

## Lennox / Arrow Heating 1969 Camaro

### *History*

The history of the Lennox / Arrow Heating Camaro begins before the Z/28 rolled off the Chevrolet assembly line in Los Angeles. In 1967 and 1968, Joe Chamberlain campaigned a 1965 Mustang in SCCA A/S and T/A races. Joe was competitive, and even won races in the Mustang. However, Joe knew that, for the 1969 season, he needed to change cars to remain competitive. Joe purchased a new 1969 Z/28 Camaro with Chevrolet's "hugger orange" paint.

To sell his racing Mustang, Joe placed a classified advertisement in *Autoweek*.



*Autoweek*, August 9, 1969.

Joe and his crew prepared the new Camaro for racing. Joe's crew included Dave Burkes, Chuck Morrision, and Ed Taylor. The Camaro retained its hugger orange color scheme, but an unpainted black fiberglass hood was installed. This hood was an early Chevrolet cross-ram hood. Cross-ram hoods are similar to Chevrolet's Cowl Induction hoods, but have a specially shaped opening for the oval cross-ram air cleaner. Under the hood, the engine carried an experimental factory crossram manifold. Joe had a friend in the Chevrolet parts business. This friend provided many parts, such as the crossram manifold, to Joe to test on the race car. In exchange, Joe evaluated the parts, and, more importantly, provided his friend with tickets to races. Everett Hatch, Joe's engine builder, installed the crossram. (Joe sold the experimental crossram in 2000.)

American Racing Wheels provided sponsorship to Joe Chamberlain. In 1969, and in early 1970, the Camaro ran five spoke "mags". These wheels were the American Racing model 200S.



*American Racing 200S Wheel*

*Firestone* provided the tires to Joe. Joe had a relationship with Vels / Parnelli Jones, so, the *Firestone* tires came directly from Vels.



Note the unpainted black cross-ram hood and the five spoke American Racing wheels.  
Kent 300 Trans Am, Seattle International Raceway, September 7, 1969.

Early in 1969, Joe raced the Camaro in SCCA regional and national events in the A/S class. The Trans Am debut of the Camaro was at the Kent 300, at Seattle International Raceway, on September 7, 1969. Joe finished 11<sup>th</sup>, and won \$200 in prize money.



Another view of the cross-ram hood.

Kent 300 Trans Am, Seattle International Raceway. September 7, 1969. Photo: Dave Friedman

Two weeks later, Joe and his crew competed in the Sears Point 200 Trans Am race. The Camaro experienced mechanical issues and finished a disappointing 17<sup>th</sup>. Prize money was \$75.

Joe experience failures with the stock ball joints. Joe's friend in the Chevrolet Product Performance parts business provided special ball joints to test. Even these special ball joints failed, so the crew switched spherical bearings.

The crew also strengthened the steering arms by replacing the stock tie rods with rod ends. After selling the Camaro, Joe had a surplus of these rod ends. These rod ends were sold to the owner of a Corvette that Joe raced later in IMSA.



Joe's crew, along with the tire sponsor *Firestone*, perform a pit stop. Sears Point Trans Am, September 21, 1969.

In 1969, the SCCA became frustrated with the factories and their development of high performance intake manifolds that were not readily available (if at all) to the public. For this, and other reasons, for 1970, the SCCA restricted T/A cars to one four-barrel carburetor. So, for 1970, Joe's engine builder, Everett Hatch, removed the experimental crossram manifold, that they been given. In addition, a standard Chevrolet "cowl induction" hood replaced the crossram hood. The cowl induction hood was painted higger orange with a black stripe on the portion of the hood that is raised for the cowl induction. Joe's and his crew transformed the Camaro into a reliable, successful, race car in 1970.

As he did in 1969, in 1970, Joe split his efforts between SCCA T/A and A/S events. Joe raced in three Trans Am events- all on the west coast. Joe's first Trans Am event of 1970 was at Laguna Seca (original track configuration) on April 19. A stellar field competed in the 171-mile event. Joe and the Camaro finished 9<sup>th</sup>, and collected \$800 in prize money. Joe's efforts at Laguna Seca are captured (briefly) on the 1970 Trans Am documentary film (available from [www.carfilms.com](http://www.carfilms.com)).



Note the new cowl induction hood during a pit stop on a cool day in Monterey. Laguna Seca Trans Am race, April 19, 1970.

Joe's next Trans Am race was at Seattle International Raceway in Kent, Washington on September 10. Joe qualified 13<sup>th</sup>, and finish 20<sup>th</sup>. After a top ten finish at Laguna Seca, the team was disappointed with 20<sup>th</sup>. Qualifying times indicated that the Camaro was as fast, or faster, than the other independents. However, the car was still slower than the factory cars. American Racing provided upgraded, light weight, six spoke, magnesium wheels. The new wheels, American Racing model TA 70, replaced the model 200S five spoke wheels. Joe owned *Arrow Heating*, a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) company in Oregon. *Arrow Heating* sold and installed *Lennox* products. Beginning in mid-1970, *Lennox* sponsored the Camaro. Since then, the car has been known as the *Lennox Camaro*.



Note *Lennox* sponsorship on front fender and *Arrow Heating* sponsorship on rear quarter. American Racing provided six spoke magnesium wheels.

Kent 200 Trans Am race. Seattle International Raceway, September 20, 1970. Photo: Roy Urban

Two weeks after the Kent 200, Joe and the *Lennox* Camaro competed in the Mission Bell 200. The Mission Bell 200 was the final Trans Am race of 1970. The event brought a full field of 35 cars to the fabled Riverside International Raceway. The *Lennox* Camaro finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall, and second, to local Mark Waco, among the independents. Joe won \$600.

