



# BACKFIRE



[www.wmr-scca.org](http://www.wmr-scca.org)

December, 2010

## RE Ramblings



Verne Wandell  
RE, WMR  
DA, F&C for GLDiv

Well, another competition season is over. This last one was successful by most any measure. You will find end-of-the-season reports on racing and solo elsewhere in this newsletter and you will see the beginnings of next year's exciting schedule in another. You will also find a personnel change for the region that makes me, for one, quite happy. It has been a pleasure to be your RA of F&C for the past six years but I have wanted to expand my horizons for quite some time now and Karen Crider's agreement to take over that position leaves me free to do so. Karen has

done a wonderful job as one of the lead communicators for the past three years and her leadership as flag chief at the regional event last season leaves me with no doubt she will maintain the region's reputation for excellence in race management.

While the national election season is thankfully past, ours is just beginning. The past number of years has brought very little member response to the election process. Last year we had no nominations from members and little enough interest that no vote was required as only one

individual stood for each office. This year one of our board members is stepping down. Terry Feichtenbinder took over the treasurer's job last July, after our past treasurer decided not to renew his membership. Terry has done a great job of getting us out of a jam and keeping our bills paid, our event accounting clear and our checkbook in order. Terry's year-end report summary is also elsewhere in the newsletter. Terry let us know from the outset that he would help us out for the remainder of the term only and that he didn't really want to continue

(continued)

## 2010 Race Report



Dayle Frame  
ARE, WMR  
Comp Dir., WMR  
Webmaster,  
GLD & WMR

As we approach the end of the year, it's time to reflect upon, and examine, the past season. It had its ups and downs but, overall, we had a pretty good year. Several key factors turned our season upside down. One, we had new leadership from our new RE (Verne Wandell). Two, we would swap our races so that our national

was on the Memorial Day weekend and it would be a double national. Three, we would move into a new era and use an online registration system for all WMR events (Solo and Club Racing). Four, CenDiv's schedule would play havoc with our entries. Five, there was a major change in the criteria for Runoffs participation. All of

these aspects would be wild cards as the season approached.

I might as well start at the beginning. We had made a decision to go to an online registration system for our events in 2010. Employing a new service like this brought its own set of headaches.

(continued)

### Meetings

Meetings are generally held the second Saturday of the month at The Corner Landing, Ionia MI. Social hour/dinner starts at 6:00 with the meeting starting at 7:00. The Corner Landing is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Grand River and M-66 in Ionia. Its a few hundreds yards north of I-96.

### Future Meeting Dates

- December 11, 2010
- January 8, 2011
- February 19, 2011
- March 12, 2011
- April 9, 2011

### Annual Banquet

The annual banquet will be held at The Corner landing on January 8th, 2011. There will be a social hour at 6 PM, dinner at 7 and a short annual meeting to follow. Again this year we are holding the price to \$25.00/pp. Elsewhere in this issue please find, fill out and mail the RSVP to Mary Ellen Sickles.

### TRAILER PARTY

There will be a trailer party at Dayle's shop at 10 AM on January 15, 2011. There is some general cleaning as well as a few repairs that need to be accomplished before next season. RSVP to Dayle at [frameh@msu.edu](mailto:frameh@msu.edu) or 517.889.1117

## Race Report (continued)

While the learning curve was steep, in the long run it was a huge positive for us. We used MotorsportReg.com and found it to be a fine tool and we had great help from them every step of the way. Both Melinda Frame (Chief Registrar) and Lorrie Wandell (T&S Chief) would be thrown into the deep end of the pool as our first race was a double national on Memorial Day weekend. The CenDiv schedule meant that we would have our race the weekend following a double national at Road America. While Verne and I fretted as to what the impact of that event would be on us, in the end we had 130 ish entries and our angst was misplaced. Verne provided masterful leadership on this as he created a marketing plan and email campaign that would insure we'd have enough entries to make the event a success. The weather cooperated (mostly) and the event went very well.

