

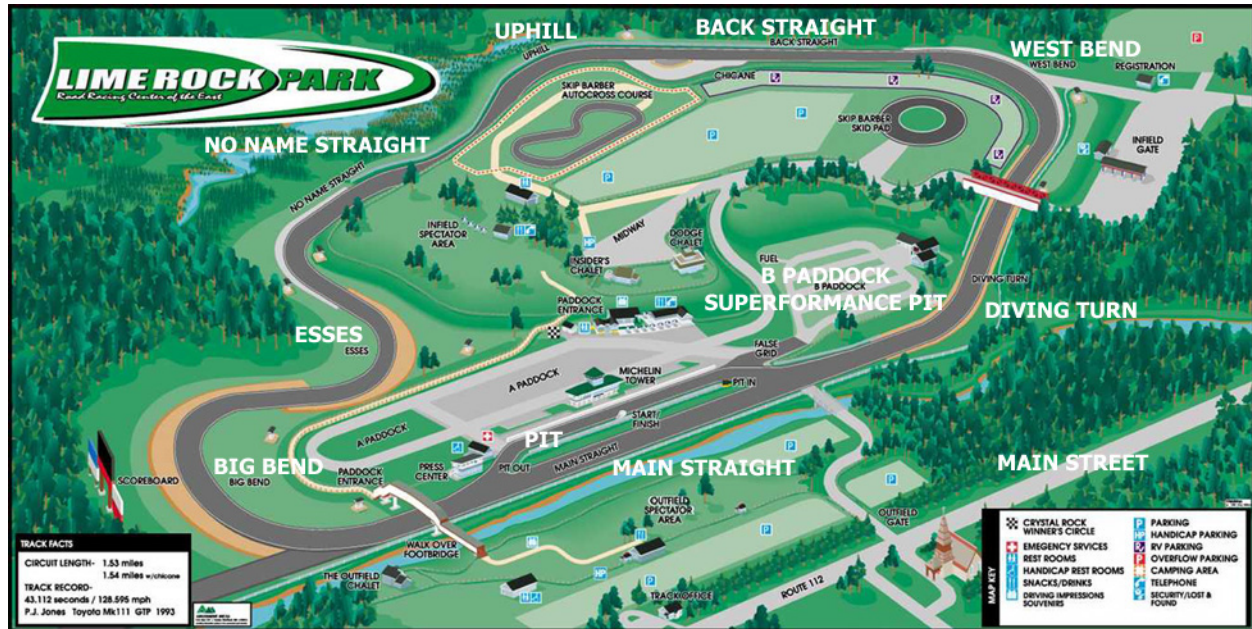
# Second Strike

The Newsletter for the Superformance Owners Group

November 15, 2000

Volume 3, Number 3

## ROAD TRIP!! SAAC-25



Lime Rock Park. Courtesy of their web site - [www.LimeRockPark.com](http://www.LimeRockPark.com)

**Road Trip!** Synonymous with adventure, “Road Trip” is a term that says that the journey is as important as the destination - perhaps more so.

So this is the story of a great road trip. Against the advice of my high school English teacher, I spin this yarn in the first person because that is the way it happens on road trips.

SAAC-25 was to be held at the ancient and honorable Lime Rock Park tucked away in the rural northwest corner of Connecticut. Although a native of the South, I lived in Connecticut in the late 60’s and early 70’s while working in the aerospace industry and finishing up my 14 years of college.

### Articles In this Issue

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- Superformance takes vintage win in LA

I met and married my wife Pat there. In the mid 70’s, I returned to North Carolina with Pat and our son Mark in tow. As a citizen of the South myself, I was able to get Pat and Mark visas to live here. Once they lost their Yankee accents, learned the language, and started eating grits, I got them green cards and finally citizenship. They now pass for Southern with ease.

I must admit that I looked forward to SAAC-25 with a great deal of anticipation. It was to be a family reunion, a vacation, and the opportunity to lay down some rubber on the famous Lime Rock track all rolled into one.

There never was in question in my mind as to how were going to get to Connecticut and back. A Cobra is a car. We’ll drive it. Jaguar drove the all-conquering D-Types from the factory to Le Mans and back in the 50’s. Same thing.

### Preparation

I knew the car would run well, but I had a few safety

and comfort enhancements that I wanted to make. Some are covered in previous editions (noted as V1N3 for Volume 1, Number 3) and some are covered in Bits and Pieces this edition.

I had previously weather proofed my car as reported in V1N3 and V1N4. This was a very good thing since we drove over 1,000 miles in the rain.

Following my own advice (Track Event Safety - V2N4) I added a second roll bar for my passengers, five point harnesses on both sides (V2N4), and a fire extinguisher. I installed the gas cap adapter (V2N4) and purchased a new helmet. No more pieces of an ancient and disintegrating helmet blowing in my eyes at 130 mph.

I went over the tech inspection list provided by SAAC and made sure everything was OK. It is easy to fix stuff a month ahead of time at home. It's not so easy when tech is getting ready to close.

Dennis Olthoff checked my car over and repacked the front wheel bearings. Bob Olthoff replaced the rear tires. For some strange reason, the rear tires were worn out and the front ones were fine. Go figure. Dennis said that it was a driver problem. In fact, he bet me five dollars that I couldn't get out of the driveway without smoking the new ones. He won, but refused to take my money. Something about a sucker bet. I swear Bob soaped my new tires so I would lose, but he says no. Driver problem? I need to think about this.

On the comfort side, I added some padding to the seats and moved the drivers seat inboard a bit for more room.

I also ordered some static cling roundels and racing numbers and period sponsor decals. I put them on a week before leaving and left them on until they came off to test their adhesion.

## Packing

I'm telling you right now - you won't believe what we packed in that car.

- Soft tool box (V1N3)
- Roadside emergency kit (V2N4)
- Soft glove box (V1N4)
- Water bottles
- Two suitcases
- Pat's overnight bag
- My travel kit
- Car cover in duffel bag
- Helmet
- Mounting sheets for numbers and decals
- Camera and film
- Map case with maps and journals

- Pressurized mister (AC substitute)
- Radio/tape with earphones
- Windbreakers
- Pillow for napping
- Books for reading
- Top, side curtains, tonneau cover

The suitcases were soft, of course. Pat got them from Lands End. They are the perfect size to sit side by side in the trunk. They held all the clothes we needed for the week.

I built a thin frame to go between the top and side curtains and the luggage. I didn't want the weight to pop the side curtains. As it turned out, it was an easy fit and we didn't have to stand on the trunk to get it closed.



*Happiness is a well packed trunk*

After I finished packing, I realized that I hadn't packed my helmet. It was half the size of the suitcase, so I told Pat she would have to leave half her stuff at home. She said, "What half do you want me to leave, the top half or the bottom half?" While I was pleasurably turning over the best answer for top down riding in my mind, I realized that it was another typical female question - neither choice offered was the right answer. So I shoved the helmet in the duffel bag with the car cover and the third unspoken and correct answer was realized - both.

## Road Trip! - On to Connecticut

The first leg of the journey was Charlotte to Washington. We left early Tuesday morning. It was 68 degrees with high thin clouds. A perfect day for top down touring.

Rather than taking the interstate, we elected to take old US 29 - the original highway to Washington. It runs up through Greensboro, Danville, and Charlottesville to Washington. It was once a two lane road, but is now four lanes divided. The northbound lanes are the old two lane highway and follow the lay of the rolling Piedmont countryside, as



old highways tend to do. The hills and curves, the small towns, and the hardwood forests conspired with the weather to make it a most beautiful drive.

Just before noon we passed through the town of "Tight Squeeze". There has got to be a story behind that one.

Between Danville and Lynchburg, the highway runs alongside the railroad made famous by "The Wreck of the Old 97". I used to sing it to my kids when we were going to Washington to visit grandparents. They tell me I murdered the words and couldn't find the tune for looking. I sang it again for Pat for old times sake. Loudly. The pipes kept time. Pat says I never did it better. I think the pipes drowned me out. If you don't know the words to "The Wreck of the Old 97", I'll sing it for you next time I see you. Now there is something to look forward to!



*There really is a Walton's Mountain!*

That afternoon, we passed by Walton's Mountain. Really. I think Pat has seen every rerun, so we had to stop. Walton buffs could spend several days here. I was willing (honest), but we had a schedule and we had to stick to it. The Weather Channel said rain in DC at 5 PM. At 5 the bottom fell out. We were in the garage at 4:55. Ain't technology wonderful?



*No drooling on your tie. This is a classy place!*

We spent Wednesday in Washington with Pat's

folks. While there, we went to lunch at Clyde's of Chevy Chase. As it turned out, John Laytham, the owner, is a car collector. Pat's folks made a reference to "some old car downstairs in the bar."

I went down and discovered to my great surprise and pleasure an original and excellent 1957 Jaguar XK-SS. In my eye, it is right behind the Cobra as hunk car and lust object.

If you are ever in DC check it out

Clyde's of Chevy Chase  
70 Wisconsin Circle  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Phone (301) 951-9600  
www.clydes.com

We hit the road very early Thursday morning. We needed to be in Lime Rock by early afternoon for tech inspection. It was raining when we got up. It rained most of the way to Lime Rock. The weather-stripping did its job. The floors got a little damp. We stayed dry. So did our gear.

We passed a few cars headed to SAAC on trailers. We were having more fun than they were.

