



# BACKFIRE

A publication for, and by, the members of the Western Michigan Region of the Sports Car Club of America

April, 2005

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### Changes this month

The Backfire is a monthly publication of the Western Michigan Region of the Sports Car Club of America. The editor must receive items for publication no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to be included in the next month's edition, provided space is available. If space is not available, it will be published in the following month. As the Backfire is a publication for and by the members of WMR/SCCA, the editor is pleased to publish letters, articles, pictures and opinions of its members, provided that: 1. They are signed. 2. They are edited for grammar and some expletives. 3. The content is not libelous and / or unsupportable. Articles may be reprinted without permission, provided credit is given to the author. Submit articles to: Dayle & Melinda Frame, 703 Pine Ridge Drive, DeWitt, MI 48820 or to backfire@wmr-scca.org.

# Team Turtle goes to the RunOffs®

Part Five: So we're on to the RunOffs. The hotel reservations were made (thank God for reward points). The vacation time was asked for and granted. The car was ready. The crew was ready. And the driver was ready. Or was I. After all, this was what I had aspired to for quite some time. Everybody told me this was just another race...ya right. This was my first RunOffs®. Of course I wanted to do well but, more importantly, I didn't want to do poorly. I didn't want to be thrashing on the car all week and lose the fun of the event. This first trip to the show would be a learning experience. I needed to make sure that we took things slowly and make progress in measured steps and use this trip as a springboard for future trips to the RunOffs.

The car and trailer were at my house so Melinda and I could prepare for the trip down to Mid-Ohio. Now, just to show you how stupid I can be, I had two major house renovation projects in the works. Both were supposed to be started after the RunOffs and be going on at separate times. But both ended up starting before the race and were going on simultaneously. One, a contouring of the back yard to allow better drainage, went pretty smoothly. The other, an installation of a new fireplace and built in book cases, went very badly. As if I didn't have enough on my plate going to my first RunOffs, now I have to wrestle with contractors every day. And LOTS of contractors; electricians, carpenters, plumbers, masons, sprinkler system guys, cable guys, landscapers, yadda, yadda, yadda. ALL AT THE SAME TIME....EVERY DAY....FOR WEEKS....WHAT A NIGHTMARE!

Anyway, I put everything from the garage that wasn't nailed down into the trailer. I wanted the ability to be as self-contained as possible. Yes, there are 700 teams down there so the possibility of borrowing equipment exists but you don't want to borrow something if you don't have to.

Melinda and I left on Sunday morning. She was in her own car as she was coming home early so she could leave on a business trip. She would follow me down. About 30 miles from the track we stopped for gas and lunch. As we got going again she motioned me to pull over. I turned off on the next side road to find that one of the bearings on the left side of the trailer was smoking. Geez, not again. One tire got in the driveway after returning from the June Sprints. This is not the way to start the week. I did not need this. After removing the offending wheel, we limped to the track and got set up. We would be paddocked next to Phil and Kendra Green, Duane and Sue Bailey and Chuck, Jill and Tom Feller. Phil was already there and had picked out a spot. We would be waaaay out in the south paddock but it would do. We set up shop and got everything ready as we were the very first group out on track on Monday morning.

Monday was nice because we got our session out of the way early and had the rest of the day to work on the car and schmooze. The car maintenance was easy. She was loose so we made a rear sway bar adjustment. The schmoozing was tough as you only get to see most of these folks once a year and you want to say 'hi' to everybody. As for the results of the session, we ran a 1:50.0. A full four and a half seconds faster than we were in August for the NEO National. It was interesting running at 8AM, though. The track layout is such that you're staring straight into the sun at T11 and then head into very dark shade. I used the brake lights of the car in front of me as a guide. I equated it to the change the F1 guys have to deal with when driving into the tunnel at



# Team Turtle goes to the RunOffs<sup>®</sup>

the Monaco GP. Tuesday the car was tighter so I could get off the corners better. And the lap times showed it. We were down to a 1:48.1. We had ordered some new tires and we had them mounted as well. They would be ready for Wednesday's afternoon qualifying session. After that session we would take them off the care to cure for a day to get ready for race day. We also tried to tighten the car some more. Wednesday's session was also in the afternoon. Even though the track was slicker, the new tires helped a lot as we were down to a 1:46.5. Thursday's session was in the morning and with the older tires our lap times were slowed a bit. It also didn't help that the session was black flagged early. I didn't have enough time to get up to speed. I noticed that the clutch seemed a little out of adjustment so we would need to make that fix before race day.

