



Newsletter of the Performance Corvair Group (PCG)

# CORVAIR RACER UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

[HTTP://WWW.CORVAIR.ORG/CHAPTERS/PCG](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/pcg)

ESTABLISHED 2007

**FROM:** Rick Norris!

## **44 DAY'S UNTIL THE HSR SAVANNAH SPEED CLASSIC**



### **SAVANNAH SPEED CLASSIC (PRELIMINARY) ENTRIES to date:**

1. Bob Coffin
2. Dave Edsinger
3. Michael LeVeque, entered.
4. Mike Levine, entered.
5. Rick Norris, entered.
6. Jeff Rapp
7. James Reeve
8. Spence Shepard

I decided to make this issue about Allen Amrine and his retelling of his valiant effort to make the trip from his Colorado home in a Rampside to Wisconsin where he would personally deliver the very nice event T shirts he had made at his own expense. It was to be an epic journey only not in the manner he expected. This was posted earlier on the Racer Facebook page.



## **My Miss Adventure to Road America and the Stinger Reunion By Allen Amrine**

Here is my story and I am writing it as I sit here so not much forethought!

I was very excited for the Yenko 50th reunion for some time. My Facebook page Corvair Racers and members there organized and promoted the event for the last year. The only slight issue was that it was the same week as the Convention. I had shirts licensed and printed up. I was also looking forward to picking up a hood and deck lid for my race car project that Bob Coffin was bringing up. The plan was to go there and take Michael LeVeque some heads so I could get them done for one of my race engines, pick up the parts from Bob, give all the drivers a free shirt, sell the extras, and enjoy meeting the racers and my first big Corvair racing event. On the way back I would stop in Missouri and pick up a couple of FC windows that John and Teresa Miller have been holding for me.

In the weeks before the event I had purchased David Feasel's New Mexico Rampside. I was going to try to get it ready to go but it needed a little more work than I had time for. Ray Schick was helping me and he offered the use of his gold Rampside. I moved the new tires over from my new Rampside and we also set out to make a level floor hit so I would transport the expected parts back more easily. We had just returned from a pretty good road trip to the Tri State Meet with Ray's gold Rampside so we were not too concerned with its ability to do that. There would not be mountain passes or anything. So we prepared it as much as possible and made this kit. It is a kit that installs and removes easily in the bed of a Rampside. It also folds up nicely for storage when not in use. The last picture was the night before I left early the next day on my mis-adventure to Road America.

The next morning I packed all of my gear, the tee shirts, and parts for Michael. A first aid kit was prepared, just in case. A more extensive tool kit than I usually carry was also assembled and loaded up. The feeling of anticipation was incredible. I was going solo though as I could not find anyone else available to travel that week. The way things worked out I started out late after my wife insisted I take her cell phone. I got on the road; it was a few hours up 24 East to 76 East into Nebraska and my first photo opportunity of the trip.

After stopping at near dusk at the Nebraska border to stretch my legs it was back on the road. I was hoping to make Des Moines and leave from there in the morning. The truck had different plans. It started to get loud, real loud in the truck, it was the exhaust. I figured I would stop at the next exit and go to a gas

station to check it out. The sign said gas was available so I took it. It was somewhere between Ogallala and North Platte in Nebraska. I proceeded off the exit and no gas station in site, there was a small motel that looked like a typical horror movie scene but I did not have a choice really and I am the adventurous type anyway - to a fault sometimes. I headed in and paid for a night and got my keys from the night clerk, then went to the truck to pull around to the room..... nothing. The battery was so dead that I could not even get the smallest groan out of the starter. I guess I will carry all the stuff I don't want stolen to the room. In four or five trips I was finished. I did manage a little sleep and a "as good as it gets" shower in the morning and had everything loaded back up in the morning. By 6 a.m. I was ready to go. I did manage one rrrrr out of the starter and nothing more. I hooked up cables and waited for the folks headed off to work. Three or four just passed me by and one finally stopped at about 7:30 he was in a big hurry we spent two or three minutes and it would not start so he had to go. A few minutes later the motel desk clerk from the night before, had peeked his head out and I asked if he could help he said it would be a little while. I had nothing but time I was not going anywhere. I did keep the cables attached and tried to flag down some help, not the most helpful people around those parts it seemed. Most of the several cars that passed would quickly look away once they saw I needed help and acted like they did not see anything. A half hour or so later the clerk came out with a jumper box. A few minutes later I was back on the road, it was loud and I was afraid to shut it off but I was back on the road.

