



BACKFIRE

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

April, 2006

This is your Member of the Year?



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- changes made 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 15th 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, and opinions of its members, provided that: 1. They are signed. 2. They are edited for grammar and some exp letives. 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 webmaster@wmr-scca.org

RE Report: Phil's Philes

Race season is near. Time to dust off the race car, launder the worker whites, get your flagging arm ready, find your green shirt, find your tow strap, brush up on your computer skills, or whatever it is that you do for our club. We look forward to seeing all of you at the track this spring.

If you haven't seen the Club Racing schedule, it is very near what has been normal over the past several years. Western Michigan Region will host a Double Regional on Memorial Day weekend, as well as Labor Day weekend. We will also host a National in August. All three races will be at Grattan Raceway. We will also be supporting the Area 4 Driver's School at GingerMan Raceway. Please help us support these events.

If you haven't been out to a race, please come out for a day. No experience necessary to work one of the many specialties that allows us to race. We will help you get started, put you with a good trainer, and be sure you have fun. There's even a great dinner Saturday night after the track events are over. If you would like to get involved, feel free to contact me directly or just show up at the track. There are also other events at Grattan and GingerMan that our neighboring regions are putting on. Please continue to support these.

On to the business news. Central Division will officially split in November of this year. Great Lakes Division is in the process of forming. This is what used to be known as Area 4. The split line is basically along the Indiana/Illinois border. The split will not mean much to most club members. The biggest impact will be National Drivers, as Road America and Blackhawk Farms will be "out of division" races for 2007. We are hoping that it will not effect worker counts at events held in our area. Being that we are near the border of the two divisions, we will need to ensure we do not have schedule conflicts with Blackhawk Farms or Road America next year.

See you at the track!

Phil

Letter from the Editor

As you may know by now, I received the WMR Member of the Year award at the banquet in February. At this time I would like to thank everyone who thought highly enough of my service to nominate me for this accolade. I've tired very hard to have the best interest of the region and the club in mind as I serve in the various posts I hold. As a member of the Board of Directors, webmaster and Backfire editor, I continuously solicit input from the membership. Any question, comment or cause you feel merits my attention, please do not hesitate to contact me (see page 2 for that information) and I will work towards finding an answer to that issue. Thank you, again, for the award. I will treasure it always. In the future I will continue to work just as hard to earn your support.

Dayle

The Tech Shed by Chris Peet

Well it's the end of February, and I just saw my considerably rotund shadow, so I guess we'll be racing in about six weeks. There are some changes this year, some you will undoubtedly like, others not so much.

I now hold a national license, and will be able to take care of all your Tech'ing needs. This means I will chief my first national event this year, and that brings on a new set of challenges. The first issue is manpower. I simply do not have enough experienced staff to do all that is needed to be done, I need your help. I've found that drivers make some of the best techs around, so if you're not racing on a Regional or National weekend, come out and enjoy an afternoon at the track, even if only for one day.

Next is fuel testing. WMR does not have the equipment to do this, and I will address this at our next meeting. Without the staffing though, fuel testing will be the first thing to go. It's just too labor intensive for small regions. But remember, this is up to the chief steward, and the GCR.

One thing that *is* gone is waived tech classes. This is something we've decided to do as a division, and is being implemented through-out CenDiv. Instead we will do random pulls from qualifying, and paddock walks. Relax, we are not going to do full blown annuals. What we will do is look for specific things on specific cars, and will try to make it as quick and painless as possible. I will keep a list so that I don't look at the same car or same item more than once. Again, this will be done with the input and at the direction of the chief steward and the GCR.

The last thing I'll cover this month is the Annual tech day. I am in touch with Gingerman, and am looking at April 15. I also am backing this up with the possibility of using the Duncan Aviation lot in Battle Creek as I did last year. This year might be a problem as we are heavily into a major construction project at this time. I am willing to do individual inspection, as well as multiple ones that you coordinate amongst yourselves. Just get a few cars together at someone's shop or barn and I'll be glad to come out and look them over. Just call or e-mail me to set up a date and time. And be sure to check those belts, helmets and fire bottles.

See you at the Track

Chris Peet

Wounded Turtle's off season

This off season, like all previous ones, has been a mix of unrelenting boredom and sheer terror created by furious chaos. What does that mean? Simply put, it means that I sat around on my bum for a couple of months when I should have been working on the car. And now I have to flog like hell to catch up and be ready for the first race. As usual, CenDiv's Club Racing schedule is front loaded with races so you have to be ready early in order to get a head of the curve. Not what a procrastinator needs.

This winter's projects were many and varied. I needed to replace my rear fenders (call me silly, but I was tired of them flying off for no reason), get an air dam on the front, re-do my rear brakes and re-mount my fuel cell. Along with all of that (and the usual off season refreshing of systems), I was told by Rob Futcher (delicately) that my suspension was awful and that it needed a complete overhaul. I had shown him on track pictures of the car in corners and it was obvious that some changes needed to be made. But since I'm not a suspension engineer, I let him do the designing. He decided to take this on as a personal crusade. And just like the Crusades in the last millennium, he was in for a long battle.