Our double regional in August was not so successful. We saw our car count decrease dramatically at this event from years past. While several factors contributed to this, we were not alone as regional racing was down across the entire division. The change in Runoffs qualifications meant we lost entries from folks that normally run regionals to nationals. Now that the Runoffs criteria has changed again (making it tougher), we expect this to have a positive effect for 2011. All that being said, the 55 ish cars that showed up put on a helluva show. There was great racing in most classes and race groups. Who would think?

As usual our two events were very well staffed in all worker disciplines. This, once again, goes to the fact that everyone knows WMR puts on a great race. Our reputation precedes us.

As a whole, we exited the season in much better financial position than we entered it. As we look forward to 2011, I see the learning curve getting shallower for us. Verne and I have one season under our belt, everyone involved has learned how to use MSR, we've done one double national already. But we can't rest on our laurels. We need to work harder to insure that we maintain the momentum we've created this season carries into the next. To that end, I urge all of you who haven't been to a race in a while to contact Verne or myself and ask about how you can support your region as we move into the next season. We can always use more help and you'll have a lot of fun while you're at it.

Take care,  
Dayle



## Flagging and Communications

By Karen Crider

## The Treasurer's Report

By Terry Feichtenbiner



Congratulations to Verne Wandell who was awarded SCCA Worker of the Year for F&C at the Runoffs in September. A well deserved acknowledgment for a person that has worked hard to build consistency and professionalism in the region and the division. As Verne moves on to his new specialty, Steward-In-Training, I will be attempting to fill the

void as RA of F&C and the Chief of F&C for WMR. I have been flagging since 1991 and spent many years working Waterford Hills, races in the former CenDiv and also traveling to work the MTM events and Pro events. Most recently I've been the "other voice" in race control, sharing the duties of communicator with Verne.

I look forward to seeing everybody next season and encourage you to bring a family member, friend or colleague out for a weekend. Complimentary weekend SCCA memberships are available to anyone that wants to try out our sport. We are always happy to train someone new and show them how we spend so many weekends of our lives. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at: karenjcrider@hotmail.com or 248-981-9692.

With the closing of the Club Racing and Solo II seasons, I am able to provide a long view of the regions financial performance. The (4) successful Solo II events netted about \$920.00 for WMR. This is awesome, given that this program could be said to be in a rebuilding phase.

Club Racing's two events netted WMR about \$3,300.00. The Double National race was a big winner financially and we ran our Regional at a loss by keeping our word and holding the race we said we would. I believe it was the right thing to do, but it reduced our net balance.

We maintained and upgraded equipment in several areas in the past year. The BoD approved spending to bring our fire extinguishers up to meet current safety standards. We also purchased sound equipment, a race control radio and two T&S laptops as well as other needed gear and repairs. Solo also purchased updated loaner helmets to meet current requirements. In addition to race registrations, WMR also added to our bank balance with dues returned from the national office for nearly \$2,400.00 and the rental of our T&S gear (with the help of WMR's awesome T&S Admin) to others like VSCDA for a total of \$3,300.00.

The Chemical Bank Checking Balance was \$14,872.73 as of 11/05/2010

**THANK YOU KAREN !!**

Thank you to everyone who made my short term as Treasurer not only possible, but a pleasure.

## 2010 SOLO Wrap Up

By David Watson



### MSU Events:

Thanks to the MSU Racing Club and to MSU for allowing us to use their facility.

### Grattan Strikes Back Event:

Despite the rainy conditions on the Grattan Weekend, everyone had a safe and fun time. The general consensus was all would absolutely do it again. One attendee even emailed that it was the "Best event, hands-down that he had done"



### A Snapshot.....

The first event at Lansing Community College (LCC). Great Course—Tight Grid—Good Weather and a nice turnout made this an awesome season wrap up.

We really enjoyed this season and we are already beginning to make plans for 2011. We would like to say a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to all who volunteered their time and talents to make 2010 a success. We welcome any suggestions or input for the up coming season. Remember.....This is your Club and this is your Solo program—Your participation is vital.

