October 2016

The '67 Super Sports by Chevrolet

NORTHSTAR CHEVELLE CLUB

MINNESOTA'S '64 - '87 CHEVELLE and EL CAMINO CLUB
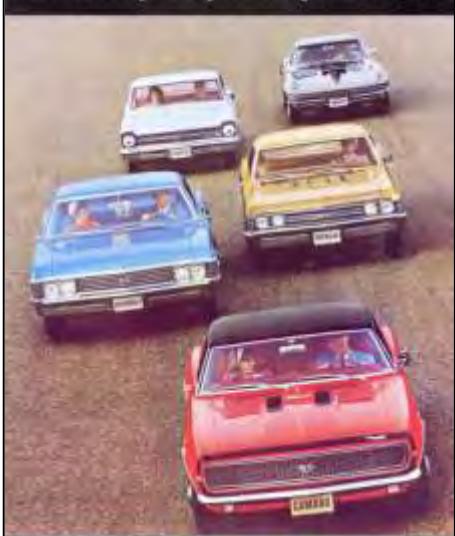
October is my favorite month of the year. This is the month that it's not too hot to get things done, but not too cold to wrap up the outside stuff for the year. Sleeping with the windows open is awesome, and the cool, brisk air just feels right. It's time to get all those outside projects wrapped up before the snow flies, and time to get in those last few miles on a fall cruise before we put the toys into hibernation. Even if you're just out going on a fall "color run" to look at leaves, hitting an apple orchard (I saw Mike S last weekend at one), or picking up a pumpkin at a farm, keep an eye out for the other car guys and gals. I love seeing them out for a drive and not just being shown off at a show, they get used.

For my last 3 newsletters, I am going to change the format a little bit. I would like to start by taking everyone through a "how it's done" session, showing what the basics look like, and how I arrange the material. Back when Derek did our newsletters and they were printed and mailed out, I'm sure some archaic program was used-probably something like Microsoft Word. It's what was available at the time, and did a decent job. When Chris Reid took them over, technology had changed, and though I don't know for sure, I bet he used a more modern version of Word too. When ZMan took them over, I could only guess what he used, but it looks a lot like Word. This is the first era of newsletters where we uploaded them directly to our website and not a scanned copy of the printed layout. I wonder if someone still has the original newsletters from 2004-mid 2009 still available to upload?
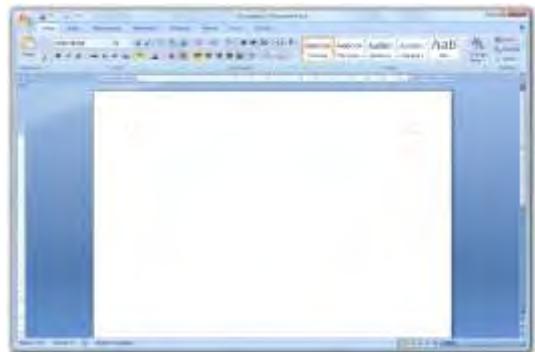
In 2010 when I took over as club President, I also took on the role as newsletter guy. I had never done anything like it before, and not only wanted the challenge, but also wanted to use it as a tool to help guide our club at a time when we needed some direction and refocus. Anyone care to guess what program I used to write that first newsletter? Yup, Word. There are several better programs out there, some are even free, but this does the job for me, and it's pretty easy.

The basics every newsletter should have include the month(s), the club name/logo, and information. After that, it's all lipstick and costume. Personally, I like the page border, and found that under the tabs: File-Page setup-Layout-Borders, you can select different colors, styles, or even patterns to use as a border. I found that I would also use the "draw a line" tool to create subject breaks and match the border to keep the "articles" separate.

