

Late May 2003

**WE LOOKED IN THE THESAURUS,
BUT THERE ISN'T ANY SINGLE WORD GOOD
ENOUGH**

Wonderful? Spectacular? Perfect? Fabulous? Unforgettable? Adrenaline-pumping? Exciting? Intoxicating? Addicting? Challenging? Terrific? All these and more, for sure.

The May 25 event at the Helena Regional Airport was another huge success, the smiles and positive comments were in full supply. Words fail us, but we'll try.

Our first thanks go to **Jeff Wadekamper**, the Operations Director at the facility. Jeff is a car guy and is highly supportive of our events. He, Airport Manager **Ron Mercer**, and the Airport Facilities Board of Directors deserve our everlasting thanks for building and making available to us an awesome facility. As we tap into this site's real potential, it just gets better and better. HUGE thanks.

And more thanks to **Ami's Snack Shack**, our food and refreshment concessionaire on Sunday. The ability to keep folks fed, watered, clear-headed, and on-site throughout the day was most appreciated. Great grub, and terrific folks!

The Mustang folks need a huge pat on the back as well. **Loretta Kelly** and her intrepid crew of Ford freaks had worked long and hard to make their weekend pony-o-rama a success in every way. We supplied only the performance event on Sunday, were proud to get those fancy fast fords out there to see what they could do, and truly appreciated their help throughout the day. Loretta tells us that her folks had a very rewarding time and that the performance aspects of the cars will be coming back into their events. Apparently horse manure and squealing tires and (real) horsepower equal fun. Nice to work with those folks.

And on to this club's members. Gosh, what to say? Some folks came over Saturday, ran with the Missoula club all day, and they came back out to work and play all day Sunday. Dedication.

The Saturday event was hampered by a low turnout (always tough on the first big weekend day of the summer recreational season), but the site was hot and challenging for the 19 hardy folks who showed. Sunday started out absolutely perfect and stayed

there nearly all day if you don't count the monsoon.

So the "Double Cross" course that we set up Saturday night served well to challenge the 54 drivers who showed up from all over the place on Sunday. 54 folks got to follow the road, select their own lines, and try to pick off tenths of seconds wherever they could. 54 folks found out that a change in radius, a change in elevation, and a change in road width can be a real sphincter-tightener, if you'll pardon the lingo. Braking distances became critical as brave drivers guessed wrong sometimes at how long one could keep the right pedal all the way down. Run results from a very quick 1 minute 53.302 seconds to a more leisurely time of nearly two and a half minutes are testimony to the course's need for balanced power, brakes, transient handling, and driver moderation. The track is near perfect for our kind of event. What a memorable day.

Three Subaru drivers came from Spokane to taste Montana motorsports. They left satisfied. A real snotty-sounding Neon manifested a healthy regard for high compression. **Victor Hodge** got the hiccups out of the lime roller skate to turn in a real ear-to-ear grinner run. **Kyle Figarelle** turned a 944 into a pylon-eater. **Mike Shreve** killed mosquitoes for the county with Ford-smoke. **Zach Gilmore** brought his Ford pickup and forgot his Contour and went fast. Tires were consumed by **Namen Paul's** Firebird. **Ed** and **Paul** battled RX-7's until a pylon bit **Ed**. **Jason Rukavina** showed up with the latest "old NASCAR" look to his Monte Carlo. **Jeff Hahn** ate belts, hoses, and other GT-1 driver's times. **Jim Messick's** Golf diesel all day. **Rick Cummings** hit his car repeatedly. **Bob Morin** showed up with a real nice new enclosed trailer, the better to pick up pylons in the rain with. **Wolf's** blow-dried red flash is still another Saab story. A blistering fast Saab story, but a Saab story nonetheless. **Stevenson** and **Rukavina** never could find first-and-a-half gear. And the stories go on and on.

