

March 2015



People in our hobby almost always have something in common: we're networkers. No, not the computer type (though there are those too), I'm talking the other kind: social networking. Walk through a large car show or swap meet, and you're bound to hear "I know a guy..." or "I have a friend/buddy..." several times. It is part of the culture and nearly impossible to avoid. Sometimes it's between close friends and one is genuinely trying to help the other, maybe passing on the name of a good salesperson or contact at a business. More often than not though, it's part of a conversation that is steadily escalating between some guys one-upping each other.

The best part about being in a club like ours is the ability to connect with other people and getting to know them. Over time, we learn more about each other, and build relationships that strengthen our network. Sometimes we know a guy, sometimes we ARE the guy. That's the way it works. I know I have made several calls over the years to members asking about everything from ants and bugs to HVAC to the obvious car help. I have also helped many others over the years too... and I know I'm not the only one on either side of those.

Many of us belong to more than one club or "networking group". Simple ones like Facebook are actually a good way to connect with others whom you may have never met or are far from each other. Our club has a Facebook page and there are people who are not regularly at meetings or events. You can learn a lot from someone's Facebook page (too much?) but you can also communicate with them in nearly instant time. There are others too, like LinkedIn, that orient more towards the business world, hoping to connect that world together.

Some of us belong in professional network groups, oftentimes called "associations" before that term network was coined. Those are good ways to trade ideas and solve common problems you might be seeing in your industry. Associations like SEMA and PRI (Performance Racing Industry) are all about matching vendors with buyers, typically at their industry trade shows. They are a lot of fun, but along the way you know a ton of networking gets done. After-hour parties, invitations to "meetings" at bars or restaurants from sales people, casual drinks with newly met screen names from online groups, and countless visits right there in vendor booths at the shows all make the industry go 'round. It's a big part of big business.

I'm also part of another kind of group that might be considered part club, part networking group, and part industry association. There isn't really a specific name other than the self named "boys" since we're all guys. "Members" include guys from just about every aspect of the automotive world. What we do is super-secret, but I will say we talk cars, enjoy a good meal, share crazy ideas about cars, and support each other's businesses when we can.

True networking is about trading resources so everyone benefits. Sometimes that means customer lists, maybe it means products, often it is cross-marketing and being able to provide something more to your own customer. In the end, networking is about creating friendships that will more often than not continue after business is completed.

Rats! Chevrolet's Mark IV big-block V-8 turns 50

By: Daniel Strohl, Hemmings Daily

Larger automobile engines have been built. Smaller engines have made more horsepower. A variety of other engines have won more races. Yet few V-8s have offered massive displacement to performance-hungry hordes and taken on such legendary status like the Chevrolet Mark IV big-block V-8 has. Fifty years after its introduction, the big-block remains as well respected as ever and worth a look at what made it more than just a supersized version of the ubiquitous small-block.



L88

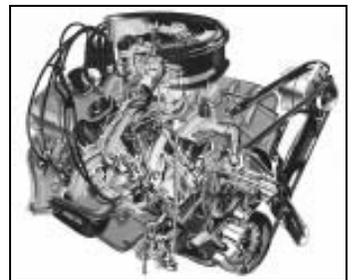
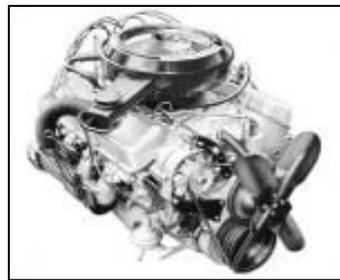
Used to seeing 409s and their distinctive rocker arm covers power Chevrolets around stock-car racing tracks for the previous few years, everybody in attendance at the 1963 Daytona 500 had to wonder just what Junior Johnson and a few other Chevrolet racers had under their hoods, propelling them to speeds of up to 165 MPH. It didn't help much that the Chevrolet racers called it a Mystery Motor and left it at that. As it turned out, though the engine looked nothing like a 409 or any other W-series V-8, it shared a basic bottom-end design and bore centers (though not the overall block design) with the first-generation Chevrolet big-block and had been designed as an evolution of the she's-so-fine engine. Dubbed the Mark II, it came in at 427 cubic inches and introduced a canted-valve cylinder head that helped the engine breathe better and that moved the wedge-shaped combustion chamber from the cylinder chamber (as in the 409) to the cylinder head. It also did away with the angled deck of the W-series V-8 and made the deck perpendicular to the bores. GM's withdrawal from racing in 1963 kept Chevrolet's engineers from producing more than a few dozen of the Mark II big-blocks for racers and thus from supporting those racers who continued to use the Mystery Motor, but development continued on the big-block as a street engine within the halls of GM. A Mark III version reportedly used larger bore centers and was never prototyped (alternately, former Chevrolet engineer Bill Howell claimed the Mark III designation was to have been applied to Packard's V-8, should GM have bought that tooling), leading to the Mark IV.



