



REDLINE

October 2001

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA, EASTERN TENNESSEE REGION #68

www.etracca.org

RE Report

As the racing comes to a close, the thoughts of racers usually goes not to how to spend the Holiday Season but to how to go faster, better, etc next year. For ETR we are entering the election season. If you missed it last year, it was because we didn't have one due to the lack of effective communication to the membership.

Therefore, the Officers and Board of Directors were hold-overs. We are having elections in 2001 while nominations will not cease until the end of the November meeting on November 6, the following have been nominated (and accepted the nomination):

Regional Executive: Wayne Henry
 Secretary: Debbie Henry
 Treasurer: Ron Hurst

Board of Directors:

Robert Carpenter	David Disney
Bill Christenberry	Bill Johnson
Mark Irwin	Mark Pilson
Lee Graser	

Without further nominations, the Officers will be elected without opposition and there will be an election for the Board positions (a total of 6). No one will be offended if you want to make a nomination since most of us do this as a labor of love and out of a sense of responsibility rather than the compensation or inherent power of the position. Your participation will be appreciated. The elections themselves will be by postcard mailed to all ETR members of record in December.

The 10th Dogwood Grand Prix will be April 27, 2002. We are now beginning planning meetings so if you would like to help out, contact me for more information. Volunteers are accepted and appreciated.

2001 has been an incredible year for ETR with unprecedented participation at our local events. We have a National Champion in our midst and a large

number of active road racers too. The winter months should be interesting and we'll see what y'all came up with for next year.

Wayne Henry
 ITA 26
 '91 Escort GT
 '90 Miata R

Farragut HS, October 14, 2001 Solo II Results

Class	No.	Car	Name	Time	#9	Index
AS	95	S2000	Mack Fraser	66.257	9	54.331
AS	16	MR2 Turbo	Jim Thompson	66.604	6	54.615
AS	10	S2000	Keith Davenport	67.910	4	55.686
AS	123	Corvette	Wayne Kickels	71.214	3	58.395
AS	13	S2000	Cliff Gibbs	71.564	2	58.682
BS	79	Miata	Dick Hancock	72.057	9	58.510
BS	11	Miata	Jim Stockburger	73.834	6	59.953
BS	69	Miata	Camron Beard	77.098	4	62.604
BS	179	Miata	Ben Hancock	78.141	3	63.450
BS	70	Z3	Marc Royer	79.155	2	64.274
CSP	211	Miata	Brent Eddy	67.913	9	57.047
CSP	80	Rx-7	Stan Hinds	69.076	6	58.024
CSP	84	Rx-7	David Disney	69.275	4	58.191
CSP	212	Miata	James Hill	69.529	3	58.404
CSP	65	Miata	Randy Finley	70.576	2	59.284
CSP	180	Rx-7	Shaun Hinds	71.241	1	59.842
CSP	12	Miata	Mark McCrary	75.152	1	63.128
DP	29	Sprite	Gary Lownsdale	67.482	9	57.427
DP	32	Sprite	Charlie Lownsdale	70.831	6	60.277
DPL	2	Sprite	Paulette Lownsdale	76.176	9	64.826
DS	2	Fiat X19	Dave Yoder	82.842	9	65.942
DSP	7	325	John Capito	71.121	9	58.461

DSP	11	325	Joe Barbarito	71.843	6	59.055
ESP	99	Mustang Cobra	David Morrison	69.842	9	57.620
ESP	17	Merkur	Chad Collier	75.493	6	62.282
FM	23	Bobsy	Larry Hunt	69.389	9	62.242
FP	03	BMW 325	Mike Akard	65.072	9	56.482
FP	8	914	Scott Gibson	83.427	6	72.415
FS	4	Camaro	Steve Waters	78.319	9	63.360
FSP	6	Hornet	Mike McMillan	76.160	9	62.147
FSP	44	Mirage	Richard Cannid	87.912	6	71.736
GS	3	Impreza	Mark Nienaber	80.182	9	63.665
HS	37	Civic	Carlton McGee	80.686	9	62.854
HS	21	Focus	Ricky Rodriguez	86.190	6	67.142
HS	55	Shadow	Michael Free	89.233	4	69.513
PRO	91	911	Lee Kent - ASP	64.013	9	54.091
PRO	96	MR2	John Brown - DP	64.059	6	54.514
PRO	33	Scirocco	Mark Pilson - FSP	69.227	3	56.489
PRO	13	Civic	Lyonel Kent - CSP	69.392	2	58.289
PRO	110	Civic	Robert Carpenter - STS	70.377	4	55.035
SS	0	996	Michael Grande	68.664	9	56.922
STM	69	Integra	Tony Bolton	67.441	9	56.381
STR	54	Civic	Jared Suter	73.551	9	59.944
STS	71	Neon	Hart Kaudewitz	71.081	9	55.585
STS	29	Prelude	Adam Ezell	71.831	6	56.172
STS	10	Civic	Doug Allen	72.713	4	56.862
STS	72	Focus	Joe Kozel	74.510	3	58.267
STS	54	BMW 325	Chuck Moore	74.912	2	58.581
STS	14	Golf	Stuart Gibson	77.746	1	60.797
STS	6	Focus	Michael Hubbard	78.269	1	61.206