### Lime Rock



*Wake Robin Inn, Lakeville, CT*

The rain stopped as we approached Connecticut. We got to the track about 2 PM. It's a good thing we arrived in plenty of time. The "two throttle spring" rule caught us. SP218 actually has three, the standard one on the linkage plus one on the carb throttle shaft plus one on the throttle petal. Tech wanted two on the linkage, I guess. We found an ancient and colorful gas station just down the road from the track. He happened to have an equally ancient spring from something or other. It worked. We passed.

Since the driver's meeting was at 8 Friday morning, we had decided to stay near the track Thursday night. We had located the Wake Robin Inn over the

Internet and booked a room a month ahead. Most photogenic, sitting up on the hill. It had the most inviting parlor with large stuffed chairs and reading lamps - just the place to spend a rainy day with a book.

We ran into Tom Yeager and Scottie Ullring at dinner and had a nice chat. We'll see Tom and Scottie again.

After dinner, the parlor beckoned, but fatigue won out. Good night.

## Our Hosts - Snakebit Performance



*The Superformance Pit in B Paddock*

Bill Ostrower, the Superformance dealer from Freeport, New York, graciously served as host for Superformance for the event. Bill, Danny Ostrower and Walter Holle arrive early and set up a Superformance pit area in the B Paddock.

In addition to providing a place to park between events and a great place to congregate, they kept a constant supply of refreshments on hand as well as first rate brats and burgers. Many thanks from all whom were there.

## Lime Rock

Friday morning. Up at 6 AM and off to the track.

Lime Rock - the town and the track - are nestled in a bowl of surrounding wooded hills. The setting is absolutely beautiful. Given the confined setting, the track is in downtown Lime Rock. No kidding. The road in the foreground of the track map on the front page is Main Street. You can stand on Main Street and watch the race. Way wicked cool. This is a race town.

## SAAC-25 Track Time!

The schedule calls for a driver's meeting, two 15 minute morning sessions for each of the five groups, a fun session with passengers at noon, and two 15 minute sessions for each group in the afternoon.

The groups are based loosely on equipment and skill level. For example, Group A is for fuel cells and competition licenses. Based on my desire to run with street equipment, I am slotted for Group C.



*On the grid. SP218 and the "red Mustang" behind it will meet again soon.*

The starting grid is on pit row. Cars are released one at a time at 5 second intervals. On to the straight and up through the gears and into Big Bend.

Big Bend is a double radius, double apex turn. Approach from the outside of the turn, take the first apex about a quarter of the way through, slide out to the track edge about half way through, and hit the second apex about three quarters of the way through then nail it down the short chute to the Esses.



*GT 350's - out of Big Bend and into the Esses.*

Approach the Esses from the outside of the first turn, head into the first left hand bend and apex late, set up for the right hand turn and apex late on it as well. Then nail it down No Name Straight.

No Name Straight has a kink, but it can be taken flat out. Red line in third at 105 mph is attainable even in traffic. Brake briefly and head into the Climbing Turn, so named because immediately after the turn is a steep hill, rising about 40 feet. Back on the throttle and back to the redline in third over the crest. At speeds over 100 mph; the car will unweight enough



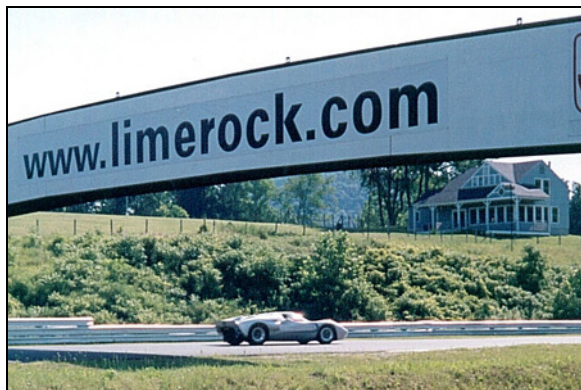
to allow the rear wheels to spin. Great fun!

The short Back Straight needs fourth gear. Hit the binders and third gear for West Bend at about 80 mph then up to the redline again in third.

Diving Turn is aptly named. The altitude gained in Uphill is given back, making it an exhilarating turn indeed. The correct line for Diving Turn is to stay to the outside of the turn, dive for the apex in the middle of the turn, then slide back to the outside of the turn entering the Main Straight. The turn can be taken flat out this way and can give an entry speed onto the Main Straight of 100 to 110 mph.

I consistently muffed this one. I followed the cars in front of me who took it too close to the inside. Entry speed on to the Main Straight was only 85 to 90 mph. The hot ticket would have been to lay back a bit after West Bend, then nail it approaching Diving Turn on the correct line and enter the Main Straight with a 10 to 20 mph speed differential over the cars in front. Next time.

As it was, the single file procession gave the cars in front the jump on the run down the Main Straight, the only place passing was allowed. Passing became a come-from-behind drag race. Tough duty in fast company.



*Bill Ostrower blasts down the main straight in his GT-40. The house is the Outfield Chalet just off Main Street.*

The run down the Main Straight brought speeds of 125 mph in fourth. With the correct entry, it would have been 130 mph. Live and learn.

I quickly notice that most folks were braking way early for Big Bend. The ones I couldn't overhaul on the straight, I caught by braking later. The maneuver was to move to the inside, pass while the other car braked, then move back to the outside to get the line for Big Bend

This led to my one off road excursion. While experimenting with late braking points, three cars

ahead of me pulled out line abreast. I was forced all the way to the inside. I passed the "red Mustang" so close I could count the teeth on the bugs on his headlight. There was no way at that speed that I would make Big Bend on an inside line. So I took the escape road. Wide. Paved. Plenty of room to stop and turn around. And shake out my pants leg.

All in all, I passed about 25 cars in the four sessions and remained unpassed except for the off track excursion. Late in the last session, someone in a red Cobra got in my rear view mirror big time for the first time. Courtesy dictates pulling over and letting him pass and I was about to do that when the checkered flag came out and it was over. Saved by the bell.

If I could change one thing, it would be smaller run groups. With 30 cars on a track 1.53 miles long, the average car separation is only 86 yards. It was too easy for cars to bunch up and that made it hard to explore the limits of the performance envelope.

## **Carroll Shelby**

In the first run, I passed the lead cars, caught up with the end of the pack and picked off another 10 cars or so before the session ended. I went back to the Superformance pit and was feeling pretty good when Carroll Shelby's car pulled up and "the man" himself got out and took some pictures of me sitting in the pit with Tom Yeager. I assumed he had seen me burning up the track and was getting ready to recruit me for his racing team. Dream on.



*Shelby with his camera and Bill Ostrower*

He turned to one of his aides and said, "My lawyer tells me that we are going to shut these people down" - referring I suppose to the Cobra replica manufacturers.

If Carroll Shelby knew his basic economics, he would know that it is we the buyers, not the manufacturers, who created the replica industry. And it is we the buyers that he is trying to "shut down".

As far as the suit goes, I hope and believe that he will lose. 1) The shape was never his to begin with. It belongs to AC. 2) Even if was his, he never perfected rights to the shape. Other people produced cars with the shape before him and after him without objection. 3) The time frame to perfect rights passed decades ago. 4) The rights haven't been protected by him or anyone and are now in the public domain.

But the real issue lies elsewhere. Like a father who doesn't understand his children because he abandoned them long ago and they have grown up without him, Carroll Shelby badly misjudges the current Cobra phenomena. It is we the people who buy replicas who played a major role in keeping the Cobra family going after Shelby walked out. Without us, there wouldn't be enough cars to fill up the rest room parking lot at the family reunion at Lime Rock. Without us, "Shelby" and "Cobra" would be more forgotten names in the long list of specialty cars that only the most rabid fans and tax accountants can remember. Carroll, the replica industry is the Cobra industry now. There are a lot of children in this family now, but they are not all yours anymore. There are ten or more of ours for every one of yours.

But daddy is back and demands to be head of household again. And if he can't earn it, he will sue the pants off the family that thrived in his absence.

It is up to you Carroll. Do you want to be remembered as a winning racer and father of the Cobra, or and a bitter and greedy old man. I do hope that you will stop this insanity before you destroy the legend that is important to all of us.

Well, I passed on the opportunity to interview Shelby for Second Strike. However, I did run into some most interesting family members, so here are some interviews with real Cobra fans.

### **John Capell and SP032**

John Capell lives in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, not far from where Pat grew up. True to its name, it is a small town sitting on top of a very large rock.

John is the owner of SP032, the first Superformance 427 S/C in the United States. John's car is Guardsman Blue with White stripes and is powered by a 351 with a Tremec tranny.

SP032 is remarkable similar to the cars being sold today. Like all older models, it has the flat floorboard and old style seats and it has the early style steel wheels. On the unusual side, it has round taillights and it does not have the reverse wind speedometer now standard on Superformance 427 S/C's.

Jerry Bernheimer was the dealer in Los Angeles in 1994. He wrote me and asked me if I could help him get in touch with the owner of SP032. He had documentation on the car that he wanted to give the owner. I got Jerry and John together and John now has the paperwork.



*John Capell with SP032 at Lime Rock*

Jerry shared the following account of SP032's early years.

"The blue car was air freighted directly to me in Los Angeles from Port Elizabeth (actually Jan Smuts Airport). I have all the import documentation etc. Actually the car was seized at LAX by US Customs as it was imported as a Cobra Replica and had Cobra badges on it at the time of inspection by US Customs. Ford owns the Cobra name. It took two weeks to get it released and thus it missed the 1994 Run and Gun, which was supposed to be the debut of Superformance. It wouldn't have flown anyhow, as it needed two months of mods. The car went through two engine installations, modifications, etc., to make it fly. I have all of the flog sheets, modifications, communications with Jim Price and the factory people, and pictures.

