Sentimental Journey: SH Supplier Tricks Out '67 Camaro

By Gerald Scott

No question that the nostalgic atmosphere of the annual Woodward Dream Cruise plays upon sentiments linked to the Motor City and its auto traditions.

Case in point is Experi-metal, Inc., of Sterling Heights, which says that it manufactures quality "Made in the U.S.A." aftermarket components, steel body replacement parts, sub-assemblies and full steel bodies sold only through its dealer and distribution network.

Every year, EMI tricks out a classic car that plays on its theme of aftermarket parts production, all for display at the Woodward Dream Cruise, of course. The car in question this year is a 1967 Chevrolet Camaro – the first year the car was available back in the early, modern pony car era and a vehicle that was developed as GM's response to the popularity of the 1964-1/2 Mustang from Ford.

Al Sharp, vice president of Sales at EMI, grew up in Warren where his late father, Bill, was a GM Information Technology employee at the GM Tech Center in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sharp had his firm's Dream Cruise cars on display out in front of his shop on Wall Street in Sterling Heights the other day.

"That's a 45th Anniversary, 2012 Camaro (factory car) with an LS3 motor. The 1967 Camaro has an LS3 motor, custom interior, custom exhaust, Detroit Speed suspension – both of them have the Detroit Speed suspension," Sharp said. "I put in the engine, it's a crate motor.

"The 2012 is factory, the 1967 Camaro is custom-made, same drivelines. Their uniqueness is their matching interiors, 45 years apart.

"I was 10 years old and I remember that car when it came off the production line," he further recalled.

"I was 10 years old and saw the original 1967 Camaro.

"At Experi-metal, we stamp the floor pans, quarter panels for the 1967. They are sold through CARS, Inc. and Sherman & Associates."

Sharp and his fellow Experi-metal employees always gather at the Radisson Hotel on Woodward Ave. in Bloomfield Hills, one of the key Dream Cruise stops between Birmingham and downtown Pontiac.

Located on the west side of the avenue, the Radisson hosts dozens of classic cars on its lawn on the day of the Cruise and the Experi-metal crowd was there with these two Camaros among other vintage cruisers.

For the record, the 1967 car that Sharp eyed as a 10-year-old belongs to Al while his wife Donna will be driving the 2012. Sharp sees the 1967 as a tip-of-the-hat to his late father.

"He worked at the GM Tech Center in Information Technology – long before EDS got there. My dad was old-school, he graduated from GMI (the former General Motors Institute, now Kettering University) in 1957 – the same year I was born."

Ten years later, in 1967, his father would be able to show him the new Camaro in person. It's safe to say Sharp's been a car guy ever since.

In fact, Experi-metal's growing car collection is so distinct that a few years ago Sharp and EMI were even featured in the *New York Times*. A framed copy of that article hangs in the firm's lobby in Sterling Heights.

Otherwise, Sharp and EMI have also been branching out, so that, besides producing those aftermarket parts for 1955 Chevrolets and 1932 and 1934 Ford 3-window coupes, they've also been producing engine nacelles for aerospace and other parts and systems for homeland security, the military and the like.

But it's the classic cars they trick out for the Dream Cruise every year that brings out the smiles for staff and management alike. Look for the twin Camaros, black with orange racing trim, on the lawn at the Radisson on the afternoon of the Dream Cruise.

Al Sharp of Experi-metal, Inc., in Sterling Heights, saw the original 1967 Camaro prototype as a 10-year-old youngster when his late father, a GM Tech Center IT employee, took him inside to see the car.

Members of SAE Offered Online Technical Info

WARRENDALE, Pa. – SAE International members now can better position themselves for career advancement with "Technology Insights for Mobility Industries," a new series of reports offered through the online collaborative platform EngineerXchange.

The reports are designed to provide technical insight and career guidance to engineers who want to solve the automotive, aerospace and commercial vehicle engineering challenges not only of today, but also tomorrow.

"Readers will discover what types of safety systems are under development in each industry, the technical challenges facing these systems and what engineering disciplines will be most important to solving these challenges," R. Winn Hardin, lead analyst, said.

"Plus, the reports offer additional experience and guidance to help new engineers gain a competitive edge when it comes to applying for jobs developing new safety systems in the automotive, aerospace and commercial vehicle industries."