Meeting Reminder

We meet at the Barley's in the Old City. Meetings are at 7:00pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month.

The Road To Topeka & The SCCA SOLO2 Nationals 2001

I am writing about a trip that took 13 hours and 825 miles to get to, and then we find out that the two-day event that we were expecting to compete at was only going to be a one-day event (yes, we did travel for a single day autocross). This was because of the attacks on New York City. I would like to say god bless America!!!! We saw gas go from \$1.50 per gallon to \$4.00 in just over three hours.

There were several East TN region members at the 2001 Solo2 Nationals: Mark Pilson, Robert Carpenter, Rich Miller, Lee Kent, Lyonel Kent, Danielle Kent & Mike Akard. This is the largest turnout for the East TN region that I have ever seen.

Mike Akard was running in his 1987 BMW 325 in F-Prepared and this was the first autocross that he had run on concrete, and on such a big course (I even think that he hit third gear!). Mike had the best of the best running in F-Prepared, but that's what Mike wanted to see. F-Prepared ran the second heat of the day, and after we all heard about the attacks of America. The second heat is a cold part of the day to run at Topeka while the tires are cold as ice and the competition is as hot as it gets. Mike's first run was 53.040 plus 1 cone, and one his second run he got down to a 52.818 and it was clean. Then with all of the pressure his last run was 53.337 plus three cones. All I can say is the North course is a punishing course if you are not on line at all times. Mike was 10th in class, but you should have seen all of the air under his car, as he had to give it up in the slaloms just to keep the car off its roof (Its a good thing that he has a roll cage because I thought it was going over, and he also was apart of the Topeka bicycle club).

Lee and Lyonel Kent were running GS in their 2000 Acura Integra Type "R". They ran the south course that was also a course that you needed to be ready to break late and turn even later. Lyonel ran first. He was number 13 and got a DNF while Lee ran 54.419, and then their second runs: Lyonel ran a 54.928 while Lee was able to drop some time with a 54.364. Their 3rd and last runs left Lyonel with a 54.197 and Lee was still able to drop more time with a 53.920. Lee placed 21st and Lyonel placed 25th. Lyonel and Danielle were just married only one week before! Congratulations!!! Danielle Kent was running GSL, and on her first run she ran a 58.348 plus one cone, then on her second run she was able to drop down to 56.952 clean. Well, she knew she had more in her so she dropped down to 55.256. This put her in 7th place overall.

Rich Miller has always had one of the oldest cars at Nationals and this year was no exception. Rich, of course, runs D-prepared and on his first run he ran 61.761. Then on his second run he ran a 59.938. Rich was not finished, on his last run he ran a 59.170, and with this run he came in 17th place. I don't know how many times Rich has run at National but he is one of the best competitors you could ask for. Good job!

Mark Pilson ran this year in a car that he has only driven two events before, in a class that he knows like his palm of his hand (DSP). I want to start off saying if you are going to drive a car that you don't know and go from front wheel drive to rear wheel drive you need to do what Mark did. Mark's first run was 61.232 and I know he was not happy with that time because the class leader was in the 53's, and this just pissed him off. So, he went off on his second run to run a 53.529 and this gave him hope that just maybe he had what it takes to show off his talent's in a BMW. Well when they all were

looking the other direction Mark said take this and ran a 52.530 and took 3rd place and only 3 tenths from the first place guy Mark Daddio (Just the driver of the year last year). Only two events and he came to Topeka with only one thing on this mind and that was to win. Mark did not get too high on two wheels, but driving the car that everyone thought would need a trailer because of roof damage before the event was over. Great jog Mark! You need to see if the owner of the car will let you drive his car a little bit more so you can get the 3 tenths you know that you could have gotten out of that car. Its not every day and what I hear not any day someone beats up on Big Daddy Brian Flanagan. I don't think I have ever seen anybody beat him in his own car! I guess you are now a member of the Tri-state club's southern region.