*Editor's note:
Maybe THIS is
where the term
Porcupine block
came from???*

Photos courtesy GM media

Based on ideas proposed by Corvair engine designer Robert Benzinger, a team consisting of Richard Keinath, Herbert Good, William Polkinghorne, Fred Frincke, Denny Wade, and Cal Davis began designing an engine with high-flowing heads as a priority over valvetrain packaging. Similar to the Mark II, the Mark IV used a so-called porcupine head with the staggered and canted valves operated by pushrods and stamped rocker arms, but it also used a stouter crankshaft and bottom end with larger bearing surfaces and four-bolt main caps for the more powerful versions. Chevrolet dubbed it the Turbo-Jet and introduced it in 1965, at first only as a 396-cubic-inch engine available in the Corvette, full-size cars (replacing the 409 partway through the model year), and the limited-edition Chevelle Z16. For the following year, Chevrolet bored out the 396 to bring a 427 into the Mark IV family and began offering it in full-sizes and Corvettes. Though corporate edict forbade installing anything larger than 400 cubic inches in intermediates and compacts—and thus restricting the Chevelle to the 396 as a top engine—plenty of dealerships and tuners found success swapping 427s for 396s in Chevelles, Camaros and Novas throughout the late 1960s. That edict would come to an end in 1970, the peak of the muscle car era in Detroit, when Chevrolet bumped the Mark IV big-block to 454 cubic inches.



Photos courtesy GM media

While muscle car fanatics know those three variants of the Mark IV—and their multitudinous designations: L78, L36, L88, L89, LS6, ZL1—by heart, Chevrolet also built a 402-cubic-inch version (a bored-out 396 offered from 1969 through 1972) and a 366-cubic-inch version (a tall-deck truck engine offered from the 1960s through the 1990s) as well as a 496-cubic-inch version (another truck engine offered from 2001 through 2009) and 502-cubic-inch and 572-cubic-inch versions (available only through GM's performance parts catalog). In passenger cars, the Mark IV lasted through 1976, but as indicated above, the Mark IV lived on afterward in both light-duty and heavy-duty trucks and vans, eventually incorporating a number of updates to become the Vortec 7400 and Vortec 8100 in 1996. Production continued until December 2009.

Like the small-block Chevrolet, the Mark IV big-block made its way under the hood of more than just Chevrolet and GMC products. A number of Can-Am cars, including the Chaparral 2F and McLaren M8 series, used 427s, as did the Iso Grifo 7-Litre, but perhaps the most widespread use of the Mark IV big-block V-8 (next to its use in boat and drag racing and in street rods) was in commercial applications, most notably powering transit buses, motorhomes, and even the Russian-built T-98 Kombat armored off-road vehicle. Though no longer in production (at least not for installation in new cars), the Mark IV big-block Chevrolet V-8 remains one of the most supported engines on the performance aftermarket and a staple of GM's crate engine program.



LS6

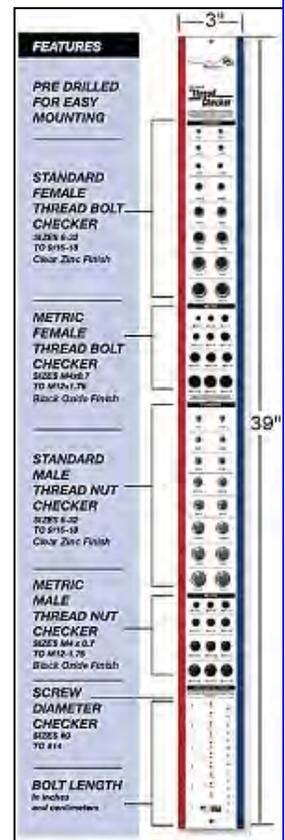
Cool Tool? I found this tool on the net last month and thought to myself “Really? Why would you need something like that? Just match what you need up to one you have...” Then I realized that A: not everyone has a wide assortment of nuts and bolts and B: even if you do, it’s not always that simple to know what it actually is when you need more. Most hardware store chains have some sort of thing attached to the shelf, but what happens when you’re in the garage? Over the years, I have collected a couple different versions of nut and bolt sizing tools. Some are simple plastic boards with the threads cut onto them and diameter sizes bored into the middle. I have a couple that are metal, and mounted on a picot like feeler gauges. Those work pretty good, but none measure nuts well.

