

## MARYLAND AUTOMOTIVE MODELERS ASSOCIATION

**Volume 4, No.10 June 1992**

by: Timothy Sickle

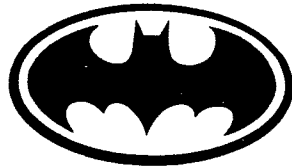
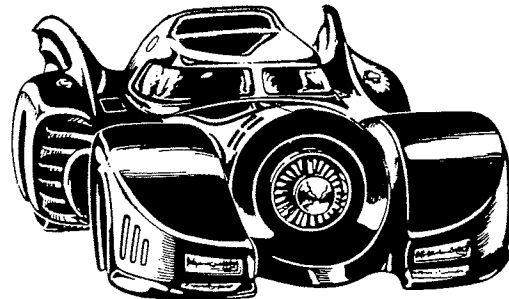
As near as I can figure, a whole bunch of people were in attendance at the May meeting which as you all know was our annual picnic at Norm's and Mary's palatial estate in beautiful Glen Burnie, Md. Ken "Mr. ORSD" Hamilton and close friend Judy made a surprise appearance and were made honorary MAMA's Boys (Persons!?) whether they wanted to be or not! I am confident that everyone had plenty 'o food, fun and friends (not necessarily in that order!). By the way Larry, thanks for the Petty Longnecks which I won in the raffle last month (but how did you know that I would pick 'em?).

The raffle raised \$65.00 The club would like to thank the raffle donors as shown below: Larry Boothe (for the Pepsis), and yours truly (If I missed anybody, I apologize! Your name wasn't on the sheet!). Special thanks also go out to those as shown below:

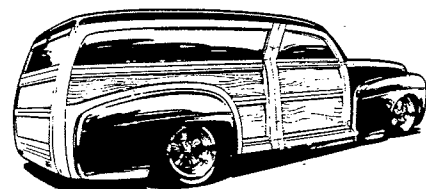
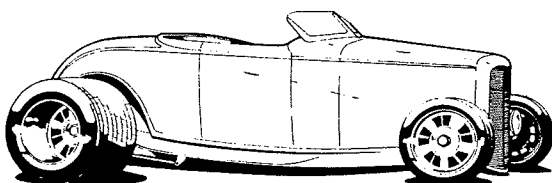
Gary Becker,  
The ERTL Company  
P.O. Box 500  
Dyersville Ia. 52040-0500

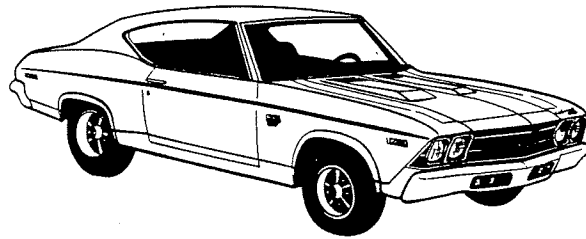
Dan Johns,  
RPM Craft House Corp.  
328 N. Westwood  
Toledo, Oh. 43607

Ed Sexton,  
Monogram/Revell  
363 North Third Avenue  
Des Plaines, Ill. 61101



It also bears mentioning at this time that Dirk Johnson (a.k.a. Detail Master, P.O. Box 1465, Sterling, Va. 22170) will be a very active supporter of not only our club, but many other clubs across the country as well. It's up to us to actively patronize Detail Master in appreciation of his continued support [Ed. Note: With the detail items he has currently available (or on the way!), I don't believe this will be a problem!]





### 1969 Chevelle SS396

(AMT/ERTL #6202; 1/25 scale; modified reissue; 125+ pieces; molded in white, clear, clear red, chrome, vinyl tires)

Here's the latest inaccurate incarnation of a kit that has been wrong for 23 years now. Despite ERTL's hype about the retooling of this kit, it's still wrong.

It's a little recognized fact that most of AMT's 1969 annual kits could not be built factory stock due to the lack of factory induction systems, exhausts, valve covers, wheels, or other little details. The Chevelle was in this category, coming through with Crower injection or a Crower injector scoop (how many of those have you seen in real life lately?) on a GMC 6-71 blower; these sat on a finned-valve-covered engine that exhausted through small-diameter tubular headers that were quite poor by today's standards but well-received by header-hungry 1969 modelers. The original kit came with no less than three wheel choices: Factory Super Sport steel wheels, factory Rallye wheels, and a very nice set of American Torq-Thrustrs (or copies thereof). Except for one problem, which we'll discuss at length in a minute, it built into a fairly nice model, and was a "parts mine" to boot.

