

# The Panic Slip

## February Meeting Minutes

Our complete February meeting minutes will be reviewed and finalized at our next monthly meeting on March 28th; however, some of the highlights of our meeting were:

- Street Survival Update from Dave Sherman (more details on this in a separate article)
- New Malmstrom commander is favorable to our racing on base. We are working with him to hopefully make this happen
- 2013 race fee schedule for members:
  - o Montana Challenge Events - \$35 for one day, \$60 for the weekend
  - o Top Gun (includes extra goodies such as t-shirts, etc. with early registration) - \$50 for one day, \$75 for both)
  - o Local events - \$30 (tentatively)
  - o A possible \$15 flat race fee for first-time racers is under consideration
  - o Non-members will have to pay an additional \$15 fee per weekend for a weekend membership
- 2013 Public Relations/Member Recruitment
  - o Lots of great ideas floated!
  - o SCCA flyers (including inserts with our local info) will be available soon
  - o Business card with SCCA info and a link to our web site for race info will be available soon also
  - o Discussed having a radio station promotion/ride-along event on 25/26 May (two day event at Expo Park)
  - o Discussed holding a charity racing event which would benefit the local community with fundraising while highlighting our club to the public. Several proposals were brought up

on fundraising methods, specific activities, and potential charity organizations for which we would raise money. A POC would be needed to orchestrate this – if anyone is interested, they should contact Jeff Thill (see officer contact info at the end of this newsletter).

- Coneheads race – PAX time winners will receive prize cones that they may donate to their clubs.
- Dave Sherman solicited for inputs for the Panic Slip (articles, photos, etc.). Submissions can be sent to [region105panicslip@gmail.com](mailto:region105panicslip@gmail.com)



## Tire Rack Street Survival Update

We are on track with executing our Street Survival teen driving program on May 11<sup>th</sup>. We've covered the program in depth in previous Panic Slips and thus will not re-hash that information. If you're not familiar with the program, information can be found at <http://streetsurvival.org/>. Parents may also register their teens through this site.

We do still have one functional lead position, 5 driving coach positions, and several event staff positions that we need to fill as soon as possible to make this event flow as smoothly as possible. Details on these positions are:

Functional lead position – we need one person to make arrangements for breakfast snacks, coffee for parents and instructors, bottled water, and a lunch meal (buffet style – possibly Subway) for 40 students, parents, and staff. All food expenses will be paid by our region up front – no out-of-pocket expenses for our volunteer. Should require no

more than two hours work prior the event date and roughly a half day's work on the day of the event. Volunteer will also receive a free lunch and complimentary TRSS staff t-shirt.

Driving coach – fundamental knowledge of car handling such as understeer, oversteer, and weight transfer is highly desired. Must be able to communicate with teens (regardless of hair, piercings, etc.), must not be exceptionally prone to motion sickness, and must be able to calmly sit in the passenger seat with students maneuvering at and beyond the limits of their cars (minor spins/slides/etc.). Qualified volunteers receive a free lunch and complimentary TRSS staff polo shirt.

Event Staff positions – volunteers are needed to provide assistance on the day of the event. This may include course set-up, cone chasing during the event, and other activities. Volunteers will receive a free lunch and complimentary TRSS staff t-shirt.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Dave Sherman at 868-8060 or through the TRSS e-mail at [montanastreetssurvival@gmail.com](mailto:montanastreetssurvival@gmail.com).

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### Tips from the Grid

This month's subject is performance enhancements, the racer's much-beloved world of aftermarket improvements in their quest for speed. Much of this article is opinion based on my experiences; other racers may have different views that are equally correct. Please judge for yourselves and spend wisely!



We've previously discussed the most important upgrade as being improving/fine-tuning your driving skills (see Nov 2012 Panic Slip). Beyond that, I prefer to take a literal "ground up" approach to improving car performance by beginning mechanical upgrades with my tire choice.