The finishers, all in pylon-corrected times ("M" indicates a Mustang Club member):

A Sedan

1st place Jason Rukavina Chevy Monte Carlo 2:21.861

B Sedan

1st place Jay Rideout Toyota Celica 2:17.769

2nd place Charlie Mann Toyota Celica 2:23.907

C Sedan

1st place Galen Smith VW Scirocco 2:18.162

A Production

1st place Namen Paul Pontiac Firebird 2:07.392
2nd place Larry Akers IROC Camaro 2:10.632
3rd place Matt Felton Chevy Camaro 2:11.591
4th place Zack Gilmore Ford F-150 2:20.672
5th place Owen Kelly(M) Shelby GT500 2:25.206
6th place Bob Beck(M) Ford Mustang 2:29.186
7th place Marc Odell Chevy Camaro No times

B Production

1st place Tim Helms Pontiac Fiero 2:04.557
2nd place John Hahn Ford Contour 2:14.423
3rd place Paul Heppner Mazda RX7 2:23.722
4th place Ed Austin Mazda RX7 2:24.721

C Production

1st place James Rowan Honda CRX 2:07.230
2nd place John Weinzettel Honda CRX 2:07.286
3rd place Bob Giri Subaru WRX 2:07.754
4th place Zack Hertlein Honda Prelude 2:07.822
5th place Sam Nazelrod Honda CRX 2:11.115
6th place Shane Elbert Subaru WRX 2:11.624
7th place Kate Lohman Maxda Miata 2:12.665
8th place Jim Messick VW Golf 2:14.910
9th place Chris Hensley Honda Prelude 2:15.600
10th place Brandy Hertlein Honda Prelude 2:17.868
11th place Kyle Figarelle Porsche 944 2:21.126
12th place David Thurston Plymouth Conquest 2:21.733

Prepared 1

1st place Mike Shreve(M) Ford Mustang 2:09.236
2nd place Jordan Kilhart Ford GT 2:11.405

Prepared 3

1st place Brian Pickering Subaru WRX 1:58.644
2nd place Erik Dawkins Dodge Neon 1:59.773

3rd place James Schneider Porsche 968 2:01.473
4th place Chris Anderson Nissan Sentra 2:03.446
5th place Nick Coate Dodge Neon 2:06.143

GT-1

1st place Jeff Hahn Steeda Ford Mustang 2:00.807
2nd place Tim Borsberry(M) Ford Mustang 2:00.990
3rd place Jerry Rukavina Chevy Camaro 2:02.051
4th place Bob Stevenson Ford Mustang 2:02.977
5th place Dennis Figarelle Chevy Camaro 2:06.159
6th place Steve Nutter Ford Maverick 2:06.256
7th place Kent Yoder Chevy Camaro 2:07.860
8th place Loretta Kelly(M) Ford Mustang 2:08.074
9th place Gary Burnham(M) Ford Mustang 2:09.513
10th place Mike Kelly(M) Ford Mustang 2:11.583
11th place Shannon Kelly(M) Ford Mustang 2:29.217

GT-2

1st place Dave Bowland Datsun 240Z 1:54.768
2nd place Paul Smith Datsun 240Z 1:58.883
3rd place Clint Houge Mazda RX3 2:02,461
4th place Rick Cummings Mercury Capri No times

GT-3

1st place Gary Wolf Saab Aero 1:53.302 FAST TIME OF THE DAY!
2nd place Bob Morin Toyota Celica 2:10.249
3rd place Mike Williams VW Scirocco 2:10.883
4th place Rein Gillstrom BMW 320I 2:11.930
5th place Victor Hodge Austin Mini 2:19.786

Of final note regarding this event, two additional points jump out. The membership and other (*spousal*) help at registration, tech, course set-up, pylon watchers, and course tear-down folks were terrific. The workers made a glorious day even better, if that's possible. Out heartfelt and deep appreciation goes out to all.

The second point is relative to this place we call Montana. 1:00 PM was as nice a day as you've ever seen, but 4:00 PM was a miniature tornado and thoroughly drenched die-hards were chasing pylons, tarps, and virtually everything but the kitchen sink to keep stuff from ending up in North Dakota. We are sorry some folks did not get a full four runs; it's the luck of the weather. We continually try

to expedite things to give everyone an equal chance, but Mother Nature is a bit capricious at times. The rain, hail, sleet, lightning, wind, and near blackout weren't perfect, but they were spectacular. Wet folks drove home in wet cars with big smiles. Cool.

