



## Once In a Life Time



In the fall of 2004 my friend Wally Bartelt and I were talking about the Silver State Classic which takes place in Nevada. It is one of those events that all people talk about doing sometime, that is to run above highway speed for more than 10 or 15 seconds. Wally said, if you ever want to do this event, count me in. So I told him that I always wanted to do this too. Let's do it. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think anyone would ever say that to me. Little did Wally realize that I had all the information at home on file. So in January I started by actually joining the Silver State Classic organization, which you have to do just to enter your registration. After that, I sent in the other paper work and waited to hear from them.

While I was waiting for the paperwork to clear, I started getting my Corvette prepared. I had never run anything like this, so I did the obvious things to make sure I had a chance of finishing. I started by changing the engine belts, doing a break job with some new rotors, too, and replacing all the fluids. We get more papers to fill out, such as health related information, and we sent them back. After a few weeks we get our rules and regulations, and now it is time to make plans for the ride out. For the people who are first timers in this event, you have to go to a drivers' school at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway which is put on by the Derek Daley Academy.



Now because we never ran their event, we had to run in what they call the touring class. This was the slowest speed class at 95 to 124 MPH. So I have to declare a speed that I am going to run at for this class. This is the trick about this race, you're not running against another car, you're running against the clock. When you are at the start of the race and the clock starts, you have 90 miles to get as close to your target speed without going over your top speed of 124 and not going 30 MPH under your target speed. Wally and I chose the 100 MPH speed and that meant we had to make the 90 miles in 54 minutes. This is getting exciting.

A couple of weeks before I need to get on the road to drive out to Las Vegas, I need to make sure the tires are okay and balanced. Everything is balanced except for one rim that has a slight wobble. We checked for dirt or anything that might cause the problem, but nothing. So now I need to find a rim, this wouldn't have been a problem with regular rims, but I have magnesiums on all four corners, and they are not kept on everyone's shelf at our local dealers or parts depot. Well, I finally find one on the internet a couple days before I need to leave. I have the rim shipped and installed as soon as possible.

The one part of this story is that Wally started a new job only a few weeks earlier and couldn't make the drive out with me. This was okay, I like to drive.

The event date is September 25<sup>th</sup> 2005, and since I don't like to be late or any other surprises like a break down on the trip out, I started out on the Sunday before, just in case. By that Sunday night I was in Denver and ready for a good night's sleep. I have never driven that far in one day before, I guess the adrenalin must be flowing. All I had time for was gas and a burger all the way to Denver. From Denver across the state to Grand Junction and a quick stop in Utah at Arches National Park.



This is a must if you get in that area. Then, back on the highway and the next stop is St. George, Utah which is on the border of Nevada. This was a planned stop along the way for a little golf and to get the oil changed from the long ride out. While I was getting the oil changed at the local Chevy dealer, I asked around where the better golf courses were and off I was to try my golf swing out in the high desert. I didn't have to be in Las Vegas until Thursday, so I spent the night here in St. George.

On Thursday morning I am off again and heading for the bright lights of Vegas. After the short drive, compared to the other days I have driven, I check in and find out where I should be parking. I am at Sam's Town now and they have kept a special area in the parking garage just for the people who are running in the event.



Driving into the garage was really exciting, seeing all these neat cars and meeting the people who have come from around the country to run their cars in the desert. I have been through registration and now I need to put all the numbers and special stickers on the car before I can get the final tech.



After tech, I now really can start to look at all the neat cars. Everything from Bentley Continental to Mustang to Porsche, to Nissan, to Saab, to Camaro, to a Silverado, to a Chevelle, to BMW, to Viper, to a GTO, to a McLaren, to a WRX, to a Dodge Magnum, and a few others including the most prominent, Corvette with 37 in all. There were a total of 96 cars, and they all had their own personality. Later that night Wally flew in to Las Vegas and met me for dinner.



On Friday 9-23-05 we caravan to Ely with 11 other rookies, and more of the group who have run before. We had a couple of stops along the way showing scenic Nevada, nothing but desert. We did see the finish line and the starting line with the staging area for the race on Sunday. All everyone is talking about is what they anticipate or expect. We arrive in Ely and check into our 1929 Hotel Nevada. We had a parade that night through town with 50 of the cars and got to meet a lot of the people like us with the need for speed.



