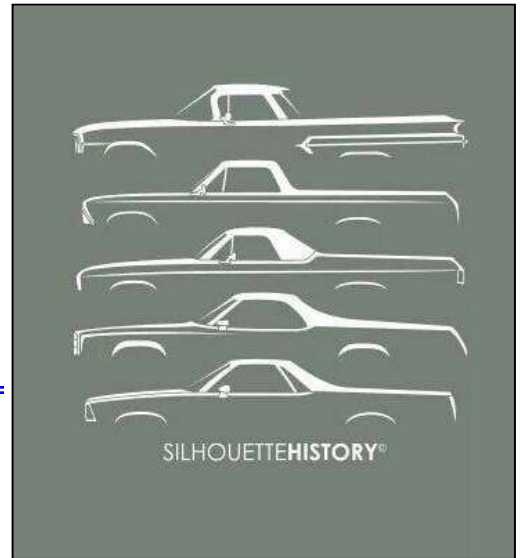


August 2016



Street Machine Nationals 2016.... Another one has come and gone. It felt different this year. I know we were short some member's cars, but we had a couple new ones with us this year too. For me, it was the first time in about 2 years I put some real miles on my car. If you've been following the newsletters over that time, you'll know that it has been a long process for me. The culmination was Street Machine Nationals this year.

I got a call Thursday morning while I was on my way to help secure our space. It was Joy at Norm's Tire. She wanted to let me know my wheels had finally arrived, and that I could pick them up on my way home. These were the final piece of this long term project. I picked them up that night, put them on after dinner, and cranked down the coilovers to set the ride height.

With no test drive to double check clearances, I hopped in the Chevelle Friday at 2:45am, and headed out to Como Ave. Man, they felt beautiful. The ride was smooth, there wasn't any vibration, and aside from a slight rub turning hard right, they cleared. By cleared, I mean there was a 1/4" on the left rear and MAYBE an 1/8" on the right. Oddly enough, the rubbing came from a place on the inner quarter that was previously pushed in. Some light tapping and it's plenty clear now. I also trimmed the right outer quarter lip just to make sure that it's a full 1/8" clear now. Hopefully that's enough. Looking at the inside, there's well over an inch clearance.

Why does all this matter? I haven't had much trust in my car lately. I had brake issues, the shifter broke a week before the show, and after doing all the parts swapping, I really hadn't had

any seat time to shake out the bugs. Problems solved. After driving to the show Friday and Saturday, the only concern I had was gas mileage. This past weekend, I put on another 80 miles round trip and it just reinforced my feelings. Yes, there are a few things I need to sort out, but I'm really feeling good about driving my car again. I hope everyone else can say the same.

Next meeting: USA-1 Monster Truck headquarters. August 13th 10am. See the Member's only section, in the scheduled meetings area for address and details.

Cool Tool: Wheel Fit by Wheelworks

A couple weeks ago I was introduced to a cool tool while getting measured for new wheels. It's called the Wheel Fit and it's pretty cool. The idea is that this tool can simulate all the wheel sizes and backspacing you would need so there's no more guessing what size to order. You assemble it according to wheel diameter, then width, and lastly you place the offset. It allows you to also place a tire on it for better visualization and ensures you clear everything.



They offer several versions of the tool, but the one most car guys would use runs about \$400. It's a lot of cash, but for a tire shop like Norm's who does a ton of street rod and musclecar business, it's well worth the investment. This is one of the main reasons why I went to a pro like Nick at Norm's vs just following what "everyone" on the internet says. Yes, it cost me a couple hours of time since the size we were trying to fit meant the wheels were special order, but the tires were at the warehouse.

They sent a driver over to get the prospective tire, and before I left, I saw exactly how it would fit. Once the wheels and tires came in, they fit just like expected. Considering I have swapped the rear end, all the suspension pieces, and the right quarter had been hit a couple decades ago, it was well worth the time to assure that I didn't have to do this twice.



They used a real front wheel to see fit. 245/45R17 on a modern Rally wheel.



This is what happens when your trunk is small.



295/45R18 vs 275/60R15
Yeah, bigger IS better!



Before and after. The picture on the left is circa 2004 or so. I liked the stance back then, but times have changed and I think it looks a lot better now. It's only money right???



I'm not the best mechanic; I have done some pretty sketchy repairs on my winter beaters. Here's a few that come to mind:

1967 Chev C-20 truck. Mounted a radio in the glove box. Somehow a power wire was able to ground out on the radio frame and started a small smoke show. Smelled bad, but over quick.

1981 LeSabre. Someone popped the driver's door lock cylinder in, and tore the metal around it. They also popped the quarter glass in and tore the dash up to get the radio out. Since I only paid \$175 for the car, I wasn't going to invest in much. I cut a piece of plexiglass for the window and used a piece of tin to cover the cylinder hole. Then I riveted it in place.

Same car. The heater temp control was actually a ball valve tee'd into the heater hose. Turn one way for more hot water into the core, turn the other and it closes it off. Regulate it a little more by opening a window if it's not convenient to stop.

Same car. My soon-to-be wife shuts the passenger door and the glass drops down but doesn't break. Pulled the panel off, wedge a 2x2 under the window since the regulator broke, and use some plumber's strapping to hold it in place. Lastly, unplug the power window switch.

When I sold that car, it wouldn't start so AAA towed it. I got a ride home and came back the next day with the title in hand. After pulling the speakers (for the now non-existent radio) and grabbing my tools from the trunk, I signed over the title to the cashier at the Amoco station it was parked at. The tranny slipped and one tire had gone flat overnight. I got 2 winters out of it. Everyone has stories like that.... Here are some pictures I found of fixes that are beyond:

