It all started over a Corvair engine heads.

As many of you know at this year’s Heart of Texas gathering I blew a head gasket.

The good fortune is Tom from the San Antonio club was there and said he could get a set done pretty quickly. If you’ve heard about Tom's heads, they are becoming highly prized, so it was a pretty quick decision to ask him to make me a pair.

 I sent the money just a few days after H.O.T. and Mike Tidwell and I made plans to drive to SA to retrieve them. Unfortunately we never could find a weekend that worked for both of us.

Which brings me to the week of May 23-29.

I texted Mike on Wednesday to see if he wanted to make the drive on the 28th. Mike was going to visit a friend in GA so he was not going.

Since we had gone 5 weeks without retrieving them I talked to Tom and made the decision to go on Saturday. One issue was that Tom was heading to Killeen that Saturday morning to go look at a late model. I told him that I could arrive before he left.

It was agreed that I would arrive around 6:30 Saturday morning. That meant I had a 3 hour drive from Montgomery to San Antonio.

I currently live in Lufkin. So my plan was to drive to Montgomery Friday afternoon and sleep there and wake up early and head to Tom's house Saturday morning.

That plan was changed on Thursday night the water started coming down.

I had been watching the radar on my pc. There was a line that was the deep purple running from up north of the Brenham area down to just south of Tomball. The line was so tight just south of Tomball. Above the line was severe rain, below it almost nothing and the line was only moving in one direction. East. It was running over my place in Montgomery.

Then Connie called. Water was coming in the house. Damn. Again.

Her next call was from at the gate to the property. I asked her what she was doing there. She said she was not sure what to do. I asked her if she planned to sleep on the street? Her answer was no. I then said that if that is the case then she needs to start driving out of there.

She then said to me the gate is open. I could not understand. Why not shut the gate? She said she was afraid of the water. I asked her if she was in danger. She said no. If that's the case then close the gate. She didn't want to, but she did. The water ran up and into her boots.

The next call was about 20-25 minutes later. I asked her, Where are you? Her answer, still the same street.

I couldn't believe it. I asked her why. She said water was running across the road. I told her to drive through it. She didn't want to.

I was looking at the radar. There was nothing but more water coming that way and it had hours to go.

I told her that whatever water was there was only going to grow. She needed to either drive through it or call 911 and let them get her out of there.

She reluctantly drove through it. She made it to her daughters up on FM105 in Montgomery and was safe for the night.

At that point I had no real idea of what was going on in that area. I assumed it was heavy rain but that I could get over there on Friday. And that was my plan.

I told my boss about the house Friday morning and he agreed to let me head out around lunchtime.

I got home in Lufkin in a driving rain. I didn't want to drive in rain and the forecast showed only partly cloudy in Lufkin around 1 and the same in Montgomery around 2. It then stopped raining at my place in Lufkin around 12:30 so I headed out.

I wasn't 2 miles from home when I hit a wall of water. I was not happy but figured I had to make the drive at some point so I continued. Steady rain and wet roads. Water running on roads in the Groveton area, the Trinity River in the Riverside area had broken its banks. I continued on.

Since I had to drive to FM105 in Montgomery I decided to alter my route and head down I45 then down 105 through Conroe. That was halted several miles out of Conroe by dead stop traffic. I made my way to the next exit. I had to work my way back to FM1097 so I could cross lake Conroe and come into Montgomery from the other side. I crossed water filled streets everywhere until 1097. Then I was clear across the lake. The lake was high but not on the road.

From there I tried and found blocked roads trying to cut back to the Walden area. I ended up running to FM149 and backtracking 105 to pick up Connie.

At this point I had already made the decision to skip going to the house and head out for San Antonio. We would check the house when we got back on Saturday.

I had heard that Navasota had received 20 inches of rain, so instead of staying on 105 to highway 6 I headed down FM1486 planning to run past my street without stopping.

It was the first in a series of decisions I'd happily take back.

About halfway down 1486 we encountered our first flash river. It was about 75 feet wide and it was running hard. I didn't think very long and pointed my truck into the water. I regretted it almost immediately. I could feel it trying to push my truck as I kept on the gas slowly.

We made it across. Looking back I'd have turned around right then. I can't say I'd want to go through that sudden river twice, but it would have been the best idea.

We headed into Magnolia with a plan to head down FM1488 to 290 and on our way to San Antonio.

Just outside Magnolia we hit our second flash river. We crossed it. Then we hit another, our third. It was moving fast and it was very wide. Why we kept going I do not know. We crossed it. To be honest at this point I was frazzled. This water quickly was in my head. I wanted out of it.

We hit our third river on 1488. Again deep and wide and moving. We moved around nervous cars to take the plunge. Once again we were through it.

I thought for a moment that we were done. A clean run to San Antonio. Wrong again.

We hit our fourth on 1488 in very short time.  We again went through. This one was not as bad as some others, but it was still bad. Moving water, debris floating, faces of people, scared.

