

Lower Michigan Region

CHEVY



CHATTER

Vintage Chevrolet Club of America

JANUARY 2013

## HAPPY NEW YEAR



### Lower Michigan Region, VCCA Leadership for 2013

Front Row L to R: Director Verle Wetherwax, Secretary Marge Henige, Treasurer Leon Eisemann. Back Row L to R: Assistant Director Brian Granger, Jr. Board Member Mike Sparks, Sr. Board Member Gary Mehl, Jr. Board Member Ken Turnwald.

**LOWER MICHIGAN REGION****VINTAGE CHEVROLET CLUB of AMERICA****OFFICERS FOR 2012**

Director: Verle Wetherwax 810-547-1768 [sharonwetherwax@comcast.net](mailto:sharonwetherwax@comcast.net)  
 Asst. Dir: Brain Granger 810-348-5198 [grangerb59@yahoo.com](mailto:grangerb59@yahoo.com)  
 Secretary: Marge Henige 810-638-5425 [mhenige57@centurylink.net](mailto:mhenige57@centurylink.net)  
 Treasurer: Leon Eisemann 517-467-6380 [leoninmi@frontier.com](mailto:leoninmi@frontier.com)  
 Historian: Wayne Jackson 616-532-9471 [waylojac@aol.com](mailto:waylojac@aol.com)  
 Sunshine: Marjorie Henige 810-638-5425 [mhenige57@centurylink.net](mailto:mhenige57@centurylink.net)

SENIOR BOARD MEMBERS:  
 Jerry VanBrunt 517-467-2493 [Jvjb12@aol.com](mailto:Jvjb12@aol.com)  
 Gary Mehl 269-979-8922 [realbrowneyes@yahoo.com](mailto:realbrowneyes@yahoo.com)  
 Dennis Clark 810-735-3297 [ClarkdennisA@AOL.com](mailto:ClarkdennisA@AOL.com)  
 JUNIOR BOARD MEMBERS:  
 Mike Sparks 616-642-6457 [Powerstroke50@Hotmail.net](mailto:Powerstroke50@Hotmail.net)  
 Ken Turnwald 989-845-2134

**EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER**

Pinky Randall 989-302-0866

**CHEVY CHATTER EDITOR**

Richard Oldenburg 248-363-4437 [RLOldenbur@aol.com](mailto:RLOldenbur@aol.com)  
 4900 Juniper Dr., Commerce twp. MI 48382-1544

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Venessa Conrad 517-882-6975 [veconbob@att.net](mailto:veconbob@att.net)  
 3530 Bergman Ave., Lansing, MI 48910-4604

**WELCOME:**

The Lower Michigan Region, VCCA, welcomes the following new Region members.

Andy and Rebekka Mehl of Kalamazoo, Michigan

and

Carl and Dian Latora of Mattawan, Michigan

**Correspondence Received:** Received a note from Region member Janet Scheer addressed to the "Chevy Chatter". *"Many thanks for the many well wishes during my bout with liver cancer. J"*

**LOWER MICHIGAN REGION - VCCA – 2013 CALENDAR of EVENTS**

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1 2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

No LMR Meeting Scheduled Meeting

20<sup>th</sup> Jackson, MI Swap Meet  
 27<sup>th</sup> Swap Meet McDonald  
 Cadillac, Saginaw, MI

LMR Meeting Scheduled

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Kalamazoo Swap Meet  
 10<sup>th</sup> VCCA Swap Meet Springfield, Oh  
 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> Zephyrhills, FL Swap Meet

24<sup>th</sup> (Tentative) Business

Central Meet Planning)  
 Junction of Hope Restaurant,  
 Layton Corners, MI

**Correction:** Received from Bob Sovis. There is a correction to the date published in the last months Newsletter "2013 Yearly Calendar". The published June date for the "Back to The Bricks Tour" has been changed from the June 1 – 5 dates to June 7<sup>th</sup> thru the 13<sup>th</sup>. Indications are the Tour will be named "Lake Shore to Lake Shore". The Tour will start and finish in Flint and visit municipalities Rockford, Hart, Manistee, Cadillac, West Branch, Oscoda, and Mt Pleasant.

