



## ***The View From The Top***

*by Doug Warren, President*

I'm sure many Camaro Club members are thinking about tucking their Camaros away for their winter hibernation, if they have not already done so! And, those that have winter projects planned are busy buying parts and planning their order of action. But just because the weather hasn't been particularly Camaro Friendly lately, doesn't mean that your Camaro Club has gone idle for the winter. No, not at all.

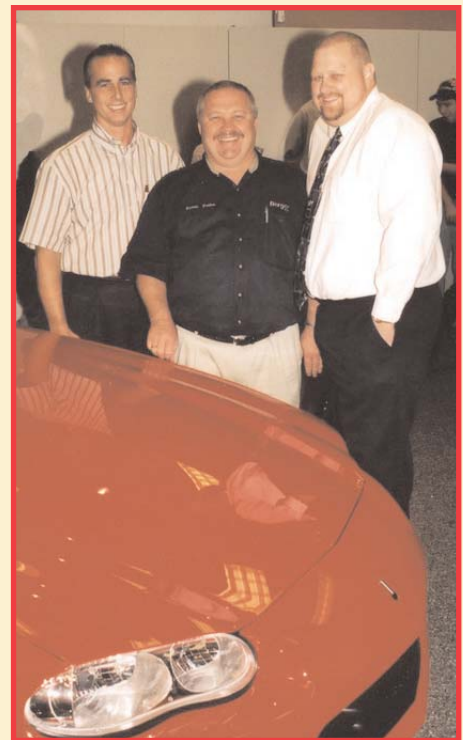
Our November Club meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 3 @ 12:00 Noon. We will once again meet at Berger Chevrolet for the business portion of our meeting. After the meeting we will perhaps try for another Fall Color Tour, weather permitting. With the uncertainty of the weather, we will make the call on that, after the meeting. So, let's see you all at the meeting, and we'll see what works out!

Our December meeting, as tradition would have it, will be combined with our annual Camaro Club Christmas Party. This year, Roberta and Steve VanHarn have graciously offered to host the Christmas party at their new home in Hamilton, Michigan. This location isn't as centrally located as usual, but I'm sure the extra drive for some of our members will be well worth the effort. Hamilton is located on M-40 between Holland and Allegan. We'll have maps and directions available prior to the Christmas Party. The date for the Christmas Party will be Saturday evening, December 7th. The Party will start around 7pm and go until whenever. Roberta has provided us with the names of some motels in the area, for those that may not want to make a long, late drive home. There is a Budget Host motel in Allegan (about 5-7 miles from the VanHarn's). Their rooms start at \$50 for 1 queen bed. The most expensive room has a Jacuzzi, and is \$95. Their phone number is: 616-673-6622. There is also a Holiday Inn about 12-14 miles away

*(Continued on page 2)*

## ***New Member Profiles....***

WMCC is very proud to have Marc and Jennifer Gembinski as new members. Marc bought the last available Camaro through Kruse auctions in September. (GM arranged to have the car auctioned with proceeds going to charity.)



**Matt Berger, Denny Barker and Marc Gembinski with Marc's Z/28.**

The car was delivered through Berger at a special October 4 event attended by Scott Settlemire, representatives from Kruse, along with many WMCC and EMCC members and guests.

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*(The View From The Top, from page 1)*  
(in Holland) starting at \$92 a night. You could also call Roberta for more information: 616-751-2706. We will have more specific information at this month's meeting, and in the next month's newsletter.

Speaking of the Christmas Party: We have had quite a few new members join or visit the Camaro Club over the last year. Many of you have gotten pretty involved right away, but some of you seem to be a little bit shy. Let me encourage EVERYONE to attend the Christmas Party. It's a nice, casual way to get to know the rest of the Club members. So, come on! Don't be shy; let's see you at the PARTY!



