8	+ .7
SHOULDER ROOM	59.4	63.1	-3.7

The salesman brochure states that a 1977 Caprice four-door sedan weighed 661 pounds less than a 1976 Caprice sedan. One way they reduced weight was by having the aluminum rear bumper reinforcement double as the frame's

rear cross member. Another weight saving example was the “scientific” placement of exhaust system hangers, eliminating the need for resonators.

Chevrolet engineers paid a lot of attention to making the new cars quieter than before. The brochure claims that they developed a whole new family of quieter body seals. They also employed new noise-suppression techniques, such as one-piece foam backed acoustic headliners and one-piece carpets with better floor insulating materials.

Chevrolet used wind tunnels to test their new body designs. This helped them reduce drag and improve aerodynamics, adding up to better gas mileage. Pillared models replaced all former hardtops. The Impala and Caprice series each contained a two and four-door sedans and four-door station wagons.

Corrosion protection was an important component of the new design. Extensive use was made of galvanized steel and zinc iron alloys. They used permanently flexible aluminized anti-rust materials and hot-melt coatings to help protect body joints and seams. Exposed surfaces were subjected to cleaning, rinsing and a phosphating process before receiving two coats of primer. Corrosion-sensitive areas received additional coats of primer. The final finish of Magic Mirror Acrylic was baked to provide a gleaming, long-lasting finish.

Repairs and maintenance were simplified as well. The 1977 models were equipped with a diagnostic terminal for the electrical system. This plugged into an analyzer (available at most Chevy dealers) that performed electrical system diagnostics. The instrument panel could now be serviced from the front, especially when a bulb needed replacing. The cars featured the new

maintenance free Delco Freedom battery.

Chevrolet claimed that the new station wagon's cargo area compared favorably with the 1976 model. The chart shown below doesn't bear that out.

STATION WAGON CARGO AREA COMPARISON			
	1977 CHEVROLET	1976 CHEVROLET	DIFFERENCE (INCHES)
CARGO WIDTH-WHEELHOUSE	48.6	48.8	-0.2
REAR OPENING HEIGHT	29.0	29.5	-0.5
CARGO LENGTH-FRONT SEAT	90.7	100.0	-9.3
CARGO LENGTH-SECOND SEAT	55.2	65.1	-9.9
CARGO CAPACITY (CU.FT.)	88.1	98.4	-10.3

All models came standard with Turbo Hydra-Matic transmission. Engine choices were the 110 horsepower 250 cubic inch straight six, the 145 horsepower 305 cubic inch V8 and the 170 horsepower 350 cubic inch V8. The six was standard on sedans and coupes. The 305 was standard on station wagons and optional for sedans and coupes. The 350 was optional for all models. The 250 had a 1-barrel carburetor, the 305 had a 2-barrel carb and the 350 featured a 4-barrel. The 305 was not available in California.

Cars came standard with radial ply tires, automatic transmission, power front disc brakes, power steering and high energy ignition. Other standard features: full, one-piece carpeting, full coil suspension, finned rear brake drums, foot-operated parking brake, glove compartment light, 21 gallon fuel tank, seat belts for all six passenger positions, energy absorbing steering column and padded instrument panel. The headlight dimmer was now built into the turn-signal level, removing it from the floor.





Station wagons featured a new “Door-Gate that drops down like a gate or swings out like a door”. Station wagons came in two or three seat versions. The third seat was rear facing.

Available options: Cruse-Master cruise control, Comfortilt steering wheel, power antenna, AM radio, AM/FM radio, AM/FM stereo and 8 track stereo system, gauge package, air conditioning (four season or Comfortron), digital clock, power trunk release, six-way power seat, two-tone paint, tinted windows, vinyl roof, Electro clear rear defogger, power windows, twin remote mirrors, power door locks, bumper guards and rub strips, sport wheel covers, heavy duty suspension and radiator, steel-belted radials, heavy-duty radiator, F41 sport suspension and positraction rear axle.

The sales brochure for public use was even more glowing about the new cars. According to the brochure the new cars were more manageable-easier to maneuver in tight traffic. The curb-to-curb turning diameter was reduced by three feet.

“The shape of cars to come. There have been beautiful cars before. There have been comfortable cars and economical cars. This car is a rare combination of all those things and others, a car meant to be measured not so much in inches and pounds as it is in feelings. The

uncommon accumulation of good feelings you get when you look at it, when you ride in it – and, most of all, when you drive it.”

“The new Chevrolet. There’s never been a car quite like it. It’s a whole new ball game, and the shape of cars to come. Enjoy yourself.”

