

July 2002

MONTANA REGION held its 2002 Champion Auto Bumper-to-Bumper, Ike & Susan's Lounge and Casino, Pizza Hut **TOP GUN AUTOCROSS** on July 13 and 14 at ExpoPark in Great Falls. Nearly two dozen drivers from across the state and even from out-of-state competed on two different autocross courses on a very hot and cloudless weekend. Sunscreen was as much in demand as traction and horsepower; it was hot!

The competition was as hot as the track itself. Great Falls and the Montana Region have regained the traveling Top Gun trophy from Missoula's Big Sky Region, the 2001 Top Gun winner. Individual class results are as follows, with all times reported as cumulative and pylon-corrected totals from both days:

A/Stock

1st place Tom Masterson Porsche 2:19.757
2nd place Carolyn McKay Porsche 2:28.000

C/Stock

1st place Kevin Hursh Mazda Miata 2:10.966
2nd place Alan Beaumont Mazda Miata 2:18.284
3rd place Ed Austin Mazda RX7 1:14.487

E/Stock

1st place Tim Helms Pontiac Fiero 2:17.121
2nd place John Woodcock Honda 2:23.308
3rd place Kyle Figarelle Porsche 944 2:27.090
4th place Dan Lopez Nissan 1:10.162
5th place Richard Clark VW Jetta 1:13.548

F/Stock

1st place Allan Foss Ford Mustang 2:11.989
2nd place Namen Paul Pontiac Firebird 2:13.021
3rd place George Paul Pontiac Firebird 2:22.079
4th place Jordan Kirkhart Ford Mustang 2:26.475
5th place Ken Liedy Ford Mustang 1:11.146

G/Stock

1st place Jim Messick VW Golf 2:12.800
2nd place Zack Gilmor Ford Contour 2:23.470

S/Stock

1st place Jason Kiser Corvette 1:58.079
2nd place Phil Kiser Corvette 2:02.837

STS

1st place Ken Stolz Subaru Imprezza 2:03.358
2nd place Kelly Paul VW GTI 2:31.501

STX

1st place Mike Moore Subaru WRX 2:15.573

B/Street Prepared

- 1st place Randy Lutton Ford Mustang 2:02.428
- 2nd place Gordy Gollehon Corvette 2:04.549
- 3rd place Athena Lutton Ford Mustang 2:17.957
- 4th place Steve West Datsun 240Z 2:22.424
- 5th place Jack Haling Dodge Stealth 2:22.604

C/Street Prepared

- 1st place John Weinzettel Honda CRX 2:14.469
- 2nd place James Rowen Honda CRX 2:15.932

E/Street Prepared

- 1st place Jeff Hahn Ford Steeda Mustang 2:04.656
- 2nd place Kate Lohman Ford Steeda Mustang 2:12.237
- 3rd place Pat Murphy Mazda RX& 2:15.575
- 4th place Jason Rukavina Chevy Monte Carlo 2:26.058

C/Prepared

- 1st place Guy Sharp Corvair 1:56.657
- 2nd place Jerry Rukavina Camaro 2:03.070
- 3rd place Steve Nutter Maverick 2:09.382
- 4th place Bob Stevenson Mustang 2:13.859
- 5th place Rick Cummings Mercury Capri 2:16.040
- 6th place Dennis Figarelle Camaro 2:20.012
- 7th place Kent Yoder Camaro 2:22.724
- 8th place Colter Cummings Mercury Capri 2:27.449

D/Prepared

- 1st place Gary Wolf Saab 2:02.354

E/Prepared

- 1st place Clint Houge Mazda RX3 2:07.564
- 2nd place Mike Williams VW Sirocco 2:10.724
- 3rd place Larry Akers BMW 2:13.446

F/Prepared

- 1st place Paul Smith Datsun 240Z 2:01.147

E/Modified

- 1st place Dave Bowland Datsun 240Z 1:57.507

F/Modified

- 1st place Bruce Schlaebitz Red Devil 1:55.582

Fast time Saturday was **Bruce Schlaebitz**, and Sunday saw **Guy Sharp** beat the course to a quick time of the day. Bruce was the fast driver of the weekend, but the pressure was definitely on from several other drivers.