Race day was very interesting. We were in race group four so we would be on track right after lunch. Late enough in the day to get some things done but not so late that we would sit around a stew about the upcoming race. I went out for the morning warm up to make sure the clutch adjustment was OK. I would know in the first lap if we had corrected the issue. It seemed fine so I stoked the coals to see how fast we could go. A lap or two into the session a few cars went past me (Canfield, Bax, Cummings, Krause) on the front stretch. I decided to see if I could keep up with these guys. They were qualified a second or two ahead of me and I was 'testing the waters' as it were. Did I have what it took to hang with them? Well I did for a lap and a half. Go-



ing into T7, I skated across some oil and slid at what seemed like full speed across the gravel trap. I ended up pointed the right direction and off I went. As I took off I could see my left rear fender sticking out of the trap like a shark fin in the water. After the session my brother Steve and I went back to fetch the offending fender. We re-attached it to the car with plenty of time before the race. Duane was nice enough to let me borrow his video camera so we could catch some in-car video of the race. We anchored it to the car and off we went to the false grid.

I kept telling myself its just another race....its just another race....its just another race.....but it never quite sunk in. I

was about to be on track with the best SCCA had to offer in our class and I was starting to get nervous. Fortunately I had Melinda, Steve, Phil and Duane around to get me through. As with Road America, Phil would use his radio to be a spotter. For this race he was in the T8 area (the esses) while Melinda would be in the pits. Duane was helping her out as she was a little nervous as well. Since it was just another race, and to help relieve tension, I waved at the corner workers (just like I would at any other race) and did a radio check around the course. Everything seemed to be going smoothly. Then the race started. I was leery of being on the outside of T7 as that was where I spun earlier in the morning. So I decided to try to slide over to the inside at the start. Unfortunately there were much faster cars behind me (one that was gridded ahead of me but penalized to a position behind me and three cars with much larger engines that could motor right by me) and several of them passed me before I could move over. I got snookered and I was pissed at myself. I started 16th on the grid and by the end of the first lap I was 20th. This was no way to start the race. But I didn't let it get me down. I had to look at it as a challenge so I turned up the heat and before long I had gained back a couple of those positions. With the usual amount of attrition, I was working my way back through the field. Using Phil as a spotter came in very handy a few laps into the race. I had just passed a Datsun 510 in T3 (the Keyhole). He had a much larger motor and could have driven away from me on the long straight. Phil alerted me to the fact that there was a waving yellow at T7. If I could stay ahead of this guy until we got there, he couldn't pass me and I would be able to lengthen my lead during the curvy bits from T7 to T15. And the plan worked. He

# Team Turtle goes to the RunOffs<sup>®</sup>

had pulled along side me and was ready to pass but we came to the yellow flag at T6. He had to back out a little and by the time we got to the front stretch he was nowhere in site. By the end of the race I had passed four cars on track and moved up nine positions to finish 11th. Not bad for our first RunOffs! I couldn't wait for next year. I got back to the paddock area and waited for Melinda and Steve to return. They were both as geeked as I was. Whew, what a ride! I stripped off the drivers suit and went around to chat with a few of the other drivers. It was a blast recounting the race with the other drivers. Bench racing at the RunOffs....nothing like it.

Now all we had to worry about was repairing the trailer's bearings and getting home in one piece. I was going to stay for the whole weekend so I could watch the other races. Melinda had to drive home Saturday morning so she could fly off on a business trip. The trailer repairs went smoothly as a friend of mine was a bearing expert for Ford. Once we got that done it was time to watch races. And there were some pretty good ones, too.



A couple of months later the Speed Channel would show our race. We went to a viewing party at Chris Crisenbery's home on a Sunday afternoon. The good news is that Team Turtle got a whole minute of uninterrupted air time in the middle of the race DVD's available). Melinda and Duane also got some camera time.

All in all it was a fabulous time. I know it went too easily. I owe the 'Racing Gods' something for the easy time we had of it. We didn't have to do anything serious to the car and yet we still went faster. I saw the traps speeds and I was dead last. But yet I still qualified in the middle of the pack. This tells me that I was making up in the twisty bits what I lost on the straights. Next year we're coming back with more power so we should have a more competitive car. Now can the driver become more competitive as well? As of this writing, we are deeply into building a new motor that will give us much more power. We've purchased a rear disc brake upgrade kit. We'll use the season to learn how these changes affect the car and how to drive it better.

As this chronology draws to a close, I must thank all of those involved. I must thank Melinda for putting up with me during all of this. Of course, I must thank Duane and Phil for all of their support. Without them involved, I would not be making the progress that I am and for that I am extremely grateful.