As if there wasn't enough craziness going on, the rules for my car changed dramatically last fall. Larger front and rear brakes, wider wheels and some suspension modifications were now kosher. There was some valuable time lost while figuring out which path to follow. I decided to stay with the same size wheels (too expensive to buy new ones now) and the same brakes (I'd never had trouble stopping this car). Now that this bridge was crossed, we could move forward. I could always change those things at a later date.

Amidst all of this chaos, Melinda and I decided to get a new truck and trailer. We'd had a couple of towing issues and she wanted to eliminate those for the future. I was more than happy to get a new gooseneck trailer but I told her it would require a new truck to pull it. We'd need a super duper mega truck. No eyelashes were batted when I informed her of the price of these items. So I contacted a friend of mine who works for Ford. He gave me a PIN number so I could get his pricing and off I went to my dealer. What fun that was! I'd never ordered a new car before and picking the options I wanted was waaaay cool. We ended up getting a F-350 Super Duty with all the bells and whistles (Power Stroke Turbo Diesel V8, 4WD, heated leather seats, automatic temperature control, towing package, etc.). Arr, arr, arr!



As for the trailer, its purchase necessitated some research. I'd really liked the one I got six years ago and considered the same make. But I had gotten a flyer at the June Sprints last summer and, after reviewing it, decided to go with an Optima. There was a dealer in Kalamazoo so I could see one up close and inspect it. It was all Aluminum and VERY nice. So we ordered one of these with a couple of options on it (lighting package, hydraulic front legs, slightly taller). It was supposed to be delivered in early April but I got a call in late January telling me that it had arrived. WooHoo! Duane and I installed a new hitch in the new truck and on 2/4 we went to pick it up. I now had the daunting task of outfitting the new trailer so it could haul around our debris. In addition to the race car itself, we had to account for the golf cart, the tools, parts boxes, spares, wheels, canopy and poles, etc.



Wounded Turtle's off season

So back to the race car, in October I started to take the car apart where necessary and we jumped in with both feet. I started several projects and was very enthusiastic. Progress was made on many fronts. But I started a new job in November and I was away from home a lot. And before I knew it, it was January and the car had been untouched for a couple of months. Rob and I re-ignited the flame and started in on things in earnest in February. He and I came up with a concept of how the new rear suspension should be designed. Along with a buddy of mine (Jon Craig), Rob and I went over to Phil Green's house to fabricate several pieces of new rear suspension on 2/12. What a blast! All of us cutting, welding, drilling. Again...arr, arr, arr! Those new pieces are the foundation of the suspension. Together they should give us a lot of adjustability and, after some on track testing, give us much better cornering ability. Also required of this plan was to weld some steel plate into the trunk floor so I could anchor the newly fabricated panhard rod bracket to the chassis. As I don't weld, Rob came over to do that. Like I said, he didn't know what he was in for. As of this writing, the new parts have been sand blasted, powdercoated and mounted on the car.

While all of this parts fabricating was going on at Phil's, I had designed an aluminum carrier for the fuel cell. This would replace a larger, much heavier steel one and would take roughly 12 pounds out of the car. Phil was nice enough to weld together the aluminum tubing to create this new fuel cell compartment. This has also been installed in the car.

Next up was the fenders. I purchased new ones (from a friend who builds them) back in October. They sat in the garage for a couple of months while we worked on other projects. Finally in mid March we were able to start working on them again. Again, Rob came over and we fitted the fenders to the chassis. We cut and sanded them to fit the contours of the body. I was left in charge of finishing the prep work and hang them on the chassis with dzus fasteners. That took me quite a while as I was not used to working with fiberglass.

As time permits we will continue to work on the other projects (air dam, rear brakes, front suspension, etc.). For the immediate future, we have our hands full. If you're at the track, stop by and see us.

Until next time,
Dayle & Melinda

PS-visit www.woundedturtleracing.org to see images from this year's construction





**COME AND JOIN THE FUN
AT OUR NEXT MEMEBERSHIP MEETING**

**WHERE: CRAIG'S CRUISERS
5730 CLYDE PARK
WYOMING, MI 49509
(616) 530-2900**

WHEN: APRIL 8, 2006 at 7PM until Midnight (if you wish)

**PRICE: \$4 PER PERSON FOR FOOD AND ONE ACTIVITY.
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES CAN BE PURCHASED FOR \$3.50.**

**Please contact Sue Bailey for reservations no later than
March 31st. Call me at 616-878-9830 or send an e-mail:
dbailey_wmi@yahoo.com.**

**We will have a brief membership meeting followed by dinner
and activities. The activities you can enjoy are indoor go-
karts, bumper cars, laser tag, ropes course, frog hopper
and rock wall...your choice.**

Western Michigan Region of the Sports Car Club of America

Next Meeting:

- Date: April 8th, 2006 at 7:00PM
- Site: Craig's Cruisers
- Location: 5730 Clyde Park Avenue, Wyoming, MI 49509 / (616) 530-2900

Happy Easter and Passover

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

WMR-SCCA Backfire

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