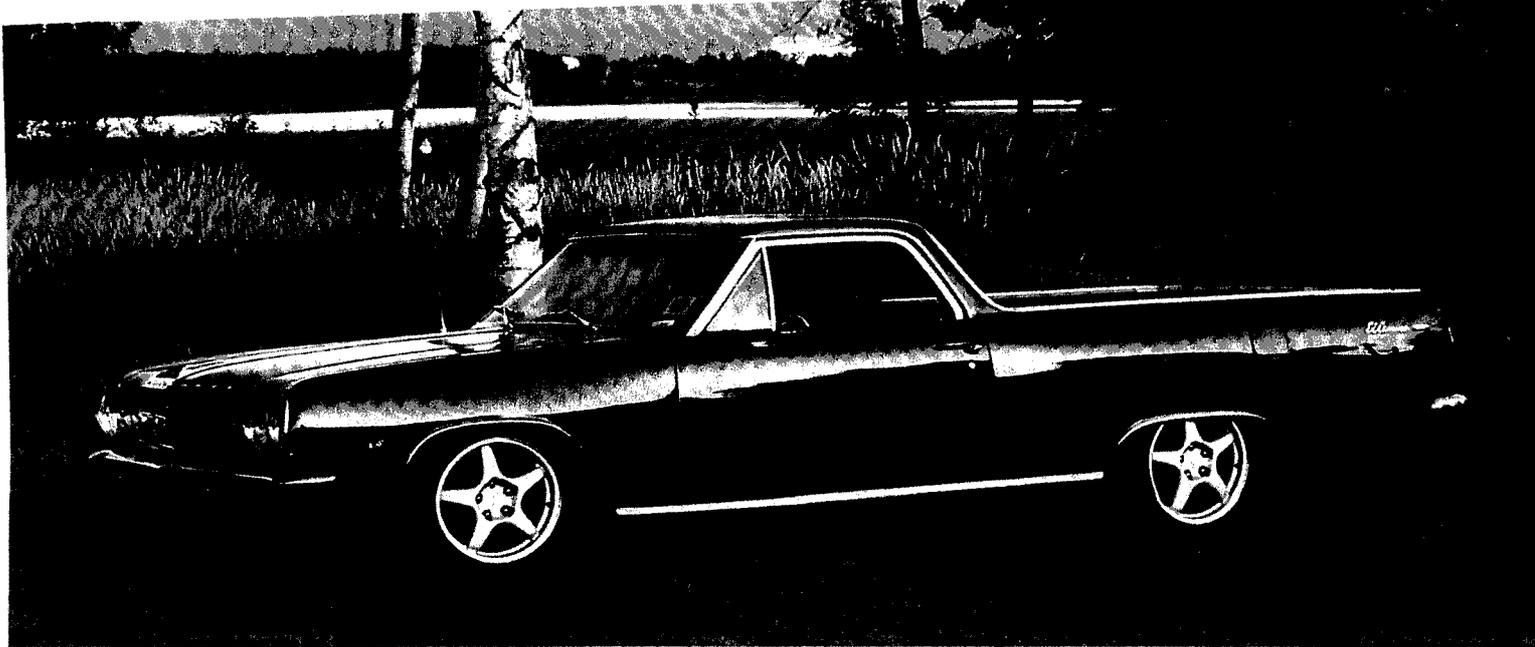


# Northstar Chevelle Club

www.northstarchevelles.com

## Black 1965 El Camino

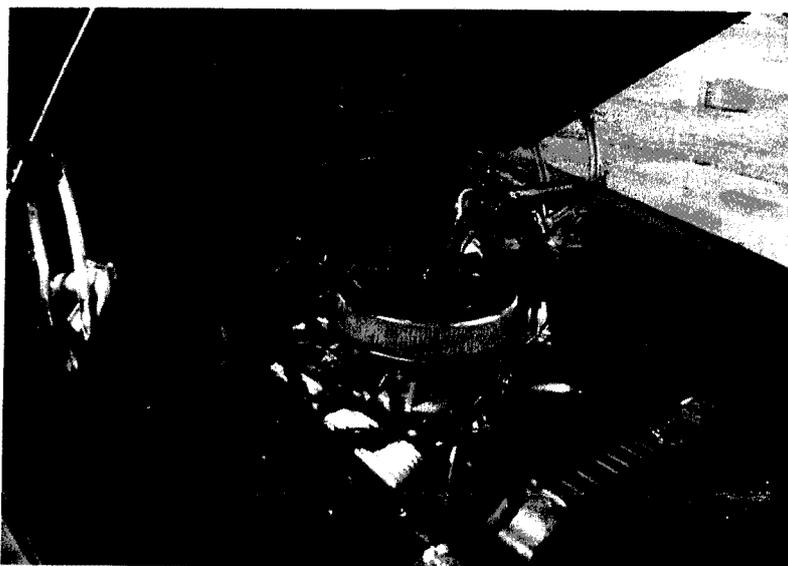


### John Delke - St. Louis Park, MN

On the last night of the 2008 car show season in Hastings there was a really nice looking '65 with a "For Sale" sign on it. I took a few shots of it, gave it a quick once-over and that was that. I couldn't get the dang thing off my mind. I talked to my wife, and she said "Go for it, it's your money!" and I set up a meeting with the owner a few days later. We haggled on price and finally settled. This car is cosmetically nicer inside & out than most '65s I've seen that haven't been fully restored. I would call it an older "refurbishment". It wears 10-year old paint, seat covers, & carpet. Unfortunately the mechanical aspects of the car were largely ignored.

It's still has the original 327 & Powerglide transmission, with 3:08 gears out back. Engine modifications consist of an Edelbrock intake, and Holley 650 carb. That's it. There may be a not-so-small small block & overdrive conversion coming this winter.

As I mentioned, this car was a real "looker", but certainly not a "runner"! The previous owner had done quite a few cosmetic changes & repairs, but really no mechanical updates. Once I got it home, I started to fix the problems under the hood. I drained the coolant & pulled the valve covers, distributor, and intake/carb off the engine. Sure enough there was a chunk of the intake gasket blown out on the passenger side EGR/carb heat passage. This actually was a good thing, as I got a nice look inside the engine. I'd say less than the expected 45 years worth of gunk, sludge and varnish.