This event, simply because it's a two-day deal and because of the heat this year, takes its toll on people and machinery. The machinery (including the "free agent" timing light that was bounced around Sunday) can be fixed. The people

must be thanked, and so we will. Thank-you's are not all the same; we assure you that these are more heartfelt than usual, if that's possible

Without the sponsorship that Champion Auto (now Bumper-to-Bumper), Ike & Susan's Lounge and Casino, and Pizza Hut have generously provided, Top Gun might not exist. These local businesses and their car-freak owners and managers really do care about motorsports and us, so they participate. We owe them a thank you and our business patronage; so next time you buy valve cover gaskets, get hungry, or wet your whistle and try your luck, do it at these fine establishments. But don't stop there, say "Thank you" to the friendly folks who work there and tell them you appreciate their support. It takes a whole village to knock down a pylon (Isn't that how it goes?), so thank the rest of the village.

And our own cast of volunteers is no less remarkable, either. **Anita Heppner** (maybe the most organized and prepared lady I know), **Paul Heppner** (who is so busy being "retired" that he rarely even drives anymore lately), **Judi Austin** (who attends to Ed's details better than he does), **Ev Rukavina** (former women's champ), **Mort Kirby** (the Godfather of autocross), and **Jim Keller** (our senior diesel guy) all showed up early, worked hard, and stayed late just for the sport. **Ed Austin** is apparently everywhere all the time. **Tom Masterson** has now put in way more hours on a fork lift than he ever imagined he would. **Darrel Schamp** (anyone need fancy seat belt installation) didn't run but certainly helped. The list goes on, and our collective hats are off to you. I am certain I forgot someone. And the competitors themselves were just terrific, too. Over 300 comp runs in two days, and every one watched by dedicated autocrossers who alternately baked in the sun and then boiled in the cars. Tremendous effort, and a tribute to several dozen wonderful people from here and all across the state (and out-of-state).

Mike Moore from Miles City drove back home in 108-degree heat. **Ken Stolz** commuted to and from Missoula. **Ed Austin** didn't feel like finishing a run on Saturday, but Sunday was OK. **Bob Stevenson** got lost on his own course. **Jason Kiser** made his dad, **Phil**, feel a little older than usual. **Weinzettel** and **Rowan** kept putting cute little wet rags on their Honda, only to be separated by less than 1.5 seconds after eight runs. **Randy Lutton** and **George Paul** had their wrists wrapped either for sympathy or for real – who knows. **Paul Smith** stole parts to get his Datsun running right. **Jason Rukavina** took Dramamine in his top-heavy Monte Carlo. **Jerry Rukavina** didn't even scratch the paint on his Camaro (we think). **Steve West** and **Jack Haling** finished .180 seconds apart! We all ate some very welcome Pizza Hut pizza on Sunday, no one broke big time, and no one got hurt (not counting feelings for sloppy or slow driving). The club actually made some money on this event this year, too. Sounds like a damn fine time for all. Thanks.

NEXT BIG FUN

Put this date on your calendar, Helena, August 25, 2002. That's right, Helena; we're going to run an autocross event at the Helena Regional Airport! A 1.3-mile road course surrounds over six acres of brand-new pavement. Makes your foot itch. No lie, this is not fiction here, we're talking corners with camber, elevation changes, thousands of feet of straightaway, you name it. This facility will bring tears to your eyes if you've been dreading those little parking lot courses. Dust off third gear and duct tape the chrome on, Mario.

The fine folks at the Helena regional Airport are car guys and pretty darn smart businessmen, too. They have consistently planned and built a facility that will be used for all kinds of emergency and law enforcement driving training, which means that the place has multiple options for training or autocross course design. The place is just spectacular.

