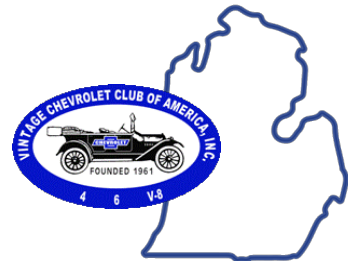


March 2019

the Chevy Chatter

Lower Michigan Region



A Look At The Different Tracks Of The 90 Year Old Milford Proving Ground



BY SAM MCEACHERN

General Motors' Milford Proving Ground is inconceivably large. It's 140 miles worth of roadways that cover two Michigan counties, and consists of an oval track, road course, two separate straightaways and much more. Milford's different tracks serve a variety of purposes. GM says these specially designed roads "bring out the best in a vehicle," by highlighting its weaknesses, allowing them to return to the drawing board and fix the issue.

One of the oldest tracks at Milford is the North South Straight Away. Built in 1955, the three-lane, 3-mile-long road is used for top-speed tests and features turnaround banks at either end. There's also 'Black Lake, a similarly old, 67-acre square of asphalt which is used to test traction control, stability control, braking, and more. The surface can be moistened and used as a skid pad or to replicate wet driving conditions. The newest major addition to Milford is the Road Course, also known as the 'Lutz Ring'. The former GM chairman wanted a racetrack that emulated specific sections of some of the world's most challenging racetracks. He got his way, and in 2003, construction began on a 2.9-mile, 17-turn road course designed to test vehicle suspension and aerodynamics.

Save the Date!!

April 28, 2019
1pm Board Meeting
2pm Member Meeting
Junction of Hope

May 17-19, 2019
Dust Off Tour
Kalamazoo, MI

June 23, 2019
1pm General Meeting
Crossroads Village, Flint

July 14-18, 2019
56th Central Meet
Lafayette, Indiana

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From the Driver's Seat

February started out with a number of members meeting at the Kalamazoo swap meet. We signed up a few new members and saw a lot of great parts for sale.

I have been using this cold weather as an excuse to bring some of my projects into the house to work on. I purchased a set of seats from one of our members, and when I got them home there was evidence that they needed some tender loving care to make them suitable for my '53 sport coupe. Now I need to find an upholstery person to bring them back to their original condition for installation in my car.

I hope you have also been keeping busy during these cold days, and keep working on your projects! If you have some stories to tell, send them to Chevy chatter to keep us all updated.

My wife and I will be heading down to Florida for the month of March, I will use that time to shop for some southern tin for other projects I am working on. In closing, stay warm and I hope to see you all at the April meeting at the Junction of Hope.

—Jim Schott



March Birthdays & Anniversaries

1st Jill Anderson
 2nd Martha Bamfield
 3rd Jim Schott
 4th Matt Dickinson
 5th Darrell Hammond
 14th Bill Anderson, Jerry Peters
 15th Mike McFarland
 17th Bob Gardner, Jo Carpenter
 19th Mary Samulski
 22nd Gary Mehl, Victor Pitcavage
 24th Marjorie Henige
 28th Dick Petterson

March 26, 1955

Bill & Sue Weinberg

March 14, 1987

Ross & Barbara Vincent

March 21, 2000

Mike McFarland & Mary Samulski

...from Proving Ground Page 1

There's also a straight allowing fast cars to top 150 mph.

"I lobbied for it, all of a sudden it was approved," said Lutz. "Look what's happened to the ride, handling, steering, braking... everything on GM cars. We're better than the best of competition and part of the reason is we have that facility (the road course). The lessons learned on steering, tire grip, braking, etc. that are learned on very high performance vehicles, some of that translates all across the line."

Despite the obvious importance of these different tracks, GM says they only account for about 1 percent of performance testing. When engineers aren't driving the cars at Milford, they are preparing the car for the tests to ensure all the gathered information will be used for future vehicle development. Engineers at its Lang Lang, Australia, Shanghai and Yuma, Ariz. test facilities also follow similar steps. However, none of these facilities match up to the inconceivably vast Milford Proving Ground.



Our '37 Master Deluxe

Gary Mehl- Battle Creek



After viewing the February newsletter introducing our new Editor, it occurred to me that some might be interested in the back-story behind the photos. In 1983, after selling a '56 Thunderbird that had been in pieces in my garage, Pam and I decided to find something a little more practical to fix up and enjoy. We borrowed a truck and trailer from friends and made a trip to the Fall Hershey meet.