While racing at Riverside, California in 1970, Joe met Frank Airheart. Frank Airheart is the founder of *Airheart* brakes. After the race, Joe went to the *Airheart* facility in the city of Torrance, about two hours from Riverside. Frank gave Joe a brake system. In addition, Frank spent an entire day at the track, with Joe, to dial in the brake set up. Joe called the *Airheart* brake set up his “unfair advantage”.

In 1970, in addition to mounting a successful independent campaign at the west coast Trans Am events; the *Lennox* Camaro was victorious in SCCA A/S races. The SCCA Northern Pacific Division was a hot bed of A/S competition. In 1970, fifteen different A/S competitors won points in national events. Joe topped all fifteen competitors, and won the SCCA Northern Pacific Division A/S championship. During the short Northern Pacific Division race season, Joe’s record in national races was:

May 27, 1970	Seattle International Raceway	1 <sup>st</sup> place
June 14, 1970	Portland International Raceway, Rose Cup	1 <sup>st</sup> place
July 26, 1970	Seattle International Raceway	1 <sup>st</sup> place
September 13, 1970	Portland International Raceway	3 <sup>rd</sup> place

In 1970, Joe won the first, of would ultimately become, four SCCA Northern Pacific Division A/S national championships.

By the end of the 1970 season, the *Lennox* Camaro had a new look. Joe was an ambitious driver. As a consequence, body damage was commonplace. The crew had grown weary of color matching the huffer orange paint. So, the crew decided that a more serviceable paint scheme was needed. Using some masking tape, they masked off a few stripes following the bodyline on each side of the car. Then, they painted the car generic white with spray “rattle” cans. Removing the masking tape, the Camaro was now white with orange stripes down the side. Decals with the *Lennox* logo were applied to the front fenders. Arrow Heating decals, in blue, were applied to the rear quarters. The Camaro now had a unique, racy, look.

In 1971, Joe and the *Lennox* crew expanded both the number of races and the geographic range of their Trans Am program. They competed in four T/A events- up from three in 1970 and two in 1969. The *Lennox* Trans Am program for 1971 included:

Edmonton International Speedway	Edmonton, Canada
Donnybrooke Speedway	Brainerd, Minnesota
Road America	Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin
Riverside International Raceway	Riverside, California

The Trans Am series had events at Edmonton on only two occasions. The first event was in 1971 (The other, and last, event was in 1973). Joe and his crew made the trip worthwhile with a third place finish. This was Joe's first podium finish on the Trans Am circuit. Joe joined Mark Donohue and George Follmer on the podium. Third at Edmonton paid \$2500. This was Joe's best race payday so far.

Another "unfair advantage" story that Joe told involved Mark Donohue himself. During practice, at the Edmonton Trans Am event, Joe and Mark were on the track at the same time. Joe was in front, and Mark was following in the Penske Javelin. This went on for laps. Joe knew that Mark's car was faster, and wondered why Mark stayed behind him. At the end of the practice session, Joe parked the Camaro in the paddock. Mark pulled in behind him. Mark got out of his car and approached Joe. Joe didn't know what to think. Mark explained to Joe that the Lennox Camaro had too much rear body roll. Mark recommended a significantly larger rear sway bar. Joe couldn't ignore advice from Mark Donohue, so he installed a larger rear sway bar. During the next session, Joe's lap times were lower by two seconds per lap!

Two weeks after the podium finish at Edmonton, the car and crew were in Minnesota for a Fourth-of-July T/A race at Donnybrooke Speedway. The Lennox Camaro finished 10<sup>th</sup>.

In another two weeks, they were in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin for a Trans Am race at Road America. To put this period of time, in 1971, in perspective, it needs to be mentioned that Joe Chamberlain owned contracting firm in Oregon, and the members of the crew were volunteers who had other jobs. This was a big effort, and a big commitment, for all of them. The effort, however, was easier to give when it results in success.

At Road America, they earned another good result. Joe and the Lennox Camaro finished the race in 7<sup>th</sup>, and collected \$1400. So, the team's road trip east was successful with finishes of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> with no DNF's.

In October, the Lennox team returned to Riverside Raceway for the 1971 Mission Bell 200. Once again, a large field of 34 Trans Am cars competed. Joe qualified the Camaro well, with the 8<sup>th</sup> fastest time. The Camaro finished the race but faded to 21<sup>st</sup>.

With the expanded T/A program in 1971, the SCCA A/S program had to contract. In 1971, the Lennox team only competed in two national A/S events. The team won the Rose Cup in June at Portland. Later in the year, they finished third, also at Portland. Running just two races, they finished fourth in the Northern Pacific Division in A/S points.

In 1972, the Lennox team returned to Donnybrooke Speedway and to Road America. At the Donnybrooke Fourth-of-July event, the Camaro finished 10<sup>th</sup>. Eleven days later, at Road America, the Camaro qualified 12<sup>th</sup>, but finished a distant 33<sup>rd</sup> in a field of 42

cars. (A photo of the starting grid of the T/A race appears on page 141 of Bochroch's book. The Lennox Camaro is visible descending the hill.)

In SCCA A/S competition, 16 cars won points in national events. Once again, the Lennox Camaro topped all 16 and won the Northern Pacific Division A/S championship. This would be the second of four A/S Championships that the team would win.

From 1966 through 1972, the SCCA Trans Am series was exclusively for American sedans, which included the "pony cars". In fact, in its first year, 1966, the series was referred to as "sedan racing". The phrase "Trans Am" caught on later. The cars allowed to compete in the T/A series included the Mustang/Cougar, the Camaro/Firebird, the Javelin, and the Challenger/Barracuda, among others. Specifically excluded as not "sedans" were sports cars, including all two-seat automobiles. So, Corvettes and Porsches were excluded by rule.