The power steering pump was loose, and the previous owner said "I could never get the belt tight".... After pulling the alternator & PS pump brackets I discovered why. There was only 1 bolt really doing anything and the bracket was bent up. A few minutes with a hammer and the bench vise cured the bracket problem, and replacement of the missing hold-down bolts fixed the rest. During all this I discovered the source of major leak #1 - a burnt and crispy PS return hose. It had a pinhole leak and was pouring fluid all over. New hoses solved that problem. Once the top of the engine was back on. I did some detailing & cleanup on the vintage "Corvette" valve covers, cleaned & painted the intake, gave the carb an external once-over and replaced all the fluids and filters.

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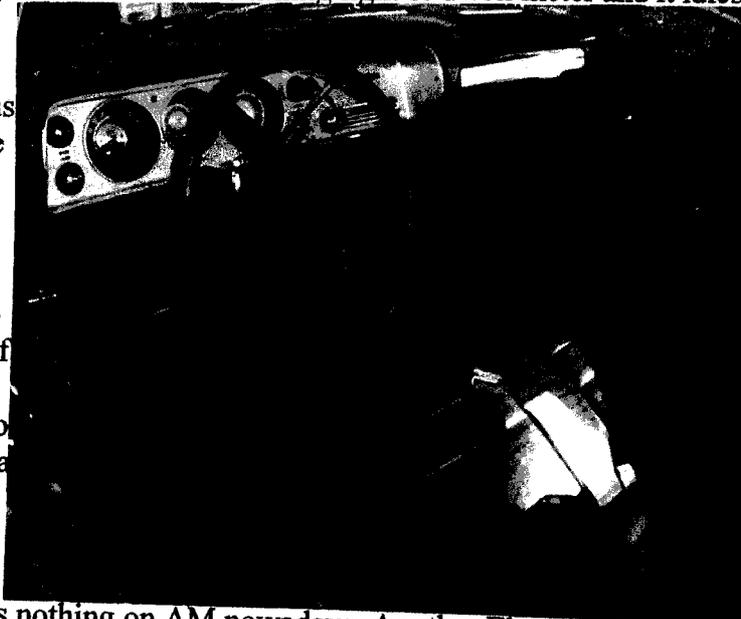
## Continued... John Ds Black 1965 El Camino

While the distributor was out I gave it a "poor man's rebuild". A good cleaning, checking for bushing slop, de-rusting & lubricating the advance mechanism, vacuum advance canister leak check, and new points & condenser set. It was a 40 minute search for my dwell meter, and a real head scratcher to remember how to "do" points. Once new hoses, T-stat, and a coolant fill took care of those potential problems, and during the oil & filter change I discovered the source of major leak #2 - the oil filter canister.