I would like to close with saying that this year has been one of the best autocrossing years that I have ever had, and I want to thank the team under dog racing for all of there help, and I cant forget Big Daddy, Mark Pilson and last but not least Paula Bell for putting up with getting back into Knoxville at 2:00am Monday when we both have to work the next day. Lets see what East TN region can offer the National scene next year.

Robert Carpenter
ES-99

Minutes October 2nd, 2001 Meeting

Wayne Henry called the meeting to order.

Attending: Mark & Lynn Irwin, Wayne & Debbie Henry, Lee Graser, Ron Hurst, Bill Johnson, Bill Christenberry, Robert Carpenter, Mark Pilson, Dick, Beverly & Brian Hancock

MINUTES-The minutes for Sept & Oct were approved by a motion made by Mark Irwin and seconded by Lee Graser. Motion passed.

TREASURER REPORT-Wayne reported for Larry who is in GA. We have \$3,519 in checking and \$3,048 in savings.

MEMBERSHIP-no report

LICENSING-no report

DOGWOOD-It looks like the South Knox Connector will be available for a few more years. The mayor has asked that it not be finished.

Wayne asked if anyone knew if Dave Disney had purchased the timing system yet. No one knew.

Ron Hurst reported on the progress with YearOne and their event. He has billed them for \$1600. He will use \$600 for workers expenses and put the other \$1000 in our account. He needs 15 workers each day.

CHRISTMAS PARTY-Debbie reported she has had no luck with Thunder World. They cannot assure the cars will be ready by December. She suggested we visit there in the spring. She can get a room at Corky's for the party if the group agrees. The group approved and asked for a Friday night.

COMPETITION REPORT-Robert reported on the Pro-Solo and National events. Rich, Lee Kent, Lyonel and Danielle, Mark P., Robert and Mike Akard attended. The National was cut a day because of the attacks in NYC. Mark Pilson came in 3rd and Robert won the National Event in his class. Lee Graser reported on the National Run-Offs for Sports Cars. He attended as the writer for the group. Mark Irwin came in 3rd in his class. Others from our area were Bill Reid running a Toyota; Stacy Wilson who finished 5th and Gary Johnson who finished 12th or 13th. The Solo group attended the groundbreaking for the new SCCA headquarters in Kansas City. The last local event had 70 entrants. The next event is at Farragut HS on the 14th.

The following nominations were made for officers:

RE-Wayne Henry
 Robert Carpenter
 Sec-Debbie Henry
 Treas-Ron Hurst
 Board of Directors-Lee Graser, Mark Pilson, Bill Christenberry, Dave Disney, Robert Carpenter, Wayne Henry, Bill Johnson, Mark Irwin

Ron Hurst announced he is cleaning out his building. If anyone wants anything they need to see him before the end of the month.

Mark Irwin motioned to adjourn the meeting, Lee Graser seconded. Passed.

Solo II Schedule

2001 Solo II Events			
DATE	LOCATION	CHAIRMAN	EVENT
Nov. 4	Oak Ridge Mall	Rich Miller	Regional #10

Solo II Entry Forms

Entry forms and Tech sheets are available on the web page in the Solo II section. The forms on the web page can be filled out on-line and printed, or printed out blank and filled in by hand. Bringing a completed Entry and Tech sheet with you to the event will keep you from having to 1) crouch over the registration table, 2) wait for an available pen, 3) find out who ran off with the clipboard, and should speed up registration considerably.

The 2001 Runoffs at a Glance

Race 1---wild, wet and whooshing---C-Sports racers 1100 lbs, 250 + hp and a very wet track--you can do the math on the basic physics involved. The back straight rooster-tails were reminiscent of those you see from the Un-limited hydroplane racing. 100+ mph in the rain and then the slick concrete of the "line" at Mid-Ohio. Those in the know and eventually those on the podium learned very quickly to avoid the concrete like the proverbial plague. My favorite (one of the Beasley gang) was on the pole- (power by a rotary)-on the point at lap 2 and all the way to the podium. Perennial favorite, long time runoffs competitor and occasional C-Sports national Champion Jeff Miller (Kohler Power)--qualified 2nd --rose to second on lap one but was punted into the dirt (permanently) before that lap was completed. A real show of power and grace on the slick surface for all the podium finishers.

Race 2---G-Production--- still wet---and some good racing for the top 3 spots between a Datsun /Nissan510, a Spitfire an MGA and a Fiat X-19. The English hand grenade qualified on the pole----began to distance the pack and then --exploded in typical Prod-car fashion. You know the routine--pull the "pin" on the false-grid and hope you can last the 20 laps of the race before the thing goes off. The win went to the 510, 2nd to the X-19 and a venerable MGA from Prather racing (Kent Prather) successfully got the Prod-car "pin" back in on the cool-off lap, to take home the 3rd podium position. Kent if I recall took a first at the runoffs with the same MGA back in the "glory days" at Road Atlanta.

