



## News for 11/11/08

### *dAM* History: New News is Old News

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A hot topic today is springs and valve trains. Read this article from the Feb `83 issue of Super Stock & Drag Illustrated. This is an early illustration of a long history of advanced engine component testing. The [dAM wet bench](#) is the latest piece of testing equipment. And the [dAME-jet](#) is the latest fuel system development.

John

PS: \$250 REWARD for a copy of my 1992 Superflow Presentation on VHS!

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# GETTING AHEAD

By Bob Don

**P**ROPER TESTING equipment is necessary for any engine builder or machinist wishing to determine either the operating condition of engine pieces or to research and develop new ones. Test equipment which can more closely simulate the actual running conditions of an engine are that much more

## John Satterfield takes engine technology into the future with a dyno for cylinder heads.

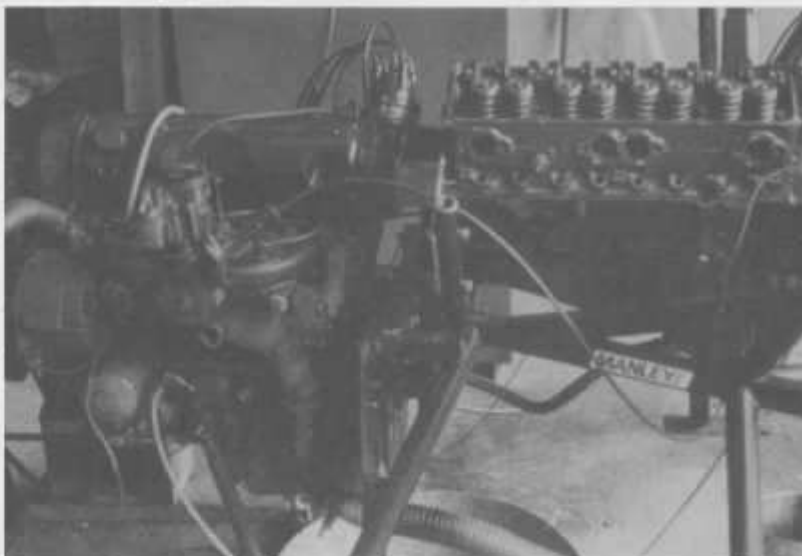
effective. Ideally, the dream of any engine builder would be to be inside a race engine as it traverses down the quarter-mile. John Satterfield, owner of Dutchess Auto Machine in Poughkeepsie, NY, has brought the dream that much closer to reality with the development of his "head dyno."

John's creation allows a close examination of an operating valvetrain. Additionally, a flow bench has been attached to the fixture, providing a detailed analysis of the effects of opening and closing the valves on the flow of the cylinder head. All in all, quite revolutionary.

John Satterfield is a 31-year-old native of Poughkeepsie, NY. He began working in the automotive machine business at 18. By the time he reached 23, he bought the company he worked for. His technical education has come from his own experience and the experience of others. Despite his lack of post-secondary education, he is a veritable storehouse of advanced technical knowledge and engine theory.

Although John would like nothing better than to research and develop race engines all day long, he still has to pay the bills. Subsequently, Dutchess Auto Machine handles a wide variety of jobs; from rebuilding Cummings diesel engines to wringing out the trans-axle of a Formula Ford car. The shop is fully equipped with a myriad of precision machine instruments and John can perform virtually any operation, including the fabrication of pistons from raw forgings.

The Satterfield head dyno represents four years of development and refinement. Basically, the test set-up consists of a small-block Chevy (bare block) mounted on an elaborate stand. Immediately behind the block is a four-cylinder Vega engine which is connected to the V-8 block through pulleys and a rubber timing belt. When head and valvetrain pieces are installed on the Chevy small-block, the Vega engine is used to power the cam, allowing a close inspection of the working valvetrain anywhere from idle up to 16,000 rpm! John reports that some amazing things can happen to valvetrain



Photos by Bob Don

components in the upper 'twilight zone' of the rpm range.

