

Retiree Discusses GM's Support, His Work with Explorer Scouts

by Jim Stickford

As the saying goes, the show must go on.

For 12 years, GM employee Mike Oginsky helped Explorer Scouts build a vehicle to enter into the annual Autorama show in Detroit.

At the same time, GM sponsored that Scout organization.

Oginsky said GM's funding of the Explorer Scouts ended when the company went into bankruptcy.

But, even though Oginsky retired from GM in 2012 and no longer helps scouts build a car, he still manages to display a vehicle at the Autorama.

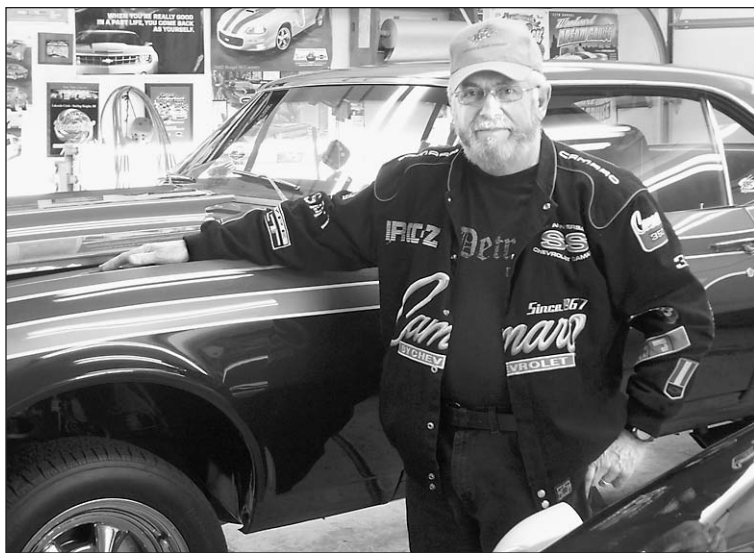
In 1991, Oginsky bought a classic 1967 Camaro and fixed it up. He first displayed it at the 1993 GM Tech Center Car Show. He even won fifth place one year at the Autorama.

"I saw the four cars that beat mine in the category I was competing in," Oginsky said. "Those were great cars and I fully understand why they beat mine. They were really great cars. I was just glad to be considered in their league."

Oginsky, who just turned 63, is a member of UAW Local 160, and worked for GM for 28 years in various capacities. He was based at the Tech Center in Warren.

Before starting work for GM, "I was working as a painter for Suburban Olds body shop," Oginsky said. "A neighbor asked me for a favor and I painted the car of his soon-to-be daughter-in-law."

Oginsky did such a good job that the neighbor said he should work for GM. It took Oginsky three years to get hired and every time he drove by the Tech Center before his hiring, he said to himself, "I'm going to work there."



GM Tech Center retiree Mike Oginsky with his 1967 Camaro

While at the Tech Center, Oginsky painted prototypes and pre-prototypes. He retired on April 1, 2012, "because it was time."

And while Oginsky was working at GM in the late 1990s, he was asked to help paint a vehicle with GM's Explorer Scouts.

"Even though it was supposed to be only one time," Oginsky said, "it kind of escalated and I ended up working with them until GM ended its support."

One thing that Oginsky found interesting was how eager and hard-working the female Explorer Scouts were.

"They really wanted to learn and they were willing to do the work," Oginsky said. "The guys wanted to, too, but they sometimes thought they knew more than they knew. The women listened to what they were told and they did excellent work."

Two of the female scouts, Oginsky said, went on to attend Kettering University, with one getting a \$50,000 scholarship.

"Thank God for Facebook," Oginsky said. "It allows me to keep in touch with my former scouts. I've been invited to weddings and graduations."

GM was very generous with the scouts, Oginsky said. They donated "beaters" that had been driven into the ground and

couldn't be sold.

"We're talking about prototypes that had no VINs," Oginsky said. "We'd get money from GM to work on the cars. Some of their suppliers, like SSBC, would donate parts."

"We had a few nights that ended at 1:30 a.m.," Oginsky said. "In my defense, when you start painting a vehicle, you can't stop because of chemical reactions that take place."

Oginsky said Autorama is a big deal because it's a car show with a lot of tradition that features the best cars in the country.

Oginsky hasn't stopped being busy. He's an ordained minister for "Racers for Christ" out of Mesa, Ariz.

He has named his classic Camaro, "Faster for the Master," in honor of his faith.

GM's Large SUVs Raise Their Fuel Efficiency by 10 Percent

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the previous models and 7 percent greater city mileage.

The Yukon Denali and Yukon XL Denali models feature an exclusive 6.2L V8 rated at 420 horsepower and 460 lb.-ft. of torque.

No other full-size SUV offers as much power and torque, said Malcho.

Denali models offer 15 city/21 highway in two-wheel-drive models, she added.

Improving mileage in large SUVs is important for GM, Malcho said, because GM has about 75 percent of the market.

"The market share of the large SUV has remained consistent over the years," Malcho said. "It's approximately 1.6 percent of the marketplace. That's whether 10 million or 15 million vehicles a year are sold."

"Last year, GM had three-quarters of the market, translating into about 264,000 sales."

"The Tahoe and the Suburban accounted for more than 50 percent of GM's share of large SUV sales."

People have consistently purchased large SUVs for several reasons, Malcho said – they either have large families, or they have cargo needs, or they have work needs.

And if GM can offer them large

SUVs with the best mileage, she said, that can only help the automaker keep its domination of the large-size SUV market segment.

"We were able to make improvements in the aerodynamics," Malcho said.

"If you look at the new Tahoe, you'll see that it's a little shorter and a little wider."

"Add to that our new EcoBoost engine, which comes with the new Silverado, and you're talking about a vehicle that gets better mileage."

Not all manufacturers produce large SUVs, Malcho said.

Right now, GM's biggest competition comes from Ford, which produces the Expedition and the Explorer.

Making these engine improvements along with better aerodynamics, she said, is part of staying ahead of the competition.

The new SUVs are just starting to hit the dealerships, Malcho said.

"We received great feedback from the critics who saw the vehicles last year when we first introduced them," Malcho said.

"And they were very popular at the recent auto shows," she added.

"But now that the vehicles are hitting the dealerships, it will be the first time that we get feedback from the public."



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