Race 3---F 500 (alias---angry hornets of snowmobile origin)---The track was drying a bit ---the race saw NO lead changes----two changes for 2nd place--the pole sitter took second away from the 4th place qualifier --and spun out of contention after 3 laps returning the 4th place qualifier to 2nd place on the track and eventually 2nd on the podium. The second from last lap saw a change for the 3rd place finisher. This race was to put it in the vernacular the 1st "SNORE" of the weekend.

Race 4---Touring-1 (T-1 cars are slightly modified top end--sports cars) Vipers---Corvettes---and the occasional Mustang Cobra. In spite of the very classy machinery the wet weather and racing bad luck (most went out on dry tires only to be faced with a deluge on the pace lap) co-conspired to produce another SNORE. --NO lead changes. A 'drop-out' on lap 3 changed the 2nd spot finisher, and only minor action to produce a couple of passes for 3rd place. Final finish was Corvette, Viper and Corvette.

Race 5---Formula Ford----- (open wheel, 1000lb, 1600 cc push-rod "pinto" motors for the young-timers not familiar with this breed) Another WET race--but at least most were on wet tires---a little bit on "racing" for 1st (one pass), a little bit of racing for 2nd (one pass) and just a bit more racing for 3rd, 4th passes involving 5 cars (3 of which went off in the wet). But again just barely above another SNORE. The podium was filled with Van Diemen, Swift and Van Diemen in that order.

Race 6 ---SSC---MAZDA Protégé's Dodge Neon's, Honda Civics, and the occasional Nissan 200SX, Ford ZX2 and Saturn. Finally the track is starting to dry a bit and the sky is clearing a bit. The MAZDA of David Roush sort of ran-off and hid from the pack---2nd thru 5th actually had a pretty good race

albeit not a lot of position changes. My favorite Paul Bonaccorsi (MAZDA Protégé) and 2-X past national champion, qualified 5th, jumped to 3rd on lap 1, then dropped to 4th and then to 5th at the finish. A "fair" day for MAZDA, the finish was MAZDA, Neon, Honda, Neon and then Paul 5th in another MAZDA. The 20th-30th positions actually had a lot of position changes and a fair amount of good racing. This race definitely moved well above the SNORE category and very close to the "good race" but not great race category.

Race 7---Formula V--- (1200 cc VW (old) Beetle motors, 800 lb open wheel speedsters.) Another dry race but very little racing at the front. Brad Stout was truly "stout" in the power/smooth driving categories. He went from the pole-flag to flag at the point. This is what he has done all year--June Sprints, Pro-Vee, and now the Runoffs all at the point for 1st place finishes. Two changes for 2nd --a two lap trade 3rd for 2nd and then back again. 4th thru 10th had a pretty good race with at least a dozen position changes.

Race 8---GT 4 last race on Friday and finally a dry track. The GT-4 guys are the little biddy GT cars --many with tube frames, all with exotic full race motors. The include Honda CRX's, Nissan 200's, Toyota Tercel's, the occasional Rabbit or Scirocco and group of "singles", an Opel, a Fiesta and a Corolla. 1st and 2nd had a really good race, followed by another good race between 3rd-4th and 5th. The finish was Honda, Nissan and MAZDA. A good race maybe even a great race to finish out the first day of the 2001 runoffs.

Race 9--- The first race for day 2 of the runoffs was GT2. These guys (Porsches, Nissan 300's, Toyota's and V8 Tigers with a couple of Lotus Elans thrown in for good measure) are fairly heavy hitters, speed, technology and \$\$\$. Knoxville native Bill Reid qualified 3rd in his Toyota Celica moved up to an impressive 2nd place on lap 4 but was punted into the dirt and was forced to retire with mechanical problems after 12 laps. An excellent race was put on by the top 5 cars trading places for the top three spots numerous times. On the 1st lap Tom Patton used a slow start and the power of his V8 Sunbeam Tiger to take the lead from his 5th qualifying position and proceeded to lead for laps 1-12 only to break and finish back in the pack completing only 16 of the 20 laps. The real show of this race was Dave Finch in his Porsche 944, he qualified 5th ---was required to start from the bubble (last on the grid), because of an engine change (I think??)---Dave had his Porsche in 16th after 1 lap and was 2nd by lap 17--- and challenging for first by lap 20, but time ran out and he was forced to settle for 2nd. Clearly the drive of the weekend so far. The final finish was Toyota, Porsche 44, Porsche 914-6, Nissan, Porsche again and FINALLY a MAZDA. Best race of the weekend so far approaching a real barnburner.