This car still has the old style canister style filter element. It's held in place (and sealed) by what's basically a heavy guage steel bucket with a long bolt, using a square cut O-ring in the engine block. Who knows how long ago it was when whomever changed the oil forgot to remove the O-ring in the block and just stacked the new ring on on top of it!! About a 1/2 hour's worth of digging the petrified/crispy O-ring out of the register, a cleaning, then replacement of the ring & filter element solved major leak #2!

Got it fired up, and it ran like crap! Wouldn't idle, missed, stalled... just ran like crap. After a few tests it was narrowed down to the plug wires. I reused the "original" (nice & new looking AC/Delco Packard) wires and it turns out that 3 were BAD!.. another run to the parts store. New wires, a session with the timing light & dwell meter and it idles @ 600rpm and smooth as a baby's ...you know what.

Now time for the interior and electrical repairs/upgrades. This car had a '64 dash bezel installed. The speedo/guage clusters are interchangeable between '64 & '65, but the bezels are different. What's strange is that the knobs & ignition bezel were correct for a '65. **Someone had gone through the hassle of swapping all the '65 stuff to a crappy condition '64 dash.(?)** Lucky for me I've got a great wife, and for my birthday she bought me a new (re-pop) dash bezel! A few hours of cleaning up the guage cluster & lens, a box of bulbs, and the new dash is in place. I found a used '65 pushbutton AM radio on Ebay for cheap (didn't know if it worked or not) and took a chance. A week later it showed up. I popped the cover off, blew out 40 years of dirt & crud, cleaned & lubed the tuner and crossed my fingers. Hooking it up on the bench (with the



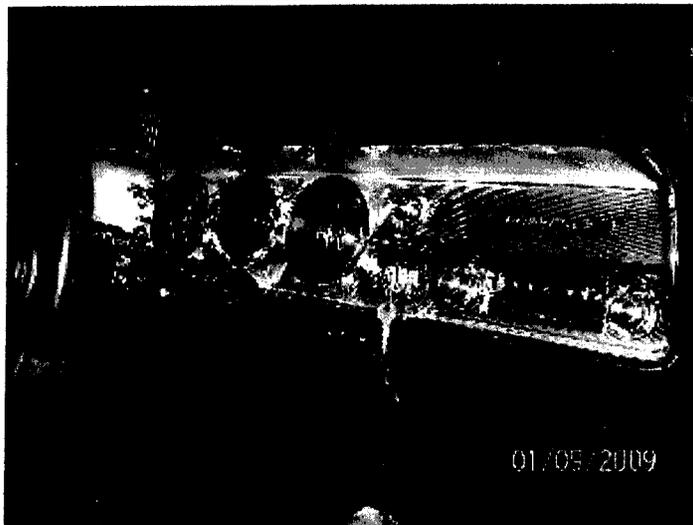
proper 10ohm speaker) and WOW!! It works! Too bad there's nothing on AM nowadays. Another Ebay find was a 4-way hazard flasher setup. It plugs in-between the column harness & the body harness. Installing this was a 10 minute job that turned into a 1-hour one! During installation I found the reason for my PRNDL light not working... the gray wire at the column connector had broken off. So, I had to extract the pin from the connector (15 minute search for my pin extractor tool), solder the broken wire back on the pin, and reinstall. Now I've got 4-ways and a lighted PRNDL. During this whole process about 90% of the annoying clinks & rattles inside where eliminated. Just going over everything with a little "tweak" on the fasteners, and tying up the dash harness worked wonders!

With the dash out I also installed the optional 2-speed washer/wiper system I had scrounged and had it waiting on the shelf. To do the conversion you've got to pull the wiper motor, wiper arms & cowl vent panel. Then exchange the single-speed linkage with the 2-speed linkage, and put it all back together with the 2-speed motor/washer assembly. There's a short "add-on" wiring harness that needs to be plugged in, and routed through the firewall grommet. Another Ebay score was an original washer fluid jug & bracket which completed the system. The dome light didnt work and was a troubleshooting hair puller!! After verifying a working headlight switch & fuse I moved on to the door switches and under-carpet "ribbon" cable. The door switches were dirty & not adjusted properly so they were removed and cleaned up. Several of the female feed connectors on the back of the fuseblock were loose. A few swipes with a scotchbrite, a tweak with a pliers, and those potential gremlins were gone. Someone had drove a screw right through the ribbon cable under the carpet and had corroded so I soldered a jumper wire to fix that problem.

