

History of IndipalaSS

Indianapolis Super Chevy Show: July 1998:

Phillip and Dodie Sheffield had been attending small and large car shows since they purchased their Impala SS ('95 DCM) in April 1995. They had connected with a few other Impala SS owners at these events, and several of them were in attendance at the July 1998 Indianapolis Super Chevy Show. An informal camaraderie had developed between these SS owners, as they began to see one another more frequently at shows throughout central Indiana.

A loosely organized group for Impala SS owners was in existence. It was called NAISSO Indiana. There were no dues, no real organization, and no plan. The leader of that group was selling his SS and wanted someone else to take over for him. He asked Joe Palmer ('96 BBB) to find someone to take the reigns. Joe asked Phillip and Dodie Sheffield if they would like to try to get something started. The Sheffields agreed.

The first organizational meeting was in the hot July sunshine at Indianapolis Raceway Park during the 1998 Indianapolis Super Chevy Show. We made the following decisions:

- Keep the dues low.
- Provide a bi-monthly newsletter, so members would feel they were “getting something” for their money.
- Provide organized attendance at car shows and cruises throughout the summer. The more the merrier!
- We would not necessarily organize as a local affiliate to the then national club, NAISSO, but would instead try to remain as independent as possible.

Phillip and Dodie Sheffield ('95 DCM), Larry Henselmeier ('96 DCM), Clark and Terri Wendt ('95 BBB), Jamie Murphy ('96 BBB), Joe Palmer ('96 BBB) and the late Ron McCullum ('94 BBB) pitched in their \$10 dues to get the ball rolling. By the end of the month we had recruited Mel Mertz ('96 DCM) (another SS owner that we had met at our local cruise spot, the Suds) and Evansville's Steve Wiltsie ('95 DGGM) (our first out-of-town member – who found us by chance from an internet announcement regarding our formation). These eight car owners became our Charter Members.

During that summer, Phillip Sheffield came up with the name “Indipala**SS**” and the group liked it! It wasn't an acronym, like so many other Impala SS club names tended to be. It would set us apart and identify us immediately as “the club from Indiana.” He also designed the Impala symbol fading into a checkered flag – which is the logo that we still use today. We attended our first club event “in force,” a show put on by the Central Indiana Camaro Club at a local Chevy dealership. We took some trophies home, had a good time, and found out that people were impressed when we showed up in a pack!

The group made good on their promise of bi-monthly newsletters. We also printed flyers and business cards for our members to put on Impalas they saw in their travels. With advertisements on the most popular Impala SS internet sites, our membership began to grow! Soon we had 20, then 30 members statewide!

In 1999, we attended our first national event (Impalalooza on the Green, Bowling Green, KY) as a group, and made our presence known! We took home several trophies and member Larry Henselmeier's car was even on display as part of the Platinum Class, best-of-the-best, group housed inside the pavilion. We made our first trip to Evansville for what has now become an annual event for us, the My Classic Car Autofest. We recruited some new southern Indiana members at this event too! We ended the season with a dyno day at Kenny Brown Performance! It was quite a summer for the first full season of participation from the group!

2000 brought several small car shows, Indianapolis Super Chevy, Impalalouis 2000 in St. Louis, and another trip to Evansville for the MCC show. The group also partnered with the Central Indiana Camaro Club by helping out as judges for that club's big national Camaro and pace car reunion at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in August. This partnership continues, as we offer our assistance to the Camaro Club for their large events, and they often meet us at cruises and car shows! Also in 2000, Dodie Sheffield launched the first IndipalaSS website in July. Soon our membership had swelled to over 40 members!

By the winter of 2000-2001, IndipalaSS membership had grown to almost 50 members. The group was more organized and active. We had a core group of about 15 people who could be relied upon to attend and assist with any activity we organized or participated in. It was time to move to a more formal leadership plan. Phillip and Dodie Sheffield turned over the reigns and, in April 2001, IndipalaSS held its first elections. Dave Bass was elected President. Royce White of Ft. Wayne was elected Vice President. Larry Henselmeier would serve as Treasure and Dodie Sheffield would be Secretary.

We began to move forward as a group. We attended even more events in 2001, including our traditional shows and the weeklong trip to Detroit for Dreamapalooza (the national Impala SS event linked to the famous Woodward Dream Cruise.) We became one of the first Chartered Clubs for the new national Impala SS club, ISSCA. We even added an annual family-focused event to our schedule – an autumn season-ending picnic.

We've come a long way and we continue to grow. We will continue to live up to our promises and we have a lot of fun doing it.

After all...

- We have winners! Our cars consistently place in the highest ranks at both local cruises and national shows.
- We have variety! Members own 94s, 95s, 96s, station wagons, 9C1s, Caprices and Roadmasters.
- It doesn't matter if your car is "perfect" or "detailed." It doesn't matter if you have the latest modifications or if you're running stock. It doesn't matter if you drive a B-body that isn't "officially" a 1994 – 1996 Impala SS. We pride ourselves on being welcoming.