## Director's Message

We had a wonderful holiday banquet/meeting in Lansing at the beginning of the month attended by approximately 60 members. The new slate of officers were welcomed and photographed.

Christmas for 2012 has come and gone, our year of 2013 is just around the corner; are we ready to tackle a NEW Year? This is going to be a very busy, challenging, but fun time. We have a list of some great events to partake in. The 50<sup>th</sup> Central Meet will be hosted by LMR at Port Huron, Mi. July 24<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup>. Mike McFarland Chairman and Linda Harbron Co-Chairwomen will need help and cooperation from ALL OF US, let's plan to attend, participate, and make this a huge success.

I am very enthusiastic about this year working with some most-talented and great car people around. Al-though I may not always do things according to Hoyle, I will be open to constructive criticism. They say a person can change, Sharon's opinion does not count!

I received a call from Jr. Board Member Tim Bramble stating he is resigning his position due to his move to Texas. We certainly wish him well and hope our paths will cross again. There will be a need to replace him, anyone interested please contact me.

MEMBERS MEMBERS, we need to work extremely diligently in the area of acquiring new members if LMR is to survive. The G & D has applications for the VCCA, Ve Conrad and myself have ones for LMR. It may be a good idea if we ALL had a couple applications and possibly a copy of the G & D to show someone; call me if you need applications.

A number of our members have gone South for the winter, Sharon and I aren't too far behind. Where ever you may be, enjoy the snow or the sunshine for the next few months until we meet again in March.

If anyone has an idea or suggestion on how we can improve our club, please submit it to me.

Wishing each and everyone a blessed, safe, happy, healthy, and wealthy New Year!

Verle Wetherwax

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### **Important: A Question for the Lower Michigan Region Membership:**

Your Region Leadership is studying the possibility of conveying the Monthly Newsletter using an Email system. The Postal Mailings of our Newsletter will always be in effect as several of our membership do not use or have computers at their disposal. If implemented, your monthly Newsletter will be delivered either electronically or as a hard copy through the US postal system, you cannot choose to receive it through both systems. If you choose to continue receiving your Monthly Region Newsletter via the US Postal System, no further action on your part is required on this question!

***If Electronic delivery of your Monthly Lower Michigan Region Newsletter is your choice, please Email your "electronic delivery selection" To: [RLOldenbur@aol.com](mailto:RLOldenbur@aol.com). Write in the title column of your Email "Electronic Newsletter Delivery", and make a statement in the text, "I (we) choose to receive our LMR monthly Newsletter Electronically". Please include your Email Address even though it may be visible in the header of the Email.***

You will be notified in the Region Newsletter if or when the proposed Email system will be implemented.

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Lower Michigan Region Annual Banquet held on December 1, 2012



Bruce and Brian Granger receiving recognition for organizing the Dust Off Tour.



Rod and Denice Thomas receiving recognition for conducting the Moth Ball Tour.



Phyllis Rickabus receiving recognition for several years as the Recording Secretary. Hummm!



Transfer of authority from outgoing Director Pinky Randall to new Director Verle Wetherwax.



\*\*\*Not shown here nor mentioned within the Awards ceremony was the fact that Joyce and Pinky Randall had provided the Region with an excellent Summer Tour in their home territory of Houghton Lake.

Dick Silagi recognized for serving on the LMR Board



Verle Wetherwax addressing the group as the New LMR Director.