We are most concerned to get our inaugural event there off to a smooth and positive start, so even though the place is apparently limitless, this will not be some foolish top speed event. Our insurance requirements, safety concerns, and some common sense dictate that we be cautious, but we thoroughly expect to see the site let us open up the course design, the speeds (limits!), and the challenges. You will receive prior to the actual event date an event site map and more specific details about the event, but for now salivate over these tidbits:

- The site has on-site rest rooms (very nice rest rooms!) and inside meeting rooms for us to use for awards, etc.
- We intend to start early so we can accommodate all the cars we anticipate may show up, and so we all get plenty of runs. Think 8:00 AM.
- Access to the site is very open and easy. Trailers have all the room in the world in which to be maneuvered.
- NO food vendors on site; you will want to pack plenty of your own water and food.
- If it's sunny, bring sunscreen. Pavement is black, black, black.
- Fill your fuel tank, there is no on-site station, and you will use some gas - more than usual.
- Check out your brakes, this will not be a first gear crawler course. You might flush, bleed, and maintain the system before you find out you really should have.
- Snell 95 helmets! NO exceptions for drivers and passengers (if we allow passengers).
- NO nitrous bottles even in the cars.
- We will use our Montana Region rules and car classification system.
- Event rates will be at least \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members; they don't give this site away for free.
- NO noise restrictions.
- Roll bars on open cars and soft-tops.
- Any cord showing at all on any tire; you will not run those tires.

- Technical Inspector's and Safety Steward's word are not appealable at this event. If you are determined to be unsafe, you will not run.
- You will be required, by the laws of good taste and all that is holy, to remove the goofy smile this site will put on your face, within three days of the event. Yea, like that will happen!

Seriously, this promises to be a great time. Put the date down now. See you there. Stay tuned for more information soon.

And to top it all off, the Helena-based Preservation Society (the collection of seven or eight different car clubs that band together to put on the Millennium Show [including the Corvetters, the Mustangers (who are really excited and who even want our club to assist them with a 2003 Memorial day event at the airport), Mopar guys, Pontiac nuts, real old-timers, British sports car freaks, and others]) is pretty jacked, too. They see a long-awaited local performance event and are excited for the event itself and for the opportunity to get this club over there for a performance event (autocross) at the 2003 Millennium Show in July of 2003. Actually, **Jon Chacopulos**, the Preservation Society's Coordinator, has informed us of two interesting offers; the first being perhaps a Saturday night get-together for those of us Great Falls folks who will be in Helens on the 24th preparing the course. Then he has extended an offer to make the Montana Region of the SCCA the Guest Club for the 2003 Millennium Show. Pretty cool; it's nice to be wanted and appreciated. We will, of course, discuss all of this over the coming months, but for now think Helena on the 25th of August and into the future.

Remember:

When you need car parts and accessories, go to Champion Auto Bumper-to-Bumper on tenth avenue south.

If you get the hungries, go to Pizza Hut or Ike & Susan's for great food.

And if you need a drink or just want to play the odds gambling, go directly to Ike & Susan's Lounge and Casino.

And remember to say thanks!

POINTS TO PONDER AS WE LEAVE THIS ISSUE OF THE PANIC SLIP:

Brake fluid absorbs water from the atmosphere and deteriorates over time, getting progressively more corrosive and boiling at a lower and lower temperature. Have you ever changed yours?

People send stuff by ground transportation and call it a shipment, yet when stuff is transported by ship, it's called cargo. Why?

Other fluids like engine coolant, transmission fluid (manual and automatic), differential lube, and power steering fluid (where automatic transmission fluid is not acceptable) also deteriorate over time. Change and flush is very good advice. Ever consider synthetic?

What did tornados sound like before freight trains were invented?

Always use the same tire pressure gauge as you adjust your tire pressure to eliminate the probability of gauge error. Try not to borrow unless you really have to.

A very successful SCCA autocrosser once summarized the point of autocrossing this way: "The object is to cut a late apex as early as you can." Cute, no?

As always, call Ed Austin at 452-1135 or Jerry Rukavina at 761-4357 for more information