"Also are you aware of the red car that came in about 8 months previous to the blue one? I also have all the flog info and modifications lists and work that was done here on the red car also. It was a "Hi-Tech" car - sorta. It had a live axle and a small aluminum dash. That one too was aired to me from South Africa - about June 92."

Thanks Jerry for that piece of Superformance history. If anybody knows anything about the red car, let me know.

At any rate, the car stayed with Jerry for over a year. It then traveled to the 1995 Run and Gun in Phoenix without an engine to serve as the display car while a black and silver car served as the subject for the famous Kit Car Illustrated article.

In the article Superformance claimed that the car could be completed in 8 hours. Bob Olthoff, then a factory technical consultant, and his son Dennis stuffed a Bill Parham 427 in the black and silver car in Bob Bondurant's shop at the Phoenix track in less than 8 hours and then went racing the next day.

From Phoenix, SP032 car went to Ron Rosen in Ohio where John Capell bought it. He has owned it ever since. John enjoys driving his car, Connecticut weather permitting, and has kept the car in excellent condition. It looks like a new car.

### **Kim Schachinger and SP447**

I first met Kim Schachinger via e-mail two years ago. He had sent me a short e-mail about registration saying, "Will phone am quad."

Sensing a person with a sense of humor, I responded, "Thanks for the info, but I don't keep up with four barrels. Everybody has one." I was right. Kim Schachinger has a great sense of humor - and a remarkable story.

Kim and the delightful Mary Seaman live around the corner from Ross and Kay Weaver (SP236) in Michigan. Ross has been a frequent contributor to Second Strike with articles on SAAC and the Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise. Having talked with them frequently on the phone, I was looking forward to finally meeting them in person. Kim and I relaxed in the Superformance pit and he told me how he came to own his Superformance Cobra.

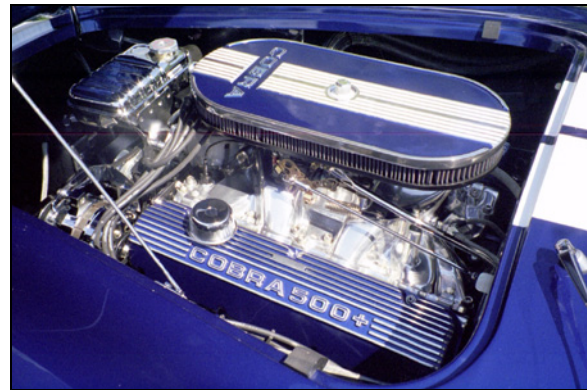
Fifteen years ago, when Kim was 24, he owned one of those scary three wheeled ATV's. They were prone to flipping in turns, particularly if you hit the brakes. Kim flipped his and broke the C5 and C6 vertebrae in his neck. He has been a quadriplegic ever since. Hence the e-mail.

The accident did nothing to diminish his love for cars. He always wanted a Cobra. He has a very nice 1960 Corvette once owned by Mark Martin - the NASCAR whiz. It is a complete numbers matching frame off restoration. Kim was looking for a 1965 Corvette a couple of years ago, but the deal fell through. He decided to follow his dream and started looking for a Cobra. He purchased his Royal Blue/White 427 Roadster from Dynamic in September 1998.

While awaiting delivery, he put together his 460 engine and transmission package. No, he didn't buy them. He built them himself. His engine is similar in specifications to the 460/535 SVO engine. Kim ported and polished the heads himself and assembled the engine with the assistance of John Vermerish. He

is running a dual plane intake with a reworked Holley 750. The transmission is a Ford C-4 with a B&M shifter. Kim owns a couple of machine shops, so he had all the custom parts custom machined.

When the car arrived in December, Kim drove down to Dynamic with a trailer and picked it up. He installed the engine and transmission himself - twice. After looking at it in the engine bay, he decided that it needed more shine, so he pulled it for additional polishing and chrome then reinstalled it. It does look good.



*Kim's nicely detailed 460*

I was talking with Ross on the phone in the March 1999 when I could hear a Cobra approaching in the background. Kim had just pulled in the driveway on his first outing.

Kim not only put his car together, he drives it on the street and he drives it on the track. At SAAC-24, he hit 135 mph at 5200 rpm on the Michigan International Speedway straight. He had track time at SAAC-25 as well.



*Cockpit of SP447 with reversed shifter, hand control under the leather wrapped steering wheel, and Carroll Shelby's signature on the glove box door.*

How does he do this? The modifications to the car are not that extensive. The car is a hybrid - a Roadster with S/C hood, dash, and oil cooler. Side



pipes are out of course. Kim has an under car exhaust system with Superformance built Tri-Y headers exiting into Flowmasters with tailpipes exiting just in front of the rear wheels. Under the car, there are stainless steel heat shields from the firewall to the rear wheels to keep the cockpit cool. Kim also took the carpet out, added one-eighth inch of foil backed insulation, then installed new carpeting.

SP447 has the leather wrapped steering wheel for better grip. Kim has use of his arms and limited use of his hands. He wedges the crook between thumb and forefinger on the rim and steers quite well with his arm strength. He has a speed control on the steering column looking a good bit like a column shift, but on the left side. It goes forward for braking, down for acceleration - again controlled primarily by arm movement. The transmission has a manual valve body for shifting which he operates with his right arm.

The door opens a little wider than normal to make it easier to get in. He and Mary get together and the next thing you know he is out of the wheelchair and into the seat. A mixture of gymnastics and ballet. Mary folds the wheelchair, stores it in the trunk, and off they go.



*Mary and Kim ready to rumble.*

Kim and Mary are a delightful couple. They are both personable and outgoing, love to talk and joke around. They compliment each other well. They are a constant reminder that limitations are limitations only if we let them be - so much so that a minute after meeting them the limitation was gone from my mind as well. Kim has overcome a terrible injury and leads a rich and full life. Having the opportunity to spend some time with them was one of the real pleasures of SAAC-25.

On a sobering footnote, shortly after SAAC-25 Kim was involved in another serious accident. His housekeeper was pulling SP447 into the garage and

hit the throttle instead of the brake. Kim was in the back of the garage and was caught between the car and the garage wall. He broke several bones and was in intensive care for awhile. I talked with him on the phone last week and am happy to report that he is well on the road to recovery and about back to normal. Kim is happy to report that the nose of SP447 has been repaired as well and looks as good as new.

### Tom Yeager

Pat and I met Tom Yeager and Scottie Ullring at a restaurant our first night in Lime Rock. It was one of those gearhead things. We somehow both knew we were gearheads and just started talking.

Tom was an ace GT 350 pilot in the 60's (still is) and was at SAAC-25 as an invited Shelby Reunion guest.

Tom and Bob Johnson drove a Mustang to victory in the first Trans-Am race at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) in 1966. I read in the Nov/Dec 2000 issue of Vintage Motorsports that Tom won the Alumni Race at the reopened VIR's Homecoming event in June of this year.



*Tom and I were conversing in the Superformance pit when Shelby drove up and took our picture.*

Although Tom was best known as a GT 350 driver, he did tell me this Cobra story.

In February 1967 he sold his GT 350 to Rick Kohler. Rick traded him a 289 street car (Cobra) which he didn't want and sold to his buddy Hal. The car was totally stock and leaked like a sieve.

Hal and Tom decided to drive it from Marion, Ohio, to the Daytona 24 Hour race. This is in the middle of winter, mind you. They left in the middle of a snowstorm and headed down US 25 through Kentucky and Tennessee. Where the sun was blocked by trees or hills, the melted snow on the road turned to ice which produced an instant sideways "Ah Shoot!"



They lost their windshield wipers. Because they couldn't see without them, they tied a rope to one wiper, ran it through the cockpit and tied it to the other wiper. One drove while the other tugged the rope side-to-side to activate the wipers for the next 200 miles. The floorboards started filling with water and it was damn cold too.

They were driving straight through, stopping only for refuel and refreshments (you guess what he meant by that). About 2:30 AM in southern Georgia, they lost their brakes. They continued their 100+ mph pace with only the emergency brake to slow them.

They limped into Daytona the next morning and pulled into a Ford garage for repairs. Just imagine the sight. The dirt, the water, the rope, the refuse of on-the-road repasts, the haggard non-stop drivers, and no brakes. But they made it in time for the races. Focus is important in achieving the goal.

Tom described his all time favorite car as a red 289 FIA Cobra that he drove at Elkhart Lake in 1965 with Dan Gurney. He also has a warm place in the mechanical section of his heart for Colin Chapman's Lotus 7 and Jim Hall's Chaparrals.

Renewing old friendships and making new ones is a big part of the enjoyment of these events. Pat and I enjoyed spending time with Tom and Scottie. I'm sure our paths will cross again.

## **Saturday Night Fever The Manchester Demos**



*The family lined up for demo rides. "Take me next or I'll jump in the lake right now!", they all screamed. A riot was narrowly avoided.*

Pat and I lived in Manchester, Connecticut, when we were first married. Her family still lives there and we stayed with them while attending SAAC-25.

Like many small New England towns, Manchester grew up around a textile mill, in this case the

Cheney silk mills. The Cheney family bet that synthetic fibers would never replace silk. They also resorted to marrying cousins to keep the money in the family. Perhaps the two decisions were related. At any rate, the mills have been converted to apartments and museums and the town goes on without the Cheneys.