In 1973, the SCCA Trans Am series made a fundamental shift. Sports cars were allowed, and the rules regarding car preparation were relaxed. As a result, the Porsche Carrera RS and the Corvette entered the series. These cars were only loosely based on the production chassis. The Greenwood Corvettes were basically purpose-built racecars with 454 cubic inch engines. So, in 1973, the existing fleet of production chassis based Trans Am cars was obsolete.

In 1973, the Lennox team repeated the, now familiar, mid-summer trek east. The team competed in the Trans Am events at Road America and Edmonton. At the Road America Trans Am event, Joe qualified the Lennox Camaro 12<sup>th</sup> in a field of 41 entrants. However, on a hot and humid race day, the Camaro suffered from over heating, and completed only 232 miles of 312-mile race. Despite the cooling issue, the Camaro finished 20<sup>th</sup> because many other competitors also had problems on race day.

Three weeks after Road America, the Lennox team was in Edmonton. The Edmonton T/A event turned out similar to the Road America event. Joe qualified the Camaro well, with the 9<sup>th</sup> fastest time. At Edmonton, drive shaft problems relegated the team to a second consecutive 20<sup>th</sup> place finish.

# Chevy's Battle, Porsche's War

*Rolling easy, Greenwood won the Edmonton TransAm. But it was Gregg who took home the important marbles.*

Report by Murray Isman

EDMONTON, ALTA.—John Greenwood led from start to finish to capture the \$31,000 Edmonton TransAm, giving the Manufacturer's crown to Chevrolet as the fast 2.527-mile circuit allowed his 467cid Corvette to build up enough of a lead to overcome 2 pit stops for fuel.

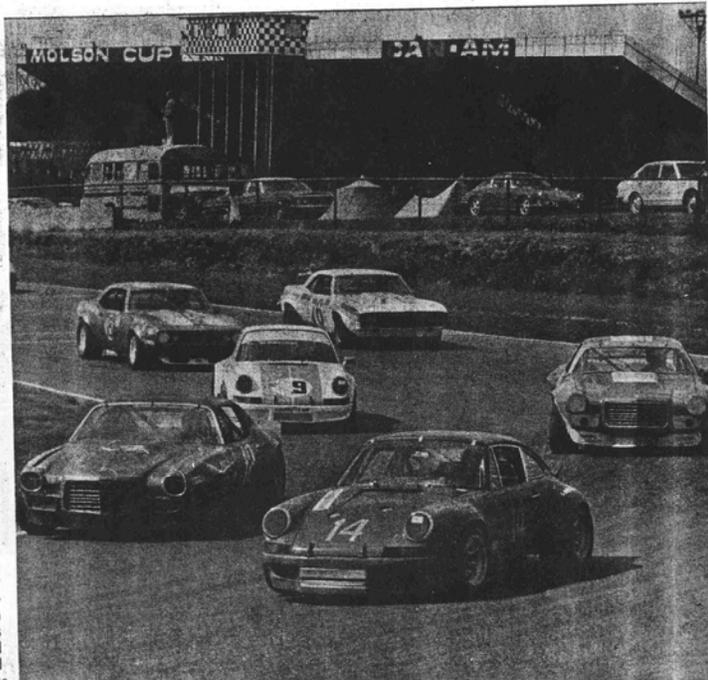
Despite finishing well over a lap down, heavily-favored Peter Gregg claimed the 1973 Drivers' Championship after a consistent drive in his 3-liter Porsche Carrera RS, which brought his season points total to 71. In an effort to deprive Gregg of the championship, Milt Minter took over early in the race from Porsche Carrera driver Al Holbert.

Although a full lap down from Gregg, Minter put on a tremendous display as the 2 swapped positions for several laps.

Minter completed the 312-mile event 2 laps off the pace in 4th position, which gave co-driver Holbert the runnerup spot in the Championship with 59 points. The Aber Robbins 454cid Corvette of J. Marshall Robbins and Jerry Thompson split the Porsche duo to finish in 3rd place, giving 4th position in the standings to Robbins.

Greenwood, paying no attention to pre-race speculation which favored the Porsches because of the race length, led by over 5 seconds after the 3rd

*Continued on page 18*



Al Holbert (No. 14) in a crowd of heathens.

Murray Isman

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**LATE NEWS**

Dodge Division will announce a new Colt sometime in January.

## The Coronation Was Postponed

The pace lap. Joe Chamberlain, Camaro #76, in the third row on the outside. Edmonton Trans Am, Edmonton International Speedway, August 19, 1973. Photo: Murray Isman.

In 1973, most of the great T/A teams that raced from 1966 through 1972 reduced the number of T/A races in which they competed, or chose not to compete in T/A at all. Instead, many of the Trans Am cars competed in the SCCA A/S class. The rules for the A/S class had not changed, so the former T/A cars still fit well in A/S. The Lennox team competed in just two T/A races in 1973. So, like many T/A teams, Joe and the crew changed their focus to SCCA A/S racing.

Because of the influx of Trans Am cars and drivers, the Northern Pacific Division A/S fields now resembled Trans Am grids. In 1973, nine Trans Am drivers earned points in national A/S races in the Northern Pacific Division. Against this tough competition, the Lennox team had four wins, a second, and a third in A/S national competition. The Lennox team won the Northern Pacific Division A/S championship for the third time, and for the second consecutive year.

