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*Communication we all  
communicate differently,  
above are ways to get  
ahold of your club  
officers.*

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*Hello from the heartland.* I must apologize that this newsletter is so late, Now that the grass is getting greener and the weather is starting to turn to better driving weather, it is nice to start to see cars out and about.

Matter of fact, just last week I seen a nova I haven't seen in 20 years, nice to know that it is still in drivable condition.

When I flipped my calendar I realized I have been slacking and we have a meeting coming up. We need to get the word out to everyone. Our calendar says the meeting is in the QC at the QC Cruisers Cruise Night **This has changed to we are now meeting in Washington Iowa at Unc & Neph's Food & Brew 105 West Madison Street Washington Iowa 52353 the phone number 319-653-4755. We will meet at 5:00 PM.**

We lost a Club member this last month and I would like to dedicate this newsletter to her Mrs. Helen Gibb. For those of you who had a chance to Meet Helen you would know that she loved cars just as much as anyone in this club. It didn't matter how hot it was Helen would always be available to talk motors to anyone at the Fred Gibb show in Laharpe. Helen would also travel to big shows and be available to represent the Gibb name.

## March Meeting Minutes...

The March Meeting was held at Zio Johns in Cedar Rapids. Boy did we have a Great Time. We started the Meeting out with a Fun Trivia Game. Dale and Ilene were partners, Gene, Becky, and Lori were partners, and Schoney and Dave were partners And Sue was an additional team when she arrived. Each Team had a dry erase board to write their answers on and it was trivia questions about The Chevy Nova. Lots of Fun!!

Attended the meeting: Jeff, Roxy, Ryan and Logan Grady; Dale Gilmour; Dave & Ilene Loutsch; Ken & Becky Schoenthaler; Gene & Lori Engler, Sue Shaffer.

-Calendars will be ordered for the show to sell

-We will order New Club Shirts

-We will meet at Riverside in June to go over last minute details

-Movie Night-What Movie would we like to show?

-We will get popcorn from Hawkeye Downs -thank you Kevin Korsmo

-Our charity will be "The Childrens Hospital" from the 50/50 and Raffle

-We Need Raffle Items... All members we need your help. We realize that not everyone can help with the show but if you can help up gather Raffle items that would be a BIG HELP!!!

-Please make sure that if you are staying at the Hotel you have made your reservation. Ask for the NOVA Show discount.

## Obituaries - 2014

### Helen L. Gibb

Mrs. Helen L. Gibb, 91, of LaHarpe, Illinois passed away at 8:55 PM Sunday, April 20, 2014 at the LaHarpe-Davier Health Care Center.

Helen was born June 17, 1922 near Stronghurst, IL the daughter Edgar and Jessie Roberts Hartquist. On September 4, 1941 she married Fred Gibb Jr. in Independence, MO. He preceded her in death on July 13, 1993.

She was raised in the Stronghurst/Media, IL area, and graduated from the Media-Wever High School where she was Valedictorian of her class. Helen assisted her husband in the operation of his Chevrolet dealership in LaHarpe from 1948 until 1984. She and her husband became involved in Drag Racing in 1967. They later won the 1971 AHRA Pro Stock World Championship in Fremont, CA. Following her husband's death, she traveled across the United States to attend and often times speak at car shows. She was a member of the LaHarpe Christian Church.

Mrs. Gibb is survived by two daughters, Connie Gibb of Galesburg, IL and Nancy Gibb of LaHarpe.

She was preceded in death by her husband, parents, one brother, Myron "Bud" Hartquist and one infant sister.



## By The Numbers The story--and VINs--of the Fred Gibb Chevrolet COPO Novas

[Super Chevy](#), April 14, 2005

Take a moment to soak in the history of the story you're about to read. In addition to the history of the Fred Gibb Chevrolet COPO Novas, SUPER CHEVY is simultaneously publishing the vehicle identification numbers (VIN) of all 50 vehicles.

The VINs have never been publicly released and we obtained them directly from Helen Gibb, Fred's widow and the current keeper of "the book." It is a detailed log of every vehicle that was ordered and delivered during Fred Gibb's running of the rural La Harpe, Illinois, Chevy store--noting every mundane, four-door Biscaynes to each of the 50 original '69 ZL-1 Camaros (69 were built, but the first 50 went to Gibb Chevrolet).

Helen Gibb has held onto the book all these years and gave us an exclusive look at the numbers for the rare--and often misunderstood--'68 COPO Chevy IIs processed through the dealership. Although flattered and excited, we couldn't help but ask why, after all this time, she was interested in having the numbers published. Cynically, we would assume that, with the value of muscle cars soaring to stratospheric heights, this list of identification numbers is worth serious money, so there has to be a buck in it for somebody.

We were surprised and delighted to learn that Helen Gibb is motivated by just the opposite--she believes the numbers shouldn't be owned by anyone, particularly speculators who would otherwise hold the numbers for ransom. And with a little modesty on our part, we should point out that SUPER CHEVY has previously published the VINs for the Fred Gibb ZL-1 Camaros, too. So, there was an

historical precedent to build on, and we're proud to serve as the disseminator of important reference information.

The back-story of the Gibb-ordered COPO Chevy IIs is similar to ones you've heard about the Camaros; dealer-ordered performance vehicles intended to be bought and used as drag racing vehicles.

Fred Gibb's interest in drag racing went from passive to active when one of his salespeople started winning at the track in a '67 Z/28. According to Helen Gibb, Fred started going to racetracks "all the time," studying all the cars and racers.