Without much of a plan but a can do attitude I was back on I 80 once again heading East with the morning sun in the bug splattered Rampside window and corn fields on either side of the road as far as the eye could see. I did have a pocket full of money and a quarter tank of gas when I saw the sign - Hastings 26 next exit. I remembered there was Corvair shop in Hastings, Shades Classic Cars. I took the exit and stopped at the next station for gas. I was hoping the truck would start but parked it at a pump with easy access for a jump again just in case.... I also purchased a new set of jumper cables at the truck stop I was at and a cup of hot coffee. Once gassed up back in the truck and you guessed it, nothing. The people here where either not in as much of a hurry or just a more helpful bunch, but the first one I asked was glad to help. I was back on the road, I don't know what road it was but I did know it was headed to Hastings and hopefully some help for the poor Rampside. I made a call with the cell phone my wife made me take (luckily) as I am stubborn and have refused to get one

over the past ten years or so. I used to have three one for work, one for my company, and a personal one, frankly I had enough cell phones for a lifetime in the years that I did have them. I digress. I called Teresa Miller as I knew she could contact Christopher Shade so that he would be expecting me. When she answered she was already at the convention. Can you guess who just happened to be right there, you guessed it Chris? He offered to call his mechanic Mike and he would be happy to help. Talk about a feeling of relief! I knew I would be back in top shape in no time.

Once in Hasting I found it Shades Classic Corner, Mike was to go outside and get me. I parked in the shade as it was already heating up. It was mid-July in the Midwest, us Colorado folks are not used to that kind of heat. It might have been the same temperature in Colorado but it sure didn't feel like it to me! To make a long story short ( here at least ) it turns out that Shades Classics had moved and I had been waiting a half hour next to the wrong building! I started out towards the new Shades location and arrived there in ten minutes or so, there was a sea of Corvairs and I was sure I was in the right place. Mike came out and though we did not recognize each other, it turns out that we had met when David Feasel and I had gone to the Corvair Auction a couple of years back. He was a really nice guy and happened to have some new exhaust donuts, I needed both of them, they were gone. I don't know how or why but there was not a trace of either there. He also brought out some studs and nuts for them, and an alternator. While he installed the alternator I worked on the exhaust. We had it done relatively quickly and then I started the truck. The light was on, it was not charging, we tried another alternator and then re worked some wiring and finally got the light to go off and felt comfortable that it was correctly repaired. I was dripping sweat by this time and wanted a tour of the shop but it was getting late 10:30 or so and I had a long road ahead. I settled for checking out his really cool Rampside double cab. He explained that he made it from a panel van and a Rampside and it was a really cool example, the only other picture that I got of the trip.

I thanked Mike and offered money for the parts and help, he and Chris both declined. I left Mike a Stinger reunion shirt and heart felt thank you and continued on the road. After several hundred more uneventful miles filled with views of all sorts of crops and a few small and larger towns, I found myself on the outskirts of Des Moines Iowa maybe ten miles out I started seeing smoke from the exhaust pipe, the fairly soon losing power and more smoke. I pulled off on the next exit and felt lucky I had made it into a parking spot, and not stuck on the

freeway with all the traffic. Kum and Go was the lucky recipient of my oil slick, and, as it turns out the last place the cell phone worked, and only slightly I might add. I called my wife and managed to be able to get her my location and that I was stuck. The rest of the calls were courtesy of Kum and Go because for some reason I still cannot figure out, that cell phone did not work again the rest of the trip. I could not get a tow because they needed an address that they were towing too. I could not get a taxi from the first and second place that I tried and I could not contact the only person I knew of in the area. All of those calls and finding the numbers etc. were thanks to the teen age crew at the convenience store. Luckily for me I remembered that Dan Reis said if I had problems near Des Moines to contact him. I did not have a number. There was a lot more here with the barely old enough to work teenagers trying to give me advice like "maybe you should add some more water" or "did you check the oil?" There were other adventures since the bathroom was being repaired, and all I had was coffee so far. I will leave it at thank goodness there are cornfields everywhere, and that I remembered to throw some TP in the truck. Probably too much information but it gives an idea to what was coming. I would have to deal with many harder obstacles in the upcoming days.

I decided I would get a cab to the nearest cheap hotel and at least I could eat and make some phone calls. I turns out I would be wrong on both counts for the most part. It was only a few miles into Des Moines and it turns out there was a Motel 6 on the first exit. I do not have a credit card (which would come back to haunt me as well), but I did have plenty of cash. I decided to stay at this cheaper motel as there were several in the area, because you just never know. I still needed to try and make the event and that I knew would involve at least a used engine. Arriving at the Motel I was relieved at the price of the cab, and also that they did not require a credit card to get a room. I was lucky it was not the weekend and they had a room available. Once I had everything up to the room now I could make some calls and get some food, or so I thought. It turns out the phone in the room would not call out, and upon asking the desk clerk about food they did not have any and the clerk said it was too far to walk for any. The feeling of helplessness and disappointment was almost overwhelming. I was able to have the clerk make phone calls for me and that was as inconvenient as it gets considering the amount of calls that I would have to make to get what I needed to get done. I will cut through the mountain of trips it took down to the desk to finally get in touch with Dan. It turns out Dan was working and would be able to get the truck on Friday after work around 6 p.m.

Dan also said he had a good used engine that he could help install. This was good news! The event at Road America started today, Thursday. I was still hopeful I could make it by Saturday late if everything went well. I spent all day bugging my wife and friends, the hotel clerks etc. Trying to get a rental car I finally did on Friday morning manage a truck from U-Haul. After calling a cab to get me there the transaction went smoothly. I drove to Kum and Go first to let them know I would be back to get the truck out of there that evening. They were good with that. I then went to get something to eat. Besides a couple of convenience store items this would be my first food in three days. I was happy.