In five years of A/S racing, the Lennox Camaro had won three NPD championships. But, the team had never chosen to enter the SCCA Run-Offs. In 1973, with their focus on A/S racing, the Lennox team went to Road Atlanta, for the Run-Offs for the first time. The 1973, the SCCA A/S Run-Offs had a strong representation of Trans Am cars. Those T/A cars earning a berth at the Run-Offs included: Carl Shafer, in the Shafer Farms Camaro; Gary Mathews, in his Boss 302, and Sid Rust, in the ex-Chaparral Camaro.



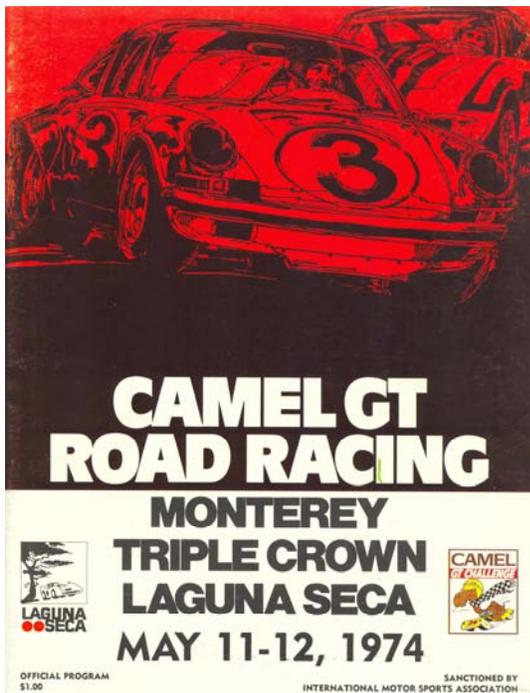
*Joe Chamberlain, after qualifying on the outside pole, on the pace lap of the Run-Offs at Road Atlanta. November 4, 1973.*

Carl Shafer had the fastest qualifying lap, and Joe Chamberlain earned the outside pole. Carl Shafer clearly had the best car, but Joe was equally confident that his Camaro was the next best car. Joe would never find out. On lap six, Frank Grimaldi lost control of his Camaro and hit the driver side rear quarter panel of the Lennox Camaro. The damage was so extensive that the Lennox Camaro had to be retired.



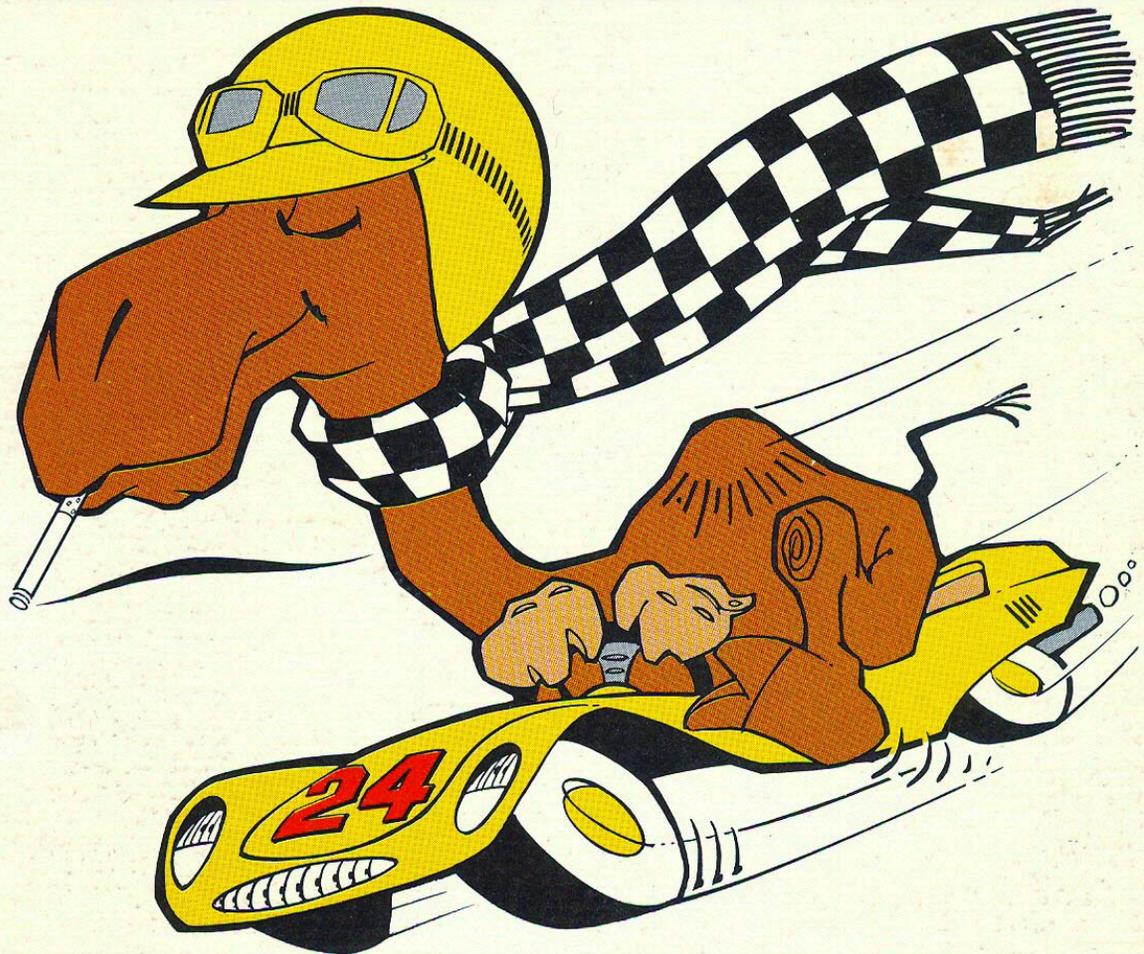
*Joe Chamberlain before being punted off the track. Run-Offs at Road Atlanta. November 1, 1973.*

In 1974, a new professional sanctioning body, IMSA, was taking off. Camel cigarettes became the title sponsor of the IMSA series. With backing from Camel, prize money was sufficient to attract interest of SCCA Pro Racing teams. So, beginning in May of 1974, the Lennox team tried three IMSA races- with mixed results. The rules, in the GTO class, favored the Porsche Carrera. So, of course, the Porsche's dominated the American pony cars, the Corvettes, and all others. The Porsche's captured the top finishing positions, as well as the associated prize money.