Race 10 --- Touring-2 (T-2 cars are slightly modified mid-range-sporty cars)--BMW-M3's, Mustangs, Camaro's, Firebirds, and one lonely Nissan 300ZX. An absolutely astounding race, yes a REAL barnburner which actually out-stepped the 1st race of the day (GT2) on excitement and great racing was put on by these weighty bruisers. A fair amount of paint traded on the start and it continued all through out the race. The Pole sitters Camero was punted in the first turn (1st place to last place) with the chain reaction started by the #21 BMW M3 of Doug Gamble who made a sandwich of the Mark Sandridge Boxster on lap one at the end of the back straight. Damage from the M3 induced sandwich forced the Boxster running a strong 4th to retire-- literally in flames after 8 laps. Driver OK --car sort of OK. After a 3 lap full course caution to extinguish/remove the Boxster the race was re-started on a sour and very unpopular with the crowd note. The then leading BMW M3 of Doug Gamble took an ill-advised "gamble" (couldn't resist the pun)----On the restart Doug was supposed to hold his BMW at the speed set by the pace car until he received the GREEN Flag from the starters stand. Doug instead put the proverbial pedal-to -the -metal and distanced the field by at least a third of a lap BEFORE he received the Green flag restart. The Boos' from the crowd were ominous, Doug had the lead but he had lost the crowd and eventually the 1st place finish (on the track) was taken away because of his obvious jumping the start ---the Gamble didn't pay off from any point of view Doug was Dis-Qualified --Out--Gone--Fini--Sianaro much to the pleasure of the crowd (who turned their backs to the track when Doug took his (supposed) "victory" lap. The real thriller and crowd pleaser of the race was the show put on by the Pole sitter Tom Oats in his Tiger striped Camaro. Remember the Pole sitter was punted from 1st to last (by the now infamous BMW of Mr. Gamble). Well the show was a real treat, Tom muscled his Camaro in an exciting charge from

last to 2nd (behind Doug's not yet DQ'ed BMW) but sadly in lap 18 of the 20-lap race the Camaro's clutch gave up from the intensity of Tom's last place to 2nd place charge. The final finish was Mustang, Honda S2000, and Camaro. Real excitement and really great racing.

Race 11--- Formula MAZDA (open wheel formula cars with a spec 13B MAZDA Rotary)--Gotta love them MAZDA Rotaries but the race was a real SNORE. Real hard to follow an act like the preceding T-2 race. Basically a parade to the finish.

Race 12 -- American Sedan, The AS cars are the popular Pony cars Mustangs and Camaros and Firebirds with the small V8-- 305 cu in and a spec carburetor. In spite of the potential and the power and the V* rumble the front of the pack produced a SNORE of a race---. The pole sitter went unchallenged flag to flag, a single change for 2nd place and only two changes for 3rd. The 4th to 10th place finishers did a small bit of "dicing" but the T2 spectacular pushed t AS easily into SNORE territory. The finish was Mustang, Camaro, Camaro.

Race 13-- Show Room Stock B, ---The SSB group is dominated (in numbers) by the MAZDA Miata 1800, throw in several BMW Z3's a couple of Hondas and Acura's and just for good measure a Celica GTS and a Ford Countour SVT and you have an interesting field. The eventual winner (a MAZDA MIATA) ran off and hid from the field. Pole position, flag to flag--a SNORE at the point but cool that it was a MAZDA. Second thru 6th did a bit of jousting and bumping and pushing and position changing --just enuf to keep things interesting. The podium was a very, very sweet MAZDA, MAZDA, MAZDA, overall a pretty good race due in great part to the MAZDA sweep-- In case you haven't caught on yet I am a MAZDA fan.

Race 14-- You will have to read the accompanying article in this month's Redline to get the Zuma-Zuma details that will make your East Tennessee heart stand proud.

Race 15---Spec-Racer Ford (SRF) or Spec wreckers (Ford Escort 1900 spec-engine/drivetrain) to those who are regular fans (experience teaches us the truth my son The start and first turn at the end of the back straight was refreshingly incident free and the SRF guys did NOT live up to their typical pre-race billing. Several cars ran up front in the top 5 places---multiple lead changes and frequent reordering of the top three positions. Pretty good race on the whole, and definitely above the SNORE status but not (for some reason that I can't put my arms around) a really great race. Possibly a letdown from the ultimate "high" of the Zuma-Zuma FP thriller that preceded the SRF guys. I guess it is hard to follow a Zuma-Zuma act.

Race 16 ----Formula Atlantic (full race Toyota twin cam motors)-The Last race for Saturday and it was an unexciting, SNORE--I'm not sure who won and didn't have the energy/motivation to find out.