### **NORTHERN COLOR TOUR**

Once again, those that went with the group to the Traverse City area a couple of weeks back, had another great time. Everyone should mark their calendars for the second weekend in October, 2003, and join us for this get-away weekend. It will be a weekend you won't soon forget. This year we got a chance to meet a new Club member that just happens to live in Lake Leelanau. His name is Steve Plamondon. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Steve into the Club, and thank him for taking us under his wing, and leading us through some incredible scenery and some amazing roads in the Traverse City area. Steve instantly fit into our group. After 5 minutes, it seemed like he has been a Club member for

years. Again this year, we had a little rain, and even some huge sleet pellets on Sunday morning! But that didn't dampen the spirits of our group (or



**Ray Cochran supplied these photos from the Northern Color Tour. Members enjoyed a colorful sunset on the Leelanau Peninsula. Talk about picturesque.... Camaros positioned for a quick getaway along the shores of Torch Lake.**

stop the burnout contest). Thanks to the handy construction abilities of John Smith, we got to enjoy sitting around a camp fire both Friday and Saturday nights. Very enjoyable and sometimes gut wrenching, when the stories got just too funny!

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

November 23-24 are the dates for this year's Fall Chevy/Vettefest at McCormick Place in Chicago. Our sponsor, Berger Chevrolet will be having a feature display at the show this year. If you can find the time to cruise to Chicago that weekend, I think you'll like what you see!

On a personal note: Now, you should be sitting down when you read this! I have been starting to buy some parts, and planning some work, on my 1974 Z28 project! It's only taken me about 16 years to get fired up about working on this car again (I didn't want to make any rash decisions!). Don't expect to see the Z on the road in the spring, but there will be at least some progress.

Anyway, I'll see you all at the Club meeting on November 3rd!

-- **DOUG**

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## ***Barker Attains 'Legendary' Status***

Our own Dennis Barker has been made an Honorary Member of the Camaro Legends Tour. The presentation was made by Scott Settlemire, assistant brand manager, Camaro/Corvette, during last saleable Camaro event held at Berger in early October.

"When you really think about it, Dennis is a part of Camaro history," Settlemire said recently. "Thirty years from now, when they're writing another book about the Camaro, Dennis will be in that book -- as part of the 'legendary' Berger Camaros."

"We at Chevy thought that there are a lot of people that put a lot of time into the Camaro hobby. But Dennis is just a really 'stand out' kinda guy. Not only has he sold a lot of Camaros, but he's always offering to help us in any way possible."

"Because of his dedication, we decided that he should be a permanent honorary member of the Camaro Legends Tour. He joins B.J. and Betty Hanback, Scott Blewitt, Andy Archer, and Pat and Karen Lewis as part of this tour. And while the tour will be on hiatus for a while, you can bet it will return!"

"In addition to selling a lot of Camaros, I've never seen Dennis in a bad mood. He's always happy to see you -- always happy to talk about Camaros -- and of course, always happy to show you how to put a set of Goodyears on the asphalt and then make 'em disappear!"



## ***Profiles, from page 1***

Marc's car, a bright red Z/28, was presented with full documentation of its production, purchase and journey from the Ontario plant where it was built. Denny Barker and Matt Berger rolled the car cover off on what is guaranteed to be a special and valuable Camaro.

The Gembinski's reside in Imlay City, MI, a small town off I-69 between Flint and Port Huron.



We are pleased to now call B.J. and Betty Hanback members of our Camaro family. B.J. has spent the last three years driving for Display Car Services, the contract hauler for The Camaro Legends Tour. B.J. estimates he's logged about 36,000 miles this year alone.



**WMCC VP Gary Crippen presents B.J. and Betty membership goodies.**

B.J. and Betty took delivery of a Brickyard convertible October 4 during the "Last Saleable Camaro" event at Berger.

"These Camaro folks are great people" says B.J.

The Hanbacks reside in Madison Heights, a suburb of Detroit. We hope they visit us often.