When we lived there, another citizen of the town insisted on burning rubber on the street in front of our house. While not opposed to shredding tires for fun, it is a bit dangerous on a crowded residential street where a number of small children live and play - including mine. After a number of requests to take it elsewhere produced no results, I contacted the Manchester police. They asked me if the perp's car misfired at high engine speeds. Puzzled by the question, I replied in the affirmative. "It's Fat Roy", they replied. "We'll take care of it." And they knew right where to find him - at "Greasy DC's", the local drive in burger joint.

Absolutely amazing. A small town police force so in touch with its citizens that it identified the perp from the sound of his engine. What a great bunch of guys.

Fat Roy never came back. After six months of peace, I called the police to thank them. "Don't thank us", they replied. "Fat Roy took care of it himself. We caught him coming out of somebody else's window with a bunch of stuff that wasn't his. He'll be the guest of the state for the next few years."

With this memory clearly in mind, I found a separate piece of deserted road for each demo ride for the many relatives who wanted one. I knew the sound of the pipes twice on the same stretch of road would reintroduce me to Manchester's finest.

## **Aunt Connie**

I don't think any of the relatives would be offended if I said that Aunt Connie is my favorite. She is everyone's favorite. She is 91 years old and lives by herself in the family homestead, an old New England farmhouse with low ceilings and a pot bellied stove in the middle of the room, in tiny Woodstock, Connecticut. Her brother Don, Pat's uncle, lived around the corner and ran the Woodstock County Fair for years until his death a few years ago. This really is New England!

Aunt Connie has been after me for three years to come up to see her and take her for a ride in the Cobra. And so we did.

We arrived early Sunday morning and had a nice visit. Aunt Connie is sharp as a tack and an engaging conversationalist. I hope I am doing as

well at 91 (or this afternoon for that matter). But I could tell that she ready to hit the road. So off we went. Aunt Connie is more into touring than neck snapping speed, so we toured the countryside - Woodstock, Putnam, the fairgrounds, and back home.



*Aunt Connie, Prom Queen*

When it came time to get out, she had to stand up in the seat to get over the pipes. I couldn't help thinking that she looked just like a prom queen in a parade. She is one special person.

**Homeward Bound**

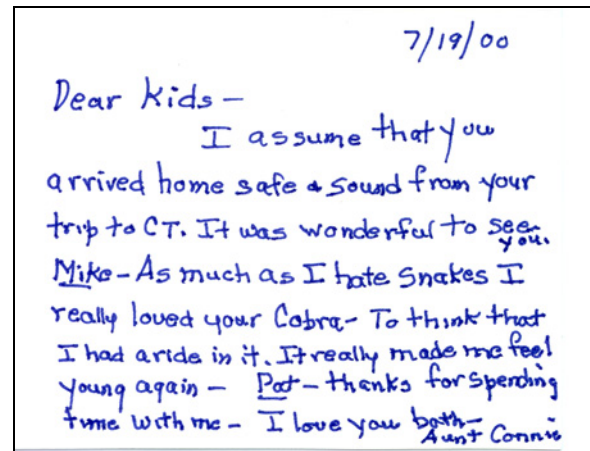
We spend Monday at Lime Rock sitting on the grassy hill overlooking the Esses and watching the practice and races with Ross and Kay Weaver and others who came by. By 3, it was time to hit the road for home. After a few miles it began to rain, so we stopped, unpacked, put the top up, and packed again. It rained all the way to Pennsylvania, very hard at times.

The hood roundel finally came off in a driving rain. Not surprising. We picked it out of the hood scoop and continued on. The weather stripping continued to do its job and we remained dry and comfortable. We reflected back on Tom Yeager's trip in an original Cobra and smiled.

We stayed overnight in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The car cover kept the car dry and safe enough from prying eyes attached to sticky fingers.

The next day was wet enough to leave the top up. When we dropped down out of the mountains onto the North Carolina Piedmont, the weather broke and suddenly it was HOT. Too close to home to put the top down, so Pat activated the pressurized mister. In the Arizona desert, a fine water mist is a hi-tech way to air-condition your outside patio. In a car, it seems low tech. But it sure worked. And it felt good.

When we arrived home we had a note in the mail.



What a great vacation. When is the next Road Trip?

**SAAC-25 IMAGES**

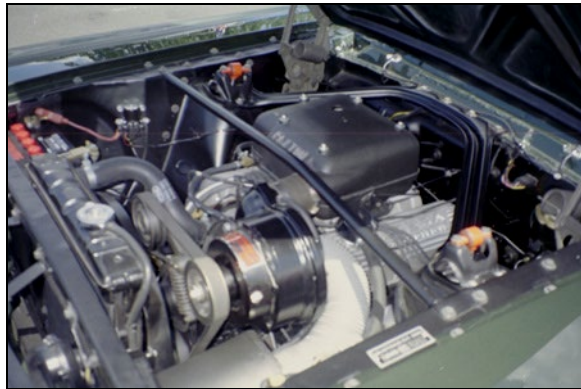


The "Shelby Reunion" of team members. That is our Bob Olthoff kneeling on the far left.



My all time, absolutely the best, favorite (no kidding) Mustang - S6051 - the first GT 350 S. Ivy Green with white stripes. Absolutely beautiful.





The S stands for the Paxton supercharger.

Why I didn't get a picture of SP218 and S6051 side by side will remain one of the great mysteries of my life. Fortunately, I did buy the Lane Collectibles SAAC-25 Limited Edition 1/18 die cast model. Yes, I did get it in the trunk. No I didn't have to throw my clothes away.



Carroll Shelby's personal 427 roadster. Twin Paxton superchargers feeding through twin four barrels and a Ford T6 three speed automatic transmission.

Only two cars were made like this one. The other one went to Bill Cosby. Bill's eventually took a flier into a lake and was rebuilt without the superchargers. Only this one remains.

This car was clocked in the quarter in 11.9 seconds at 116 mph in a 1968 Road & Track road test. Fast indeed, but no faster than my 351W powered Superformance. Sounds weird, but there are good reasons.

The supercharged 427 made maybe 580 gross horsepower with 6 pounds of boost. The really high installation losses of the original 427 roadster, around 40%, resulted in about 350 net installed flywheel horsepower.

My 351 puts out about 415 gross horsepower, but with a much more efficient installation the losses are about 17%. The net horsepower is about the same.

With about the same net horsepower and about the same weight, you get about the same performance. Good engineering is as important as the parts.



Webers on a 289. A winning combination both visually and on the track.



Dan Ostrower models the latest in Superformance sportswear.



CSX 2300. The most expensive car I have ever actually touched. (Sorry). The current owner had it on the track at SAAC-25. Rumor has it that it is valued at \$5,000,000. Amazing courage, or something.

Photos by Stenhouse, Ostrower, Olthoff, and others.

SECOND STRIKE ON TRACK  
CHARLOTTE MOTOR SPEEDWAY – SPRING 2000



*Twenty one of the thirty seven Cobras line up for a family portrait on Saturday morning.*

**Charlotte (Lowes) Motor Speedway  
April 14, 15, and 16 2000**

Charlotte Motor Speedway is considered to be one of the best track facilities in the country - maybe THE best. Cobras are legendary in their own right. Put the two together with and mix in a great bunch of folks and you have the ingredients for a spectacular weekend. If only the weather would cooperate.

The foul weather for Auto Fair cleared during the week, but returned on Friday just as the Track Days were ready to begin. But you can't keep a good group down. All in all, we had a great bunch of owners show up to learn and enjoy.

SP097 Dave Himes	SP311 Michael and Beth Caveness
SP116 Doug Reed	SP313 Walt Malcolm
SP119 Neil Lutens	SP382 Grady Wilson
SP125 Carlton Broome	SP410 Jerry and Sean Witt
SP134 Bill Garrett	SP427 Lee Brock
SP139 Jon Kurtin	SP428 Brad Altman
SP144 Jimmy Witty	SP453 Billy and Rosemary O'Briant
SP151 David McRae	SP465 Woody Woodruff
SP181 Bob Jordan	SP496 Mark Gasque
SP195 Dick Abbott	SP499 Charles Kellogg
SP197 Tony Spence	SP580 Daren Cave
SP200 Mike Thurwachter	SP603 Mark Rhoades
SP218 Mike Stenhouse	SP646 Joe Herring
SP227 Rod and Lisa Waltermann	SP670 Gene Harris
SP239 David Sugg	SP673 Hal and Chris Copple
SP263 Terry Freck	SP674 Chris Phelps
SP281 Barry Gupton	SP715 Gunter Schmidt
SP285 Kenny Brown	SP734 Rick Pearce
SP304 Rick Parks	

Friday morning was spent on the skid pad and autocross course learning the limits of adhesion in controlled lower speed events - and learning spin recovery.

**Lunch with Chris Economaki**

Lunch break! Several groups headed to the nearby Harrisburg to dine at Chris' Pit Board, a burger joint decorated with mangled NASCAR body panels.

As we sat down to eat, a distinguished and familiar looking gentleman took the table next to ours. Somebody commented that he looked a lot like Chris Economaki - the dean of American motorsports broadcasting. What better way to confirm it than to strike up a conversation. It was indeed The Man!