David Watson

## Wounded Turtle Racing's 2010 season (part 1)

By Dayle Frame



2010 began the second chapter of Team Turtle's history. If you recall, life got in the way a few years ago and it had been four years since Melinda and I campaigned the Turtle. An exhaustive, ground-up rebuild had yielded a car that was much better than her previous incarnation. It had a better suspension, it was lighter, it was better engineered and it was much nicer looking. As a result, the expectations were high going into the season.

Heading into the spring, I had completed most of the rebuild of the chassis, but a few things remained. We needed to do a setup (corner weights, ride height, etc.) on the chassis. On 2/27, Rob Futcher and Phil Green came over and we did all of that. To get the car setup properly, I needed to get some new shocks, springs, spring spacers, etc. Once those were all purchased and installed we could finalize the setup in late April. Only a few minor details remained. Adding decals, bleeding the brakes and clutch, etc. I had wanted to do a test day at Ginger-Man Raceway but time and weather had not allowed us to do that. So it was on to Grattan and we'd do the testing on Friday before the race.

The Friday test day revealed a huge oil leak that we were able to conquer by borrowing a fitting from Steve DeLoof. I was very nervous going out on track for the first time. It had been three and a half years since I drove this car at speed and I had to calm myself down so I could concentrate on what I needed to do. The other thing we were trying to do that day was dial in the brake bias. It started at full rear and we gradually moved it forward during the day. Once we found the sweet

spot, we locked it down and called it a day. Saturday morning we had a practice session and I was feeling more and more confident as time went on. I qualified at a 1:38.858 for Race One (Sunday morning). Due to some mechanical problems by other drivers (Duane Bailey, Matt Brannon and Greg Gauper), I was on the pole for HP. This was my first ever pole for a national event. I knew I would not be the fastest car if the others got fixed for the race. And that's what happened. Gauper and Brannon passed me right away making me third. Bailey passed me a few laps later. Once he was past me, I relaxed and slowed down a bit. He later had a problem that allowed me to get back to a third place finish. My fast lap was a 1:36.242. Not too shabby for her first time out. Later on Sunday we would qualify for the Monday's Race Two. Again, the car behaved great and I set a fast lap of 1:37.951. I was now qualified in second place. The weather was now a question for the race. All weekend long the weather had been mid 80's and dry. Thunderstorms had been predicted for Monday morning. Our plan was to mount the rain tires on one set of rims (taking off the tires we had used for the entire weekend) and having brand new slicks on the other set of rims. Monday we awoke to a lot of rain overnight and it continued to rain until 9AM or so. By the time our race came along at 11AM, the track was dry so we went with the slicks. As we were getting ready for the race, Rob gave me a pep talk. He was disappointed in me backing off during the first race once Duane was past me (and rightly so). After his fabulous pep talk, I would give it maximum effort on every lap and we'd see what happened. After a couple of laps the radio started beeping loudly. I assumed that this meant the battery was dying, so I turned it off. As we had no pit board we were on hand signals (note to self...get a pit board). Brannon was in front of me and Bailey was behind. I saw Bailey coming and he passed me in T2 on lap eight in some traffic. I was determined to stay as close as I could because I thought I had more power and could pass him on the front straight. I was only a few car-lengths back coming onto the front stretch and drafted him down the straight. I passed him going into T1

and I never saw him again. By now Brannon had pulled into the pits with transmission troubles. Little did I know that I was the only HP car left. I was in a pack of cars (an EP Austin Healey 3000, a GTL Nissan Sentra) and having a lot of fun. I kept hammering the car around the track. It seemed like forever. Once, while I was going by, Melinda held up four fingers. I assumed this meant there were four laps left. My guess was correct as a couple of laps later the 'one' board was held out signifying that we were on the last lap. What a relief. I crossed the finish line and headed into the pits where I was told I was the winner. I motioned for Futcher to hop in and carry the flag on the victory lap. Nobody deserved it more. It was his hard work and engineering skills that created the car over the last few years. As a lot of corner workers knew me, several ran to the edge of the track and waved and saluted me as I drove by (a VERY nice touch). One worker (Jai Deagan) actually stood in the road and made me stop so he could pour water on me.....and it was COLD (but refreshing). When we got back to the tech it was time for the post race schmoozing. That's the best part.