## GENERAL MOTORS PROVING GROUND MILFORD, MICHIGAN

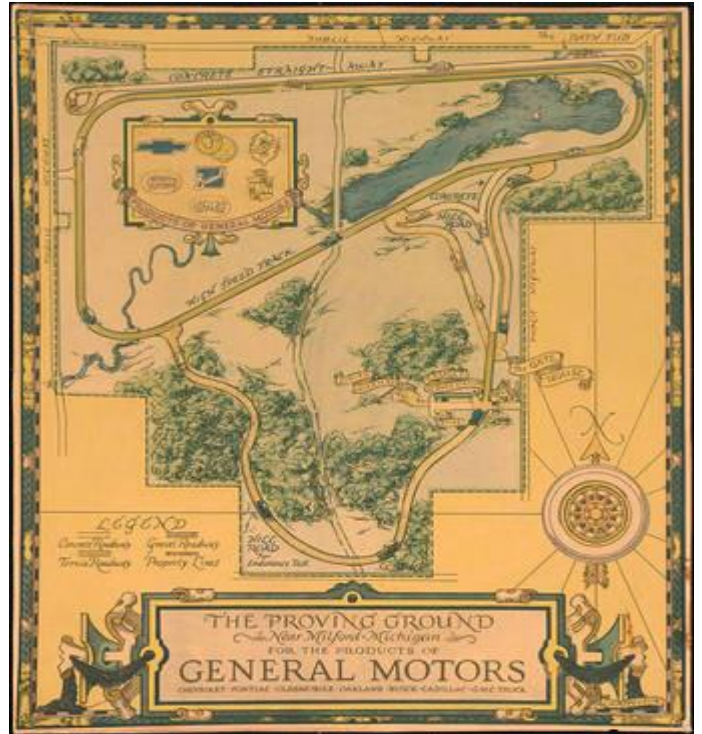
Through the foresight of Mr. Alfred P. Sloan Jr., then President of General Motors, the General Motors Proving Ground came into being in 1924. Prior to this time all the car road testing had been done on public highways, and the condition of the roads was controlled by the highway department. Some brake tests were run on a road near Flint and by the time experimental changes on the brakes were made and the car taken back for comparison tests, the road had been resurfaced, completely nullifying any comparison with the first tests. Situations like this led to the inevitable development of a private road system owned by the Corporation.

In 1923 the Corporation formed the General Technical Committee with one of its first tasks, to locate a site, central to the Lansing, Flint, Pontiac, and Detroit areas. The site was to have a topography that would satisfy their requirements for a flat, level area, where a mile-long straightaway could be constructed, with an adjacent hilly section of sufficient grade for hill climb tests. In mid-November 1923, after reviewing the results of surveys, Mr. W. J. Davison, a member of the Technical Committee, submitted his recommendation on the present Proving Ground location to the Technical Committee. After receiving their approval, he issued the go ahead for the purchase of the 1125 acre site. In the spring of 1924, an outside construction company was hired to lay out the roadways, draw up plans and cost estimate. Then a meeting of the General Technical Committee was held on the site and Mr. Sloan and all the members covered the entire area on foot, ate a picnic lunch, and agreed that the roadways and land were acceptable. Mr. Davidson then "immediately put in an appropriation covering the construction of the roadways, clubhouse, and one garage, 200 x 60 ft."

Prior to purchase, the area was known as the "Bluffs" because of its rugged terrain (267 feet of elevation change), and was a popular destination for sight seeing during the early days of motoring. The area still provides an impressive view of the surrounding terrain.

The first GM Proving Ground employee was hired in August 1924. When initially placed into operation the 1125 acres contained seven miles total of gravel roadway, 3.8 miles of which were

consumed by the original oval test track. During the first full year of operation, a total of 1,563,000 test miles was driven. In the early days, all of the car divisions, along with GMC Truck and Coach, had working quarters in half of the first 12,000 square foot building.



(First Illustration of GM's Milford Proving Ground)

Due to its rural setting, the Clubhouse, as it was called, was an early, important, and necessary facility. It provided a cafeteria and Living Quarters for visiting employees and guests. The men who worked and cared for the Clubhouse lived there continually, leaving only on the weekends.

From the very beginning the Proving Ground was in a steady growth and improvement mode with buildings and road systems being added. A water concrete trough was built in 1925 for the purpose of finding the slightest leak, for soaked brakes, or how well the car design keeps water from splashing on the windshield, etc. The East West Straightaway was relocated 50 feet north of the Oval track from the originally shared roadway. The Oval Track was paved in 1926. The famous Belgian Block road (a 1.75 mile oval) was constructed in using granite boulders purchased for the city of Chicago. These boulders were originally apart of Chicago's famous South Loop and were in service there during the Great Chicago Fire.