LOST:

The club has (had) three loaner helmets; two black and one white. The white one has not been seen since the season opener at the old Buttrey's Warehouse site. It had a stripe of blue tape on it, and we need it back. Please return the helmet ASAP so we can continue to offer it to NEW DRIVERS.

Speaking of helmets, if you are a long-time club member, please BUY YOUR OWN! The goofy frantic search for helmets for drivers and riders is a maddening slowdown at nearly every event, so please help out by getting your own brain bucket. The need for loaner helmets to new members is an obvious convenience and a service to newbies, but if we can't overcome this snafu in staging and at the line it may simply disappear as a possibility for club members.

You don't fish with a borrowed pole if you're a fisherman. Real pool players have their own cue stick. Real autocrossers have their own helmets. Get real.

DEMO DERBY HELP

Just a reminder here for all of us to keep the 2nd of August open for the Demo Derby at ExpoPark. We will need tech inspectors in the morning and marshals/judges in the afternoon and evening. This is a real big money-maker for the fair and an equally big opportunity for this club to work off some ExpoPark event dates. So we need you. Please call **Jim Messick** at 268-1742 to sign up now for this nifty time. You gotta love the fair and a Demo Derby! And remember that YOU get a FREE race if you do help. That's right, you get a free event in exchange for your assistance. That's the best deal going! It's all good.

THE "X" FACTOR

As reported earlier, the timing and start line folks are not mind-readers. If your car is not correctly numbered (meaning that the "X" on two-driver cars is either clearly visible or definitely not visible), you will return to the end of the longest staging line. Or you may take the run and have it mis-reported. Seriously, folks, the responsibility to

see to it that your car is correctly identified is pretty fundamental. Just do it! Thanks.

NO MORE BEGGING FOR PYLON WATCHERS

Most drivers and crew-persons are wonderful! They generally step up and volunteer to watch the course for one another without complaint. But all participants do not step up equally. Some do not help at all. Ever. For whatever reason, the need to wait for volunteers always slows down events, perhaps even depriving some folks of competition runs when weather closes an event prematurely (like the 25th at Helena). So here's the new deal at all events:

- Each driver's meeting will conclude with a pylon-watcher's school, so that all competitors and participants will know how to safely and accurately police those pesky orange cones. There will be no mystery about how to score cones correctly.
- Not one single car will leave the line until all pylon watch station assignments have a name in every time/station slot. For example, if there are five watch stations and four "rounds" (two runs each for half of the competitors, split 2/2/2/2), then we shall wait until 20 people sign up to watch the day's events. Please remember that the starter, timer, safety steward, tech guys, etc will not watch pylons because they have volunteered elsewhere to do more than their fair share of the work. If the board does not fill up, we will not run. Could be awkward and tense, and peer pressure will be high for sure.
- If the volunteer system does not induce and encourage enough participation, the only other option is a totally random and capricious system of assigning stations after registration is cut off. This will not be fair, there is no question about it. There is no way to treat early/late/one-driver/two-driver/new/experienced folks all equally, so this is guaranteed to make somebody unhappy, without fail. Last resort. Not good

This is not just baseless grouching or sour grapes. The goal is to have a quickly-paced event with darned few stoppages or slowdowns. Big unintended shutdowns do nothing positive for anyone, they just make the day longer and more tedious. We want everyone from the course designer to the last registrant to get all of their runs, and we'd like to spread the work around equally. Just like the second-grade playground; it's all about fairness.

This club has shown time and time again that we can squeeze nearly 250 comp runs into a six-hour span (even at the long Helena site!), but we need to keep moving. Moving is good. Stopping is bad.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Exopark, June 8, 2003. Be there. One day points event.
- Helena Regional Airport, June 22, 2003. Be there. One day points event in conjunction with the Millennium Show.
- ExpoPark, July 19 and 20, TOP GUN. Be there. Two day double points event.

More later.

Questions? Call **Ed Austin** at 452-1135 or **Jerry Rukavina** at 761-4357