



CORVAIR RACER UPDATE

MAY 9, 2016

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FROM RICK NORRIS' CORVAIR ALLEY



The main race engine was almost ready for the initial fire up but then it decided to mark its territory with a static oil leak! The leak is the usual lower part of the rear cover. Removed cover, checked for flatness, burrs etc. and reassembled with some sealer on a new gasket.

While torqueing up the four nuts that hold the engine mount on one of the studs snapped off at the nut! I never had this happen before. Removed the rear cover again, removed and replaced the broken stud and successfully retorqued the new nuts. Will fill with oil and hope for the best today. I'd really like to get this damn thing fired up and run in!

DAVID CLEMENS sez:

Well this Mother's Day weekend was race weekend for me. The SARRC/MARRS challenge event at VIR a double road race weekend with a qualifying and practice session in the AM with an afternoon race each day.

I have just recently finished the rebuild of my backup motor that I ran at the Mitty last year and also just finished the buildup of a 3:27 Diff with new Double Close transmission, all of which I plan to run at the WIC in July at Road America. VIR has two nice long

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PCG is one of the many regional chapters of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA), a non-profit organization that was incorporated to satisfy the common needs of individuals interested in the preservation, restoration, and operation of the Chevrolet Corvair. Membership is free of charge. To join, please use the handy form on our website: www.corvair.org/chapters/pcg.

straights so they make for a great test track for the new setup in the car.

Friday evening we (my son Zachary and I) arrived at the track around 6PM. After getting through registration we found a pit spot and started to unload. I had to get an annual tech done so we took the car to tech along with all my gear. Once I got to tech a swarm of people gathered around the car. Everybody with stories about how they used to own one and how theirs was the Spyder with the 4 carbs...It took about 30 minutes to get through tech just because all the tech workers had hundreds of questions about Corvairs in general.

We finally got back to the "Haulmark Inn and Suites" (20ft enclosed trailer) and setup our beds for the night. We woke up Saturday morning to a perfect spring day. I was in Group 2 with all the other production vehicles and some other odd classes. There were 43 cars in group 2. We went out for the morning practice and the car worked great. I was able to run the car hard and didn't have to over rev the engine due to the 3:27 gears. The extra torque that the big bore 3.0 litre engine has allowed me to shift at 6000 rpm and stay in the power band of this engine. Also at the end of the longest straight I was pulling 6000rpm in 4th gear.

The car ran great with no issues but the biggest issue on track was a spinning Honda that tried to take me out on the first lap. After that I had no other problems. When I came in they sent everyone to Impound and took us all in for a drivers meeting. My son also attended the drivers meeting. He told me that the announcer said I had qualified 8th out of the 43 car field which amazed me and I couldn't wait to get the official results to verify it. When I got the sheet it did verify that I was 8th overall and 1st in SPU! Not only that but I had qualified faster than I have ever been around VIR with a 2:18.504.

Race time now.... we were the first group out after lunch. I wasn't sure if I would be able to get around VIR any faster since the track temp was now higher and the air temp was 20 degree's warmer then the morning practice. We lined up for the start and while coming

to get the green I couldn't decide if I wanted to start in 1st or in 2nd gear. I choose 1st... I chose poorly. When the flag dropped I accelerated hard and was right on he guy in front of me then I missed the shift into 2nd and 3 cars got around me before the first



turn. I proceeded to pick them off one at a time.

VIR has a rule called the 35 rule. Anytime a vehicle is off track or needing assistance they throw a double yellow caution flag and a purple flag with the # 35 on it. Once this flag comes out you must drop your speed to 35 mph and maintain the distance to the car in front of you until the track is clear and all corner stations will pull the flags and wave a green.

This became interesting as we had this situation happen twice during our race. The first time everyone did a great job and thanks to my great eye sight I was able to see the flag man pull the double yellow and throw the green from the other end of the straightaway. I nailed the throttle and passed the two cars in front of me that didn't respond to the changing of the flags.

The next few laps were clean and fast. One of the guys that I passed was dogging my heels and a couple of missed shifts for me allowed him to close to a tight gap. We were running nose to tail coming onto the front stretch and I looked up and saw the corner station was again displaying the double yellow and the purple 35 flag. I hit the brakes to slow down and the guy behind me pulled out passed me at full speed.

As he headed down the straight and got into view of the next flag station he realized what had happened and he slowed down and let me back in front of him. The race went green again and we quickly caught the tail end of the field. I managed to clear several slower cars before the entry to the esse's and the guy chasing me got hung up behind them. This gave me some breathing room and I went on to finish 4th overall and 1st in SPU. I managed to also put a lap on the other guys running SPU. When the final results were in I was amazed that I had now gone even faster - a 2:17.624.

Saturday after the Race I had my chief Corvair pit crew (Zachary Clemens) assist me with some major alignment changes. The radial tires like big negative camber #'s and the car had been set up for bias ply slicks. So we added more negative camber and readjusted the front toe, then set the rear camber and rear toe. We also readjusted the shifter base on the floor to try and eliminate my shifting issue.

We attended the social and got our grub on... talked to lots of people all who said they loved the Corvair and how awesome it was to see it out there running. Then back to the Haulmark inn and suites for some rest.