## ***Have You Ever Wondered How The Berger SS Came To Be?***

GMMG, Inc., based in Marietta, Georgia, is a fast growing company since its inception in early 1999. Company President, Matt Murphy, Jr. was born the same year the first Camaro was produced and we're convinced they share the same blood line.

Matt and WMCC President Doug Warren became acquainted in the mid to late 80's after Doug wrote an article for the United States Camaro Club magazine, entitled, "Paper Camaros". It seemed that Matt shares a passion

for collecting any Camaro "paper" (sales brochures, magazine ads, promotional material, and the like) just like Doug does, so Matt contacted Doug after the article came out. They corresponded for several years, trading rare items and giving tips to each other on where to find certain ads to enhance their collections.

Fast forward to 1996. Doug & Anita had ordered one of the first 1996 Camaro Z/28-SS Camaros that were built, after SLP Engineering had shown the prototype Camaro Z28-SS at Camaro Superfest in July of 1995. The last of the early Camaro SS's were built in the 1972 model year, so when SLP reintroduced the SS in the fall of 1995, it was an immediate sensation. Of course, Doug ordered their new Camaro and had it delivered by Berger Chevrolet (where else). Matt worked at SLP Engineering at the time as their South East Zone Rep., and helped launch the 4th generation SS Camaros. Matt finally met Doug and Anita in person at the Circle City Celebration, Camaro show hosted by the Central Indiana

Camaro Club in Indianapolis in the spring of 1996. Matt was there representing SLP Engineering, Doug and Anita were just enjoying driving their new Camaro Z28-SS, and hanging out with other fine Camaro enthusiasts!

Through the friendship that Doug & Matt had developed with each other, and through Doug's association with Berger Chevrolet, Matt decided he would like to have his 1997 LT-4 Camaro SS delivered through Berger, the only "Super Car Dealer" that still existed. No one knew

at that time what a great relationship would soon blossom from this meeting. Berger Chevrolet and the WMCC delivered Matt's #100 of 100 LT-4 SS Camaro to Matt in grand fashion. They had many members of the WMCC out at the dealership the day of the delivery, along with the



**Great things happen when Camaro enthusiasts come together.... (left to right) Matt Berger, Scott Settlemyre and Matt Murphy.**

Grand Rapids Press and others members of the local media.

Julie and Denny Barker bought their 1999 SS Camaro in the fall of 1998 and attended their first Camaro Superfest in 1999. Berger Chevrolet's 75th Anniversary was coming up in the year 2000 and in the back of Denny's mind, he wanted Berger to do something special with the Camaro to celebrate the dealership's 75th Anniversary.

At the 1999 Camaro Superfest, WMCC's Pat Lewis introduced Denny to Scott Settlemyre, assistant brand manager for Camaro. Although Denny had heard a great deal about Scott, they had never met him before. Denny did not realize at that time what a great friendship and working relationship the two would later have.

*(Continued)*



**The black tail panel, Berger “Prescribed Power” and silver die cast “by Berger” badges help to quickly distinguish this SS from it’s factory built brothers.**

Before the weekend was done, Denny asked Scott what he thought about possibilities of Chevrolet and Berger working on a very special Camaro to celebrate Berger’s 75 years in business. Scott thought it sounded like a great idea.

A short time later the North East Ohio Camaro Club Fall Classic, Scott and Denny talked again and Scott agreed that 75th Anniversary Project could be put together together. Denny spoke with Matt Berger about the project and the ideas started to fly. Berger did say from the beginning that if we are doing a special Camaro with Berger’s name on it "IT HAS TO HAVE HORSEPOWER AND CANNOT BE JUST A FANCY STRIPE PACKAGE".

Little did we know but Scott had already made a call to Matt Murphy about this dealership in Grand Rapids that wanted to put together a special Camaro Project. Matt Murphy had been tweaking Camaros since his days with SLP and was very happy to hear Berger Chevrolet was looking for somebody to do a special Camaro project with.

