

Time Trials gets off to strong start in 2005

The 2005 season marked the beginning of the new SCCA Time Trials program which consolidated the Performance Driving Experience (formerly HPCCC), Club Trials (Solo Trials), Track Trials (Solo I) and Hillclimb events. The premise of Time Trials is that there's something there for everyone. This has shown to be true with the growth that the program experienced in its first year.

The total number of events that were held in 2004 under the old setup of the programs was 32. This includes all of the HPCCC, Solo Trials, Solo I and Hillclimb events. The 2005 season saw growth beyond anyone's wildest dreams as there were a total of 70 Time Trials events held for the season. This more than doubles the total number of events held over the 2004 season. Not too shabby for the Time Trials pro-

gram's first year.

The Performance Driving Experience leads the way for 2005 with a total of 24 events held. Seven regions held two events each, with the Northwest Region being one of them. There were 10 other regions that held one event each.

Second on the venue list is Club Trials with 21 events. The Colorado Region leads the way holding six events and has the honor of holding the very first National Club Trials event. The Reno and Hawaii Regions are tied for second place with both holding five events this year. The Northwest Region comes in a solid third place having held three events for the season. The St. Louis and Steel Cities Regions both held one event each. The Club Trials venue shows the most potential for growth in 2006 due to its popularity.

The Track Trials venue came in a

Time Trials

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very close third place with 18 events held in 2005. The Northwest Region has the honor of leading the nation with eight events held this season. The Central Carolinas Region held two events and eight other regions held one event each. I hope Track Trials will continue to hold its own for 2006 and experience some growth within the regions that hold these events.

There were a total of seven Hillclimb events held in 2005. All of the events were concentrated on the East Coast with the Southeast Division having four events and the Northeast Division with three.

The Northwest Region inaugural

Club Trials season finished with success for the first time out of the box. We had 58 total entries for the three events that were held this season. Two of the events were scheduled on the same weekend as the SCCA National Solo Tour, which made it a difficult decision for a majority of the drivers as to which event to attend. Those who did participate that weekend received more track time than they had anticipated. The bottom line for all three events is that everyone had a great time. We hope to have more Club Trials events on the Region calendar for 2006.

The Northwest Region Track Trials program, in its ninth year, saw a decline in driver participation from the 2004 season. The 2004 season had 39 drivers in 18 different classes participate in the eight events that were held. The 2004 season resulted in nine regional class champi-

onships that were awarded. The 2005 Track Trials season had 23 drivers in 14 different classes participate in the same number of events as the 2004 season. The 2005 season resulted in six regional championships awarded. Some of the drivers moving on to Club Racing and the skyrocketing fuel prices during the 2005 season were probably the biggest contributing factors in the series' participation decline.

The Track Trials program is still viewed as a success for 2005. The drivers who have remained with the series are the main reason for this. They are what make the program what it is today. Their support and hard work resulted in the first-ever standalone Time Trials event in the Northwest Region being a huge success. This will no doubt carry the program well into the 2006 season and beyond.

Notes from the back of the garage

Forty Years of Going Around in Circles, or, Memoirs of an Old Fart

BY CRAIG K. ANDERSON

It was a day like any other I suppose, well maybe not. In 2005, the autocross scene in the Pacific Northwest is celebrating its 40th anniversary and I was there when it all started, it doesn't get any simpler than that (with the same car no less). Let me explain, the year was 1965 when it all began in the great Pacific Northwest:

I bought my Austin-Healey in 1961 when I was 19 years old. My first autocross was June 17, 1962, in San Diego, Calif. In addition to the autocross (in which I finished dead last) they also had an "acceleration and braking contest" whereby you came from a standing start, accelerated about 100 feet and attempted to stop just in front of a white line on the tarmac. Closest and fastest to the line without going over it won.

By September of that year, I was going to college in Monmouth, Ore. Those four years of university had to be the best seven or eight years of my life. My first Northwest autocross event was that same month in Salem, Ore., put on by the Willamette Motor Club, (which is still in existence by the way). We put the event on in the parking lot of Russ Pratt's Warehouse, a local storage facility for the hops used in beer. We used no helmets but with the pungent smell of hops wafting in the air who needed helmets?

