



CLBCOM 116

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 2002

Squire SS-100 Registry

CHASSIS # 8 UNDERGOES COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION

Most of our Squires have experienced upgrades from simple major maintenance to body-off restorations. But the biggest one yet has just been started. Chuck Blethen has been associated with our Registry for five years now and will one day own a Squire SS-100. Business commitments and property upgrades have not allowed that to happen to date. That, however, did not stop his son JD from wading into this major effort. To explain;

Many years ago Member Bob Murray went to an auction in Carlisle, PA and bought #8 in something less than sad condition. It sat outside and uncovered in his back yard for another few years. Enter Member Sid Weaver and Associate Member Paul Helmick. Sid had restored his # 20 to great condition and the two of them needed a project so Paul drove back east to see his father and hauled #8 back to New Mexico. At that point, Sid traded his #20 for a real basket case named #42. #42 had been a Florida car, stored in a dirt floor shop in central Florida where they strip mine phosphate. That particular combination of mineral & moisture destroyed all the lower steel on the car to where you could poke a screwdriver right thru the frame. Sid, working in Los Alamos and Paul, working in Albuquerque, took every nut and bolt apart on both cars, combined the best parts and wound up with the now beautifully restored #42 that Sid drives.

Paul Helmick thought he'd try and rebuild what was left of #8 but the man works a 50 to 60 hour week and again it just sat there. Finally Member Jim Dimond need a project so he bought it and it came to Phoenix. Jim started on it and made some progress but health problems surfaced and again, it just sat there. Finally, JD Blethen and his dad said, "We'll take a whack at it". HURRAH!

The incredible pile of junk that is still called #8 was hauled out to Scottsdale and is on it's way to recovery. The Blethens have contracted to have a complete new, reinforced frame built using the old one as a model. The original engine will be replaced with a fuel injected 302 V-8, the four speed tranny with a Borg/Warner T-5 five speed, the front suspension & steering with Mustang 2 parts and four wheel disc brakes. Many of the original trim parts are missing and will have to be remade and what's left will be restored, all here in my shop.

As stated, this is a major, major project and when all the welding, painting, upholstery, polishing and cussing is completely finished, I'll put a picture of the completed project on the front page of the Squire SS-100 Registry newsletter. Oh! And did I mention that this is going to cost a lot of \$\$\$?

MEMBER PAUL DULLAERT ON SQUIRE SEAT ADJUSTMENT MODIFICATIONS

Paul continues to work on his Chassis #35 in Canada and wants his seats to move freely so that wife Jan can freely adjust the seat forward when she drives the car. Paul offers the following:

"There are two reasons that the seats won't move. The first is that either the seats are too wide for the body or they were mounted too far outboard (i.e. too close to the sill where the body drops down inside the frame). This causes the hex head of the bolt which serves as the pivot and connection between the seat cushion and the back to be forced into the carpeting near the top of the vertical wall of the sill. Also, the bottom outboard of the frame tube of the cushion rubs hard against the edge of the sill (enough to scar the vinyl upholstery). This was the first problem I identified and the one that provoked my attempts at narrowing the seat assembly.

I removed the seats and separated the backs from the cushions. I cut the hog rings on the outboard side of the cushions and turned back the upholstery. With a steel bar with one end on the floor and the exposed cushion frame tube held across the end of it, I progressively hammered (big hammer!) the tube flat where it crosses the sill edge when it's installed. This was not pretty but gained 1/8". I refastened the upholstery using small nylon cable ties instead of hog rings. (Works just fine).

Where the pivot bolt goes thru the angled flat steel tab to connect the seat back, I countersunk the hole almost all the way thru and got a stainless steel flat head bolt. That gained 3/16". I left the inboard tab alone. On the seat backs, I turned back the upholstery on both sides to reveal the junction of the round side tubing and the square tube across the bottom. This was well welded so I cut 1/8" off each end of the square tube, then flattened the round tube where the pivot bolt passes thru, by squeezing it in a vice. I then carefully rounded over the cut edges so they wouldn't damage the upholstery. Now the back was 1/8" narrower on each side. I went back to the cushion and the connecting tabs. I bent these in an 'S' to accommodate the narrower back frame, first inwards then outwards to be parallel again where the pivot bolt passes thru. Back on the backs, I removed the floppy backwards leaning headrests and saved the material for future repairs. To do this, I turned back the upholstery across the top and with a cold chisel, hacksaw, file and loads of patience I removed the inadequate headrest mounting tabs from the frame tube. No more not-used-in-1937 headrests.

The second reason the seats won't move is the interference between the welded clevis on the bottom of the seat back frame and the floor. This clevis is the attachment point for the sheet metal channel of the seat reclining mechanism. This interference has caused the clevis to cut thru the carpet and cut grooves in the floor. They tried to overcome this at the factory by grinding chamfers on the clevis but that did not gain enough. (Continued)

I made spacer blocks of 1/2" by 1" aluminum bar (somewhat more workmanlike than a stack of washers) and installed them between the seat cushion frame and the upper adjustment track. This is easier than blocks under the lower track because you don't have to get longer mounting bolts welded to the lower tracks by doing it this way. I don't have any headroom concerns so raising the seats half an inch has more of an effect on thigh clearance with the steering wheel. This raising has a bigger impact than all the narrowing I did and is definitely the fix to be tried first! (Underlining added by the editor).

While I was at it I chamfered all the notches on the adjustment rack so it would engage more easily. I also squeezed the reclining channel a bit so it was easier to move in it's forward bracket. I put Loctite on the threads of both operating knobs so they don't turn when you use them.

There is one other problem limiting the forward movement of the seat. The back frame extends well below the back edge of the cushion. This makes a fat wad of useless material hang down behind the seat cushion. When you move the seat forward this upholstery runs into the back of the lower track. I cut the tracks off immediately behind the rearmost welded mounting bolt. Now the forward movement of the driver's seat is limited only by the seat frame running into the transmission tunnel adjacent to the shifter (manual tranny). By the way, if you get the lower tracks mixed up, they seem to work best if the 2 cross welded adjustment bars are closer to the rear. I had to experiment a bit by turning them around and trying things to figure which end was the back? I didn't want to cut off both ends".

EDITORS NOTE: We thank Paul for this excellent report but it should be noted and recalled that no two Squires are exactly alike and in addition, his #35 was professionally reupholstered in leather before he purchased the car. If you attempt these seat modifications and they don't match what he's saying here, contact him directly by phone, snailmail or email at:PDullaert@rim.net

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER

Thou shalt not weigh more than thy refrigerator!

AND AGAIN

It ain't the blue jeans that make your butt look fat!

ONCE MORE

Middle age is when broadness of mind and narrowness of waist change places!