"He was bitten by the racing bug," she says.

It was during this time that Fred Gibb noticed that Chevrolets were at a distinct disadvantage in the automatic classes. In fact, there were no Nova automatics competing in NHRA racing--mainly because the top-dog L-78 396/375 engine wasn't available with an auto in 1968. So, Gibb started a dialog with Chevrolet's Vince Piggins with the idea of ordering some auto-equipped Deuces.

As was the case with the later COPO Camaros, the intention was to get enough vehicles built to qualify them as production vehicles and, therefore, make them eligible for stock-class competition at the strip. With Piggins' help, Fred Gibb ordered 50 Nova SS models--the minimum number to qualify for NHRA--with the L-78 engine and the TH-400 three-speed automatic. The COPO order code was 9738.

The heavy-duty Turbo 400 was introduced in 1964, but didn't make it to Chevy vehicles until a year later. With a torque capacity of more than 400 lb-ft, it was really the only option for backing the 396 with an automatic. Besides the engine/transmission combination, Gibb Chevrolet ordered the cars with other heavy-duty and performance-oriented components, including a heavy-duty radiator, 4.10-geared Posi-traction rearend and floor-mounted shifter (with center console). And since the cars were intended strictly as racecars, they were ordered with just steel wheels, drum brakes (power-assisted), and no radio. A pair of bucket seats also distinguished the COPO cars.

Fred Gibb ordered the cars in just four colors: Fathom Blue, Grecian Green, Matador Red, and Tripoli Turquoise; with the interior colors in either blue or black. In all, it was a simple package designed for the racer who knew exactly what he was buying.

"They were really plain-jane cars," says Helen Gibb. "Fred believed that racecars should be sleepers, because he figured they would be used on the highway as well as the drag strip."

According to Helen Gibb, the car's sticker price was \$3,592.12. They were sold to customers not only in the western Illinois/eastern Iowa area immediately surrounding La Harpe, but also in California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, and other states. Some were picked up by dealers, while others were bought by in-the-know individuals.

Not surprisingly, the cars that trickled down to racers were very quick and competitive. Adding a twist to the history and authenticity of some, however, were the cars prepared by Gibb's Kansas City associate, Dick Harrell. Harrell's shop prepped numerous Novas for racing, but it also transplanted 427 engines into several of the COPO cars. We don't have the exact number, but some super car watchers place the total at approximately 20. These cars often were outfitted with aftermarket goodies such as a Sun tachometer and even a Corvette-style "stinger" fiberglass hood, as well as being performance-tweaked under the hood.

Identifying an original COPO Chevy II becomes murky if the original 396 was chucked more than 35 years ago. And that's where the numbers from Helen Gibb's log book become essential. It doesn't take long to find only a partial list of numbers on the Internet, with the information based on known and documented cars. The accompanying VIN breakdown, however, is the definitive reference--the numbers are straight out of the Gibb dealership book and were recorded, as each car was unloaded from the transporter.

The two cars seen here on our pages represent the standard and Harrell-ized versions of COPO 9738. The Fathom Blue example is car number 50--the last of the COPOs built--and still has its original 396 engine. It also shows just more than 16,000 miles on the odometer. The turquoise Nova has the full-on Harrell 427 treatment, including the hood, tach, and a period set of Cragars.

Until recently, the turquoise car was owned by Jude Hattick, but the blue Nova was purchased by Matt Murphy a few years ago (the same enthusiast who runs GMMG and produced the Camaro ZL-1 Super Car a couple years back, as well as the current "Wide Body" Dick Harrell Edition Camaros--see SUPER CHEVY's Camaro Performers, Fall 2004). Although the blue Nova was a low-mile car when Murphy bought it, it wasn't in the shape depicted in our photos.

"It was a little rusty here and there," Murphy tells us. "But the window sticker was still on the rear quarter window and it was so original, I couldn't pass it up."

Gibb Chevrolet originally sold the car to a Kansas City-area customer, the car "disappeared" for years before turning up a few years ago on the back of a truck just prior to LaHarpe's annual Fred Gibb Memorial Car Show. The unrestored car returned to Kansas City for a comparatively brief period, but ended up in Atlanta and under Murphy's care.

Murphy had the car disassembled and freshened up; performing what he calls a "semi-frame-off" restoration. It included a thorough detailing of the frame, trunk, and engine compartment. There was a large, racing-style electric fuel pump in the trunk when he bought the car and he's left it in place, along with a set of "slapper" traction bars on the rear suspension. There also was a set of period slicks on the car when he bought it--tires that were on the car since the late '60s--but they were replaced with more modern rubber.

Read more: [http://www.superchevy.com/features/0505sc\\_chevrolet\\_copo\\_novas/#ixzz31AVNB2CK](http://www.superchevy.com/features/0505sc_chevrolet_copo_novas/#ixzz31AVNB2CK)



## New Members 2014

Dale and Nancy DeReuss Cedar Rapids Iowa-1976 Chevy Nova

Welcome to our new members we look forward to meeting you and getting to see you cool rides.

## Buy/Sell/Trade

**Wanted**-L-79 Air breather complete for a 66 Nova-

Joel Fuller 563-264-8321

**For sale**- Power Steering Gear for a 68-74 Nova-\$20.00

Roger Prasil 319-270-3865

**For Sale**-Trim for 66-67 Chevy Nova  
Wiring kit for 66-67 Chevy Nova  
Jeff Grady 319-310-9566