Within the next two months, I had discovered the greater Seattle-Tacoma autocross scene. The deal was to run an event in Portland on a Sunday morning, get permission to run early, pack up and head north to South Sound Mall in Tumwater for a South Sound Race and Rallye event.

Other venues included go-kart tracks (there were several then), Bellevue Square (which was basically a paved field for about a year) and most community colleges. They were being built nearly everywhere around Seattle at the time and most were out in the middle of nowhere. They wanted to embrace the "racing community" and would allow a great deal of variation to what we now know as safety rules.

It was not too long until they dis-

covered that the rapidly encroaching community did not like noise of any kind and the college's freshly paved access roads and building aprons soon had what the English call "sleeping policemen" or as we know them "speed bumps." Boeing Kent soon came on the scene and was the savior for autocrossers for many years.

I moved to Enumclaw in 1967 and the commute to autocross was shortened considerably. Boeing was prime! However we also got to use Pacific Raceways, mostly the run-off road at the bottom of the hill after turn 2. We would start at the top of the hill (2), downhill through 3, 3A and 3B; make a sharp left and back up the hill.

I was road racing then as well and thought I was pretty hot stuff. Don't we all think that at that age? Our venues then were Pacific Raceways, Portland (the old course on the Vanport roads, several 90-degree right turns); and Westwood, B.C. A great deal of autocrossing took place at the Vanport site, too. The streets were crowned and kerbed with the so-called California water ditches. It made for interesting events.

I remember Clark Marshall, a local Seattle drag race promoter, asking me to oversee an event held on his Puyallup drag string that was basically what we today have come to know as a ProSolo. It was two cars, separated by hay bales, going down the track through the cones, left and right, to the finish lights. His idea was to get more business for the drags from the sports car crowd. He paid me \$100 for the effort.

Highlights of those years were Pangborn Field in Wenatchee, the Waterville Hillclimbs and Yakima. Yakima had a go-kart track and we also got to run on the then-unpaved (packed dirt) speedway. We ran events on the streets of Longview for several years as well. The chief of police was an autocrosser with a Triumph TR-3. We also used the fairgrounds (packed dirt again) for a couple of years. "LoKeCo" was the event's name which stood for LONgview, KElso and COWlitz. There was also a large go-kart track in Ridgefield, just south of

Disclaimer

This memoir is taken from a highly dysfunctional person whose two mottos for writing are one, "I never let the truth stand in the way of a good story," and, two, "What I don't know I make up." The author asked several hundred people to edit and review this material but either no one wanted to think that far back in time or no one is willing to admit to being that old. All errors of omission or pure bull roar are not intentional and anyone portrayed, living or dead, has every right to be upset.

Longview, and I believe the Sunbeam club still uses it.

Mentioning Pangborn Field in Wenatchee reminded me of an autocross experience somewhere around 1968. I was pitted next to a classic 1958 Corvette. We were in the same class. We were working on our cars and I looked over and I told him he was allowed by the rules to remove his air cleaner. He said he had taken off his air cleaner. I looked closely and saw my first-ever 1,200 cubic feet per minute down-draft carburetor. It was as big as the air cleaner. The 'Vette was great in a straight line but at the first corner it was all over.

The active clubs around the greater Seattle area were: Per Terras (basically a rally club but they put on some great autocrosses, too), the local Chevrolet Corvair clubs (which were very popular), tons of Mustang clubs, (as the dealerships changed names, so did the club's name) scads of Camaro clubs (ditto, with the name change thing), the Boeing Employees Sports Car Club, (now BEAC), Tyee Triumph Club, the previously mentioned South Sound R & R, Puget Sound Sports Car Club (one of the largest), MG Seattle, Rally Fanatics (or rat f*** for short who did great autocrosses, too), and of course the largest, SCCA.

Highlights of those years were the annual Seattle Auto Show. One year I was the gopher for Jim Rogers of Channel 13 in Tacoma, owned by J. Elroy McCaw (who died in 1968)

who was Bruce and Craig's dad. Jim had an hour show called "Behind the Wheel." I drove cars on the set, shagged visitors from the airport and announced the races at Pacific Raceways with the TV crew. I was squire to Craig Breedlove (the land speed record holder at the time) at the 1967 show and chauffeured him around to his various promotional appointments.