Race 17---Sports 2000 (S2000) these are the OHC 2 liter pinto engines in a Sports racer body. At one time these were a popular and growing class--but in recent years the grids have seen great reductions in numbers. Only 12 cars qualified for the race, which was a SNORE with little passing/racing anywhere in the thin field.

Race 18---GT 5 ---these are the smallest of the GT thunder buggies--1200 and 1300 cc tube-frame purpose built racecars. The most exotic of which is probably the RWD Mini---that's right a front engine RWD mini. Well over 20 qualifiers for this race and because of the extreme level of engine development a full third of the field was not running at the finish. Another group that pull the "pin" on the false grid and hope it motor doesn't "grenade" before the checker. In spite of the fragility of these buzz bombs they put on a pretty good show. Close racing for the top three spots, with at least a several position changes at the front. In the end the Huffaker (RWD) (\$\$\$) mini prevailed. In second another RWD mini, followed by a Nissan 200 and the only Alf of the field in 4th.

Race 19---H-Production the MG Midgets and Bug-eyed Sprites. Another hand grenade engine class--but attrition was minimal this year---some very good racing--a surprising amount of metal-to-metal resulting in a finish with a lot of the proverbial walking-wounded. These little guys are all but totally invisible

on the street and have been for years but they continue to be raced and new racecars continue to be built. I guess it must have something to do with the admirers of these cars trying to emulate the very British tradition of a keeping a stiff upper lip in spite of all the duress one must experience while in his sprite. <G> <G>

Race 20-- GT 3---these are the MAZDA 12A rotaries (silhouette bodied RX-3's and 1st, 2nd & 3rd gen RX-7's), the 1600 DOHC Toyotas, a couple of 240sx SOHC Nissan's and a single Acura and a single Probe. This was another very good race---15-20 position changes in the top 5 cars, with three different race leaders. Three of the top 4 qualifiers ended up on the podium and an East Tennessee Driver (Stacy Wilson from Athens) worked his way from 9th to 5th. Stacy followed 4 Toyotas (boo-hiss) to the checker BUT he lead a pack of six RX-7's to the finish (5th thru 10th)--Yeah--Stacy!!

Race 21---E-Production---With the addition of the so-called "limited-prep" cars to this class a couple of years ago these guys have grown in popularity tremendously, at this year's runoffs they were second in numbers (42 entries) the ever popular (46 entries) for Formula Vee's. The huge field was lead thru the 1st turn by the pole sitter a MAZDA Miata---who then proceeded to "check-out" on the rest of the field. A flag to flag runaway for the Miata. The rest of the field had some fairly close racing but not really very many position changes. The final finish was Miata--Nissan 240sx---RX-7--- Miata. My racing buddy and race favorite (Mike VanSteenburg) struggled with an unfamiliar transmission (a competition box with different ratios and shift pattern than he had run all season) to move from a 20th qualifying spot to 14 at the finish. Mike was plagued by missed shifts and an unfamiliar rev-band. Mike does it all---builds--- races---makes his living preparing race cars and when I last saw him at the runoffs he was behind the wheel of the 18 wheeler tractor for the tow back to Florida, a true Renaissance man of racing.

Race 22--Formula Continental (2 liter SOHC ford motors)--this Annual SNORE was livened a bit by the debut (in this class) of Arie Luyendyk jr. --yup---the son of Indy 500 winner Arie Sr. -----Arie qualified 2nd and apparently picked a "too-hard" compd tire---had difficulty pursuing 1st in the race and resorted to evasive blocking to finish 2nd on the track, only to face a one position penalty (for blocking) which pushed him back to third. Dave Wietzenhof the receiver of the blocking effort was granted a 2nd place finish by the Chief Steward but the blocking prevented Dave from his chance to run-down the leader. Most of the race was a follow the leader SNORE except for Arie jr.'s miscreant blocking action.

Race 23---GT-1---These guys were the Thunder Wagon kings of the weekend. Big A-mar-cun V-8's. Several Trans-Am class cars were entered this year. Trans Am Rookie John Baucom qualified 2nd on the pole---took the lead in a gutsy 1st lap late braking pass at the end of the back straight only to be punted to last place 2-turns later. John was able to work his way back up to 7th before the checkered flag flew. A great run but not the podium finish that he likely could have had without the "punt". The rest of the field had a great race---lots of dicing lots of late-breaking passes and re-passes--even a stuck throttle into the tire/concrete wall at the start of the -esses. (Driver OK--car not). There was a lot of class-cars and drivers in this race---which made for a really exciting 20 laps.

