After my last update, I receive a couple of phone calls and emails from concerned customers which basically asked “since I am doing very little to update on the first run of engines, does this mean that there is a problem with delivery”. If I inadvertently mislead anyone then I am truly sorry. I should have explained that I continue to ship engines on a weekly basis and there really is very little additional news that can be added about the first run of engines. My wish is that everything would go a little faster.

The following is an example of what I am talking about - two weeks ago I was test running an engine when I saw the oil turn a “milky” color. This could only mean one thing and that was, there is water in the oil, somewhere. The engine was immediately removed from the test stand and the supercharger, intake manifold, and both heads were removed. Everything was checked and appeared to be OK. The pan was also removed and the entire bottom end of the crankcase was thoroughly cleaned. The rubber water gasket which goes between the head and top of the block was replaced. The heads were then re-installed and the head bolts were re-torqued – then came the tedious job of re-installing all of the pushrods, rocker arms, and re-adjusting the valve lash. When finished, the intake manifold was installed, then the supercharger, distributor, and all the necessary connections. If that were not enough the timing was reset then the engine placed back on the test stand. All of the oil lines had to be cleaned along with the oil holding tank and filter. Is everyone still with me? Very confident that the problem was solved, the engine was started and much to my surprise and anger the oil once again, turned “milky” color. Three days of work was lost. After saying some choice expletives and trying to calm down, the only thing left to do was to go through the entire process again. The long and short of this story is that after another 2+ days the problem still did not go away. This meant that the water had to be coming in from some other place. With the engine upside down and the supercharger and heads intact, I removed the oil pan and applied some light pressure with a squeeze bulb into the water inlet, while plugging the water outlet. I could hear the air leak but could not find out where it was coming from. Keep in mind there are connecting rods, pistons, crankshaft, and windage trays in the way. I then found my old automotive stethoscope and placed a piece of brass tubing in the end and was able to pin point the air leak. You will never guess where it was. Much to my amazement, directly behind the water pump, in the timing cover, there was a small flaw (pin hole) in the casting which allowed water from the water pump to be directly injected into the crankcase. The timing cover was removed and a new one installed. The chances of this happening again, is less than zero! Now you can understand why this project is taking so long. The only reason that I am telling this story is that the customers need to know not only the good but also some of the not-so-good.

I have had a lot of interest in the steel flywheel and as soon as I have had a chance to drill all the holes and mount one for testing, everyone will be informed as to the results. It is not as simple as just mounting and new flywheel. This flywheel weighs 1 lb 5.7 ounces. This is a lot of weight to be spinning at 9,000 rpm.

Work is continuing of the blocks and can be seen by the first four pictures. Once the front end of the blocks are machined, then the opposite end will be completed, then I will start on each bank of cylinders. It seems like the “stack” of thing to get done, gets larger each day. Oh well.

After all of the exhaust tubes were bent for the “Zoomie” headers, each must then be polished and finally, welded. The welded portions must then be re-polished. Very time consuming.

The final pictures are of the, much anticipated belly pan for the new 34 Ford. A lot of people have been asking if I was ever going to get it finished. Unfortunately, mold making for fiberglass molds is not my forte! I can now start work on the frame, suspension, and motor installation. I will try to keep everyone informed as soon as there is any progress.

On a special note, two weeks ago, I received a phone call from Craig Libuse, from the Craftsmanship Museum, informing me that I had been selected as Metalworking Craftsman of the Year. This prestigious award comes with a $2,000.00 prize, numerous press releases, and guest of honor at the NAMES show in Wyandotte, Michigan on April 20-22 of this year. Just to be considered for this award would have been an honor, let alone be selected. If you go to www.craftsmanshipmuseum.com you will be able to review the article which highlights my career.

For what it is worth, I started this update on January 21 and it has taken this long just to get it finished. To say that I am busy is totally an understatement! Hang in there everyone who has place a deposit on the next run of engines. Although it will take longer than originally planned the net result will be worth the wait.