This is where **The Original Thread Checker** comes in.



They also offer just inch or metric gauge checkers in separate groups in case you’re never going to work on “a damn foreign” car. Both of these offer even more sizes than the combo kit.

Prefer the style used at those hardware stores in the nice convenient wall mount design? Of course, they offer that too. At just over 3 feet tall, you can’t miss it. They even offer a lug nut and stud checker too.



The Combo (Inch & Metric) Thread Checker™ is an accurate and easy-to-use thread identifier for both nuts and bolts. Each individual gauge features a male threaded stud on one end and a female threaded hole on the other. The Thread Checker is especially well suited for distinguishing between similar inch and metric threads. Conveniently assembled onto a wire loop, it's the perfect portable solution! Hang it on your shop wall or store it in your tool box for safe keeping.

The Thread Checker, also known as a Thread Identifier or Thread Verifier is a great addition for any Home, Hobby, or Inventor's Work Shop; Auto, Motorcycle, Marine, ATV or RV Repair Shop; Heavy Equipment Repair Shop, Military Equipment Repair Station, Machine Shop, Fabricating Shop, Assembly Department, Production Department or Quality Inspection Station!

You can rest assured, these tools are made for the long haul. Manufactured from grade 12L14 steel with the thread sizes permanently stamped onto each gauge, it will take some serious heavy duty use before we get the opportunity to fill your next order. **Proudly made in the USA.**

Features:

- Each size has a nut and bolt checker on the same gauge
- Thread sizes are permanently stamped onto each gauge (inch in red, metric in white)
- Inch gauges are clear zinc plated, metric gauges are black oxide
- The individual gauges rotate freely on the wire cable for fast thread verification
- Wire cable with loop for convenient hanging

SWTC-26 Size Specifications:

Inch: 6-32, 8-32, 10-24, 10-32, 1/4-20, 1/4-28, 5/16-18, 5/16-24, 3/8-16, 3/8-24, 7/16-14, 7/16-20, 1/2-13, 1/2-20

Metric: M4x0.7, M5x0.8, M6x1.0, M7x1.0, M8x1.0, M8x1.25, M10x1.0, M10x1.25, M10x1.5, M12x1.25, M12x1.5, M12x1.75



Have you ever heard of the GM Heritage Center? It's essentially GM's private collection of vehicles, and all are firsts, one-of-a-kinds, or historically significant pieces. Many are technological experiments that were never intended to be more than a platform for innovation. With over 100 years of history, GM has amassed 600+ vehicles (and counting).



Though it's not open to the public, groups of 30 or more can tour the facility for \$10 each Monday-Friday. The fee changes to \$20 on Saturday. Plan on 1.5 hours for the tour. Cameras ARE welcome, but the cars cannot be touched. Designed as a special event venue,



Fast Facts

- 81,000 sq. ft. facility 60,000 sq. ft. main exhibition hall
- 600 sq. ft. conference room
- 800 Amp. Power availability
- Programmable lighting system
- 50 laminate-top 72" round tables available on site
- 500 laminate/chrome chairs available on site
- 19 decorative stainless steel tables (32" round) on site
- 9 decorative stainless steel rectangular tables (55") on site
- 10 decorative stainless steel square tables (36") on site
- 2 Plasma presentation screens (60')
- 9x12 elevated projection presentation screen
- Wireless microphone system
- Podium
- Parking for 140 vehicles on site
- Caterer's staging area adjacent to main hall. Direct outside access through full-height overhead door

Event Coordinator: gmhc@gm.com

it is also available for groups and organizations to hold their function in a unique facility. The Heritage Center displays about 200 vehicles at one time, along with artifacts which are all displayed to convey the history of General Motors.



1967 Elky and 1969 Chevelle at GMHC