Race 24---DSR---D-sports racing----the little biddy engined sports racers. The early laps of this race were exciting --with the Beasley family (Al's Jr and Sr.) running up front as they have for millenniums in this class. Jason Miller (son of long time C-sports front runner Jeff Miller) also ran up front in the early laps. Alas attrition took its toll on these high-strung little screamers. The 4th 5th and 7th qualifiers finished 1-2-3 on the podium. The winner was a MAZDA Cheeta (rumored to be a single rotor??) followed by two Radicals---a new chassis to appear on the DSR scene. The Radio announcer was literally at a loss for words because there was no "Beasley" on the podium---an unfortunate 1st for the Beasley family for many, many years.

Final note on the runoffs is that, as always I meet at least several very interesting new persons at the annual race. This on the back straight concession terrace I met two of the competitors from the Original Cannon Ball Baker-Sea to Shinning Sea memorial runs (early 70's)---the real coast to coast race NOT the movie with Burt and his gang. Rob Conklin and none

other than Donna May Mims the "pink lady" SCCA racer who drove among other all Pink cars the original Yenka stingers (Corvaire fame)---all pink of course and wouldn't you know it she was dressed primarily in pink at the 2001 runoffs. Those of us with a few racing years behind us can remember the Pink racers from the first Road Atlanta racing days.

It was a real treat to hear their racing stories of Stinger development in the early days. And the added bonus of their insiders view of the many race stories of the Cannon Ball Baker run was nothing short of stupendous---like all fledgling races the technical and sometimes legal problems that were stumbled into and eventually solved by each of the teams were absolutely fascinating.

That's the 2001 runoffs---hope to see you there next year---we will be camping at the NW corner of the campground---come by and share some racin' stories, samores and maybe even a "beverage" of your choice. Please beware there will be rubber dust everywhere from the ubiquitous bench racing.

C ya-at-th' track.

Bye lee

Mike Akard's Rookie Season

It all started in January 2001. Tom Buto, a good friend from South Carolina Region persuaded me to install a roll cage in my Red 1987 BMW 325is that I have been autocrossing in FP for the past 3 years. He had purchased an Austin-Healy Sprite last year and was planning on going club racing. Since I have been his instructor at driving schools, he encouraged me to join him at the SCCA licensing school at Roebing Road this past winter.

After several attempts to contact our local officials for a Novice Permit, I obtained one from a last minute telephone call to SCCA in Colorado (had it shipped next day air) and it was off to Savannah, GA for the school. It was the first race for the BMW too, so an in-depth technical inspection session and creation of an SCCA Logbook took place immediately upon arrival at the track so that it could be approved to run in SPO. SPO is a "catch-all" class based entirely on having an engine displacement of greater than 2.0L. SPO includes ALL makes of closed wheel cars that can pass the technical and safety inspections that have engines larger than 2.0L. Before the season was completed, there were over 50 different cars that competed in SPO that included ex-Winston Cup cars, ex-TransAm cars, ex-Busch Series cars, Corvettes, Twin Turbo Porsches, and all kinds of high horsepower muscle cars. In all likelihood, my 325is had only half the horsepower of most of the cars in SPO and in some cases less than 1/3! But, fortunately there is a lot more to road racing than just horsepower and my little BMW could out corner and out brake a lot of those super fast cars at Road Atlanta, Virginia International Raceway, and Roebing Road Raceway during the 2001 SARRC season to follow.

The licensing school weekend included a lot of wet racetrack racing (another first for me). Lyonel Kent was also a participant in this licensing school in ITA and we both had our hands full with the wet racing conditions. We both, however, did well in our prospective classes when it came down to the "races" at the end of the school day. The first day, I was able to win my very first race in the rain by nearly 11 seconds over the 3rd generation twin turbo Mazda RX7 that gave me a really tough time on the straights because of my handling and ABS brake advantages! It was an incredible rush to run 1:23's on a wet racetrack. On Sunday, the course was much drier than Saturday. I finished 3rd to a Turn One Motorsports Busch Series Chevy Monte Carlo and a new Panoz GTS although my car was faster through the corners than the Panoz, but my little 6 cylinder engine could not muster up enough power to pass his 5.7 Liter V-8 when I would get beside him. The 3 of us finished the race nose to tail with no other cars in sight as we took the checkered flag running laps in the 1:19 range. Overall, I was pleased with how well my Bimmer did against the considerable muscle of my competition, but I was really impressed with how well it did on wet surfaces with Hoosier racing slicks. Little did I know that wet performance would be a major factor in the overall points race for 2001.