The last two years of the fixture's development have centered around mating the machine to a flow bench. An elaborate plumbing system allows the flow bench to draw through the tested cylinder and read flow rates as the head operates!

Despite the outwardly crude appearance of the head dyno, the machine functions flawlessly, heralding a new age in valvetrain, cam and head technology. Since the fixture is in essence a Chevy block, intake manifolds and headers can be bolted to the head for even more revealing test sessions, expanding its versatility.

The head dyno is not used solely for John's own research and development work. Several major manufacturers of cams and valvetrain components, including Manley, have enlisted John's expertise in wringing out their prototype pieces prior to marketing. Interestingly, the sales literature for some of these companies may boast that their parts were tested in their own testing laboratories when, in actuality, the components were sent to Satterfield.

The Satterfield head dyno is a tribute to John's technical wizardry and creativity. He is quick to point out, however, that despite the revolutionary nature of the fixture, it is not the information acquired through its usage, per se, but how that information is applied which is important. Considering John's insightful and analytical nature, as well as his ability to learn and extrapolate from experience, one can have little doubt of his capabilities in applying any newfound knowledge.

Satterfield has developed other test components for various engine functions as the need has arisen. Although not widely known, one of the most accurate methods of measuring engine horsepower is by determining the amount of air consumed at the carburetor. Unfortu-

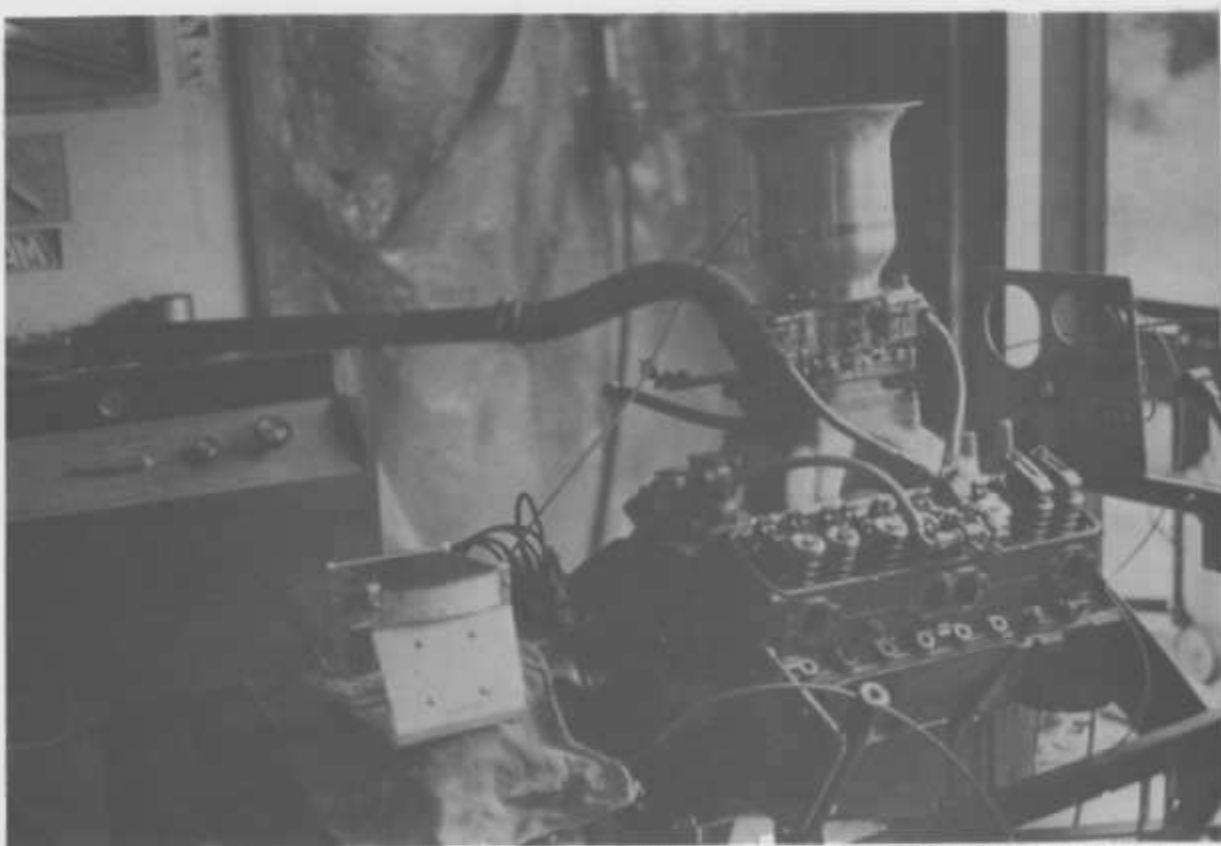
nately, no equipment to test this aspect of engine operation could be found. Undaunted, John constructed his own by modifying a special velocity stack. A fan inside the stack is spun by the incoming air flow. The rpm of the fan is then translated electronically into an exact cfm rate. This "air flow dyno" has proven most effective in measuring even the smallest changes in power output and John has plans to market this item soon.

Besides being an engine builder, machinist, and mechanic, John Satterfield is also a drag racer. He owns an immaculate Chevy Monza which is campaigned in NHRA's Competition Eliminator as a B/Econo Altered. The car serves as a rolling test bed for John's latest development work. The car was previously campaigned as a C/Factory Experimental, and in such guise it consistently ran 1 to 2 mph above the national record, testimony to the effectiveness of John's prowess in utilizing the knowledge ascertained from his head dyno. Further chassis refinement, John believes, would have netted him the record setting ET's to correspond with his high horsepower output. Considering the performance of the car as a C/FX, the Satterfield B/EA could become a serious threat in 1983 competition if all goes according to plan.

Satterfield is constantly in motion. Even when his body stops, his mind is still going at around 200 mph. He is constantly analyzing, correlating and applying even the tiniest shreds of information that may surface through the course of his test sessions. Only the best engine builders have a thorough grasp of the internal dynamics of a racing engine. Still fewer have the ability to properly interpret test information and effect meaningful change. John Satterfield is one of those people.

Have you ever gotten a headache from trying to ingest too much information at one sitting?

FEBRUARY 1983 63



That's what happened to me when I paid a visit to John Satterfield in Poughkeepsie. Satterfield's head dyno produced an incredible plethora of technical revelations that are of such a startling nature that it is difficult to de-

scribe. While revolutionizing the development of valvetrain components and port design, the head dyno also has the potential to render obsolete such test equipment as static flow benches and spring pressure testers — equipment whose results were heretofore taken as gospel.

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64 SUPER STOCK

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### **John's creation allows close examination of an operating valvetrain from idle all the way to 16,000 rpm! There's even a flow bench attached that provides a detailed analysis of valve action on the flow of the cylinder head.**

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Although it may not look like much, John Satterfield's cylinder head dyno has taken valvetrain science a giant step into the future. By being able to observe the valvetrain in operation, Satterfield (left) can detect any irregularities and then tighten up the weak link.

is far more involved and borders on redesigning the internal combustion engine entirely. John, though, has been able to work around the reversion as reflected in his port designs and has come up with noticeable increases in horsepower.

Designing head ports using air flow as it would occur in an operating engine can be most advantageous. John has taken a fully prepared head from a major company and flowed it statically. On the static flow bench, it flows better than his own design. On his head dyno, however, the situation is reversed and the Satterfield head becomes the better performer. The race track bears out his findings as his own port design can run circles around the commercially prepared head — the one that flowed better on a static flow bench!

These informational gems are only the tip of the iceberg. Satterfield has reams of notes and test results that he has amassed through the course of his four years of working with the head dyno. It is safe to say that he will continue to discover additional and equally relevant facts concerning air flow and valvetrain science. And that will put him that much further ahead of the competition. — Bob Don

NOTE: Special thanks to Bob Schmalz of Manley Performance Products for his assistance in conducting the tests. And thanks for lunch, Bob —the pizza was good!

FEBRUARY 1983 65

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