The technological focus areas for the "Technology Insights for Mobility Industries" reports were identified by industry leaders as critical to the advancement of mobility industries during SAE International steering committee meetings held in 2011.

The first report, "Technology Insights for Mobility Industries – Safety Systems," includes guidance from industry experts, engineers and business managers in the automotive, aerospace and commercial vehicle manufacturing industries.

To access the report, SAE International members will need to log-into EngineerXchange at http://ex.sae.org/; the report is located on the left-hand side of the page under the "SAE Quick-Links" menu.

SAE International says that it is working hard to serve its members' lifetime educational needs whether its through online classes, webinars or live classroom presentations.

Big 3 Support Paul W's Tourney, Setting Record for PAL

DETROIT – The Ninth Annual Paul W. Smith Golf Classic at the historic Detroit Golf Club raised $520,000 – a record – to benefit Think Detroit PAL.

Local business and community leaders joined together with title sponsor News/Talk 760 WJR and Presenting Sponsors Ford Motor Co., Compuware Corporation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, General Motors Co., The Chrysler Foundation and Ambassador Bridge for this annual fundraiser that supports the youth of Detroit.

"Sponsors are providing the opportunity for these kids to have officials, clean fields, new uniforms and equipment and the ability to participate like they should – like they deserve to participate – in the city," said Tim Richey, CEO of Think Detroit PAL.

"I guarantee you that an investment in Think Detroit PAL is absolutely an investment in the community, the young people and the future."

The Paul W. Smith Golf Classic is the largest fundraiser benefiting Think Detroit PAL, and has raised over $3.5 million in net funds since the inaugural event in 2004. The tournament connects Detroit-area corporations with the largest non-profit youth organization in the city.

Think Detroit PAL provides athletic and leadership development programming for more than 10,000 youth in Detroit, utilizing nearly 1,500 trained and dedicated volunteers to act as coaches and mentors for the youth they serve.

Think Detroit PAL aims to build character and instill the values of teamwork, perseverance and integrity in local youth.

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Chrysler-sponsored Broadway Series Brings Hot Musical 'Billy Elliot' To Fisher Stage in September

DETROIT – Universal Pictures Stage Productions is bringing the multi-award-winning "Billy Elliot the Musical" to Detroit's Fisher Theatre from September 4 - 16.

Based on the international smash-hit film and featuring music by Elton John, book and lyrics by Lee Hall, choreography by Peter Darling and direction by Stephen Daldry, Billy Elliot the Musical has earned critical acclaim around the world and was the winner of ten Tony Awards including Best Musical.

Tickets for the Detroit performance of "Billy Elliot the Musical" are currently on sale at 10 a.m. on weekday mornings at the Fisher Theatre box office, all Ticketmaster locations, or by phone at 1-800-982-2787.

"Billy Elliot the Musical" is the joyous celebration of one boy's journey to make his dreams come true. Set in a small town, the story follows Billy as he stumbles out of the boxing ring and into a ballet class, discovering a surprising talent that inspires his family and his whole community and changes his life forever.

In addition to the Tony Award for Best Musical, "Billy Elliot the Musical" received the award for Best Direction of a Musical (Stephen Daldry); Best Book of a Musical (Lee Hall); Best Choreography (Peter Darling); Best Orchestrations (Martin Koch); Best Scenic Design of a Musical (Ian MacNeil); Best Lighting Design of a Musical (Rick Fisher); Best Sound Design of a Musical (Paul Arditti); Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical (David Alvarez, Trent Kowalik, Kiril Kulish); Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical (Gregory Jbara).

The production has been awarded 81 national and international awards including ten Tony Awards, Best Musical by the New York Drama Critics Circle, Drama Desk, Drama League and Outer Critics Circle.

Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* says that Billy Elliot "Sends audiences into a mass swoon!" Time Out says it's "The most electric and passionate show in years."

The Daily News calls Billy "So exhilarating that you feel like leaping!" Liz Smith calls the show "Absolutely awesome," The New York Observer raves that Billy is "The best thing to happen to Broadway in a long while," and WOR's Dave Richardson cheers, "All I can say is WOW!"

Performance times for Billy Elliot the Musical, appearing Sep. 4 -16, 2012 at the Fisher Theatre, located at 3011 W. Grand Blvd., in Detroit, are:

- Tuesday through Saturday performances at 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday evening performances at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.