The '69 Chevelle molds managed to escape the fate of many of their contemporaries and the model was never converted to a later model year, a funny car, a NASCAR stocker, or, worse yet, a dirt-track racer. It has been reissued in both hardtop and convertible styles several times over the years. The late '80's version appeared without the beautiful Super Sport wheels, which were still in the "Countdown" issue of the late '70's; somewhere along the line, the kit's taillight bezels were removed from the rear bumper to become separate, ill-fitting chrome pieces that replaced the original red plastic inserts. The non-stock engine setups have remained throughout the years, as have the hideous "custom" front and rear end treatments.

Suddenly it's 1992, and the '69 Chevelle is back. This time the Super Sport wheels make a welcome reappearance, and for the first time ever, the engine can be built as stock. The Super Sport wheels were standard on the SS396, despite the kit's instructions that the Rallye wheels are "stock". Detail them with Model Master Black Chrome Trim and Pactra or Polly-S Flat Aluminum spoke faces and they'll look great. If you've got one of the last issues of the Chevelle kit and just need the Super Sport wheels, there's no need to go buy this kit for them; just paint any Magnum 500's in your parts box as described and save yourself the cost of the kit (the ones in the AMT '68 Roadrunner/'69 GTX are particularly nice).

The kit's Rallye wheels also deserve mention. These are the only versions of this wheel I'm aware of that come with separate center caps, which is a nice touch. The wheels themselves aren't plated, but airbrushing them with Pactra Chrome from the bottle (cut it with lacquer thinner and it'll dry better) will give a convincing impression of brushed stainless steel, which many of these trim rings were made of. Then brush the slotted disk part of the wheel with Pactra or Polly-S Flat Aluminum and you're in business. These Rallyes are especially nice to use if you're

going for a monochromatic look on a street machine.

Only two of the kit's four American mags are usable; the centers are screwed up on the other two.

Solid vinyl Goodyear Blue Streak drag slicks are included. One of mine had an off-center hole, just like every other set of these I've gotten in recent years.

There was some speculation that the "new" stock engine in this kit would be picked up in toto from AMT's excellent '67 Chevelle. No such luck--what we have here is some new valve covers, intake manifold, carb, air cleaner, and exhaust manifolds/headpipes for the original '69 rat motor, which is NOT among the best on today's market. Oh well, at least they filled up the hole in the oil pan for the wire axle. The (unplated) valve covers each have a hole as for a PCV valve. The air cleaner is snorkeled (most '69 SS396s I've seen had open-element air cleaners, but they may have been 350 or 375-hp versions), and the new exhaust manifolds are quite basic and undistinguished. There are two rather nice decals for the air cleaner, but since AMT's nice air cleaner decals in the '67 Chevelle and '70 Corvette didn't fit, I don't hold any great hope that these will, either.

Now, the bad news: The '69 Chevelle was originally just retooled from AMT's '68, which featured a chrome trim strip that starts above the grille and runs along the lower side of the body all the way back to the rear bumper. This strip is accurate for a '68 SS396 or for a plain vanilla '69 Malibu, but is NOT correct for the lean, mean, '69 SS396. It's still on this body and it shouldn't be. (And the box art model is painted black below the strip--that's a '68 trim touch, not '69!) No big deal; just file it off, you say? You sound like someone who's never done one. The "Coke bottle" kink in the body line right at the rear of the doors makes this a challenging job--you have to file a compound curve that is essentially concave in one axis (front-to-back) and convex in the other (side-to-side). I've done three of them over the years and I now have it down to a nasty, loathsome three-hour job that requires every file, knife, razor saw, and sandpaper in my toolbox. That's to do it right, of course. Don't even THINK of trying the dremel on the job. Built straight from the box, this kit will only represent only those fake SS396s made from Malibus that you can see in almost any high school parking lot.

Well, look on the bright side: If you want to build a straight '69 Malibu, or a '68 SS396 conversion, half your work is already done. (More on such things next month.)