# CAMEL

## GT CHALLENGE



So, the Lennox team returned its focus to A/S racing. The Lennox team continued to dominate A/S racing in the Pacific Northwest. In five national events, the Lennox Camaro captured four wins and a third. The wins included the Rose Cup at Portland and the Olympia Sprints at Laguna Seca. With all the talented T/A drivers and top quality Trans Am cars, the A/S races were hotly contested. *Sports Car* magazine enthusiastically described the racing at the Olympia Sprints (which drew over 300 total competitors).

Joe Chamberlain and Rainer Neumann provided the life of the party with a terrific scrap for third overall and the AS crown. Chamberlain's Camaro stayed in front all the way although Neumann's Mustang trailed by only 0.54 second.  
Ed Pitz, *Sports Car*, September 1974



*Photo by Bob Ames*

*Joe Chamberlain on the way to victory in the 1974 Rose Cup A Sedan race.*

At the end of the 1974 season, Joe Chamberlain had captured his fourth A/S title in the Northern Pacific Division. The team had won the A/S championship three consecutive years. With their focus on A/S, there was no doubt that the team would return to Road Atlanta for the SCCA Run-Offs. In that era, the title sponsor of the Run-Offs was

Champion Spark Plugs. The official name of the event was: *Champion Spark Plug Road Racing Classic*.

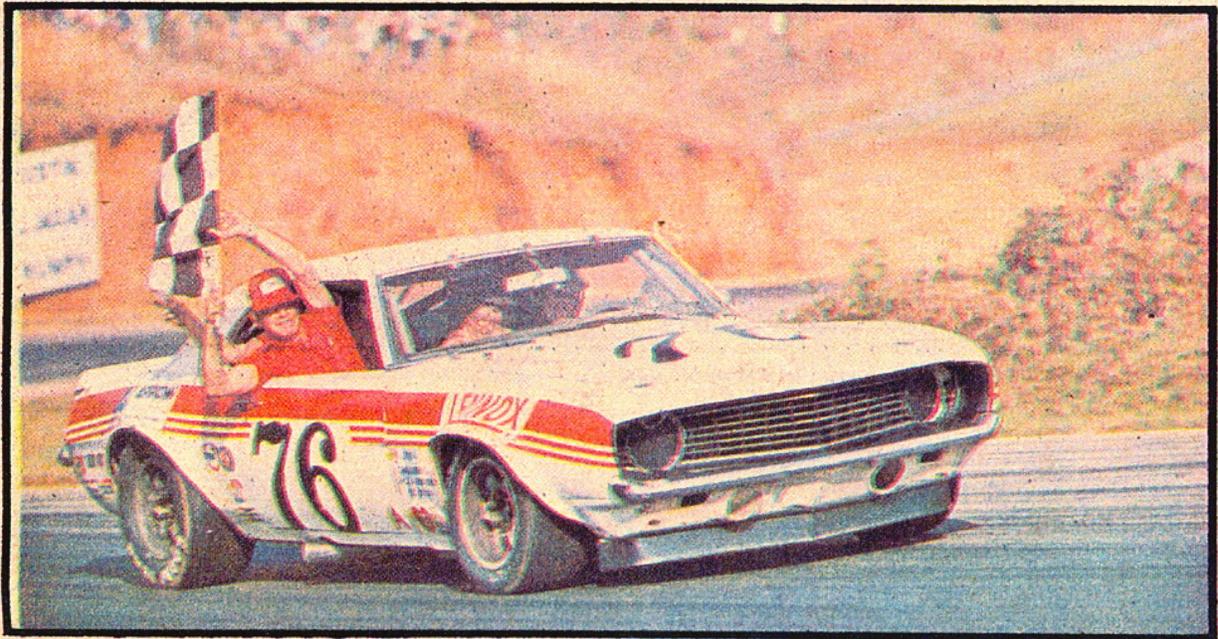
As in 1973, the field at the 1974 SCCA Run-Offs was composed of ex-Trans Am drivers and cars. Marshall Robbins was there with an ex-Bud Moore Boss 302. Jocko Maggiacomo raced the ex-Penske Javelin, and the ex-Chaparral Camaro was campaigned by Sid Rust. Joe qualified with the fourth fastest time against these strong competitors. Only 0.8 second separated the pole qualifier from the seventh place qualifier. However, Joe almost didn't make it to qualifying.

During a test session at Road Atlanta, an A Arm buckled, and the Camaro bottomed out in dramatic display of sparks. Ed Fullerton repaired the A-Arm at the track in time for qualifying. Qualifying with the fourth fastest time is a testimony to the quality of work the Ed did at the track (and in the shop).

On race day, the field got off to a clean start (not something to be taken for granted at the Run-Offs). Joe quickly moved from fourth to second. However, after eight laps, Joe trailed the leader by seven seconds. Joe knew that the leader was pushing hard, so he believed he would have a chance. On the ninth lap, the leader's engine expired at turn five. Joe led the remaining 10 laps, taking the victory by 2.2 seconds. On Saturday, November 2, 1974, Joe Chamberlain, his crew, and the Lennox Camaro became the SCCA A/S champions.