At Hershey we found a '37 Master Deluxe coupe. It was on a trailer. The engine and drivetrain had already been rebuilt, most of the body work was done, and it was in primer. The best part was, it was all there! Down to the seat frame and re-chromed bumpers! The owner was a LaSalle nut and he wanted the money to buy a restorable LaSalle roadster. A deal was made and we trailered the car back to Battle Creek.

Over the next two years, with the help of a remarkable Buick restorer named Bud Hicks, the body work was completed and the car painted in his shop. Mark Larder of Larder Upholstery installed a Hampton Coach kit and the car was complete. Pam and I had visited a VCCA meet while on vacation in Arkansas a few years before, so we immediately joined the national club. During the awards banquet at the second central meet we attended in Ft. Wayne, Lois Jackson was organizing an LMR group photo. She invited us to join in the photo and when we told her that we weren't LMR members she said, "Who cares, you will be soon." We were in the photo and shortly after, in the LMR.

I'd like to include a word about Bud Hicks, who was responsible for the gorgeous body and paintwork that my daughter is polishing in the photos. He had a large collection of rare Buick's from the twenties through the forties. A '53 Skylark that he owned and restored (a story in itself) was on display in the Auburn Cord Duesenberg museum for years. He also did concourse quality restorations for customers on Packards, Pierce Arrows, and any number of other classics.

The Master Deluxe, a number of years later, went to an elderly man in Vermont who was mostly home bound and wanted to use it for occasional trips to town for groceries and errands. I'd love to know where it is now...

DUST OFF TOUR

May 17-19, 2019

Join us for a delightful journey through southwest Michigan and the greater Kalamazoo area. The Lower Michigan Region is hosting its annual Spring Dust Off Tour, beginning Friday, May 17th, with an evening get together. Arrangements for accommodations have been made with

Candlewood Suites

3443 Retail Place Drive

Kalamazoo, Mi. 49048

You can make your reservation by calling **269-270-3203** and referring to block code VCC. Book online at www.candlewoodsuites.com

Group rate for a single king, or 2 double bed studio will be \$99.00 per night plus tax. Parking for your vintage car, including trailer parking if needed, is available on the hotel property.

Hotel reservations must be made by April 26th to secure the VCCA-LMR discount.

We will have a full tour day on Saturday, with lunch at a local drive-in, and dinner near the hotel following the tour. Check out of the hotel on Sunday morning and join us for additional touring, or head home if you wish.

More details of the tour, with reservations and costs, will be in the April Chevy Chatter. The deadline for reserving a spot on the tour will be **Wednesday, May 1st.**

VCCA National

Plans are finalized for the

60th VCCA Anniversary Meet

in Bowling Green, KY.

July 3-10, 2021

Holiday Inn University Plaza is the host hotel. Since this is the home of the Corvette Museum and the Corvette manufacturing plant, tours are planned for both, along with some track time on the adjacent Corvette test track.

It's never too early to make plans!

You can begin to make reservations at 9am Central Time on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.

The host hotel will not accept reservations until that time.

Call 270-745-0088 and mention VCCA when making your room reservations.

**A letter from Ann Cook:**

Dear Bruce and all our Chevy friends,

Sorry to tell you, if you had not already heard, that Cleland Cook passed away this past March 28, 2018. His funeral was March 31st in Eaton Rapids, Mi. at the Skinner Funeral Home. I miss him very much and I will miss all our "Chevy" friends.

I am still at 9655 Columbia Hwy, Eaton Rapids, Mi. I have not gone south for the winter. My home phone is 517-663-2471 if anyone cares to talk. It's easier for me to hear than the cell phone.

Thank you for the friendship we enjoyed with all of you. Love and Blessings to all.

- Ann L. Cook

A few interesting submissions from members!

Above: An advertisement for a vacuuming system that uses your car's exhaust instead of electricity. What could go wrong?

Right: Couldn't we all use a squarebody tractor snow plow?