ERTL did make an effort at fixing the incorrect '68-type front side marker lights that have been on this body since Day One, but they did a poor job of it. Oh, the new lights are fairly accurate in size and shape, although they should be exactly the same as the rear ones and they're not, but they're in the wrong place, being too high and too far forward. Interestingly, they're shown in almost the correct location on the box art through the magic of photo retouching (i.e., fraud). They will have to come off, especially if you plan to use the factory striping decals. You can make copies of the rear markers using the foil/superglue/epoxy trick I demonstrated at a MAMA clinic a few months back, and if you're going to that much trouble, you might as well foil-copy all four lights from the Revell '69 Camaro body--they're cleaner and sharper, and they're correct for the Chevelle. (You can also check with our own Tim Powers of Scale Resin Detailers--he's been talking about adding these lights to his line for some time and may have them ready by now!) Chrome wheel opening moldings were standard with the SS396 package in '69, and they're not represented here. You can fix this in a number of ways, the easiest of which is to run a Testor Silver

paint marker around the wheelwell. (This stuff is easy to use, and believe it or not, it actually dries!)

ERTL did fix the mold damage on the body's rear panel that was evident in the last issue of this kit. Good.

The interior is a one-piece tub, but fairly well detailed. The separate rear seat is a nice touch. The steering wheel in my sample was broken in two places and quite unusable. The chassis is poor by today's standards--separate rear suspension and exhaust, but no front suspension at all. If you want a better chassis, it's in the MPC '69 4-4-2 and AMT '69 Hurst/Olds. It'll fit with only minor work. (The AMT and Revell '67 Chevelle chassis are too long--the Chevelle's wheelbase was reduced from 115" to 112" in 1968)

Two other items in this reissue merit special attention, decals and tires. AMT deserves credit for trying to give us the factory Super Sport side striping in both black and white, which has never been done before and which is nearly impossible to make yourself. They're beautiful on the box--more photo retouching/fraud--but, unfortunately, both sets of stripes are somewhat crudely rendered and my samples were fuzzily printed and had an ugly yellow blob on the white set. If you want to use them, make the decision before you paint the body, because you'll have to solve the frontside marker light problem--the lights are sitting right where the stripes should go, or at least, too close for comfort.

Making their debut in this kit are AMT's all-new Firestone Super Sport F70-15s. These are solid vinyl tires with a full disk to cut out, and they fall midway in size between ERTL's solid Goodyear Polyglasers and their hollow L60s. They carry a cleanly cut groove into which you can presumably lay some red or white paint (is blue also correct?), though the instructions make no mention of this. The best paints I've found for this use are Pactra acrylic Flat White and Tamiya Flat Red. (Enamels won't dry on soft vinyl.) These tires will look great on a number of '66-'68 musclecars and ponycars (AMT's '67 Chevelle and '68 Z28 come immediately to mind), but I seem to recall that redlines (especially Firestones) were on the way out by '69--the "in" thing by that time was white letters, preferably spelling G-O-O-D-%-Y-E-A-R.

Also missing from the instruction sheet is original factory paint and interior color information--a welcome touch that we've come to know and appreciate. Please don't phase this out, ERTL--it's one of the things that you're doing right!

To sum up, this isn't a horrible kit--I have a new standard for "horrible" after seeing AMT's '69 Daytona and Ferrari 250 SWB--but it is definitely not up to today's standards. Still, if you have the time and skill to solve its numerous major and minor problems, it can be built into an attractive model. With some 86,000 built, the '69 SS396 was a significant musclecar that deserves a place in your collection. It also deserves better treatment than this kit, but don't hold your breath. Stay tuned next month and we'll look at some interesting variations you can kitbash on the Chevelle without too much trouble.

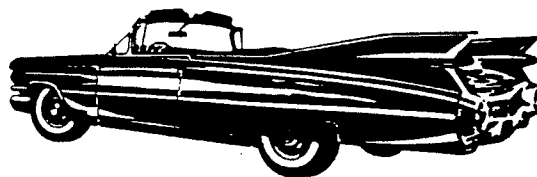
--©1992 Steve Mesner



### Sneakin' a Peek!

This column will appear as frequently (or infrequently!) as new releases from the manufacturers. The idea behind it is to give a "thumbnail review" of the releases as they hit the shelves with a detailed review to follow at a later date (hopefully!). We'll see how it goes!

