



### Another SSR Project

We just completed another Chevy SSR project here at Arizona TPI! As we've mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter, we've been doing a lot of work with Chevy SSR's lately: superchargers, radiators, custom tuning, rear-end gears, and all kinds of cool stuff. But this project was unlike anything that's ever been done in this shop. Ever.

We've come to know a lot of these SSR owners that belong to a web forum called [www.ssrfanatic.com](http://www.ssrfanatic.com). The domain name is 100% accurate. These people are fanatical about their SSR's, and who wouldn't be? They're cool trucks! But, as a whole, these people are also really great. And that's where this story starts.

There's a great guy, we'll call him Jeff, who had the misfortune of contracting Polio when he was a child. The disease left him with very limited use of his arms although he has good use of his legs. You might think that a guy with these challenges wouldn't be able to operate a motor vehicle. Of course, if you think that, you don't know Jeff!

Jeff drives a late model Chevy Tahoe and a cute little "kit car" called a Rodster, built on a Chevy S-10 Blazer chassis. Both of these cars have been modified so that Jeff can operate them with his feet and by using a special stick that he holds in his teeth to push buttons and so forth.

When we first heard about this we were amazed that someone could do this and, frankly we were a little nervous that someone was out there driving like this. But when you see Jeff behind the wheel, you realize that driving with his feet is as natural for him as it is for most of us who have the luxury of using our feet *and* our hands.

So, at some point, Jeff begins to notice the Chevy SSR's and decides they look pretty cool and that he'd like to have one for himself. He starts to do some research on the internet and comes across the SSR Fanatic forum. Jeff joins and starts to ask questions.

After a lot of correspondence with the SSR Fanatic group, he determines that it probably is feasible to outfit an SSR with the same controls as in his other vehicles. This group, being the kind of people that they are, rallied around Jeff to help him find an SSR.

Eventually, a very low-mileage 2004 SSR was located in Houston and a deal was struck. Now the search began for a shop to modify the truck so that Jeff could drive it. That's where Arizona TPI enters the picture. We were contacted by one of the SSR Fanatics and we agreed to become involved.

The SSR was shipped to our shop and Jeff and his wife drove out from their home in California, towing the Rodster so that we could remove the controls from it and install them in the SSR.



The "Rodster". Currently at our shop and for sale. Call if you're interested...

Jeff uses a turntable device that he manipulates with his left foot, much like a steering wheel. This device is attached, with gears and a motorcycle chain, to the steering column. We cannibalized the turntable from the Rodster and modified the SSR and the turntable to make it all fit.



The "turntable" that Jeff uses to steer his SSR

We had to modify the brake and accelerator pedals, remove the kick panel, relocate the hood release and the OBDII diagnostic port in order to provide enough clearance but everything eventually fit.



"Knee" Controls to operate turn signals

We built controls so that Jeff could operate the turn signals with his knees and turn on the windshield wipers with the stick he operates with his teeth.

Initially, we built a mechanical shifting device but that proved too cumbersome for Jeff to operate and we ultimately installed an electronic push-button shifter. Jeff has enough mobility to operate the electronic shifter with his hand. This was important since we didn't want to create a situation where Jeff could drop his stick and be unable to take the car out of gear.



The Push-Button Shifter

This turned out to be a very challenging project for us as well as Jeff and his wife who accommodated us by making several trips to the shop to test-fit our installation. We were inspired with Jeff's never-say-die spirit and his adaptability. Happy motoring Jeff!