On to the next season....and thanks for listening (reading?).

Dayle

## Log Book Information Needed

WMR Competition Director Duane Bailey is looking for some information. Please contact him if you have a logbook issued by this region. This petition is irrespective of whether the logbook was issued for a Rally, Club Racing or Solo car. Our region number is 006 so if your logbook number begins with those digits (i.e., 006-1234), then it was issued by the region.

# The Tech Shed

## Third Annual WMR Tech Day

Date/Time: Saturday April 16 / 9 AM until 5 PM

Location: Duncan Aviation, Battle Creek, MI

- ⇒ Due to the change of venue, we will need to limit the number of cars we can accommodate.
- ⇒ At present, there are 16 slots open, two per hour.
- ⇒ We will add slots if demand is high and additional Tech support can be found.
- ⇒ Reserve your slot soon.
- ⇒ Last minute requests will be handled in the order they are received.
- ⇒ We will make every effort assist you, time and manpower permitting.
- ⇒ Contact Chris Peet for further details or to schedule your annual (269-963-0602 or [repeet68racing@aol.com](mailto:repeet68racing@aol.com))
- ⇒ If you are coming from the west on I-94: Take exit #92 North (I-94 Business Loop); go north roughly 1.5 miles; bear right at the light onto Columbia Road; go another mile; turn left onto S. Airport Road.
- ⇒ If you are coming from the east on I-94: Take exit #95 North (Helmer Road); go north roughly 2 miles; turn left onto Columbia Road, then right on S. Airport Road.



# 2005 CenDiv Club Racing Schedule

Date	Driver's Schools	Regionals	Nationals	Other
4/23, 4/24	Quad@BHF (D)	Quad @ BHF	INR @ GM	
4/30 - 5/1	DET/WHRRI @ WAT		BVR @ BHF	VSCDA @ GM
5/7, 5/8		INDY @ IRP (D, C4)		
5/14, 5/15	NEO @ NL		DET/FWR @ GRA	SVRA @ RA
5/21, 5/22			MIL @ BHF	ALMS @ MO
5/28, 5/29		WMR @ GRA (D, C4)		
6/4, 6/5		MIL @ BHF (D)	OVR @ MO	AMA @ RA
6/11, 6/12				
6/18, 6/19		MIL @ RA (D)		F1 @ IMS
		SBR @ GM (D, C4)		VSCDA @ BHF
6/24 - 6/26			CHI @ RA	
7/2, 7/3		CINCY @ MO (D, C4)	INDY @ IRP	
7/9, 7/10		BVR @ BHF (D)		
		NEO @ NL (D, C4)		
7/16, 7/17		DET/WHRRI @ WAT		BRIC @ RA
7/23, 7/24		MIL @ RA (R)	MIL @ RA	
		NEO @ NL (R, E)		
7/30, 7/31		FWR @ MO (D, C4)		
		CHI @ ABJ		
8/6, 8/7		WOR @ MO (D, C4)		
8/13, 8/14		CHI @ RA (D)	WMR @ GRA	
8/19 - 8/21			NEO @ MO	VSCDA @ GRA
				ALMS @ RA
				ASA @ MM
9/3, 9/4		WMR/LSR @ GRA (D, C4)		MWSCC @ GM
		MIL @ MM (D)		
9/10, 9/11		OVR @ MO (D, C4)		
9/17, 9/18				VSCDA @ RA
9/19 - 9/25			RUNOFFS @ MO	
10/8, 10/9		CHI @ BHF		
10/15, 10/16				VSCDA @ MO
ABJ = Autobahn Joliet / BHF = Blackhawk Farms / GM = Gingerman / GRA = Grattan Raceway / IRP = Indianapolis Raceway Park				
MO = Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course / MM = Milwaukee Mile / NL = Nelson Ledges / RA = Road America / WAT = Waterford Hills				

- This schedule is tentative. It may, and probably will, change. Look for updates on the CenDiv website (<http://www.cendiv-scca.org/>).
- (%) = Area 4 regions involved are DET, FWR, SBR, INR and WMR
- D = double regional; R = restricted regional; C4 = CenDiv East Regional Champ Series event; T = tentative; E = enduro

# Western Michigan Region of the Sports Car Club of America

## **Next Meeting Information:**

**Date:** April 9, 2005

**Time:** 7:30PM

**Location:** Days Inn

3825 28th Street, SW  
Grandville, MI 49418  
(616) 531-5263

Don't forget to visit the WMR web site at <http://www.wmr-scca.org>

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