- \* '34 Ford Pick-up(Lindberg #72155): Molded in tan.... Goodyear ZR40's along with Armstrong "skinnies"...Champ 500-style custom wheels....no tow truck parts....chrome T-Bird V8, along with flathead V8....tool box with tools included....incredibly smooth, shiny flash-free plastic.
- \* "Valvoline" T-Bird (AMT #8756): Molded in gray....re-hash of "Coor's Light" & "Maxwell House" 'Birds....red & blue stripes on white portion of car included....Goodyear 'Eagle' tire decals....'proper' red Goodyear sponsor decal, T-Bird logo for leading edge of hood.
- \* '92 Ford Flareside Pick up (AMT #6951): Molded in white....knocked off of F150 Lariat....same wheel options (10-holers and 5 spoke billets)....roll bar with driving lights....same inaccurate "radial" tires....nice, new Predator carbs and billet-style air cleaner (Street Rod guys will love this one!)....optional bed rails.
- \* GMC Syclone (Revell #7435): Molded in black....Syclone-specific aero kit nearly all separate pieces (grille/front airdam excepted!)....optional sliding rear window....separate windshield wipers, steering gear box, a/c evaporator, upper and lower radiator hoses....23-piece engine....separate door panels, sunvisors, and dome light....130+ pieces! Good job, Revell!
- \* "STP" Snapfast Grand Prix (AMT #8709): Molded in Petty Blue....Nice, colorful decals...easy, step-by-step instructions naming parts and listing painting info....red striping not included as decal....chrome wheels w/oversize hubs....car rides "too high".
- \* "Valvoline" T-Bird Snapfast (AMT #8729): Molded in white....comments from "STP" Pontiac above apply here as well.

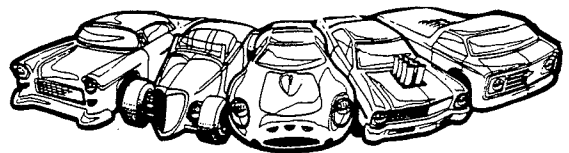
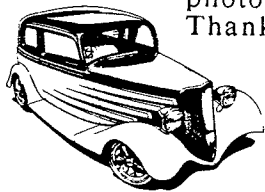


### BITS & PIECES

- \* Snake-bit again! Apparently, Chrysler Corporation is really pushing the Viper. Along with the artwork and books reported on in this space just last month, they have announced another publication on 'ol Shel's latest creation. This one though, sounds as though it is much closer to the mark than the earlier offerings--it is a tech book on this latest snake. It is purported to be 28 pages long and contain 40 full color photos and illustrations for all you detail nutz. How much is this thing gonna cost me, you ask? The paltry sum of only \$10.00 plus \$4.00 (shipping & handling). How do I get one, you ask? By merely calling 1-800-626-1523 (toll-free) and asking for publication #81-699-0233. How long will it take to arrive, you ask? 4-6 weeks is all, so get crackin'!

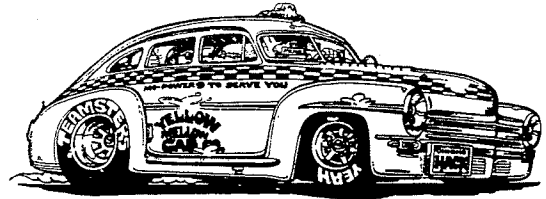
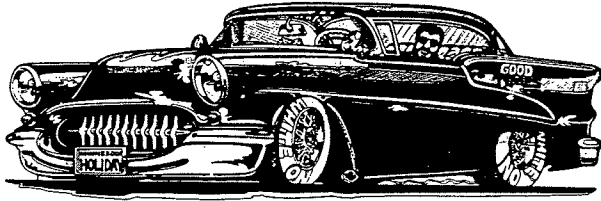
Thanks to our own Norman Veber for this tidbit!

- \* **Flash!** Our own Jim Bray and Randy Paschke recently paid the Delaware IPMS contest a visit. The result? Jim took 1st Drag with his oh-so-fine '61 Impala and 1st Street for his '81 El Camino. Randy took 1st Truck for his SS454 Pro Street Peek up and 3rd Drag for his Castrol dragster. Congrats, guys!
- \* **Motorsports Monthly.** What is it, you ask? It is a monthly magazine devoted to all things automotive-car shows, drag racing, road racing, rod runs, etc. It is published by Dan Carney in nearby Reston, Va. and do you know the best part? **It's free!** It is available at local shops in the Washington metro area. And do you know what else? MAMA is recognized therein! I will try to have some sample copies available at the June meeting for those interested.
- \* **Thanx!** I wish to remind everyone that we all need to extend many mucho thanks to **Dirk Johnson** for the photography work he did in connection with our NNL event. Thanks, Dirk! We 'preciate it!