After our successful weekend at Grattan, we decided to add Nelson Ledges to the schedule. We did that for a variety of reasons. One, it was on the way to Watkins Glen. Two, it was a track at which we'd never raced. Three, and probably most importantly, I was personally challenged to 'man up' and come race there by Debbie LaFond. She told me I should come to her 'house' and see if I could beat her. So on 7/2, we drove to Nelson Ledges and got set up for the weekend. A couple of laps into the first practice session on Saturday, I heard a loud grinding noise. I pulled into pits and inspected the car. Nothing obvious. So we took it back to the paddock and disassembled the rear a bit. I observed that the chassis end of the third link had moved forward an inch or so. This allowed the diff to point downward a bit and the drive shaft to scrape on the sway bar so a serious fix was in order. After consulting with some prod guys, a repair plan was hatched. Maurice LaFond directed me to the track manager (Scott Lane) who has a prep shop on

the grounds. We got the car over there and started working on it by 11:30 or so. A lot of hammering and welding later, we had it done by 6:30 that afternoon. I had missed my qualifying session for Race One but the car was repaired so we'd just start at the back of the field. This would be a challenge as there were 10 HP cars in the field. I had my game together though and we eventually ended up third as we passed seven of them (including Debbie...on the first lap). It was a lot of fun as it was a 'next target on the range' situation. Every time I passed another HP car, Melinda told me how far in back of the next one I was. I was rung out at the end but the day was just starting as we had to qualify for Race Two. I qualified third and was looking for a good race the next day. Ron Bartell was the class of the field but Tom Broring, Martin Burk and myself would do battle for the next spots. Tom had a motor problem and that left Martin and I to do battle. I was six or seven seconds behind with a dozen laps left. Melinda called out the gap every time we went by. Finally, I was all over him going down the front stretch. By the time we got to the carousel, the leaders were coming around. I gave them a point by, got in the marbles and almost slid off track. This allowed Martin to get away a bit but the hunt was not over. I got closer again....and again I made a mistake. I didn't match revs and spun a bit in T13. This allowed him to get further away. By now the race was almost over so I conceded second place to him and made sure I didn't do anything else too stupid. So the count was one repair, two races, two thirds...not too shabby. On to The Glen.

Watkins Glen was a mixed bag. On one hand you had the beautiful surrounding area, the nice folks at the track and a great race track to drive. On the other were a myriad of minor issues that, when added together, diminished the trip a bit. I'll elaborate: We arrived at the track about 2PM on 7/8. Registration would open at 6PM but we thought we could at least get inside, drop our trailer and set up. Nope. Grrrr. So we dropped the trailer and headed into town for a couple of hours of sightseeing. We got back, waited in line, got registered and off we went. We found a great spot in the grass and set up

camp. The next morning would be our first qualifying session for Race One. This track wasn't real tough but you had to stay sharp as there was guardrail everywhere. The afternoon session was marred by a black flag all that ate up eight minutes of our 25 minute session. Add to that the in and out laps and half the session was a wash. Grrrr. We also didn't get a five minute warning which added to the angst. The next morning's session was another qualifying session with the race right after lunch. But a T&S delay meant we didn't race until almost 2:30. We delayed lunch thinking we would eat after the race but that turned out to be a mistake. Grrrr.

Race One was great.....if you liked full course yellows. We were supposed to have a 14 lap race. It ended up being 11 because of FCYs. Of those 11 laps, only five were racing laps. Grrrrr. As for the race itself, Ron Bartell broke and was out by lap six so this left



Tom Broring, Charles Gerundo and me (in that order) to vie for the lead. We were all together on the track. With a lap and half left, we get the green. I dove under Charles in T10 and he cut me off and forced me into the grass. I regained my momentum by T1 and dove under him again. We were side by side all the way through the esses and up to the bus stop when we saw a waving yellow. I broke last and assumed second with Tom just in front of me. We weaved our way through the incident and set off to do battle again. I used a slower GTL car as a block in T7 but apparently there was a FCY out there that I didn't see. I crossed the line first but was dinged to third by a protest. And rightly so.