Every newsletter has pictures. Luckily in the computer age, we can simply just "right click" on a picture to save it or make a copy and directly paste it into the word document. Now it can get a little tricky if you want to put that picture in a specific space on that page. Here's my process:

1. Either copy/paste a picture to the page or go to the Word toolbar and click: Insert-picture-from file and select your picture.
2. Click on the picture that came up, right click, then choose Format
3. Select the Layout tab, choose Square, and then OK.
4. Your picture will most likely have to be made smaller, so click the picture, then click and hold the little circle on a corner. Drag that circle toward the center of the picture until you get the desired size. You can make the picture taller or narrower too.
5. Need a border for the picture? Go back to format, click Colors and Lines, and then choose an outline color. There are several options. Here's a sample of what I chose:
6. Lastly, you want to put that picture somewhere on the page. Click and hold, then drag the picture to its new place.

The next part of setting up the newsletter would be creativity. Find articles or create your own. I did plenty of cut/paste articles, but make sure you give credit to the writer. I get a ton of online daily/weekly/monthly email newsfeeds from various sources so sometimes I will save something to use later. There aren't any hard and fast rules to what you can include, aside from it being family-friendly. I like using club events, personal projects, other shows, and other websites for ideas, trade shows, or whatever I come across. You can take an idea, do a web search, and get tons of information from several sources, including manufacturer's websites.

Lastly, you need to think about layout. When I make a newsletter, I think about the colors and layout to be visually interesting. Simple tricks include using easy to read *formatting of the letters*, *colors, bold type, and size.* You can also add colored shapes to use as background for text boxes which helps make things stand out separate from plain black and white print. I originally did the newsletters to be like that: newsletters, but over time I found myself wanting to evolve into something more like a magazine insert, so I played around with what's called the "white space" on the page. Arranging pictures, text boxes, using lines to divide areas, and playing with colors, I was able to make it visually appealing. See the picture above? It just stands out, because there isn't anything else next to it, plus the border is distracting. On a positive side, I have had that picture for 6 years, just looking for a place to use it.

How long does creating the newsletters take? Really, as much time as you want to put into it. You can delete the previous month's info or use a saved template, and just start plugging in words and pictures as you see fit. There really aren't any rules, and it's nice to be able to have the design control for everything. I probably spend 6 hours per month if I am honest about it, though it really varies. Most of the time, it is done the last weekend of the month right after I wake up on Saturday and Sunday mornings. I do save some stuff over time, which makes it easier to plug information in, and I get distracted by the TV a lot too. Real time to create: probably 2 hours. I have found that creating your own content takes a little more time since you have to actually type it out and include the pictures as you arrange it, but cutting and pasting an entire online article can take nearly as long since you have to add their images separately, adapt the formats, etc, but it's also a good way to share with everyone.

How would you do the newsletter? Honestly, I don't think anyone in the club would be kicking and screaming about how it looks or how much or little is included. The format isn't set in stone, change is good. It's nice to get something from your club every month that adds something more to being part of our club. Best I can recall, there have only been 5 newsletter "editors" since 2004. We need someone to step up and try their hand at it, and you would be surprised at how easy it actually is. I can help guide you through the process too.

Cruise for Troops:

As a coordinator for Cruise for Troops, I would like to say Thank You to our club who donated $500 and to those who came out and participated. I don't have a tally on dollars raised since a few bills are outstanding, but we topped 800 participating vehicles and easily doubled that for attendance. Not too bad for the iffy weather with the threat of rain. Next year there will be changes, some stemming from hiccups we experienced, some from the site due to possible construction, and some in a format change of Cruise for Troops itself. More on that in 2017.

Brad's '57 Chevy passing a fallen soldier memorial, in front of USA-1 Monster Truck, next to a Firetruck flying the Stars and Stripes. 'Merica!

What's coming up???

Check out CarShowNationals or Autoswalk for the remaining shows of the year. Our club has its annual Chevelles and Shooting event down at Derek's on Saturday October 8th, 10am. It is done in a safe environment, open to everyone, and members are willing to help teach about firearms. Post on our club forums if you have questions, it's a fun time.

November is the official club election meeting. This is an important meeting and has a good turnout. It is on 11/19. See website for details. We will elect new officers and select support roles such as newsletter editor. The club's bylaws are available on our website:

http://www.northstarchevelles.com/aboutus.html