*Mark Rhoades, Neil Lutens, Mike Stenhouse, Daren Cave, Chris Economaki, and the Kurtins.*

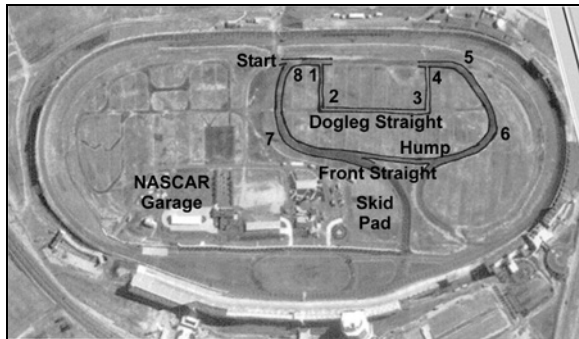
He joined us for a few minutes of conversation (about cars, what else) and a group picture. Harrisburg is now his home. **Speed Sport News** is now his game. I do believe that he enjoyed the hoopla as much as we did. I certainly hope so.

**On Track**

The CMS road course is 2.5 miles long, combining the infield track with the 1.5 mile NASCAR banked oval. We ran on the 0.7 mile infield portion of the road course highlighted in the spy satellite photo.



By afternoon, the infield had dried enough to hit the track for some high speed fun. Water remained on some sections of the track and kept it interesting. Water is a real world thing. Unlike the NASCAR guys, we don't go home when the track is wet. We deal with it! We are here to learn!



The format was a simple one. About seven cars at a time on the track, released at intervals, for about 15 minutes a session. Passing was permitted in turns 7 and 8 if the leading car slowed and waved the following car by.

The course runs clockwise and has 8 turns, six right hand and two left hand. From the Start, accelerate to Turn 1 and take it in second. A brief burst, a stab on the brakes and left in Turn 2. For those testing the limits of adhesion, proper throttle in second through Turn 2 will produce a prolonged tail out romp down the Dogleg Straight. As many discovered, a bit too much throttle will produce a trip through the grass.

Turns 3 and 4 are a fast second gear, then into third in turn 5. Water in turn 5 stayed on the tires and makes the uphill run from 5 to 6 tricky. Just when the water is shed and it is time to nail it, turn 6 interrupts the progress. Terry Freck didn't quite understand this as SP263 disappeared over the crest of the Turn 6 hill. Corner workers claim he got a full four feet of air before landing in the soggy grass infield. Unharmful but carrying at least 50 pounds of mud and grass in his car, he returned to the pits to collect the "John Deere Award" for best agricultural excursion.

Out of turn 6 in third and down the front straight. Full throttle acceleration down the left side of the track will find the Hump where the road course heads left and we go straight. Engine revs jump as the car catches some air over the Hump. What fun! Barry Gupton's 460 powered SP281 got a little too frisky here, executed a full 720, and wound up on another section of the track. Unfazed, Barry motored back onto the track and continued on, picking up the "Best Pirouette Award".

The Front Straight dips down and Turn 7 disappears from view. Over the rise and Turn 7 reappears just

in time to haul it down from 100+ to 60. Turn 7 is backed up with Armco, so it takes more nerve than most were willing to demonstrate to brake at the last possible moment.

Turn 7 and 8 and 1 blend together into a long decreasing radius turn requiring turning, braking, and heel and toe downshifting into second. It is a delicate traction balance where the quest for the fast line produced more spins than any other section of the track. See Sean Witt's photo, page 15.

Saturday started out with serious rain. CMS opened the NASCAR garage for us so that we could stay dry. The ever effervescent and ebullient Doug Reed staged the group photo to pass the time. The weather broke around noon and we got back on the track for more hot laps.

As wet as Friday and Saturday were, Sunday was a gem. Clear skies, a warm sun, and a dry track made for a wonderful day. Everyone present got all the track time they wanted. Friends and relatives showed up and it turned into a real Sunday afternoon family event. The extra day more than made up for the rain. By actual odometer tally, I got in 160 laps around the infield track during the three days - half of it on Sunday.



*This Doug Reed photo of SP218 in the wet wound up in the new Superformance brochure.*



*Wet or not, Bob Jordan - the autocross whiz- was able to pull enough g's to lift his inside front wheel.*



*Converting tires to smoke on the skid pad.*



*Powering through Turn 2 on to the Dogleg Straight*



*Billy Belcher brought SP163 from Michigan.*



*Kenny Brown in SP285 rounding Turn 7*



*Parade lap around the banked oval.*



*Doug Reed in SP116 (the OLOA car) exiting Turn 7.*



*Steep! That is Billy O'Briant and son in SP453.  
Photo by Rosemary O'Briant.*



*Michael Caveness in SP311 in Turn 8.*





*A spin in Turn 8 produced contact with the Armco. Both Jerry Witt and his son Sean (SP410) accepted it in good nature as an educational experience.*

Photo credits: Mike Stenhouse, Mike and Beth Caveness, Billy and Rosemary O'Briant, Doug Reed

## Post Script

These track events are fun to be sure. But they are also a valuable learning opportunity, a unique opportunity to learn to drive a very high performance car at the limit of adhesion and at times beyond.

I want to learn the limits of my car, to learn how to tell when it is reaching these limits, and to learn how to recover once the limits have been passed. By definition, when I have gone too far, I cannot regain control. Trying to do so can compound the problem. But I can learn to use what little control I have left to conclude the event as gracefully as possible. Keep the engine running, drop down a gear or two, complete the spin, avoid immovable objects, get the car headed in the right direction, and keep going. Maintaining control while out of control. I can't do it every time yet, but I am getting better at it.

These are important lessons as these two letters attest.

**From:** Hal Copple  
**To:** Bob Olthoff  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2000 8:31 PM  
**Subject:** 80 mph to zero in a Cobra!!

Just a note to let you know that the recent driving school at Lowes Motor Speedway may have saved the front end of my Cobra Sunday.

Chris was driving. We were heading back down to Clemson on I-85, doing 80 mph or so, following a Jag XK-8, when a minivan pulled in front of Chris. As Chris was about to let some distance come between the minivan and us, it went to panic braking, as did the car just to our right. The minivan tried to take to the median, but there was a guardrail there. Chris braked hard, just short of locking the

brakes up. The Cobra stayed straight and true, no slewing around, and Chris was able to stop before hitting the rear of the minivan, which was in a panic stop mode. A trailer in front had flipped with a Jeep on it.

So perhaps the experience Chris had with Dennis, braking and such, made the difference in our saving the Cobra from damage. It is pretty rare to have to accomplish such a stop in highway driving, but we were OK. As were stopping, I was thinking to myself "I am glad Chris has the shoulder harness on, as we are going to hit the rear of this green minivan!"

Thanks for the driving school.

Hal Copple MD (SP673)

July 12, 2000

Dear Bob, Baby, and Dennis,

I would like to thank everyone for an extremely enjoyable time at Lowes Motor Speedway and am looking forward to the next event.

On my return trip from upstate New York, I realized that not only did I get a chance to drive my Cobra really hard at the track, but I learned how to handle it better and last week the Lowes experience paid off.

While passing a line of traffic at 75 mph in the passing lane, a semi four vehicles in front swerved as if dodging something. As expected, the three cars in front hit the brakes and started swerving to miss a recap left by a previous semi.

I steered to the left of my lane and the next thing I saw was the recap flying toward the right front of my Cobra. I veered left and the recap hit the right front of my Cobra. Now I was heading into the grass median, still running about 70 mph. Remembering not to slam on the brakes, I slightly lifted from the throttle and was able to keep control.

I kept the car parallel to the road and was able to bring it back onto the Interstate without incident. After getting to the shoulder, I checked for possible damage and luckily found none.

I honestly feel that I was able to control the situation because of learning how the car reacts and this was done at your Lowes Event in April. Thanks for the experience.

I have a lot more confidence in my Cobra and my driving ability. You can count on me being at the next event.

Again, thanks for everything.

Walt Malcolm (SP313)

**WOODWARD DREAM CRUISE 2000**

**Woodward Avenue, Detroit  
August 19, 2000**

**Story and photos by Ross Weaver (SP236)**

The 6th annual **Woodward Dream Cruise** has come and gone. The number of participants was estimated to be 1.5 million this year with around 30,000 cars, twice as many as last year. It is still the country's largest one day event.



*Cobra Row*

The way that it's growing, they might have to expand it to two days. This year we were limited to parking spaces for 40 cars. We had hoped to get enough room for 75 to 80, but the organizers in Birmingham cut us back. This was due to a lot of space being sold to the big three auto companies for their huge displays. He who has the most money wins. Still, a great time was had by all. We had car owners coming in from other states and Canada.

Out of all the cars that showed up that day, approximately 8 to 10 Superformance cars were there. One of the Superformance Cobras that showed up belonged to John Spira (SP636). He brought his car up from the Chicago area. His car is a little unusual in that he wasn't happy with a little horsepower. He had to have 740 ponies in his car. I

would hate to see his fuel bill, but as we all know, we didn't buy these cars for the fuel economy. John Young and his wife brought (SP579) up from Ohio. Their car is black with gold stripes. First time I've seen that color combination on a Cobra. It looks great! Also up from Ohio were Harry and Colleen Stapleton, unfortunately without SP321.

Dean Rosen and his very pregnant wife Samantha from Dynamic Motorsports set up their display of Cobras and the new Superformance S1 roadster down the Avenue from us. One of the cars that they brought up was delivered to Wes Rozan at the Dream cruise. He was very happy to receive his car in time for the event.



