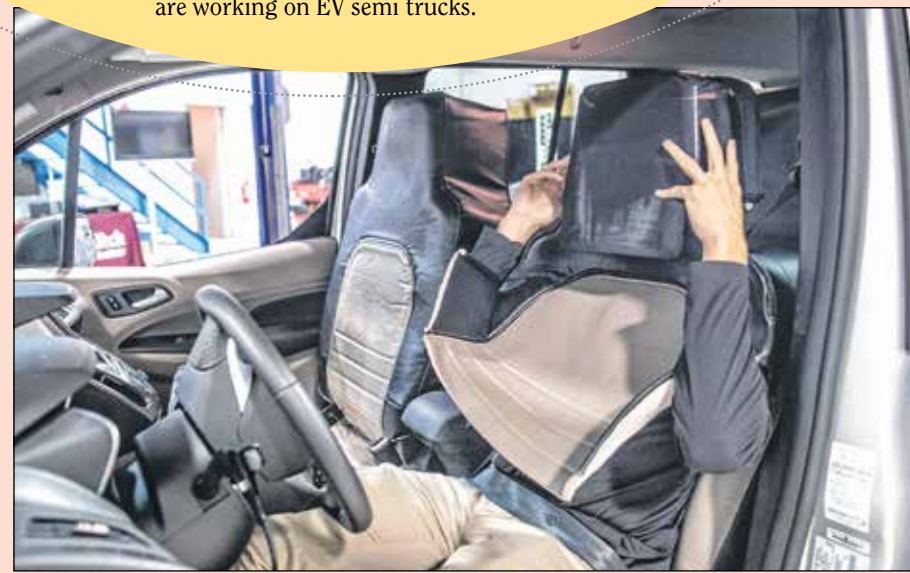




Meet the 1,000-mile EV bus

The manufacturer of an all-electric city bus is claiming a new world's record. **Proterra's** current EcoRide BE-35 can get an 80 percent charge in only 10 minutes, which would be good for 40 miles. But last Tuesday, the South Carolina startup drove its new **Catalyst E2 Max electric bus** 1,100 miles on a single charge, a greater distance than most city buses travel in an entire day. For comparison, the **Chevy Bolt** crossover has a 238-mile range and the **Tesla Model S** luxury sedan hits 335 miles. The Catalyst E2 Max's battery, however, stores 660kWh — the equivalent of 11 Chevy Bolts. Further, the stop-and-go driving patterns of most city buses plays to the kinetic energy recapture strengths of EVs. With Proterra's high-voltage charging system, it takes an hour for a full recharge. The Catalyst E2 Max has a top speed of 65 mph. Urban mass transit is a big market, and EVs are poised to expand beyond private passenger cars. In addition to Proterra (which **General Motors** invested \$30 million into back in 2011), China-based **BYD** is also working on an EV bus. **Daimler** plans to supply UPS with short-haul electrics, while both **Tesla** and **Cummins** are working on EV semi trucks.



Too early for Halloween? This "driver-less" van was actually a test funded by Ford.

Look, ma, no driver

How will pedestrians and other drivers respond to driver-less cars? As society prepares itself for the mass deployment of autonomous vehicles, Ford attempted to study that question with a vehicle that only appeared to be empty: The driver was disguised by a concealing costume that made him appear to be the seat, even though his arms extended out to man the steering wheel.

The test was performed last month by Virginia Tech's Ford-funded Transportation Institute, but it was a viral video of a reporter from Arlington's NBC affiliate approaching the "hidden" driver in the van that brought it to widespread attention.

Ford's Self-Driven blog explained that the test hoped to find a user-friendly way to telegraph to others the autonomous vehicle's intent. At issue was how to design signals from a lighted bar on the vehicle in a way that pedestrians and other drivers could easily interpret.

TEST DRIVE

2017 Ford Shelby GT350

Continued from page 1

The Shelby's interior isn't as unique as its sticker price might suggest. It's clear that the dollars were directed mainly towards performance hardware and technology, not cabin accoutrements. Wraparound Recaro bucket seats are a highlight. They offer fine support and sueded, grippy inserts, though larger occupants may find them a little on the snug side. A sport seat option is a little more accommodating size-wise, and also offers heating and cooling.

Track Apps offer easy, onboard access to launch control, electronic line lock and various performance metrics, via the 4.2-inch message center display. My test car added the Electronics Package (\$3,000) which adds dual zone A/C, a CD player, satellite radio and a navigation system to the SYNC 3 infotainment system's menu. This version of SYNC is an improvement over the system it replaces, in terms of ease of use.

Extremists can push all chips forward

and take the GT350R (\$63,645) which adds a carbon fiber wing and wheels and suspension tuning, while stripping away weighty niceties like A/C, SYNC 3, sound system, rearview camera, tire inflator and that pesky 'ol rear seat.