**2019 Lower Michigan Region VCCA Officers**

| | |
|---------------------|---|
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| Secretary: | Mike McCarty michaelrrrmccarty@gmail.com |
| Treasurer: | Pat Mehl jakobs.grama@gmail.com |
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Bill Anderson old50grit@comcast.net

Chevy Chatter Corrie Mehl
ChevyChatterMI@gmail.com

The purpose of the VCCA is to promote interest in the preservation and restoration of vintage Chevrolet manufactured vehicles, 25 years old, or older. Ownership of a vintage Chevrolet is not a prerequisite for membership. LMR region dues are \$20 per year. To become a member, an applicant must be a National VCCA member in good standing. National dues are \$40 yearly.

56th Annual Central Meet

**July 14-18, 2019
West Lafayette, Indiana**

The Indiana Region, Area 7, is planning a fun event in America's Heartland. It will include a judged meet and plaque tour, which will visit Delphi, Indiana, and the Wabash-Erie Canal historic village. This includes a canal boat ride and a lunch event at the visitor center. A welcome social, swap meet, ladies luncheon, and awards banquet are all on the agenda. There will also be adequate opportunity for participants to make voluntary driving tours.

The Host Hotel is Four Points by Sheraton, West Lafayette, Indiana. Hotel reservations are accepted now by calling 765-463-5511 and mentioning code VCCA. Book your reservation by June 13, 2019 for the VCCA group rate.

The registration form is available at www.VCCA.org Go to the calendar, and under the listing for the Central Meet, there is a link to open up the registration form and print it.

For additional information, you can contact:

Meet Chairman: Harold Doremire

765-463-2918 or 765-426-4600

hwd@doremire.org

OR

Joseph Razumich

219-762-0544 (home) or 219-545-1032 (mobile)

vcca2019@gmail.com

Welcome New Members!

**Chuck & Joyce Stebelton from Coopersville, Michigan
1974 Caprice Classic Convertible**

**Carl Latora from Mattawan, Michigan
1955 Bel Air, 1957 Bel Air, & 1967 Corvette Convertible**

**Mike Nelson from Shelby Township, Michigan
1964 Biscayne, 1965 Malibu SS, & 1969 Camaro**



A Note from your Area 7B director:

Hello everyone in area 7B! We've certainly had an interesting winter! I can't remember when we've had colder temperatures, or more icy conditions! While it has kept us indoors, Andy and I have been using the time productively to work on our cars! I hope that you are all doing the same so that we are ready when spring rolls around, and we can drive them again!

We've had an interesting year in the VCCA. One of the most significant events in my nearly 20 years of being a member, is the response to the fires in CA. It was a terrible event that took the homes from 6 of our VCCA family. We responded with fundraising, which has grown to over \$30,000 so far. (You can still contribute funds until the end of March.) I'm extremely proud of our club for raising this money for our members in need.

We inaugurated a new relationship with Mecum Auctions this year. We had two of their events in our area and the response of our members in support of recruiting efforts was outstanding! My thanks to everyone who contributed their time and efforts! As a result of this, and other recruiting efforts, Area 7B held their own in membership this year. This is great news after many years of decline, so keep up the good work!

The Central Meet in Canada last year was great! This was the first time it has been in Canada, and the folks in Ontario did a marvelous job of putting everything together! I'm looking forward to the Central Meet in Indiana because I know the team there is putting together a great program for our enjoyment! We have already made our reservations and I hope all of you will be joining us!

I also want to mention that we have seen many contributions to the VCCA Foundation this year. As you may remember, this is a tax-exempt entity that we've created in order to accept donations of materials and funds for our library. This has been a great addition to the VCCA and will allow us to maintain and expand our collection in the years to come. Your tax-free contributions would be greatly appreciated! I hope you all have a great year of touring and car shows, and I hope to see you all in West Lafayette!

Regards,
Tim Mehl

Autos, Parts, & Services

LMR Members may place one ad per month free. Additional ads and all others, \$5

****NEEDED****

Items that are produced, sold, or unique to Michigan, These items will be used in a basket, to be raffled at the Central Meet in Lafayette, IN, in July 2019. Please bring your item; jam, coffee, bottle of beer/wine, crafts, and other items to the General Meeting on April 28th at Junction of Hope Restaurant 4136 Peet Road, Chesaning, MI.

This is a fundraiser, so all donated items will be greatly appreciated!



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PLEASE NOTE: Follow the VCCA on Instagram @VCCA_Official and don't forget to follow the VCCA facebook page!

Battle Creek, Michigan 49015

11431 Four Mile Road

Chevy Chatter Editor