*Cruisers and Cobras check each other out.*

People started rolling in about 7am. For once we had perfect temperatures for the cruise. Low 70's as compared to a typical humid 90+. Our club's first run of the day included 16 Cobras, two lanes wide. The spectators along the route were craning their heads as they heard the thundering roar. What a great sound! And in stereo no less. Unfortunately, we could only get a few runs in. When Woodward Avenue starts to get busy, traffic slows to a crawl. These motors just don't like it when they are sitting idle. The rest of the time we are happy spectators, standing like proud parents next to our babies, ready to answer questions from curious bystanders. Talking about babies, one couple had an infant seat mounted on the trans tunnel in their Cobra. Now that's teaching a child the joys of Cobra ownership early.

The organizers of our local club, SMCMA (Southeast Michigan Cobra Motorsports Association) are trying to wrestle more space from the grasps of the Birmingham officials for next year. We could easily bring 80 Cobras, and that is just with our club members. Hopefully we will be successful in the wrestling match.



SUPERFORMANCE WINS LA COBRA CLUB STREET RACE

**Los Angeles**

**July 15-16, 2000**

**Story and Photos by Deborah Stander**



*Dennis Olthoff accepting the First Place trophy.*

Hillbank Motors, the Southern California Superformance dealer, and Olthoff Racing, the Southeastern Superformance dealer, teamed up to race and win in the Cobra Cup event. The event took place on July 15-16, 2000 at the LA Street Race.

On Friday the transponder on the Superformance Cobra, driven by Dennis Olthoff, did not record his practice times correctly so for the qualifying race on Saturday he was placed at the back of the field. It was awesome watching Dennis, in the number 25 Superformance white and red Cobra come up from the back of the field to qualify in pole position. He had a tough challenge from the No. 99, the Black Mustang driven by Dan Lucklow who was piped to win. On Sunday, we all watched anxiously as car number 43, (the practice leader) a white Mustang with blue stripes overtook Dennis, only to hit the wall a short time later sending debris all over the track.

It was brilliant driving on Dennis's part, as he not only avoided the Mustang, which crossed the track right in front of him, but he missed all the debris as well. He went on to win the race by 06.76 seconds, remaining in first place for about 5 laps. In second place was car number 99. In third place was another Cobra, number 46 driven by James Wells Junior.

Thank you to Dave Bouzaglou of Pro Racing and the other organizers, sponsors and drivers for an enjoyable event. We would also like to thank Jim Price of Superformance for making it possible. Congratulations to all for making the event a success.

*Ed: Dennis created quite a stir with this incredible*

*come from behind performance. One unhappy spectator even put a post on the Club Cobra forum branding the car as a one off, tube frame, factory built special with a modern high-tech engine and only a vague resemblance to a Cobra and it had no business running with mortal Cobras.*



*The amazing SP245 awaits its turn in LA.*

*How wrong he was. As it turns out, SP245 is a pretty much off the shelf Superformance Cobra with some reasonably period correct competition changes.*

*SP245 is quite similar to my basically stock SP218, which has seen 19,000+ street miles and a number of track events. Both bodies were made in the same mold as every other Superformance and are dimensionally and visually correct. Both cars have the standard Superformance chassis and suspension. Both cars have the Ford 351 Windsor engine introduced in 1969 as the big brother of the 289 that carried the original Cobras to their World Championship. Both engines have TFS Twisted Wedge heads, a Holley four-barrel, and the same Superformance headers and side pipes.*

*There are differences. SP245 has the then optional (now standard) Wilwood brakes, an aero windshield, a competition engine with about 100 more ponies, a competition drivers seat, impact side beams in the doors, a four-speed tranny, and a fuel cell. Like many people who race their Cobras, Dennis has switched to 17" rims to get the V and Z rated tires needed for competition.*

*The other difference of course is the driver. Dennis Olthoff is really good.*

*When you take a really good car, prepare it well, and drive it well, you will win your share. I for one am excited to see somebody win in a car that costs less than the upgrades in the typical tuner Viper. Cars like this make racing affordable again.*

**BITS AND PIECES****Submissions**

Bits and Pieces is an owner's forum and includes modifications made by individual owners to their Superformance Cobras to improve the performance, reliability, individuality, and/or drivability of their cars. Maybe it's just puttering. The decision to use any idea and the proper installation and operation of any idea is entirely the responsibility of the owner.

If any item has been recommended, tested, and/or approved by Superformance, it will be so stated.

**Track Event Tech Inspection**

Tech inspection is required at track events as it should be. Some are good points for high performance cars driven on the street as well. The following has been extracted from the tech inspection rules for SAAC for your information. If you have a track event in your future, this may give you a leg up on preparation.

**OPEN CARS.** All open cars or convertibles *must* have roll bars. *No exceptions.* All convertibles must run with tops down. Cobra or Tiger hard tops are acceptable in place of roll bars. Late model Mustang "sport bars" are acceptable. Single-loop roll bars in Cobras are acceptable.

**DRIVING SUITS.** Nomex driving suits are recommended, especially in run group A, but not required.

**SEAT BELTS.** DOT approved or SFI competition type belts are required. Belts must be in good condition with no cuts or frays. Must be mounted securely. Shoulder harnesses are recommended.

**MIRRORS.** Each car must have at least one rear-view mirror. Two are recommended.

**INTERIOR.** Seats must be mounted securely. All loose objects must be removed. No loose wires under the dash.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHER.** A fire extinguisher is recommended. Fire extinguisher bracket *must be metal* - not plastic.

**BATTERY.** Must be securely mounted. Terminals tight and in good condition. Positive terminal must be taped or covered.

**TRUNK.** All loose items must be removed including jack, spare tire, lug wrench, etc.

**TIRES.** Should have at least half of the original

tread (unless they are race tires). Side walls should be in good condition (free of cuts, cracks or deep scratches). Should be the proper size for the rim width. Check tread for foreign objects (nails, screws, glass, etc).

**BRAKES.** Brakes will be tested for pedal fade when car is stationary, straight line stopping, and for fluid level.

**BRAKE LIGHTS.** Must be operational.

**FLUID LEAKS.** None allowed. Cars will be checked while running; includes oil, coolant, brake and fuel lines.

**WHEELS.** Should be on tight, with all lugs in place. Will be checked for cracks. Hub caps or trim rings must be removed.

**STEERING.** Manual steering should not have excessive play. Power steering should be free of leaks at hoses and seals. Fluid levels of either should be checked. Front wheels should be tight at bearing and spindle. Steering linkage (tie rods, idler arm, etc) should be in good condition.

**GLASS.** Window glass should not be cracked or broken.

**EXHAUST SYSTEM.** Entire system must be in good condition and securely mounted.

**RADIATOR OVERFLOW CATCH CAN.** Mandatory. Must be securely mounted (although it need not be permanent).

**THROTTLE RETURN SPRING.** Two required on all cars with carburetors. No exceptions.

**NO OPEN-WHEEL CARS.** All cars must have fenders. No Formula cars, Indy cars, F5000 cars.

**HELMETS.** Your helmet must carry a "Snell SA 90" or "Snell 95" rating. Older "Snell 85" helmets will not be allowed this year. The Snell Foundation rates and certifies helmets and they upgrade their certification every 5 years. Helmets do not last forever. After 5 years their protective qualities begin to decline. After 10 years helmets should be replaced. The "SA" designation stands for Special Applications and is directed towards requirements unique to auto racing. The performance tests for these helmets are somewhat different than what motorcycle helmets are subjected to. In addition, "SX" rated helmets have stricter requirements for flame retardance. Motorcycle helmets (which carry a "M" designation) are not acceptable. Please do not



show up with an inferior or older helmet because you will not be allowed on the track.

**RACE NUMBERS.** Race numbers are required on both sides of all cars (8" to 10" in height works best). Temporary numbers (liquid shoe polish or tape) are okay. Duplicate numbers on more than one car in a class do not present a problem. Numbers are used by corner workers to identify cars on the track.

### Dual Roll Bars vs. Full Width Roll Bar

I like to take passengers on track events where it is allowed, so I need some protection for the passenger as well. There are two approaches that I have seen - dual roll bars and a single full-width roll bar.



*Dual chromed roll bars on SP218*



*Full width roll bar on Dick Abbott's SP195*

I elected to install dual roll bars on SP218 primarily because I like the way it looks. The full width bar may be more acceptable to some competition sanctioning bodies. If this is important to you, check it out before you make a commitment. I do believe that the installation of either is a job for a pro with appropriate fabrication and welding skills.

**Dual Roll Bar Installation.** Since Superformance makes right hand drive cars, I ordered the right hand roll bar from the factory. Dennis Olthoff and Paul Whitlock at Olthoff Racing installed it. It was a complex full day job.

Complete instructions are lengthy so I'll hit the high spots. If you are interested in the full instructions, let me know and I'll send it to you. See the last page for addresses.

1. The driver's side single loop is not exactly perpendicular to the axis of the car. It is a few degrees off and looks fine unless it has a companion to compare it to. So we made the passenger's roll bar symmetrical with the driver's roll bar. We marked and cut the holes for the passenger's bar to be symmetrical with the holes for the driver's bar. These holes then served as the guide for mounting.
2. The passenger's bar sat about an inch lower than the driver's bar. The height was matched using the top of the windshield as a visual guide and the mounts were modified accordingly.
3. Installing the mount for the outboard hoop leg requires welding. Getting access to the frame cross member requires cutting a hole in the rear bulkhead. When done, the hole was covered with aluminum sheet and caulked to make it weather tight.
4. The angle of the right side rear brace is not as steep as the left. With the holes drilled and the height set, the brace mount on the passenger's hoop was cut about 90% through and the angle set to line up with the brace installed. The brace mount was then rewelded at the correct angle.
5. The passenger's brace bottom end did not exactly line up the frame rail. An attachment plate was welded to the frame rail to provide a strong and secure attachment point.