### COMING EVENTS

- \* June 19-21: **Budweiser Super Stock Nationals** at Maple Grove Dragway in Reading, Pa.
- \* June 19-21: **All-Truck Nationals** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* July 8-11: **1992 Pontiac-Oakland Convention** at the Gaithersburg Marriott in Gaithersburg, Md.
- \* July 13: **US Pro Stock Open** at MIR (Monday night!).
- \* July 17-19: **3rd Annual Goodguys East Coast Nationals** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* July 24-26: **Summer Carlisle** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* Aug. 21-23: **Chryslers at Carlisle** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* Aug. 26: **Mountain Motor Nats** at MIR (Wednesday night!). Only one rule-there ain't no rules!
- \* Aug 28-30: **'Vettes at Carlisle** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* Aug. 29, 30: **1992 NMCA Flowmaster Muffler Muscle Car Challenge** car show 'n shine, drag racing, nostalgia Super Stock class, swap meet, car corral, model car show, manufacturer's midway at Maple Grove Dragway in Reading, Pa.
- \* Sept. 17-20: **Sunoco Keystone Nationals** at Maple Grove Dragway in Reading, Pa.
- \* Sept. 18-20: **Fallfest '92** at Prince William Fairgrounds in Manassas, Va.
- \* Oct. 1-4: **Fall Carlisle** at Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pa.
- \* Oct. 3: **Royalfest '92** Model kit Contest and swap meet. Contest theme: Musclecars of the '60's & '70's. Event to be held at the Front Royal Youth Center on Commerce Ave., Front Royal, Va. Doors open at 10 A.M., registration from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., judging to begin at 1 P.M., awards presented at 4 P.M. Admission-\$3.00 per contestant, \$10.00 per vendor table (limit 2), General admission \$1.00. For further info, call Mark's Models and Toys at (703)635-TOYS (8697).



**CLASSIFIEDS**

**FOR SALE-** Majority of personal collection. Call Matt Guilfoyle at 551-6070 for specifics and to place your order!

**WANTED-** Old Woodies. Call Eric Novak at (410)391-4627.

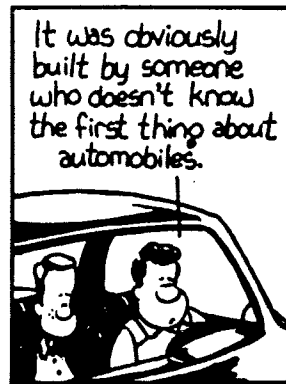
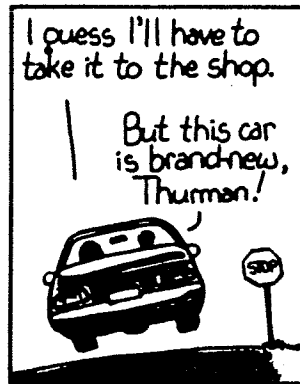
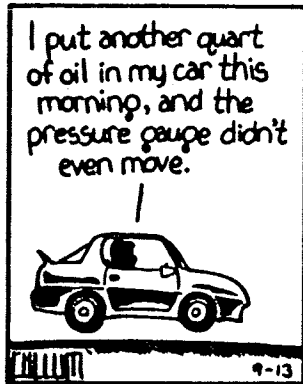
**WANTED-** "Trick T" dragster. Call Randy Paschke at (410)551-8598.

**FOR SALE-** Remote Control truck "Clodbuster". Equipped with dual motors, 4 wheel drive, 4 wheel steering, includes radio, several battery packs, battery charger, and extra set of race motors. \$475.00 or best offer. Call Charlie Scheerer at (410)661-5040.

**WANTED-** Racing seat and roll cage for AMT '69 Ford Talladega. Call Gary Sutherlin at (703)361-8058.

**FOR SALE-** Musclicar and Musclicard cards (both singles and sets). Display cards with your built-up musclicar models. \$15.00 per set or \$.25 each, 6 for \$1.00. Call Tim Sickle at (301)249-3830 or see me at a meeting.

**WALNUT COVE/MARK CULLUM**



Anyone having an item for the Newsletter whether it is a Bit, a Piece or even a Classified, it can be included by contacting one of the individuals listed below:

Timothy C. Sickle  
15905 Ark Court  
Bowie, Maryland 20716  
(301)249-3830

Norman F. Veber  
317 Roosevelt Ave., S.W.  
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21061  
(301)768-3648