Friday evening came and I met Dan at the truck. He had a new truck and his friend had a trailer. Dan, it turns out installed the sign when they built the Kum and Go and was familiar with the location. His house was about 25 miles away. The truck did start and run (barely) and we loaded it on his friends' trailer. I followed them back to my turn off and they continued on to Dan's house. Dan and I made arrangements for me to call in the morning and we would get the engine installed. I had a much better evening with a vehicle and some food. This motel did not serve any type of breakfast and barely had coffee, if you got there at the right time. Saturday morning I was showered and ready early and after a few trips to the desk to make some calls I was able to set it up with Dan to meet me at the U-Haul and we would go swap the engine. Being the optimist I am I did not book the room that night as I was heading to Elkhart Lake and Road America.

Dan met me and we went to his house, a very nice quite place in the country, but close to town. He had an open garage bay and we started right in. It turns out that his engine was from a Powerglide late model coupe so we had to do a little work. A couple of Dan's friends came by to help and luckily I had enough of my own tools to get the lower engine stuff ready to take the engine out. They worked on the top and getting the bell housing and torque converter off. We also had to change over the exhaust manifolds. After I had most everything off I removed the manifolds. We both worked on getting the replacement engine ready. We then did the swap. I am really making a long story short here as Dan picked me up before 8 and it was after six before he went and heated up a pizza that we shared. It took us until dusk about 9:00 this time of year to have it ready for a test drive. The drive worked out well with only a clutch adjustment necessary. Once that was done Dan gave me a tip on a close motel and I thanked him, it could never be enough.

This guy I had only talked to on the internet helped get my truck towed. He picked me up at the U-Haul, and we worked for over 12 hours on his day off. We worked! I looked like I had been in a grease pit for a week straight without a break and he was pretty close as well. Dan Reis has some serious good Karma coming his way! I went to the Motel 8 that Dan recommended and they did not have a room, I honestly think they did not want me ruining their linens or shower. So I got back on the road, I thought I would drive until I was too tired and pull over and sleep in the truck. Then I would get a cheap room or use a truck stop shower, and head to see the racers. The truck had different plans. I made it almost back to I 80 when the truck started acting funny. I made it almost back to my original Motel before it died in the middle of an intersection. It was about 10:30 or 11:00. After block the intersection through a couple of light cycles the lady stuck behind me offered to call the police to push me off the road. The truck was pretty heavy with all the stuff I was bringing.

About a minute after she left I managed to get it started, it would be fine when it was cooled off. I managed to make it back to Motel 6 and guess what, no rooms available! I was not surprised after seeing myself in a lobby mirror. I spent the night in the truck in an office park parking lot. I spent an hour or more moving from sprinkler to sprinkler as they made their rounds for watering. I would soap up a rag with my travel soap and shampoo etc. then rinse and wring it out and repeat. My hope was that the next day I might be able to get a room, I would get back over to Dan's and we could figure it out. It had to be something simple. I had minimal sleep and it started pouring rain about 3:00 a.m. I made the best of it. By this time I had moved to a Target parking lot so I could buy a pre payed phone in the morning. It turns out in Des Moines Target stores don't open until 9 on Sundays and I was the first one in the door. I bought a phone, babied the truck back to my hotel. I just went back there because it was familiar. I had cleaned up fairly well for appearances sake, and they let me get a room for that evening. I was still hoping I would just need it for a shower, and I could continue on soon. Turns out I needed a computer to set up that phone. It is still not set up!

I am not sure what happened to Dan on Sunday but I cannot blame him a bit if he never wanted to see me again he went far above and beyond in the previous days adventures. I started to panic a bit and we tried to get a rental car so I could drive there and if I had a credit card that is what would have happened, but after all morning not being able to procure anything I was at the end of my ideas and the end of my money. If I could have made the event I

could have made enough to pay for the trip, but that was not happening it was after 10 a.m. on the last day of the event. I was feeling hopeless and had my wife looking in to bus tickets. That is when Ray called. He said he would come up with a tow dolly and get me and the truck.

The next morning Ray was there, we loaded the truck and all my stuff up and were on the road! We arrived back in Colorado Springs in the early morning hours of Monday. My hood and deck lid were put on a transport heading west and dropped into the good hands of Jim Williams of Cheyenne WY. He brought them to Steve Goodman's shop a couple of days later. I picked them up from there. I never made the event; I blew the engine in my friends' truck and a lot of money! It was still an adventure and I would do it again. I learned some things and managed to have a smattering of good times. Met some awesome people, and had a time I will not soon forget! Thank you all that took your time to lend a hand or part, or make a phone call on my behalf. I appreciate each and every one of you. The Corvair community is great! See you next time.....maybe!



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What's in your shop?



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Corvair Racer Update is published by the Performance Corvair Group (PCG). We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners who are interested in extracting high performance from their classic Corvair cars and trucks. Classified advertising is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. For details, email our club President. Email address shown in the Officers section on the back page of this newsletter.

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