Race Two was another animal altogether. I went out and qualified on Sunday morning and did better. But again, a lack of grid sheets didn't tell

us the whole story. Today we were supposed to be the second race after lunch so we ate before the race (lesson learned). But there was a huge incident in T8 which required the repair of the guardrail and tire wall. This delayed our race by 90 minutes. The problem was that the grid didn't know when we were supposed to start so we actually were belted in with the helmet on twice only to have the race delayed. Grrrr. In the end the delay was enough to shorten our race from 14 to eight laps. Grrrr. When we did go out, the race was kind of boring (at first). Tom and Charles got away from me and I decided to soldier around and collect another third. On the seventh lap, the leaders were coming around. I saw them coming quite early and moved out of their way. I hugged the inside of the corner (a left hander) I pointed to the right but still got hit anyway. I was so furious that I lost concentration and allowed the fourth place HP car (Joe Camilleri) to catch and pass me on the last lap. I stoked the coals and passed him back just before the finish line to save my third place. In impound, the offending driver apologized but said my damage was "minor...and its only fiberglass". Grrrr. I filed a protest but I was told it was "...not well founded" and it was rejected. Grrrrr. So we stayed the night in Corning, drove home the next day, parked the rig in the new shop and went home to sleep it off. Two more races, two more thirds.

As I stated, a myriad of issues cropped up at the Watkins Glen race (T&S, grid, etc.). I expected more from a region and division that should know how to put on a race. It reminded me about how well we (WMR and GLDiv) put on races.

In the end, we ran six races, finished all of them, had one win, five thirds, finished with 47 points and won the Great Lakes Division crown. Nationally, we had 72 points and finished tied for fifth. Four of those races were at tracks on which I'd never competed. All in all, a pretty good season. Now it was on to the Runoffs.

(To be continued)

RE Ramblings (continued)  
in the position beyond the present term. His retirement and decision to pursue other interests after this year have only made that decision clearer. While the other board members have agreed to stand for another term we are in need of a treasurer. As you will see, we have only one nominee for the treasurer's position. Members of the board have contacted several members about the position but only one of them agreed to stand for the club. It has been quite a few years since the general membership has stepped up to run for a board position during the nomination period. The board would surely welcome a change in that area. If you are willing to assume an extra mantle of duty in your club or if you know someone else who deserves to be considered please consider making a nomination.

We continue to meet monthly, the second Saturday of the month, at The Corner Landing in Ionia. The turnout remains disturbingly low. On an average

Saturday the board turns out as well as any new members that have found the meeting on our web site and, once-in-a-while, another member. I would gladly entertain any ideas that the membership has for making these meetings more inviting. We have faced a number of challenges in the last few years and I think solutions could have come more readily if we had a larger base of knowledge and experience to survey. If you have any ideas please address them to me or to our Director-at-Large, Bobbe Orr. Contact information for both of us may be found at the back of the newsletter.

In this newsletter you will also find information and a reservation form for the Annual Club Banquet and meeting to be held at The Corner Landing on January 8<sup>th</sup>. I hope you will take the time to come out, congratulate our newest member-of-the-year and spend some time with the members, both new and old, who attend.

Finally, take a look at the article on

next season's new event, a joint double regional shared with Midwest Council of Sports Car Clubs. This is the first event of its kind in the division and it will be an exciting undertaking with the potential of adding a number of cars and drivers that are new to the region. It is one more step in the process that both the WMR board and the SCCA national office are taking to try and keep sports car racing relevant and growing. WMR has had wonderful results in sharing events with other regions. We worked together with SBR two years ago and last year had a very successful double national with Fort Wayne Region, an event we will be holding again over Memorial Weekend. We are hoping that, like those changes, the new event with MCSCC will bring new cars and drivers and additional prosperity for the club. If you haven't been involved with a race for a while there will be plenty of opportunity to come out and play. I look forward to seeing all of you further down the track.