*The location of the hole was marked on the masking tape and the hole in the deck drilled. The carpet was pulled back and a hole cut in the bulkhead.*

I had both roll bars chrome plated. The grommets were attached with super glue. The tonneau cover was marked while the roll bars were out and sent to

an upholstery shop with the instruction to “Make the right side look just like the left side.” And so it was done.

The effort to get the two roll bars visually balanced and symmetrical was worth it. They look terrific. The new mounting points are fully as strong as the factory mounts so it will also do the job if called upon to do so.

The complete job, parts, labor, chroming both roll bars, and tonneau was around \$1,500.

If you go with the full-width roll bar, there will be a hole in the rear deck where inboard loop used to be. If you look carefully at the photo, you can see that Dick Abbott has a battery cut off switch mounted in the hole. It solves the problem and provides an accessible cut off switch to boot.

**Fire Extinguisher**

The fire extinguishers come in two sizes - 1 pound and 2.5 pounds. Both will fit. I selected the 2.5 pounds version because if I have a fire, I want to have the best shot at putting it out. I also know that many Cobra owners have the “more is better” syndrome, but I can’t imagine that applies to me.

I purchased my unit from Olthoff Racing. They are also available from Cobra parts houses in the \$75 to \$85 range. The brand is a mystery since it wasn’t marked on the box. The label looked something like this:

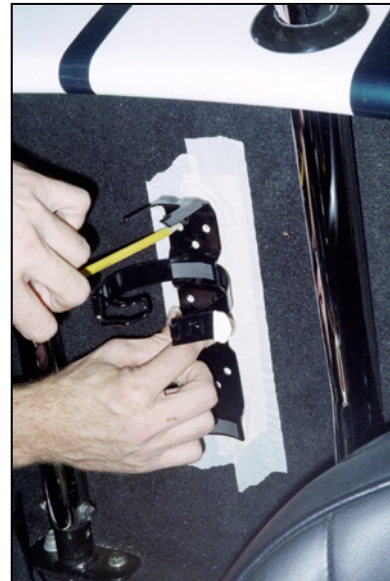
<b>A</b>	<b>A417TC</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>2.5 LB ABC</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>11561C09091T</b>	<b>C</b>
	<b>USA AM</b>	
	<b>AL VLV WITH V/M BKT CHROME</b>	

I installed the fire extinguisher on the rear bulkhead, vertically aligned and centered on the bulkhead. I have seen a number of period photos showing the fire extinguisher mounted on the top of the driveshaft tunnel behind the gearshift. While this may be the “correct” mounting, Dennis Olthoff tells me that it can hit your hand when shifting. He recommended the rear bulkhead position and I am inclined to accept his experienced advice.

I applied two strips of 2 inch wide masking to the carpet in the area where the fire extinguisher was to be mounted. This gave me a writing surface to align the fire extinguisher and mark the mounting holes.

After some visual “what looks right”, I located the mounting fork on the bracket (top of the bracket) 14 1/4 inches up from the ledge that the roll bar is

mounted on. I have dual roll bars, so I centered it between the roll bars. The center of the bracket was 4 7/8 inches from the outside edge of the roll bar hoop. I made the alignment marks on the tape, then used a third piece of tape to mark the centerline.



There were a number of mounting holes in the bracket. Only two mounting screws are required, but I elected to use 4 (more is better?). There were three pairs of holes. I elected to use the middle and lower pair. The upper pair is too high and would require drilling into the

upper frame crossmember.

I aligned the bracket with marks I had made on the tape and punched the four holes in the tape. I then used a 7/64-inch drill bit to drill the four holes. The drilling left a white powder residue, which marked the holes when I removed the tape. No problem finding them. I attached the bracket to the bulkhead with four #10 x 3/4 inch sheet metal screws.

All that remained was vacuuming up the drilling residue, locating the fire extinguisher neck on the mounting fork, and snapping the clamp into place.

**Extra Padding for Old Style Seats**

Somewhere in the high 200’s, Superformance changed the seats. The “old” style seats have a fiberglass shell and removable seat bottoms with foam over a plywood base. The “new” style seats have a metal frame and an integrated bottom with a diaphragm base. The diaphragm is like the webbing in a lawn chair and is a lot more “butt friendly” than the plywood base in the old style seats.

It is easy to tell which style seats you have. If you can remove the seat bottom, you have the old style seats.

The new style seats are more comfortable thanks to additional padding and the diaphragm. With the new seats, you sit about two inches higher. A number of owners have replaced their old style seats with the new ones and speak highly of the swap.



As an alternative to replacing the seats, I decided to add additional padding to my old style seats.

I removed the seat bottom, flipped it over, and removed the staples holding the bottom cover to the plywood base. I then marked the outline of the edge of the seat cover on the plywood base to assist me in reinstalling the cover when done.

I removed the staples holding the seat cover to the base, then carefully removed the seat cover. The stitching will unravel if you aren't careful, so watch it. With the seat cover removed, I laid the bottom cover back in place on the plywood and marked the edge. When I re-stapled the seat cover, the edge would have to be between these marks.



*Marks on plywood base. The edge of the seat cover will have to be aligned between these marks.*

The foam is glued to the plywood base. Using a paint scraper, I carefully separated the foam from the base.

Using the foam as a template, I marked and cut the extra padding from a sheet of two inches thick medium density upholstery foam.



*Seat with original foam, new foam, and plywood base.*

I stacked the original foam, new foam, and plywood base together and shaped the edge of the new foam

to fit. I then used spay adhesive to attach the new foam to the plywood and the original foam to the new foam.

I let the glue dry for an hour or so, then carefully pulled the seat cover back on. Since the seat is now thicker, it was necessary to put the seat on the floor and kneel on it to get the cover in place for stapling.

The edge of the seat cover did not have to go all the way back to the original mark. I backed off about a half an inch to allow for the extra thickness.

With the seat cover lined up on the plywood base, I stapled the seat cover to the base with a heavy duty staple gun. I then lined up the bottom cover and stapled it in place. Done.

I put the seat back in the car. Much better. No fanny fatigue on the SAAC road trip.

### **Relocated Seat**

Mike Caveness (SP311) sent me a CD of photos from the Spring Track Event at CMS with the note, "On that last track session you were right behind me. I was trying my best and you kept gaining. When I see the pictures you appear to be casually touring the young lady around the track!"

Mike told me that his impression of "casual touring" came from the fact that I had my arm resting on the door. I had to laugh. Mike is tall and lean. I am, well, not tall and lean. I had my arm on the door because there was no room for it in the cockpit.

However... The Olthoffs discovered that by angling the front seat to point at the pedals, the seat could be moved inboard about an inch. I have made this change to my car and it is amazing how much difference the extra inch makes. I can now get my arm inside under spirited driving conditions. In addition, I do not have to offset my legs to the left to work the pedals, which in itself is more comfortable.

The factory has adopted this as the standard mounting for driver's seat somewhere above car 400. To determine if you seats are mounted this way, stand behind the car and look at the front seat. If the seams in the seat cushion are pointed straight ahead (parallel to the axis of the car), then it is the old mounting. If the seams are pointed about 10 degrees to the left toward the pedals, it is the new mounting.

If you have the old mounting and are interested in repositioning your seat, your dealer should be able to do this for you. I have instructions for the old style seats (only) if you want to do it yourself. Contact me by snail mail or e-mail and I will send you a copy. See the last page for addresses.

**Knee Pad**

It's a knee pad for the hinge on the driver's door. It serves as a padded knee brace in track events. No more bruised knee. It is also very comfortable as knee resting place on long

trips.

It is another one of Bob Olthoff's little inventions. I have had it for a year and I love it. It is easily and securely attached via a strap and Velcro. Sometimes the little things make a big difference. If you are interested, contact me either via US mail or e-mail and we will be make up a batch. See the last page for addresses.

**Switching Springs for a Better Ride**

Originally, the coil springs on the rear were slightly bigger and stiffer than the coil springs on the front. The Olthoffs experimented with this and found both ride and handling improvements could be made by swapping the coils front to back and back to front.

They have switched mine. The biggest difference that I have noticed is a change in ride quality. With the big springs on the rear, the rear end would "pogo" over big bumps. Since the occupants sit very close to the rear end, this was very noticeable to both driver and passenger. In fact, at high speeds over the famous North Carolina wooden bridge, I sometimes wondered if I wouldn't be ejected without a seat belt. This is not to say that it was a shortcoming of the car. A lesser car would have been in serious trouble after such a stunt. With the springs switched, this pogoing has been eliminated.

The second advantage is supposed to be improved handling, particularly a more stable transition from oversteer to understeer in turns. I am now able to achieve rather long power slides coming out of second gear turns. Whether this is the spring change or the fact that I am learning how to drive the car better during our track days, I can't say for sure.