After numerous telephone calls between Matt Berger, Matt Murphy and Denny, the team felt they had a package we could work with. So Berger purchased a 2000 SS Camaro and sent it to Matt for him to begin the research & development phase.

This was November of 1999 and the project was on its way. Matt worked hard to get the right pieces to get the HP and the look we were all after. Some things worked and some didn’t. Denny talked with Matt and they decided to have the Prototype done and "debut" it at the WMCC Christmas Party of 1999. Well, Matt was still dyno-ing the car at 7:30 PM the night before our party and he was still in Marietta, GA. "LOTS OF TIME" as he would say. Well lo and behold; Matt was in Berger’s driveway with PR1 at 4:30 pm on the next day, the day of the party. Denny had talked with John & Christi Falkenhagen about hiding the car in their garage (where the party was going to be) and that is what they did. The debut of the 2000 75th Anniversary SS Camaro was a HUGE SUCCESS. And the rest is history!

"I swear if you look up Camaro in the dictionary there will be a picture of Matt Murphy," said Denny. "He is the Ultimate Camaro Connoisseur. He knows the most about Camaros of anybody I have ever met. He has been a perfect match to be a partner in this project with Berger Chevrolet. He has the ultimate "keen eye" for design as to what will work with these Camaros and why!"

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The partnership has been a great one for Berger Chevrolet and Matt Murphy.

Matt & GMMG have had numerous very successful projects since we started the Berger Anniversary SS project. GMMG is the builder of not only the Berger SS Camaros, but also the Hot Rod Magazine Camaro, Intimidator SS Camaro, Tom Henry Racing Camaro, the Performance Edition 35th Anniversary Camaro SS and also the Black Bird Firebird for Carl Black Pontiac. Matt worked personally with Dale & Teresa Earnhardt on the Intimidator SS Camaro. Scott Settlemire put Earnhardt in touch with



Matt because Dale wanted to build a Camaro "that would kick Jack Roush's Mustangs ass".

Sadly, Dale did get to see the finished product or drive it before his untimely death.

Now Matt and his talented employees are hard at work on the Camaro Supercar Project (code name ZL1) in which they are building '69 ZO6 Corvette motored Camaros that are being sold nationwide. Chevrolet has worked very closely with Matt on this project and that shows what

confidence Chevrolet has in the product GMMG produces. The grand total for all of these projects added together is 460 cars. In some ways, that seems like a lot, but in the overall "big picture" of the car business, or even the Camaro part of it, it really isn't that many cars. If you are lucky enough to own one of these very special F-bodies, you

should consider yourself to be very fortunate, indeed.

Matt Murphy and his whole staff at GMMG, Inc. are a bunch of dedicated, hard working F-Body Gear heads. They are GREAT PEOPLE building a GREAT PRODUCT and Berger Chevrolet is very proud

to be a partner with them. Matt and his staff welcome enthusiasts to visit their facility anytime you are in Georgia.

This story just goes to show you, that you never know what the future holds when you make a new friend. This friendship turned into something pretty special.

-- Doug Warren and Denny Barker contributed to this article. Next month, we'll visit Matt's shop.

### All Camaro / Chevrolet Events:

Nov 3 WMCC Camaro Club Meeting @ Meet at Berger to start a possible Southern Color Tour  
Dec 7 WMCC Annual Camaro Club Christmas Party – Meeting – see "From the Top" for info.  
Jan 5 WMCC Camaro Club Meeting @ Berger Chevrolet  
Feb 2 WMCC Camaro Club Meeting @ Berger Chevrolet