Firestone provided the tires for the Camaro. The Vels / Parnelli Jones dealership was the west coast distributor for Firestone at that time. So, the tires came from Parnelli Jones. Joe stayed with Firestone from 1969 through 1974. At the end of 1974, for the SCCA "Run-Offs", at Road Atlanta, Joe switched to Goodyear tires. Joe won the SCCA A/S Championship on Goodyears, and realized what he had been missing. It is remarkable that Joe achieved the success that he did on Firestone tires. From 1970 on, it was well known that the Goodyear race tires were superior to those of Firestone. Firestone withdrew from racing in 1978.

When Joe won the A/S Championship at the Run-Offs, he took a victory lap. His crew joined him in the car- waving the checkered flag. At turn five, the corner workers gave Joe a bottle of champagne.



**Joe Chamberlain and crew celebrate their A-Sedan win.**

*Bruce Czaja*

Victory lap after winning the SCCA A/S Championship at the Run-Offs. Road Atlanta, November 2, 1974. *Autoweek & Competition Press*, November 9, 1974. Photo: Bruce Czaja

In 1975, with an A/S Championship in hand, the Lennox team again dabbled in IMSA races. But, the results were the same as in 1974. The Lennox team ran well, but the Porsche Carrera RSR's dominated the races. For example, the Lennox team competed at Laguna Seca, where ten of the top thirteen finishers were Carrera's.

The team made their annual July trek to tracks in the east. In 1975, they competed at an IMSA event at Mid-America Raceway, in Wentzville, Missouri. This gave the team a chance to run the track for the first, and last, time. Joe was the fastest non-Carrera in the GTO class. However, this was only good for an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish.

The next week, the team was in Road America for a Trans Am race. Joe finished 7<sup>th</sup> against a strong 32-car field, composed primarily of big block Corvettes.

In 1975, the Lennox team shined at the local events. At the Seattle Trans Am event, Joe qualified on the pole. This was the first Trans Am pole for the team. Dinah Chapman reported that:

"A local favorite, Joe Chamberlain of Tigard, Oregon, took pole position in his Arrow Heating Camaro ..."  
*Sports Car*, August 1975.

Chamberlain led through lap eleven when he spun in oil on the track in turn 5. Chamberlain returned to the race to finish 7<sup>th</sup>.

Two weeks later, at the Portland Trans Am, Joe qualified second. On race day, Joe led through lap 35- when the driver side front suspension collapsed. Dinah Chapman described the Joe's situation succinctly, if not comically:

"... he raced into the pits, as fast as a Camaro can go with the entire left front suspension collapsed. Just about everyone figured that was it for him- except him and his crew. In four laps, the Camaro was underway to finish twelfth."

*Sports Car*, September, 1975.



Again, the crew made an amazing recovery.  
Portland Trans Am race. June 15, 1975.

Photo: Karen Engstrom

In 1974, Joe and his crew won the SCCA A/S Championship. They experimented with IMSA in 1974 and 1975, and found the rules stacked in favor of the Porsches. In 1975, by qualifying on the pole at Seattle and qualifying second at Portland, they showed that the car and the driver were as fast as any competitor in Trans Am. So, for 1976, they decided to try to win the Trans Am championship. This decision is obviously crazy. It is even crazier that they almost won the championship.

To compete for the Trans Am championship was huge undertaking for Joe and his volunteer crew. The 1976 Trans Am series was composed of eight events, only one of which was on the west coast. So, for four months, the crew would be on the road. To

make them even greater underdogs, the rules changed- in a big way. For 1976, IMSA realized that their races had becoming predictable Porsche parades, and banned the turbo Porsches. The SCCA took that opportunity to open the 1976 Trans Am races up to those disenfranchised Porsches.

“SCCA realized that there were a lot of turbo Porsches lying about with nowhere to race, and let it be known that it would take them in. Jo Hoppen, Porsche’s racing guy, thought that was just fine ...”  
*Autoweek & Competition Press*, January 1, 1977

The 1976 Trans Am season started in Pocono International Raceway, in Pennsylvania. At a track to which Joe had not been before, the Lennox Camaro finished a remarkable 6<sup>th</sup>.

Three weeks later, the series was at Nelson Ledges Raceway, in Ohio. At another track that was new to the team, the Lennox Camaro improved to a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish. This effort moved the team up to fourth in the Trans Am Championship standings. Things were looking up for the Lennox team and their championship aspirations. And, they were heading for their home track!

Two weeks later, the Trans Am series raced at Portland International Raceway. Joe knew the track, and had won numerous races there. True to form, Joe used his expertise to capture his **first Trans Am victory**. Finishes of 6<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup> put Joe in third place in the Trans Am Drivers Championship.



Joe Chamberlain on the grid at the 1976 "G.I. Joe's Rose Cup" Trans Am race. Photo: 1977 Rose Cup Program

## q.i. joe's 1976 rose cup victors get spoils



A PORTLAND AREA PAIR took the honors in the 1976 Trans Am and here they receive their "Spoils". From left, Joe Chamberlain of Tigard, winner of Category I and second place

overall; Miss Rose Cup; Monte Shelton of Portland, the Category II winner and overall Rose Cup Trans Am victor; the Rose Cup trophy; and David Orkney, president of G.I. Joe's.