We drove on. And then we hit a row of about 30 cars. People were not attempting the 5th river on FM1488 and we could see people pushing a sedan out of the water.

I looked around. Was there a street we could turn? No. It was nothing but forest on both sides of the street and the forest was flooded.

We had no alternative. We had to turn around and once again go through the 4 rivers we had just come through.

So we turned around and crossed our 9th flash river passing making it back up to higher ground in Magnolia.

As we were out of these rivers I noticed Joseph road. I still had it in my head that we could make it to San Antonio if we could just break out of this area.

We headed down Joseph Road and passed our 10th flash river. It was not horrible, but it was wide. On a bit of high ground on the road I said to Connie "Wow. Do you see that"?

She could not see what I was seeing. A gigantic lake where a road and homes should be. We were turning around again. Our 11th crossing.

We headed to FM1774 to head down to Tomball. I figured we could still get to San Antonio.

We crossed our 12 and 13th crossing. These were the smallest of the day so far. Not that they were not dangerous. They were wide and my truck was sounding and feeling quite funny by this point. Any water was making me very anxious.

But we were on high ground and I thought maybe we could get out of this in this southerly direction.

Wrong again.

We were not moving. I had figured that on the way down I could stop by Mike's house and see if everything was okay. We never got close.

I think we waited an hour before we turned around and crossed our 14th and 15th crossing.

At this point I think me and Connie were a bit shell shocked. Every direction we turned seemed to be blocked.

We decided to head for FM2978, though I had little hope at this point that we would get through. We went through some water, not a lot, but I had seen enough. We turned and quit on this road as well. Later that weekend I read that it was impassable. It was maybe the only decent decision I made that afternoon.

I decided to head for I45 north of The Woodlands and head through Houston to I10 and finally get on our way to San Antonio.

FM1488 between Magnolia and I45 was fine. No water. On the sides of the road we saw lakes in the woods and tons and tons of water.

It was on this drive that I made the decision to forget about San Antonio and head north and back to Lufkin. I called Tom as we were approaching I45.

And then we saw a wall of cars in each direction. We were not getting out this way.

I talked with Tom and asked if he could ship me the heads. He quickly agreed. It was a disjointed call. I tried to tell Tom what was going on, but I'm not sure I was very clear. I was trying to talk to him and make new decisions at the same time.

He wished us safe and we turned around and headed back to Magnolia.

As we drove west again I was trying to decide the next move. I thought about hotel rooms but figured at this point they were full.

I decided on Honea-Egypt in Magnolia as the path north. I figured 1774 north was not passable as the reason for this choice.

I told Connie that if we didn't make this we would be sleeping in a parking lot somewhere.

What I did not tell her was I had read that morning that the road might be impassable.

I wanted to see for myself.

It was clear until we came to Lake Creek. Cars were lined up and attempting to cross the biggest river we'd attempted all day. It was wide and deep but trucks were getting through, cars were smartly turning around.

We waited our turn as my stomach churned.

As we got closer to the water I saw one of the images that is burned into my head from that day. This is a very nice area loaded with fancy homes. The last two houses before the water there were cars parked at the end of the driveway. I mentioned it to Connie because I did not understand what I was seeing. As I got closer I realized the cars were empty and what was going on.

These rich folks had blocked their driveways so that their fellow neighbors could not use the bottom of their driveways to turn around. I was stunned.

Rather than opening their doors and helping their neighbors they were shutting their driveways. I will not forget that.

Soon we were next. It was so far across I waited for the truck in front of me to almost get out of the river. I did not want to be slowed by another driver. This had happened at another crossing where I was forced to slow down in the middle of deep water.

As we were about to enter we saw trucks falling into holes in the road as they crossed. But they were pushing through.

My truck was feeling and sounding poorly but I plunged us ahead. It was long and deep but we made it. Our 16th crossing.

We had no idea if we were done, but we were praying it was so.

We stayed on the road until we hit FM105 in Conroe. At that point I felt we were through it.

I was right. We used FM1097 to get back across to Willis and found I45 clear. It turns out the backup south of Conroe was water at the 336 loop.

We drove silently back to Lufkin. It stopped raining about 7:00PM and as we made our way down FM94 into Lufkin we actually saw the sun. It felt good.

We landed in Lufkin about 8:00PM.

As we sat on the back porch we both started to understand what we’d done.

We had driven into a disaster area by choice, not realizing it until too late. We had crossed water like you see idiots on TV, yet in the midst of it we just kept trying to get out. I never felt like the people you see that die on the news, but there was no doubt we had been those folks several times.

We talked about going both Saturday and Sunday to check on the house. I had no real interest. There was no reason to believe those newly formed rivers we had crossed had receded. Reading the papers we were right.

Connie headed back on Monday. She made it to the house around 7:00PM Monday evening.

The floor was dry. There was silt all over the house, but it had come through pretty well.

Looking back I made a series of poor choices. I lacked information. I’m not sure what I’d do different other than not heading into it, but that is the benefit of hindsight.

Me, Connie and my dogs are safe and sound. Thankfully.