My very first SCCA Club Race was a total disaster. I elected to run my first SCCA race at Gateway International Raceway in Saint Louis, MO because it coincided with a BMW CCA Club Race that same weekend (also my first). Having no prior actual racing experience, I made the mistake of qualifying on my practice tires rather than using my new sticker slicks. The used tires simply would not grip well enough to put me up front where I was capable of running (and did run) on better tires. I had to settle for a 5th place starting position. A "gentleman" that started more than one row behind me (whom I had lapped on old tires during the qualifying session) elected to shoot to the inside (one side of his car in the grass) as the whole field went into turn one. For some reason or another it did not stick to the grass as well as he expected it to and his car broke loose and slammed into the inside rear corner of my car. I had no radio, so I elected to enter the pits to determine how bad the car was damaged. Should have read my GCR in greater detail because once I went behind the wall I was not allowed to return to the race. DNF in race number one. NOT a good start to my season. However, in the BMW CCA race, I finished 2nd to the same BMW that won the ITE (other region's name for catch-all class like SPO) race. We both broke the existing ITE track record lap times (he now has the official track record) and lapped all but 3 cars in the race. It is a shame that someone making a bone-headed move in the grass cost me a decent finish in the SCCA race too.

My first SARRC race was on a double SARRC weekend at VIR. I saw some other ETR folks there, but mechanical problems made it a less than desirable weekend for them. On the other hand, things went well for me. I was able to finish 3rd in SPO in both races (8th and 10th) overall in a field of (I believe) more than 40 cars while racing on my Novice Permit. The GT1 cars did NOT lap me, but they were approaching me rather quickly on the last lap. It became readily apparent that I needed more under the hood to run with the big boys, but my finish was strong enough to move me into 13th place out of more than 50 drivers in the season long points race.

Next was a rainy single SARRC race at Road Atlanta. It was pouring rain during our race after we were able to qualify on a dry racing surface. I qualified 3rd for the race, but started on the front row because the documented ex-Winston Cup car that had won the pole realized he would not be able to compete with us on a wet racing surface. I finished 2nd while running regular racing slicks in the pouring rain. Following this race, I was posted in 7th place in the season points race.

A month later we were back at Road Atlanta for a Double SARRC holiday weekend. It was another rain fest. I struggled to keep up with the cars that had rain tires when pouring and the cars that had all kinds of horsepower when dry. I finished 8th in SPO in the first race (12th overall) on a relatively dry track and found myself hoping for rain in the next event because I could not keep up with all of the muscle on course. Robbie Kollar, formerly an ETR member, finished 2nd in SPO in this race in his now highly modified BMW M3. When we qualified for the second race, the racetrack was wet, but it was not raining. I placed my car in 5th place on the starting grid. When race time came around, it started raining pretty hard. Three of the top 4 cars dropped to the rear of the pack and I started on the outside of row one. It was an extremely difficult race because it started raining pretty hard. My windshield fogged up and I could only barely reach a small area to clean a tiny spot to look through. My slicks were hydroplaning very badly toward the end of the race and cars with rain tires had a distinct advantage. I was only able to hold on to 4th place, but if the race had gone on much longer I would have likely dropped out of the top 10 due to the fact that several of the AS cars with grooved tires were gaining fast. Very glad it was over when the checkered flag waved. I was now tied for 3rd in the points race with only the SARRC Invitational Challenge (SIC) remaining.

The SIC is an invitation only event that counts double points. It is a one-race deal. I knew that 1st and 2nd place were out of reach, but I needed to hold on to 3rd place. Following my troubles at Road Atlanta on dry pavement and the difficulty getting my car to keep all four wheels on the ground at the SOLO II Nationals in Topeka, I attempted to improve my suspension for the SIC and it was a big mistake. The car developed a horrible push. I could NOT seem to get the car to turn after the initial turn-in. I went through 2 NEW SETS of tires that weekend. On set was only used for qualifying and the actual sprint

race. Tires were GONE. My best lap time was a 1:18.9 and I had run a 1:16 there in the summer at a driver school. I had little choice but to take my lumps and drive the car the best I could. I started the race in 9th position overall and finished in the same spot. I passed no one and no one passed me. My 4th place finish in SPO was good enough, however, to move me into sole possession of 3rd place for the 2001 season as a rookie.

After all of this, I would like to thank Ron Hurst, Lee Kent, Lyonel Kent, Robert Carpenter, and John Brown who helped encourage me to continue racing in the SCCA. Without their help, I would have given up organized SCCA racing after my first autocross experience and it would have been a huge mistake. Thanks for helping me stay involved!

Mike Akard

[Editors Note: Let us know what you've been up to! Articles about your racing experiences are appreciated.]

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**David Disney
Redline Editor
P.O. Box 67
Greenback, TN 37742**