The rear lights were a real mess of poorly done previous repairs and trailer harness damage! At one time the car had a hitch, and our friends at U-Haul type shop did their 10-minute wiring job. The wiring had corroded, strands were broken, and the whole rear lamp harness was basically junk. I wound up making a new harness from the ribbon cable connector to each device.

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## Continued... John Ds Black 1965 El Camino.



Now it was time for some of the fun upgrades. At one of my many sessions at the local "U-Pullit" yard, I found a nice rearview mirror with integral dome/maplights. I already had accumulated a few OEM mirrors for 64/5's and one was broken. I'd had an idea knocking around in my head for an upgrade. By cannibalizing the '65 mirror ball/swivel guts, and drilling a hole through the arm (very scary) I came up with a "modern" rearview, with map lights. The next project was to "save my rear end". Since the rear lighting is dismal on '65's. Another "U-Pullit" excursion was to find some type of 3rd Brake light to work into the car. Nothing I could find would work on the 2-1/2" wide El Camino package tray/shelf, so I had to get creative by using the roof mount 3<sup>rd</sup> brake light off of a Chevy Astro van. I also installed a set of my very own LED taillight kits made just for the 65 El Camino.

Going into buying this car I already had a '64 El Camino that I'd already done a 4 wheel disc brake conversion on. The brake conversion also included a full re-bush with poly bushings, all new Moog steering components, and a fast-ratio steering box (off an '89 Pontiac T/A). (The '64 is about 10 grand and two kids worth of college away from getting "done", so why not get some use out of the parts I've already paid for!) '64's & '65's are identical in this respect, so it was just a hard weekend's thrash to basically exchange the suspension & steering components from one car to the other. This exchange would also include the rear control arms (already boxed) and adding a rear sway bar. But, of course the "bug" hit hard again, and after talking to a few of my "Pro-Touring/G-machine" buddies in our club I was convinced to upgrade the front suspension/steering geometry & springs. New SC&C adjustable upper arms, "Howe" tall ball joints, and new front and rear springs. There's about 4" difference in length, and about 2" in ride-height change (springs & spindle relocation combined). Most of the time from around February '09 to date has been spent just "tinkering". You all know the never ending little projects that pop up, or something that needs cleaning, adjusting, whatever. Tinkering sessions have included: Complete carburetor rebuild. Stock '65 steering wheel restoration & reinstallation. Addition of OEM/GM "Cruise-Master" cruise control (69 to 79 era parts). Conversion to gauge instrument cluster (from idiot lights). Design & fabrication of custom/hidden LED warning lights in the gauge bezels for: Low Fuel, State of Charge, & Temp. Modification of high beam indicator to be dual color – blue for high beam & orange for low beam. Addition of H1 & H4 lighting with relay system.

*By John Delke and Chris Reid.*

### AUGUST MEETING:

Saturday, August 29th, Sunday, Aug 30th  
Hideaway Speedway  
25363 University Ave. N. Isanti, MN. 55040  
Free parking for spectators.  
free overnight camping.

*We are hosting our first ever car show and swap meet. Which will be co-hosted by the Northstar Novas. Itinerary is listed on the right.*

### Upcoming Events:

Saturday 29th- Formal car show. Registration opens at 9am. Judging to be concluded by 2pm with awards at 4pm. Open class plaques awarded for top 20 cars. Gates open to swap meet vendors 8:30-5pm. ¼ scale RC Nascar races in the evening.  
Sunday 30th- Car show continues, swap meet, Gates open 10-5

*If you would like to host a future meeting or if you have an idea for a meeting, please feel free to contact Chris Reid 612-396-1045. Email: Chevelle396guy@msn.com*

## Northstar Chevelle Club officer positions

President: John Sinna.  
Vice-president: Rick Pochmara.  
Secretary: Lori Mcaree.

Events Coordinator: Chris Reid, Ian Mcaree  
Webmaster: John Enga, John Delke.  
Newsletter: Chris Reid.

Treasurer: Terry Didion.

## Club Merchandise For Sale

Northstar Chevelle club has t-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts and hats. All with the Northstar Chevelle Club logo on them. We also have license plates and baby onsies too.

T-shirts: \$15

Hats: \$10

Polo shirts: \$22

Sweatshirts: \$25

Window Decals: \$5

License Plates: Was \$10, still on clearance...\$5!!!!

Baby Onsies: \$15

Membership: \$25/year.

2009 NCC Chevelle calendars.

To order, contact Rick Pochmara: (763)497-7169