

February, 2002

AND THE WINNER IS:

At the awards banquet at the Silver City Casino last month, the Montana Region of the Sports Car Club Of America released the final results of the 2001 Autocross Competition season. Jerry Rukavina won the hard fought points race in his less-than-attractive 1967 Camaro (so it needs a paint job!), saying, "It may be ugly, but it's still fast." He is reportedly searching for the elusive "speed paint". The top fifteen drivers are listed below, and the list is interesting, to say the least.

Drivers from Great Falls and Helena shared the top spots, and those drivers ranged from 20-somethings to 60-somethings; autocrossing is truly a sport with wide age appeal. In addition to the broad range of drivers who were successful, the vehicles that were driven seemed to defy categorization as well. Thirty-five year old musclecars punched it out with newer high-tech rides, and everything from little 110 horsepower grocery-getters to the latest turbocharged or supercharged killer engine combination had a chance to burn rubber. Every event saw new levels of enthusiasm and participation, so the off-season bench racing is getting pretty intense (ever notice that bench racing and bullshit both start with the same letter?).

The local club is healthy, with over 50 members, and is looking to soon finalize the 2002 schedule of events here in central Montana. 2001 saw terrific participation and outstanding events and plenty of smiles. The consensus is to do it again!

1st place 75 points **Jerry Rukavina**, Camaro, Great Falls

2nd place 72 points **Larry Akers**, BMW, Helena

3rd place (tie) 71 points **Jim Messick**, VW Golf, Great Falls, and
Greg Painter, Corvette, Helena

5th place 68 points **Gary Wolf**, Saab, Great Falls

6th place 65 points **Tom Masterson**, Porsche, Great Falls

7th place 62 points **Bob Stevenson**, Mustang, Great Falls

8th place 61 points **Steve West**, Datsun 240Z, Great Falls

9th place (tie) 59 points **Clint Houge**, Mazda RX3, and
Darrell Schamp, Mercury Capri, both from Great

Falls

11th place (tie) 57 points **Phil Kiser**, Corvette, and
Steve Nutter, Maverick, both from Great Falls

13th place 51 points **Chris Hensley**, Honda, Great Falls

14th place 49 points **Ed Austin**, Mazda RX7, Great Falls

15th place 47 points **Paul Heppner**, Mazda RX7, Great Falls

For more information about any topic relative to local autocrossing, call Regional Executive **Ed Austin** at 406-452-1135 or Assistant RE **Jerry Rukavina** at 406-761-4357. The club's next general meeting will be Thursday, February 28, at 7:30 PM at the Skyline Club (formerly the Skyline Bar). All interested persons are welcome!

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR 2002

There will, of course, be a 2002 autocross season, but with perhaps more than the usual number of restrictions on where we are able to run. Locally, the ExpoPark location has a lot going for it, and careful course design can help keep it from getting stale. Bay Drive is still available. The MAFB facility will likely not be available until national security factors change. Likewise, the Helena Airport is still undergoing construction and it, too, along with all American airports, has ongoing security issues. The Highway Patrol training course still has no pavement, but we are continuing to talk to the facility on a regular basis.

We truly appreciate the interest of members of the club when it comes to event sites, but remember that only the club's officers speak for the club. Individual members have no authority, nor any official veracity, when it comes to securing and insuring sites. The Helena site, for example, got some local press from the Independent Record, wherein it was reported that high speeds (135mph!) would be really neat. That sort of big-mouthed nonsense (and probably bad reporting) could just do us in! Please remember that autocrossing is a mid-speed event, and if SCCA national ever thought we were pulling those kinds of speeds, they'd shut us down in a New York minute. Keep the feelers out for event sites, but don't let your mouth or your enthusiasm get ahead of this club's obligation to fully comply with the SCCA rules and common sense. Refer stuff to Ed, if you please.

Tentatively:

April 7, Non-points opener at Bay Drive

May 5, ExpoPark

May 26, the club will work with the Big Sky Corvetters to repay their help at the 2001

Top Gun event. Their event, our equipment and manpower.

June ?, maybe Lewistown event with Yellowstone Region

July 14/15(?), Top Gun, ExpoPark (double points)

August 3, Demo Derby at ExpoPark Remember, we work this event in exchange for

other ExpoPark dates, so there will be further discussion about how to

“repay” those members who actually do work the derby.

August 9, Black Otter Hillclimb in Billings

September 1, ExpoPark

September 22, ExpoPark

October 6, ExpoPark

More later, as it comes, and as sites possibly open up.

WEBSITE

We are supposed to be up and running with a new website soon, so just keep your belts fastened for a bit. It promises to be properly and easily connected to the national site. The site will contain as much or as little as we'd like it to, so positive suggestions are welcome at anytime. If you don't have a computer or are not online, you still have a stake in what the club puts out there.

FISCAL STUFF

Money, money, money! Just a couple of points to make here:

- Our treasury is healthy. We are several thousand dollars in the black, and Paul Heppner, our treasurer, is not being audited by the IRS or investigated by the local "Who has too many Jeeps and too much money" task force. Things look very good.
- The national rate per vehicle for liability insurance has jumped from \$2 to \$3. That huge (50%) increase will have to be dealt with in some way, so expect some event rate discussion this year.
- The hugely successful year-end banquet was a delectable feast, an awfully fun time, and underfunded. Actually, after a head count by the club and the Silver City management, the tab was about \$50 more than the total of individual payee checks. Did you forget to pay? Solution? Next year will see a charge to get in rather than checks on the way out.

ANYONE WANT TECH?

There has really never been a great clamoring for technical articles in this publication, so two scenarios are possible. One, our members could know everything. Seems unlikely. Or, two, maybe folks are just too shy to ask. So here's the deal. You let us know what technical question (you know, high performance stuff, autocrossing stuff, not the front band adjustment on your 1959 Dodge Polara, for cripes sake) and we will find the answer. If we don't know it, we will find an expert who does. If we can't find an expert, we'll make fun of the question, sorta like Click and Clack. Anonymous questions will be accepted.

Already discarded topics include:

Do decals and stickers make you fast?

Are shiny things faster than dull non-reflective stuff?

Can you have too many neon wipers?

Would wheelie bars help?

Can better woofers lower your roll center?

Window tint: Threat or Menace?

When it comes to exhaust tips, does size matter? Or is the secret to just have more of them?

Can crawling in and out through the windows actually lower your lap times?

Now that you can see what we won't talk about, request what you do want.

OTTO CROSS

Otto used to be a staple of the pages of this fine publication. **Roger Evans'** alter ego (or is that altered ego?) is sorely missed, for it showcased a truly brilliant, if admittedly strange, writer's mind. No one knows if he can be bribed or cajoled or even extorted to revive Otto, but let the club know if you'd enjoy the return of Mr. Cross and his unique paradigm as he viewed life and motorsports through his own personal lenses. Peer pressure almost always works. Hell, he may even drive again.