Oh, also at this time in history, (1967) I navigated for Senior McCaw's son Bruce in his first competitive driving event in which we won first place in the press class and second overall, I think. Bruce was 16 and had just gotten his driver's license. We were in dad's Mercedes. Father asked me to "look after Bruce." I just love the comfort of the modern rally car.

In 1971, I moved back to Portland and continued to autocross profusely. I ran 62 events in the 52 weeks of that year which I believe had a small part in my first divorce. In the mid-'60s, the Pacific Northwest clubs banded into the Western Oregon-Washington Sports Car Council, or WOW as it came to be known. The joke was if you grabbed your ankles and put your head between your legs and rolled down a hill, you would be WOW MOM WOW MOM all the way down.

The association lasted for several years. Many in Oregon would make the short three-hour drive to Seattle and spend a weekend with the groups assembled. An autocrosser could gain "out-of-region" points toward the WOW championship. It was nicely done and well organized.

I moved to Shelton in 1976, where I went to prison at the Washington Corrections Center. No, no; I was teaching auto tech and got to go home at night. I always have said I did a "three-to-five" with a little time off for good behavior. While in prison, I had several sports car groups put on displays inside the prison's fences and at the Mason County Fair each year. Even had three drag racers show their stuff on one occasion, inside the joint, down the main tarmac separating the reception units from the main prison blocks. Now that got some attention!

I got into the concours arena in those years. At one of the Sports Car Spectaculars, always by Boeing, they had an autocross, a rally and a concours; giving points in each event for a combined overall trophy. In the 1968 event, I took first in the autocross, second in the rally and last in the concours. My Healey was so bad I actually got negative points. However, I had the top points in the other two events and took home a huge trophy, which I still have. By that time, I was on the Pro Rally circuit driving under the name of Mad Dog. My navigator, William Hugh Johnson, used the name Buckwheat. Our mail came addressed to Mr. M. Dog and Mr. B. Wheat. I believe that had something to do with my second divorce, but I'm still not sure.

In the spring of 2001, I had the privilege of being the last person to drive on the Boeing Kent site before it was unceremoniously ripped up; never the more to be. This honor was afforded me by one of the organizers of the event who asked the last driver of the day to loan me his car. He reluctantly allowed me to drive his car but only if he went with me in the passenger's seat.

As we left the line he thought I needed some instruction as he thought I was a novice, having misunderstood the "committee's" request. He told me where to take early and late apexes, where to brake and where to accelerate. When we finished the run, he said I did very well for a first-timer. I told him it was a privilege to drive his car and thanked him sincerely.

A few minutes later he came over to my trailer and began fumbling excuses and flushing profusely. He said he didn't know who I was and what the occasion was all about. He was just asked to loan his car to someone for the last run of the event.

I told him I really didn't know who I was either; just an old fart that happened to be around when things started. But then I was 40 years younger, too. And that's another story.

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WWSCC Hotline RIP, 1965-2005

BY ALAN DAHL

Western Washington Sports Car Council

At the May Western Washington Sports Car Council meeting, the council voted to disconnect the WWSCC telephone hotline because of lack of use. Although I don't know

the exact date of birth of the hotline, I do know that it was long ago enough that WWSCC still did rallies in addition to autocrosses! (If anyone knows more let me know.)

According to Don Gill, the hotline originally was located at "Auto Via," which was owned by Jim Bauman

who was thought to be the original hotline voice (I just learned that it may have actually been Chuck Heleker). Later on the hotline moved to Ron and Karen Babb's house and Ron became the "voice" of WWSCC. Karen loved to tell about the odd times the answering

machine would switch on, especially as events got closer and closer.

In 1995, www.wwscc.org debuted and the fate of the hotline was just a matter of time. From the beginning with all the computer geeks in the area the Web site quickly became popular and hotline use dropped. About the same time, Ron retired from the hotline and passed the torch on to Bret Dodson who has

served until present time. Eventually, however, the hotline was only being called two or three times an event and it became obvious that its time had passed. Still, all of us who one relied on it for timely event information in the days before e-mail and the Web will regret its passing.

One more time: "This is the Western Washington Sports Car Council Hotline for the week of June 12th..."