If all that seems a tad too Spartan for your taste, most can be restored via the Electronics package (\$3,000).

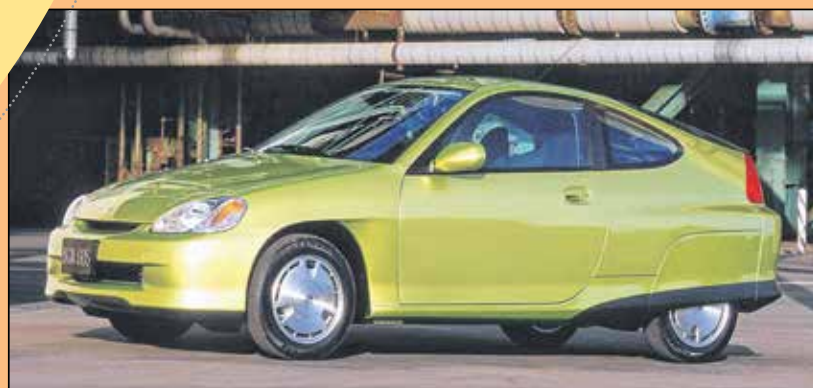
Classic era muscle cars were one trick ponies, by and large. Their abundant, straight line speed was often matched by their inability to corner. That hasn't been the case for a long time. Most modern muscle cars have at least passably good handling in stock form, with options that coax still better cornering.

And speaking of options, the formerly optional Track Package is now standard equipment on the Shelby. The bundle includes an aluminum brace stretching from shock tower to tower, a high downforce rear deck spoiler, oil, transmission and differential coolers, and Magneride damping system. The latter



Mazda and Toyota join up

The forthcoming alliance between the two Japan-based auto-makers is certainly welcome news for **Mazda**, says your humble Times Union automotive section. The smaller of the two companies has been out in the cold as far as hybrid and electric vehicles is concerned. By teaming up with **Toyota**, arguably the world leader in both areas, Mazda will have access to these and other technologies, while Toyota should benefit from Mazda's strengths in gasoline powertrain, suspension and platform engineering. The two competing brands will construct a **joint manufacturing plant in the U.S.** to be completed by 2021 that will employ an estimated 4,000 workers. It will also reportedly have a planned annual capacity of 300,000 vehicles. To further cement the deal, Toyota will acquire a five percent stake in Mazda, while Mazda purchases a 0.25 percent share of Toyota.



The first generation Honda Insight hybrid (1999–2006) was too futuristic-looking and, as a two-seater, to impractical to give it the edge over Toyota's Prius.

Honda gains new Insight

We call this one the Model That Refuses To Die. At its debut in 1999, the too-futuristic **Honda Insight** hybrid hatchback was perhaps ahead of its time, and maybe (in its original two-seat configuration with minimal cargo space) impractical, but there are reports that Honda is reviving the name.

This time, it appears that the Insight hybrid will have its own unique shape, but will remain on the small side (i.e. much smaller than the 2018 Honda Clarity hydrogen-fueled vehicle). Plug-in and non plug-in versions will likely be sold, but whether both will make it to North America is unclear.

The Insight is part of Honda's announced 2030 Vision Strategy that specifies two-thirds of the company's cars will be partly or fully electrified by that year.

With hybrids hotter than ever, it seems as good a time as any to make another foray into the dedicated hybrid vehicle.



The second-gen Insight (2009–2014) gave us two more doors, but its design was suspiciously similar to the Prius, by then the dominant market hybrid.



TEST DRIVE this vehicle at these preferred dealerships:

DEPAULA FORD 799 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12206
518) 336-5544 www.depaulaford.com

JACK BYRNE FORD 1003 Hudson River Rd., Mechanicville, NY 12118
518-664-9841 jackbyrneford.dealerconnection.com

takes some explaining (and taxes spell check). Adaptive magnetorheological shocks can respond to changing road conditions in milliseconds, and allowed Ford's Engineers more options for fine tuning springs, shocks and anti-roll bars. The result is prodigious grip — .98-1.02g on the skid pad.

It makes for a marvelous muscle car, but also a specialty piece. Some of the stuff that shines on the track, doesn't work as well when consigned to commuting.

On the billiards smooth boulevards of southern California, the Shelby's suspension will come off stiff, but not noteworthy. Here in upstate New York, pavement

is a lot more variable, and the Shelby's suspension makes for a very active ride on the street. On bumpy roads, you and your passengers are so many bobble heads.

It's a tradeoff for the power and Velcro-like grip, and if you're buying the Shelby for its impressive strengths, I doubt you'll care about the downside. If you do, and this setup doesn't work for you, there are many Mustangs models (like the GT) whose ride/handling balance is far more street friendly.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 25 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 180 calendars.