This is now the standard factory installation. From somewhere around car 700 on, the bigger springs are in the front. If you want to check your car, use a caliper to measure the diameter of the spring wire in both the front and rear. For example, my big spring

is 13.5 mm (0.53") in diameter and my little spring is 12 mm (0.47") in diameter. If you have the bigger spring in the rear, you can swap the entire coil over assembly - spring and shock - front to rear.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

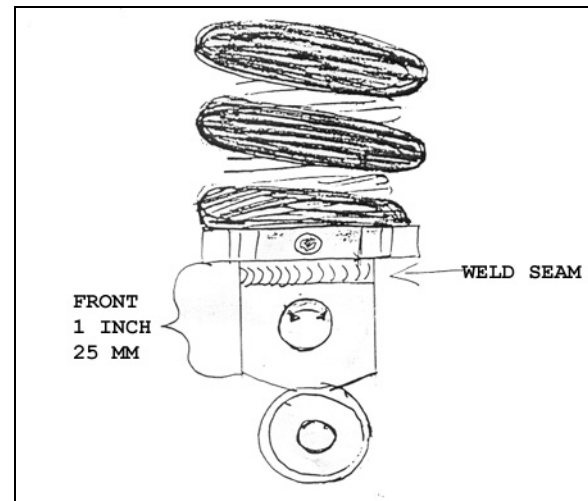
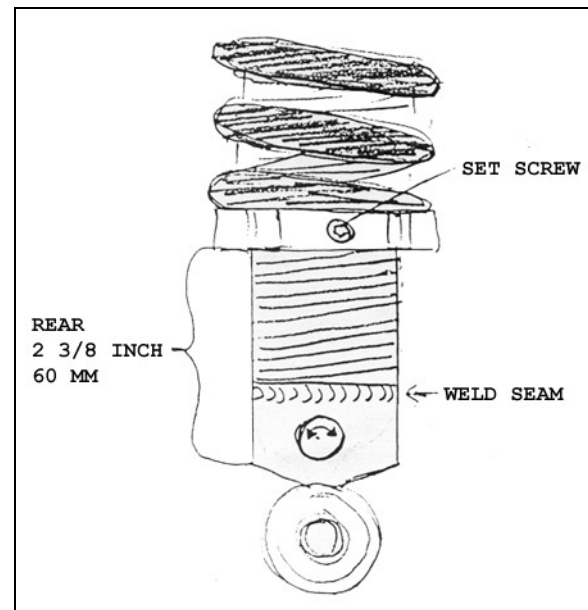
All four shocks are the same. Only the springs differ.

You may switch assemblies front and rear, setting adjustments as shown in the diagrams below.

Discard the flat helper spring if so equipped.

Set damping adjustment 4 to 7 clicks up.

You may tailor the ride height pending taste and mileage of your car - 27 to 27.5 inches at the fender edge is desired. On a flat hard surface, measure from highest edge of fender to the ground.

**LARGER SPRING GOES ON THE FRONT****SMALLER SPRING GOES ON THE REAR**



A word of caution about setting the preload on the springs. Change the preload on each end in unison. Do not change the preload on springs independently to get the ride height exactly the same all around.

If you adjust the preload on the front springs, make sure that the left and the right side have the same preload. If one has more preload than the other, the ride height may look OK, but you will induce what NASCAR calls "wedge" - more weight on one diagonal set of tires than the other. This is fine if you only turn left, but it can make the car oversteer in one direction and understeer in the other. Not good for a machine that goes left and right.

In the rear, the battery overhangs in the left rear. You may want to put a little additional preload in the left rear spring to even the rear out. Do not use more than 1/4 inch additional preload on the left side. If you change the preload in the rear, keep this 1/4 inch differential the same.

### Static Cling Numbers and Logos



Some track events, such as the SAAC events, require numbers. I like the font style of the ones offered by the folks at Finish Line. You can reach them at:

Finish Line, Inc. / Moto-Lita U.S.A.  
3593 SW 173rd Terrace  
Miramar, Florida 33029  
(888) 436-9113  
[www.cobraaccessories.com](http://www.cobraaccessories.com)

The roundels or "meatballs" are available in the same 15 inch diameter as the originals. You specify the number. Two digit numbers are standard. Three digit numbers are available on special request, but the numbers are of course smaller. They are available in black numbers on a white background. A set of four is \$55.00.

They also offer a set of period sponsor decals. The set includes two each of Pure, Castrol, Goodyear, Autolite, Esso, Koni, Wynn's, and fire extinguisher markers. The set is \$45.00.

The roundels and decals are static cling, which mean that they are easy to remove and are reusable.

I actually read and followed the instructions, which call for washing and waxing the car to provide a clean smooth surface. Wet the surface of the car and the back of the roundel/decals. Position the roundel/decals and use a squeegee to smooth it out and remove excess water. I used a windshield cleaning squeegee that I found at a car parts store.

To test the clinging power, I applied the roundels/decals a week before SAAC-25. Hot sun and high speeds - they stayed on. They also survived the rain on the way to SAAC-25, the track event, and the week's commuting.

On the way back from SAAC-25, we hit a downpour on the Interstate in Pennsylvania. The driving rain worked its way under the front edge of the roundel on the hood and it came off and went in the hood scoop. Test over, we pulled in the next rest area and removed the remaining ones. The instructions clearly stated that "Extreme weather conditions should be avoided", so I wasn't surprised.

Overall, when properly applied, they look really good on. They held up well. Based on many period pictures in my Cobra library, the sponsor decals are period correct.

### Soft Suitcases

I mention this only because two are a perfect fit in the Cobra trunk. We got them at Lands End ([www.LandsEnd.com](http://www.LandsEnd.com)). They are listed as "Large Canvas Zip Top Totes", item number 6647-4235. Size is 16"Wx17"Hx7 1/2"D. The price is \$27.50 each. A number of colors are available. We picked Dark Navy/Evergreen because it went with the color of SP218, of course.

### Superformance Paint Codes

A number of folks have asked about their paint codes. I contacted Ron Kruger at the factory and he has researched this for us. His reply follows.

"Color codes are a problem because the paints have always been SA (South Africa) developed paints and the local codes are meaningless to any paint supplier outside the country. We keep record of the pigmentation formulae of the various "special" colors such as your Malachite, but not of "ordinary" colors. There is, of course, the fact that paint shades starts to change fairly early in a car's life, and still the best way of matching a color (if partial or total respray is required) is to go to good matcher and let him mix the paint to the desired color."

**FEEDBACK**

I have received many great letters and tech tips from you the members since the last newsletter. Unfortunately, the press of schedule and need to stay employed forces me defer these until next issue.

Please keep the cards, letters, photos, e-mail, tech tips, and user mod coming. This is a member contribution newsletter. Everyone is invited to participate.

**UPCOMING EVENTS****SAAC Does Vegas - 5**

Friday, February 9, 2001: Early registration, early tech inspection, cocktail party and seminars

Saturday, February 10, 2001: Tech inspection, open track - Las Vegas Motor Speedway

Sunday, February 11, 2001: Shelby American open house, autograph session, car show, BBQ Lunch

**SAAC-26**

The 26<sup>th</sup> annual SAAC convention will return to Charlotte (Lowes) Motor Speedway July 6-7-8, 2001. Events will include track time on the famous Charlotte track and vintage races.

For more information on these events, contact:

SAAC HQ  
PO Box 788  
Sharon, CT 06069

**Second Strike On Track 2001**

We are in the process of planning Second Strike On Track events for both spring and fall of 2001. We are hoping to return to VIR for both events and are working to secure dates. Stay tuned.

**BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE**

To continue to make back issues available, I am reprinting the newsletters for 1998 (Volume 1) and 1999 (Volume 2) as bound sets for the year. Each set is an individually printed and bound color original with a clear plastic cover sheet, soft cover back, and color title page with contents.

The Volume 1 set is 40 pages bound, 34 photographs and drawings, mostly color. The Volume 1 bound set is available for \$15.00 including shipping and handling.

The Volume 2 set is 80 pages bound with 62

photographs and drawings, mostly color. The Volume 2 bound set is available for \$30.00 including shipping and handling.

**REGISTRY AVAILABLE**

Each member is mailed a copy of the current registry when you are registered. Our membership is growing quickly, so your copy is soon out of date.

I had planned to reprint the registry and mail it to all registered owners once a year. With our growing size, this has become prohibitively expensive.

For those who want an updated registry, I am making two versions available on an individual order basis. Each is current as of the date shipped.

The **Standard Version** has owner's name, address, phone, email, and car number. It is printed 40 to a page in state then last name order. It is currently 17 pages long, staple bound with a cover and is \$10.00 including postage.

The **Deluxe Version** has both owner and car data, is printed 10 to a page in car number order, has both name and state indices, and is spiral bound with a clear cover and soft back cover. It is currently 73 pages long and is available for \$30.00 including postage.

**SECOND STRIKE - SCOG**

Second Strike, our Superformance Cobra Owners Group, continues to reach new and old Superformance owners. As of November 1<sup>st</sup>, we have 611 registered owners in forty states and six other countries, representing about 70% of all Superformance Cobras on the road. Our goal remains to register every Superformance Cobra. If this newsletter came addressed to you in the mail, then you are registered. If you know an owner that isn't registered, please get them signed up.

In addition to our registry and newsletter, we now have a web site,

**[www.SecondStrike.com](http://www.SecondStrike.com)**

This is our owners' group, newsletter and web site. All contributions are appreciated. Please submit all literary contributions, inquiries, reprint requests, and registry requests in writing or via e-mail to:

Mike and Pat Stenhouse  
400 Avinger Lane Villa 902  
Davidson NC 28036-6708  
Email: [Mike@SecondStrike.com](mailto:Mike@SecondStrike.com)  
Phone: 704-655-1902