*photo by Dale LaFollette*

*Joe on the podium with the race queen and the prize money after winning the 1976 Rose Cup Trans Am race. Photo: Dale LaFollette.*

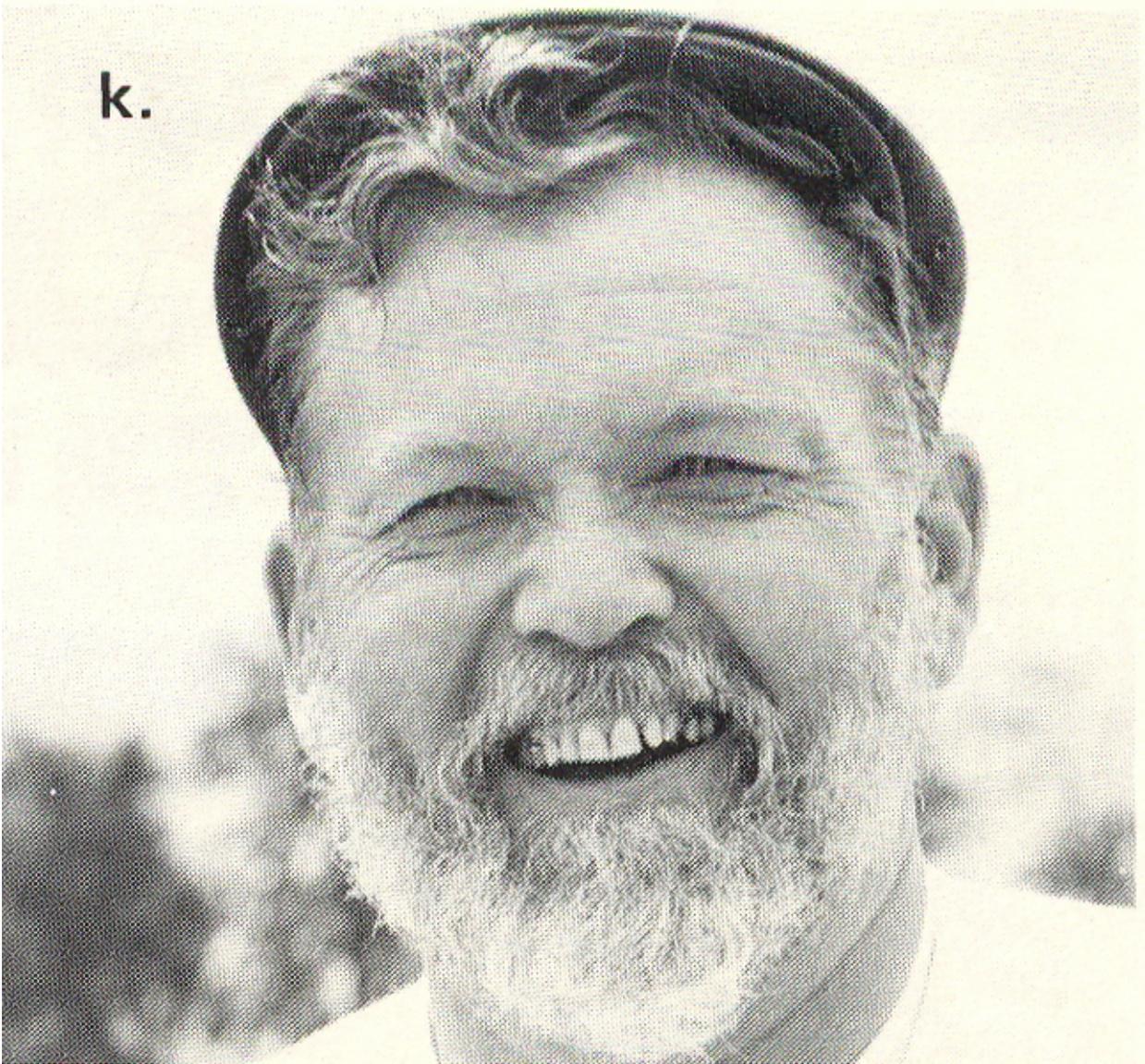
After Joe Chamberlain's Trans Am victory, Paul Aragon wrote a human-interest article about him.

"Chamberlain, rumored to be retiring his Camaro at the end of the season, will compete in the entire Trans Am series. A former A Sedan champion, he is confident that he will be a factor to contend with before the season is over and a Trans Am champion is picked.

A 52-year-old contractor from Portland, Chamberlain did not earn his national license until he was in his 40's, and since that time, he has been an avid promoter of racing. His friendly welcome and willingness to talk racing with anyone who happens by has earned him the title of the Northwest's Goodwill Ambassador to road racing. On the Thursday before the race, Chamberlain interrupted an impromptu practice session in order to give some children a unique thrill. One by one they were given a unique tour of the race track in Chamberlain's venerable Camaro."

*Autoweek, June 19, 1976.*

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*A happy Joe Chamberlain after his victory in the 1976 Rose Cup Trans Am race at Portland International Raceway. Photo: 1977 Rose Cup Program.*

The Trans Am series headed back east to New York. The four-week break before the next event, at Watkins Glen, welcomed by the Lennox team. This was the first time that the team had been to Watkins Glen, so they did not have great expectations in qualifying. Following up his victory at Portland, Joe put the Camaro on the pole. This was Joe's second Trans Am pole. During the six hour "World Championship of Makes", the Camaro slipped to 7<sup>th</sup>. However, the Camaro finished the test of endurance, and the team earned valuable points. Mid-way through the Trans Am season, Joe stood fifth in the standings- behind three Porsches and a 427 Corvette.