The World War II period was one of the Milford Proving Ground finest times. It rapidly switched from civilian vehicle testing to Military vehicle testing, regardless of company of manufacture. During the war years it received five Army-Navy E Flag awards for “Outstanding Services in the Production of War Equipment”. The US Army Ordnance considered the Milford Proving Ground and Auxiliary to its main Aberdeen, Maryland Proving Ground. The heavy military equipment was not kind to the Proving Ground road system and after the war much of the road system required extensive repair before its return to civilian use.

In the late 1940's the Proving Ground expanded with the purchase of an additional adjoining 2800 acres, mainly to the north and east of the original purchase. This additional property allowed for the addition of a Military and Heavy Equipment test area, independent of the commercial vehicle test area, and was placed into service in 1951.

A new 7.2% test grade was built to the east of the original Oval Track in 1954. Its three lane wide surface has a uniform grade for 2715 feet with a high speed turnaround at the top.

A new Truck Test Loop, 2.1 miles in length consisting of hills, curves, and cross ditches was built in 1955. This road system was placed in the south east corner of the newly expanded property.

The North South Straightaway was extended to the North and widened to three lanes in each direction in 1957. Its level road surface was now 2.5 miles in length northbound and 2.6 miles in length southbound and was nearly 3 miles in overall length with a turn around at each end.

A 4 mile Ride and Handling Loop was constructed in 1958 at the inner edge of the soon to be built 4.5 mile Circle Track. The R & H Loop has several types of surfaces and curves used by engineers to evaluate vehicle maneuverability and ride quality.

The 5 lane wide, 4.5 mile long Circle Track banked at 30° in the outer high speed lane, was placed into service on November 22, 1963, a tragic day in American History. Its design is such that a well aligned vehicle can operate at 120 MPH in the outer lane, “hands free”, although that isn't recommended or condoned.

The Vehicle Dynamics Test Area (VDTA), also known as Black Lake, was built in 1966 and located inside the Circle Test Track area. It is a 67 acre (equivalent to 59 football fields) paved area containing three different coefficient surfaces to simulate snow and ice. Called Black Lake because when wet it appears to be a large body of black water and has been known to fool migrating water fowl during landings. It is used to evaluate all types of vehicle limit handling tests, most recently the testing, validation, and calibrations of ABS, Traction Control, and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems.

Today the Milford Proving Ground campus is situated on 4011 acres, has 140 buildings, houses 4,600 residents with operations around the clock, 365 days a year (a small city). The original seven miles of gravel roadway have increased to 140 miles, of which 125 are paved and 15 are unpaved. Parking lots consume 115 acres of land. There are 175 acres of lawn. Twelve hundred acres are mowed along the roadways. A total of 15 million miles per year of Vehicle Development and Testing are performed.

Even though some 15 million miles are logged each year on the Proving Ground road systems, most of the vehicle testing today is accomplished in the laboratories and through computer simulations.



## ADVERTISEMENTS

**Note:** Your advertisement will be placed here free of charge to club members

**For Sale:** 2001 Chevrolet 3500 (1 Ton Dually) crew cab. This is my personal truck. 2 wheel drive, 8100 gas engine. Allison 5-speed automatic transmission, all new tires, new a/c system, new exhaust, and many other things. 130k miles, runs, drives perfect, no rust, never seen winters, came from KY. \$12,000.00 or best offer. Will trade for old car of equal value or cash up or down. Mike McFarland, 810-790-1812.

**For Sale:** 1999 Chevrolet ¾ ton 4X4 Suburban. Loaded with only 300 miles. It was used as a test truck for propane. No engine, transmission, transfer case. I have a 1999 ½ ton Suburban for the drivetrain to rebuild or use as a core exchange. This Suburban came from Texas and is in mint condition. Put it together and you will have a new 1999 Suburban . \$5,500.00 or trade. Mike McFarland 810-790-1812.

**For Sale:** Large accumulation of 1933 Chevy Master parts (4-Dr. Sedan) for sale located near Ann Arbor, MI. Too many to list. Call or Email and I will send pictures and negotiate prices. Joe Scheuring, Phone 734-426-3586 or Email [Scheuring5@aol.com](mailto:Scheuring5@aol.com).

**Wanted:** Parts for 1940, 1941, 1942, 1946, 1947, and 1948 Chevrolet Passenger cars; Lester March, ph 810-658-9614