Your tires are the foundation of your car's performance. Horsepower gains and suspension improvements won't help you at all if you can't get the power to the ground and control it. Generally speaking, you can get the best performance out of a tire with two characteristics: the most amount of tread surface in contact with the asphalt AND the lowest numerical treadwear rating. More tread on the racing surface equals more traction – more traction is, of course, a good thing! A lower treadwear rating indicates a softer tire compound. This generally indicates a higher level of traction as well. With that being said, there are many different approaches taken by manufacturers' to gain a performance edge – take advantage of the internet and research forums for your race chassis to help you decide what tire is best for you!

After you've sorted out your tires, you should consider possible suspension improvements. Suspensions can be very tricky to upgrade and achieving a fully balanced, race-tuned suspension is an art. A change in one component almost always causes changes in other suspension considerations such as balance, steering responsiveness, or ride height. Some of these changes can be good, some can unexpectedly make your car handling worse. Plan your suspension upgrades carefully, again

taking advantage of advice from those that have gone before you from online forums.

Beyond tires and suspension we get to the all-important horsepower! We all love the sound and feel of a high-horsepower chassis accelerating out of a corner but attaining maximum horsepower can also be an art form. My advice on this is to get intimately familiar with the improved performance of your car you've attained with your wise tire and suspension choices before beginning any horsepower upgrades. Once you have a firm grasp on how your chassis now responds, carefully plan your horsepower upgrades with consideration of your budget AND qualifying for the race class in which you want to compete. An air intake and cat-back exhaust upgrade can be managed for a few hundred dollars and often results in a 5-15% horsepower increase; however, make sure you coordinate your final-product horsepower plans with your upgrades along the way to keep from having to upgrade the same parts twice.



One can always find a host of other upgrades from harness-type belt systems (generally a good upgrade), short throw shifters (generally just make precise shifting harder), aftermarket brake pads, air dams, rear wings, vortex generators, fuel additives, and so on. My advice on these components dovetails with my overall thoughts on upgrading your race car – consider your upgrades carefully, research reliable sources as to the effect (and effectiveness) of your upgrades, and have an overall plan before starting.

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#### Article Correction

We related in last month's Racing Tips from the Grid that the arrow indicated in the picture below indicated the edge of the driving tread surface on a tire. This was incorrect – it is actually indicating the location of the wear bar on the tread surface of the tire. It can be used to help you relatively gage how far the driving surface of a tire extends but is not intended for that purpose and does not actually indicate how far on edge you can safely operate a tire. Kudos and thanks to Dean Johnson for the catch!




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#### Your 2013 Region 105 Officers:

*Regional Executive – Kip Anderson*

Contact number: (406)453-3494

E-mail: [kip@pacific-steel.com](mailto:kip@pacific-steel.com)

*Assistant Regional Exec – Dustin Ostberg*

Contact number: (406)788-2623

E-mail: [dustin.ostberg@gmail.com](mailto:dustin.ostberg@gmail.com)

*Treasurer – Stan Howard*

Contact number: (406)788-1735

E-mail: [stanndel@gmail.com](mailto:stanndel@gmail.com)

*Secretary – David Sherman*

Contact number: (406)868-8060

E-mail: [region105panicslip@gmail.com](mailto:region105panicslip@gmail.com)

*Competition Chair – Nathan Church*

Contact number: (406)761-2750

E-mail: [nathan@406racing.com](mailto:nathan@406racing.com)

*Member at Large – Jeff Thill*

*Contact number: (406)788-8808*

*E-mail: [thillagency@yahoo.com](mailto:thillagency@yahoo.com)*

*Your committee leaders:*

*Safety Steward – Bob Stevenson*

*Contact number: (406)781-2647*

*E-mail: [bobcetera@bresnan.net](mailto:bobcetera@bresnan.net)*

*Street Survival Program – David Sherman*

*Contact number (406)868-8060*

*E-mail:*

*[montanastreetssurvival@gmail.com](mailto:montanastreetssurvival@gmail.com)*

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*Send Panic Slip submissions and suggestions to our  
Panic Slip Editor, David Sherman, at  
[Region105PanicSlip@gmail.com](mailto:Region105PanicSlip@gmail.com)*