A two-week break was used to prepare and to transport the Camaro to Wisconsin. After the six-hour endurance race, the Camaro required thorough servicing and repair. The

next Trans Am race, at Road America, was only 100 miles (about one hour of racing). Joe had competed in five previous Trans Am races at Road America. He knew the track well, so expectations were high. Joe finished 6<sup>th</sup>, but was a lap down to the leader at the end. However, the team continued its streak of finishing and earning points at each event. After five Trans Am events, Joe stood fifth in points, and still in contention to win the Trans Am Championship points race.

The sixth race of the series was three weeks later in Minnesota. The track, Brainerd International Raceway, was new to Joe. So, of course, Joe qualified well- in second behind a 454 Corvette. In the race, at Brainerd, Joe finished second close behind the winner. He earned valuable points, but the points did not come easily. Autoweek reported that:

“Chamberlain and Jocko Maggiasco’s Javelin decided to play a game of tag, rumbling into each other several times.”

*Autoweek*, August 21, 1976



*Evidence of some love taps between Joe and Jocko Maggiasco is apparent on the Lennox Camaro. Brainerd T/A race 1976. Photo: Jerry Winker*

With two races to go, Chamberlain had moved up to third in Trans Am points. Only eleven points separated Joe from the points leader. A week after the Brainerd race, the Trans Am series was racing in Ontario, Canada at Mosport Park. Joe had raced in Canada before, but at Edmonton, not at Mosport. The Camaro was never a threat to win at Mosport. Joe finished 6<sup>th</sup>, but at the checkered flag, he was a lap down to the race winner. The crew, again, had prepared a reliable car, and Joe earned points. Going into the final event, Joe was only 18 points behind the points leader. The team still believed that they could win the Trans Am Championship.

The team had two weeks to prepare the Camaro for the final race of the 1976 Trans Am season. The series remained in Canada. The team transported the Camaro from Ontario to Trois Rivieres, Quebec. Trois Rivieres is about 80 miles east of Montreal. The race track there is a temporary street circuit that runs near the St. Lawrence River. Without a permanent racetrack, race fans in the area were starved for race events. So, it was not unexpected that 75,000 fans lined the street to watch the Trans Am finale.

Autoweek set the stage for the battle for the Trans Am Championship:

Five drivers had a chance at the crown going into the race, with each having to prove he should be the victor.

*Autoweek*, September 11, 1976.

Joe was one of those drivers with a chance at the Championship. Joe qualified the Camaro with the fourth fastest time. On race day, Joe and the Camaro got a good start. On lap 13, Joe was running strong. *Autoweek* reported:

“Chamberlain was still making his bid for the title.”

*Autoweek* coverage of the event noted that Joe had moved into second place, and was closing on the leader.

“Chamberlain was right on his tail.”

At this point, it looked like their dream of winning the T/A Championship was coming true. However, on the next lap, disaster struck the Lennox team.

“Chamberlain’s hopes were dashed after 28 laps when he was forced to pit to have his shift linkage repaired. The costly stop knocked him out of contention for the title ... “

*Autoweek*, September 11, 1976

Joe returned to the race, but four laps down. He would finish eighth, and earn only three points. The disappointing finish put Joe back to sixth in Trans Am points. The Lennox Camaro finished and earned points in all eight races of the 1976 Trans Am series. At Trois Rivieres, they came with eighteen laps of winning the T/A Championship.

After eight years of racing his 1969 Camaro, Joe retired the Camaro.

In early 1977, Joe placed a for sale classified ad in Autoweek.

**1969 TRANS-AM CAMARO-Fully prepared, reliable, car  
complete with spares, dry sump, Hearst brakes, 12 wheels.  
A proven winner \$9000. JOE CHAMBERLAIN. (503) 638-  
8577 Days (503) 639-4414 Evenings.**

*Autoweek, April 2, 1977.*

## **Highlights**

SCCA A/S Champion, 1974 ARRC/Run-Offs at Road Atlanta

SCCA, Northern Pacific Division, A/S Champion, 1970

SCCA, Northern Pacific Division, A/S Champion, 1972

SCCA, Northern Pacific Division, A/S Champion, 1973

SCCA, Northern Pacific Division, A/S Champion, 1974

Trans Am race win, Portland 1975

Trans Am race pole, Seattle 1975

Trans Am race pole, Watkins Glen 1976

## **Where are they now?**

Joe Chamberlain still lives in Tigard, Oregon.

Ed Fullerton still lives in Oregon in Lake Oswego. Ed still has a passion for racing. In 2006, Ed traveled to Lime Rock Park, Connecticut for the Historic Trans Am event.

Chuck Morrison still lives in Oregon across the river from Joe. Joe showed his appreciation to Chuck by giving him a motor home.

Dave Burkes later moved to Vancouver. Dave is a pilot.

Everett Hatch built Joe's engines. Everett died in an airplane crash. The engine building business continued under the same name. Brent Faulkner now owns Hatch Engine Service.

## Vintage Racing

The Chamberlain Camaro is a member of the Historic Trans Am group, [www.historictransam.com](http://www.historictransam.com). The car regularly participates in events, such as the Monterey Historic Races, Wine Country, and the Coronado Speed Festival.



The Chamberlain Camaro at the Monterey Historics at Laguna Seca. August 2005.



In 2005, the Chamberlain Camaro earned General Racing's award for "**Best Presentation and Performance**" at the Coronado Speed Festival.



*In 2006, the Historic Trans Am group visited Lime Rock Park, CT and Watkins Glen, NY. Camaro #76 against the distinctive backdrop of the blue guardrails of Watkins Glen. 2006. Photo: Mark Spaulding*



*The start of the 2006 Coronado Speed Festival vintage race.*



*The Chamberlain Camaro, back in victory lane, winning the 2006 Coronado Speed Festival.*