VRW

## 2011 Local Road Racing Calendar

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It isn't too early to start thinking about next season's racing schedule. While all the events are tentative, following is a list of events that are either local or of interest to drivers within the local SCCA community.

- April 21 – May 1, 2011, VSCDA Spring Brake driver school and race at GingerMan Raceway
- May 7– 8, 2011, Great Lakes Division SCCA driver school at Nelson Ledges Road Course
- May 28 – 30, 2011, WMR/FWR Cheap Points Double National at Grattan Raceway Park
- July 9 – 10, 2011, South Bend Region National/Regional Races at GingerMan Raceway
- July 16 – 17, 2011, 24 Huers du LeMons Race at GingerMan Raceway
- July 23 – 24, 2011, WMR/MCSCC double regional at Grattan Raceway Park
- August 19 – 21, 2011, VSCDA Au Grattan Summer Race and Picnic at Grattan Raceway Park

## ACCOLADES



**WMR RE, Verne Wandell, receives the F&C worker of the year award for 2010 from Jeff Dahnert, President and CEO of SCCA, Inc. during the 2010 Runoffs.**

**In addition, both Verne and Lorrie Gaunt-Wandell, DA of T&S for the division as well as RA for the region, have qualified for membership discounts under the Volunteer Incentive Program for volunteering 12-19 days to the club during 2010.**



### 2011 Double Regional Joint Event with MCSCC

The upcoming race season will feature the first of what we hope will be a new series in racing for WMR, a double regional co-sanctioned by WMR and the Midwest Council of Sports Car Clubs. The "Council", as it is commonly known, is an organization of 8 clubs on the other side of the lake with a great history and a philosophy similar to our own. Midwest Council "prides itself on a family-friendly atmosphere and emphasis is on fun and safety first. Safety has always been paramount, and the combination of thorough driver training, tough stewarding and sensible competition has given the group a national reputation for its competitive programs and members."

There were many hurdles to jump in order to make this event happen and, honestly, not a few left to leap before the show goes on but we are excited to put this event on the schedule and

to return to a time when MCSCC and WMR cooperated on events on a regular basis. Several (read that as many) years ago WMR could not get a track date on this side of the lake. At that time the Council folks took us under their wing and partnered with us to host joint events at Blackhawk Farms in South Beloit, IL. This was before I was a member and so I can't give you any in-depth history on the event but this event offers us a way to pay back that favor, introduce a number of drivers to SCCA racing in the WMR spirit and, hopefully, increase the field at our regional event which has been declining in recent years with the sagging economy (not only for WMR but for SCCA racing in general as well as for MCSCC). Please come out to see the cars and meet the folks from Council as we venture into a new era of road racing in Western Michigan.

— VRW —

### TRAILER PARTY AT DAYLE'S

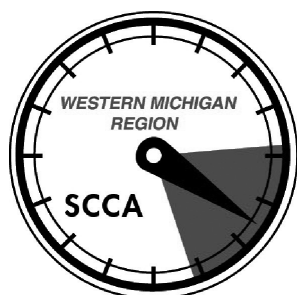
Over the course of the season the trailer gets a lot of use by both the solo and the race disciplines. That takes a seasonal toll and proper maintenance is a necessity. We can do it ourselves or pay to have somebody else go over it. On January 15 at 10 AM I am hoping a number of you will choose to meet us at Dayle's shop in Lansing where the trailer is stored for the winter. There is something for everyone to do. The trailer needs a good general cleaning, the roof needs to be sealed in several places, the brakes need to be adjusted and wheel bearings packed. Some of the shelving and shelf supports probably need some care as well.

The Club will provide lunch for those who join us and you can browse a couple of our members' cars as they begin preparations for next racing season. Honest, we have a pretty good time at these events and are always looking for new/better ideas for packing everything we need to haul around and for maintenance procedures.

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Mailing label

*Grassroots racing in Western Michigan.*



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

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