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Nov 23-24 Fall Chevy/Vettefest at McCormick Place-North, Chicago, IL  
Dec 1 Super Sunday Indy, Swap Meet- car sale, Indiana State Fair Grounds, Indianapolis, IN  
Jan 5 Super Sunday Indy, Swap Meet- car sale, Indiana State Fair Grounds, Indianapolis, IN  
Jan 11-20 North American International Auto Show – Cobo Hall – Detroit, MI  
Jan 17-19 37th Annual Autorama – Cleveland, OH  
Jan 31-Feb 2 40th Annual Autorama – Dayton, OH

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## *Minutes Of WMCC's October Meeting*

*In Attendance: Doug Warren; John & Christi Falkenhagen; Ray & Kyle Cochran; Amy Kugel & Kenya; Gib & Tammy Loudon; Dennis, Robert and Amanda Barker; Diane Blean & Paul Struble; Gary, Shelley & Ashley Crippin; Brent Findley; Karen & Patrick Lewis, Scott Blewitt*

The first bit of business was an announcement of the arrival of our new portable Club computer. It still needs to be loaded with programs, so is not really up and running yet.

Next was the report on the Friday night activities at Berger where the Last Saleable Camaro was 'delivered' to Marc & Tammy Gembinski of Imlay City. They are now members of our Club, complete with T-shirts, nametags and newsletters. WCA also recognized them with a membership and T-shirts. Scott Settlemire, product manager, had a bag of goodies, which included "documentation" and a framed copy of the newspaper who's front page featured a photo of Scott and Marc and the stand in car on the front page..

Of course Berger Chevrolet also had T-shirt and sweatshirts for them. A representative from Kruse Auction house had a collage of photos made of him while he was bidding to help him remember the event.

The 'review' of the Bowling Green, Ky. Event was really those of us who went trading stories. We did all agree that while it is a fun event it is a bit too busy and you have to make choices about what you are going to do and what you are going to miss.

We then went on to discuss some of this things we may want to do differently next year at our own Berger show. Some felt that 2 and a half days was too long. We talked about giving awards out Saturday afternoon and so those who prefer to do a show-lite could leave after awards. The diehards could stay for a cruise and return for a catered (hot dog & hamburger type catered) meal at Berger while we wait for it to get dark enough for the professional photographer to set up shots in front of the dealership's blue neon sign.

We also spent some time exploring how our members felt about trying to stay at Domino's Farms for Superfest. The consensus of those present was that we should move on and not try to raise Lazarus. We did however want to stay at the same Holiday Inn and try to check into getting permissions to use the parking lots of the business behind the hotel. We talked about the trouble with a PA system that could reach around the building.

The next meeting will again be at Berger's at noon, Nov 2, 2002. The weather will determine if a Southern color tour will be perused.

The next event will be in Chicago on Nov 23 & 24 the Chevy/VetteFest. Dennis was invited to bring dozen or so cars to the show, and he has some of them already lined up.

Next weekend is the club outing to Traverse City and some advanced planning went into that.

We then made final plans for that afternoons color tour to the north and headed out.

*-- Karen Lewis, Secretary*

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**The Western Michigan Camaro Club** is dedicated to the enjoyment, preservation and promotion of the Chevrolet Camaro as the premier four passenger sports car ever. The club was formed in 1975.

**Meetings**

The WMCC holds monthly membership meetings on the first Sunday of each month. Times and location vary, so see the newsletter or check the club's web site at [www.wmcamaro.org](http://www.wmcamaro.org) for specific times and locations, or call one of the officers.

**WMCC Officers**

President: Doug Warren 616.531.7482  
Vice President: Gary Crippin 616.273.5051  
Secretary: Karen Lewis 616.572.4066  
Treasurer: Anita Warren 616.531.7482  
Membership: Mark Deremo 616.957.9005

**Club Sponsor**

Berger Chevrolet

**Website**

[www.wmcamaro.org](http://www.wmcamaro.org)



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**More from the  
"Last Available Camaro" event!**

Marc Gembinski admires his new Camaro. Scott Settlemire presents Marc and his wife Jennifer framed news clips from the Kruse auction coverage.