On Saturday 9-24-05 we meet at the football field for another tech session for those who missed their inspections in Las Vegas. Then a very impromptu car show. Later that morning we have a navigators' meeting for the rookies to learn more of what we should expect on the course. All of us asked questions because we were clueless on what a close competition this really is. Our instructor, B.J., has raced her 89 Corvette in the 160 MPH class and just loves the thrill. She does tell us to watch for animals on the road. Don't swerve, she says or we will roll over if we hit the ditch. Oh boy, now this is really going to be fun.

In the afternoon, we go and watch the shoot out. This is who can go the fastest from a standing start to how fast in a half mile and a mile run. A 350Z Nissan running a turbo does 180 MPH but can't stop soon enough and crashes. He will not make the race on Sunday. A 2002 Z06 does 163 MPH. Also, a 1964 Chevelle SS turns in a quite respectful 145 MPH. Nice going Leonard. We had a chance later on Saturday afternoon to tip a few cocktails with this gentleman and hear his story of adventures. What a day!

That evening we go to the welcome and participant meeting to get our final staging instructions. We learn that we start near the end of the grid due to our touring class entry of 100 MPH. Everything is set up according to speed categories. The bad news is we start our caravan to the starting grid at 6:00 A.M. to Lund which is the start of the race.



Sunday 9-25-05

The temperature is 29 degrees, we're excited, and who cares how cold it is. Everyone has been extremely helpful and very friendly. We leave the grid area and head for the other side of Lund and the final staging area. There is plenty of time to get out and make a final pit stop and say hello and good luck to the many people who we have met these last couple of days.

It is 9:55 and it is our turn to get in line with the touring class. With a car leaving every minute the time goes by fast.

We leave the starting line, with anticipation, and follow our game plan at 105 MPH and no more than that. Our time is good as we go by the different checkpoints along the way. It sure doesn't take long and we are at the Narrows at mile marker 70 entering at a speed of 100 MPH but slow fast to a slower speed of 84-89 MPH until we exit the Narrows. Two miles of the twists and we are almost there. The last 17 miles are all adjustments for our time so that we cross the finish line at 54 minutes. As we go across the finish line, Wally feels we are within a second of hitting our time, and now we just have to wait until the awards banquet. We were kept in suspense, but know we finished and all the Corvettes did finish. What a feeling!



There were lots of congratulations from everyone. Those who have done the race and high fives from the workers. What a ball, the thrill of a life time! Would we do it again? Yes, in a heartbeat. If our wives let us!!

Wally had to return home, so I drove him back to Las Vegas and I returned to Sam's Town. The banquet hall was set up with tables for eight people and I found some friends to sit with as we ate a great feast from the hotel. When it came time for the awards, I waited to hear the results from our group. This is the exciting time for we really thought we did well. The time came and our names were called. As I walked up to accept our award I couldn't believe we did it. Not only did we finish, but we finished just (.0090) one thousandth of a second from first place.

Place in Class	Car #	Driver	Navigator	Year	Car Make	Car Model	Target Speed	Average Speed	Variance from Target (MPH)	Variance from Target (Time)	High Trap
1	252	Dawn Goldwasser	Sean Goldwasser	2005	Chevrolet	Corvette	100	99.9973	0.0027	00:00.0890	102
2	293	Fred Severt	Wally Bartelt	1999	Chevrolet	Corvette	100	100.0056	0.0056	00:00.1830	105
3	71	Charlie Friend	N/A	1966	Chevrolet	Chevelle	100	99.9823	0.0177	00:00.5720	103



I was told later on I had quite a big smile on my face with the two lovely presenters on each arm. Wally, you really missed it. Too bad it is so far away and the cost was a little much, too. I do suggest that if you have read about this race and thought about doing it, you will not regret the rush. All of us crazy car nuts just love **“THE NEED FOR SPEED”**.

Wally Bartelt & Fred Severt  
 Wisconsin Corvette Club Members  
 Midwest Region

Article written by Fred Severt