Sales success greeted the new cars. 1977 Impala sold 320,279 cars compared to 239,577 for 1976. Caprice sales increased to 341,382 for 1977 versus 184,639 for 1976. Chevrolet continued to produce these cars in the basic 1977 form through 1990. While sales fluctuated each year, they remained strong.

The 1977 coupes are already collector’s items. The down-sized Chevrolets also make great tour cars. They have a comfortable ride, nice radios, and most are equipped with air-conditioning.

These cars were the beginning of a trend for Chevrolet. They introduced a new down-sized version of the Malibu in 1978. In 1979 they replaced the Nova with a down-sized, front-wheel-drive car called Citation.

After some rough years caused by economic decline and oil crises, Chevrolet hit a grand slam with the down-sized 1977 cars.

CHEVROLET—CENTRAL OFFICE

DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION
DETROIT 2, MICHIGAN

Geo



TECHNICAL SERVICE BULLETIN

Technical Service Department



SUBJECT: OIL LEAKS AT CAMSHAFT REAR BEARING -
1963 230 CU. IN. ENGINE

BULLETIN NO. DR #588

SECTION VI

TO: ALL CHEVROLET DEALERS

DATE April 29, 1963

Oil leaks past the camshaft rear bearing plug on subject engine may be due to oil pressure build-up between the end of the camshaft and the plug. In some cases the pressure is great enough to force the plug completely out of the engine block.

This pressure build-up will occur if the oil return hole in the camshaft rear journal is not completely drilled through the journal.

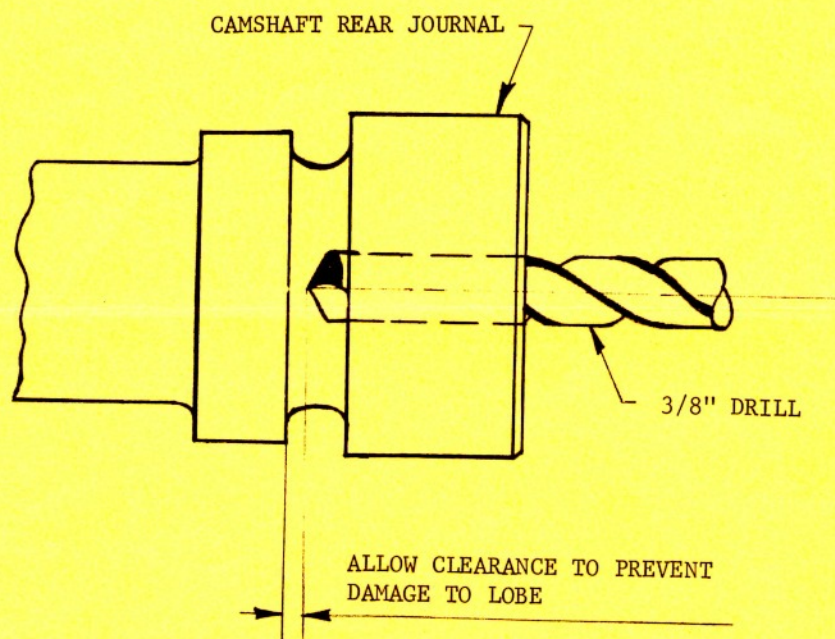
When oil leakage is evident at the rear bearing plug or if plug has been forced out of position, inspect the two 3/8" diameter holes in the camshaft rear journal. One hole is a blind hole about 3/4" deep, and the other hole should be drilled completely through the journal.

If the oil return hole is not completely drilled, remove the camshaft from the engine and drill as shown in the illustration on Page 2. When operation is complete, re-install camshaft with new Part No. 3704158 bearing hole plug.

Director, Technical Service Department

ADJ/afm

2.



PARTS DATA

<u>Part No.</u>	<u>No. Required</u>	<u>Description</u>
3704158	1	Rear Bearing Hole Plug

FLAT RATE

<u>Time</u>	<u>Description</u>
2.3 hrs.	R & R Flywheel - 3-Speed Overdrive
3.3 hrs.	R & R Flywheel - Powerglide
8.2 hrs.	R & R Camshaft - 6-Cyl. (add .6 if equipped w/air cond.)
.1 hr.	R & R Rear Bearing Hole Plug

The Space Age Star is the official publication of the Space Age Chevrolet Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America. This is a non-geographic region dedicated to the enjoyment, restoration and history of 1955 and later AACA eligible Chevrolet cars and trucks. We publish the newsletter six times each year.

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