We woke up Sunday to another perfect spring day. I got to the grid a little late so I had to start at the rear of the pack for the practice/qualifying session. For the Sunday event there were only 36 entries but the qualifying session went great and I qualified 4th out of the 36 cars and set an even faster personal best lap of 2:16.935!

When I got back to the pit area I noticed that the right rear tire had way more camber than it should have. We measured it and the gauge showed 8.5 degrees negative. I couldn't understand what had happened and just figured that my new in training pit monkey just didn't read the gauge correctly. With the pit monkeys help we reset the

camber to where we wanted it then I just had a hard time with thinking that we had missed it that badly.

I started looking around found that the rear control arm bearing mount area was cracking and pulling away at the bottom. There was a noticeable gap lower edge of the bearing surface it was supposed to be sitting on. I didn't feel that it would get any worse but I didn't want to drive the car hard with a known potential failure lurking.

I went out through the paddock in search of a mig welder. Finally found one at team VIPER engineering garage located at the upper end of the paddock. I pulled the car over there and welded up all of the cracks and put it back together. Now I felt confident that the part would not fail and that I could go racing again.

Sunday's race was the 2nd group out after lunch and the outside air temp was a warm 80 degrees. I started 4th and this time I didn't miss the shift from 1st to 2nd. Got a good start and had a great race. I stayed in 4th for a few laps then missed a shift into 4th gear and that allowed the two cars behind me to pass me by the end of the straight. The three of us then ran the rest of the race in this order and we were all very close in time.

The rear tires did get hot and start sliding around a bit. I had one nice long slide coming onto the front straight but managed to get it under control. I managed to finish 6th overall out of 36 cars and again won the SPU class and put a lap on my competitor. Oh and I now set another even faster personal lap time of 2:15.879! All of this from my backup engine! I can't wait to go back with the primary engine in the car.

We ran the car all weekend and didn't use any oil. It had one or two drops under it, basically just fueled and drove all weekend. The only issues were the wheel bearing mount and the shifter. The alignment thing was just tweaking to go faster. I saw a max of 285 degree oil temp measured in the pan before it is pumped to the cooler then back to the crank journals, and with the vertical fan and Westach head temp gauges I saw a stable 400 degree head temperature.

We arrived back home Sunday around 4 pm and put everything away then I took my wife out for dinner for Mother's day.

If any of you are looking for an inexpensive track day. The SARRC series is running at Summit Point June 18, 19 and this is a double weekend with a cost of \$335.00 but they are also running a promotion that if you have not run at Summit Point in over two years (raced not track days) they are giving you a \$100.00 dollar discount that would make it a total cost of \$235.00 for a Double Weekend. I was planning to go to an autocross that weekend but now it looks like I will be road racing instead.

Keep eyes open for Video footage later this week.

Special thanks to my official new Pit Monkey Zachary Clemens. (Pit monkey shirt coming your way, Ed.) Also we enjoyed talking with Spence Shepard who was there helping crew the other SPU car which was a beautiful 69 Alfa.

[Congratulations to David and Zack for a great week end of Corvaair racing!](#)

BOB STORC sez:

My backup engine is basically complete and the main engine will be built in June. I expect to attend the WIC.



DAVID CLEMENS also sez:

I would like to ask for any information regarding track records.

What I'm looking to do is make a list of all the tracks that Corvairs have run on and the fastest lap times recorded at each of them. These can be Vintage cars, Modern cars, V8's, and so on. (Corvaair body based) If the track has changed like Road Atlanta I would also like to know old or current layout.

These lap times can be from any recorded laps, time trials, track days or regional races. It is always interesting to see how our current Corvairs compare to the great names that made Stingers and racing Corvairs such a great part of history.

Example list:

VIR full course Modern car record 2:15.879 David Clemens. Road Atlanta Current track configuration Vintage 1:43.??? Michael Leveque. Road Atlanta Current track configuration V8 ??? Mike Levine.

This is just an idea I would like to get on record somewhere other than in personal scrap-books and memories.

WIC UPDATE

Updated entry list as of 5/5/2016 for the Weathertech International Challenge with Brian Redman presented by Hawk or WIC for short. The list of paid entrants that I am aware of has not changed. As stated before we have reached our goal of ten. More would be

better. If we could get five more it would be our best ever eclipsing the 14 we had at the 2012 Mitty.

1. Clemens, David No. 24
2. Coffin, Bob No. 48 (the Dennis LeForge tribute car)
3. Langley, Chris No. 99
4. Latulippe, Norm No. 41
5. LeVeque, Michael No. 2 (had to use an alternate number)
6. Levine, Mike No. 4 (in his badass mid-engine Crown V8 car)
7. Norris, Rick No. 36
8. Sadek, Chuck No. 73
9. Schardt, Jim No. 7
10. Whitley, Jon No. 265

You can go to the Road America site, click on events then seven down for the WIC then click on Competitor Registration and Information. At the bottom click on Entry Lists. They are arranged by alphabetical and group.

Other possible drivers are Eric Schakel, Eddie Meadows, Dave Edsinger, Spence Shepard, Jeff Rapp, Logan Dernoshok and Bob Storck. If all these guys sign up it will be a new record!

If there are any car owners out there with an eligible race Corvair but no comp license there are several good drivers who would love to be your driver such as James Reeve and the Schardt brothers just to name a few.

Also we'd like to see some of our West coast brethren (Carey Eisenlohr?) come back East and join in the fun.

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