

velocity

PORSCHE OWNERS CLUB



JOHN GORDON - 2010 DRIVER OF THE YEAR
DREW WATERHOUSE - 2010 MEMBER OF THE YEAR





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PORSCHE

EDITOR'S NOTE

SANDY ISAAC

This issue blows the lid off a not-very-well kept secret among Porsche Owners Club competitors – They smile. Sure, when we show up at a race track for a Cup Race or Time Trial or Performance Driving Series event, it's an impressive display of hardware and game faces. The men and women buckle-up and bear down with full focus on lowering their lap times and/or winning the race that day. But what you'll see in this issue is a lot of smiling. Smiling as they collect their hard-earned well-deserved year-end class championship trophies. Smiling as seasoned Time Trialers graduate from the Racers Clinic to begin their new career as rookie Cup Racers. Smiling after they look up their very first lap times or successfully negotiate their first-ever throttle-steer in a

Performance Driving Series event alongside a helpful, patient POC volunteer instructor. (And while I don't have a picture of that, you'll read about it. Repeatedly.) Because the key to this club isn't the spectacular collection of Porsches (and a couple other cars that don't begin with "P") that we bring to each venue or that we happen to be the fastest, safest, most knowledgeable and most experienced group of Porsche track drivers in the U.S.A. (This is not an official statement of fact approved by the P.O.C. management, just the opinion of this biased Editor and maybe a couple hundred fellow P.O.C. members.) The key to the Porsche Owners Club is that the members enjoy spending time with one another off the track too. Smiling.



On the Cover:
Driver of the Year (John Gordon) and
Member of the Year (Drew Waterhouse)

Cover Photo by Virtual Access Photo

FIRST TIMERS

JOHN PAYNE

If you are reading Velocity for the first time and wondering what it might be like to drive your Porsche on a race track, this message is for you.

The Porsche Owner's Club (POC) is a Southern California based organization of men and women who were all in the position you are now -- wondering what it would be like to experience the full performance capabilities of your car in a way that cannot be achieved on the street. And we shared the same concerns you are feeling -- Is it safe? Is it scary? Is this something I can really do? Will I feel welcome as a

newbie with my driving experience consisting of driving to work or to the store? Will I be welcome if I drive a car other than a Porsche? The answers to these questions happen to be: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. And Yes.

The Porsche Owners Club welcomes new drivers wholeheartedly and would love to have YOU join us. We will take you as far as you want to go. This is a non-profit club. Our members come from all walks of life. Some have brand new cars. Some have cars older than many members. Most of us have families and are involved in many other

activities. We do love our cars – more so now that we have learned how to drive them to the limit. Our volunteer instructors are the best in the business and will guide you through the process of learning your car's true capabilities. You will have the time of your life!

We encourage you to take the first step and join us for an introductory day of high performance driving by calling the club at 949-360-6475 or emailing us at officeofpoc@aol.com. We look forward to seeing you and welcoming you into our POC family.

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Virtual Access Photo

FROM THE **PRESIDENT** MIKE TAKAKI

It's been a great start to 2011. We already have a Performance Driving Series Drivers Clinic, three PDS events, and two Cup Races under our belts. And by the time you receive this, we will have been to Spring Mountain and completed two events at our latest addition to our PDS schedule, Pomona. Ten events in three months – that's a lot of driving. Thanks to everyone involved for making it happen.

Starting this year, Andrew Weyman has been appointed as Production Manager for Velocity. Andrew will be setting mailing date schedules, coordinating advertisers, and keeping the magazine revenue neutral. It is an enormous job that sustains Velocity as a wonderful marketing and promotional tool for our club. Thanks, Andrew, for stepping up.

If any of you are looking for service points, please contact Laurie. We will find something for you. I know it's early in the year and the thought of a year-end club championship is far off, but we all know how the months and events will race by. Don't be the driver scrambling for those final points. Accumulate them now.

Our Board of Directors will be reviewing various initiatives over the next three months, including some GCR revisions. Plus, we welcome the opportunity to investigate different, new ideas for the club. If you have thoughts on how to



improve our club, drop any board member an email, or go Old School and use a telephone! I'm proud to work with such a great group on the board. Next time you see one of the board members, thank him or her. They are all volunteers, giving their valuable time for your benefit.

We have an exciting series of upcoming events in the next few months for everyone to enjoy. 2011 is shaping up to be our most competitive year yet. See you soon.



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2010 SEASON FINALE WILLOW SPRINGS RACEWAY

by Chet Kolley Photos by Virtual Access Photo

Saturday morning began with a winter chill in the air as the green flag dropped on the Time Trial and Cup Race season finale. An overcast sky was somewhat ominous and a hint of things to come later in the weekend.

This was my first trip to Willow Springs Raceway as a newly minted PDS license holder. It is the oldest, purpose-built road course in America and it's known as the "Fastest Road in the West" for good reason. The overall track record of 1:06.05

was set by Michael Andretti driving a Champ car in 1987, eclipsing Nigel Mansell's 1982 record of 1:06:30 in an F1 car.

As I came thru the gates and into the paddock and pit area, I got a sense of nostalgia, history, and speed. Willow Springs is different than Auto Club Speedway, the other big track with which I am most familiar. There are no awe-inspiring grandstands. No tunnel that brings to mind a gladiator about to take stage. The distinct lack of

amenities makes it clear that the place exists for the singular purpose of providing a pure driving experience.

During this all-important final weekend, the 2010 Time Trial and Cup Race champions would be determined while a Racers Clinic would school the next group of aspiring POC wheel-to-wheel competitors (covered in John Armstrong's article in this issue – Ed).

During our Time Trial drivers meeting, TT Chairman Jack Greening explained the system he uses to give the practice sessions and timed runs the maximum amount of clear track space for each driver. After every session, the TT run group is re-grid according to the last session's times. This session-to-session grid adjustment and realignment ensures that each practice session starts as a tight group that gradually spreads out, which keeps the run groups pretty close and allows for many clear laps without

Mike Monsalve



Orange Group PreGrid

POC generations - Regan and Jim Steedman



being held up. Jack is ably assisted by Jackie & Gabe on the grid/pits and Larry the starter in keeping the sessions running like clockwork. The teamwork and professionalism of this crew was quite evident throughout the weekend.

As a recently licensed PDS driver, I was interested in learning about moving up to the Time Trial group. For other PDS folks considering the move up, you can expect higher speeds at larger tracks that demand a variety of advanced skills. I learned from talking to numerous Time Trialers that you never stop learning and improving. A

step up to Time Trials also means some important new investments in safety equipment. A thorough review of the GCRs is a must, and a consultation with experienced Time Trial drivers driving similar cars is a worthwhile investment of time.

The V3 Time Trial Class had a very close battle coming into the weekend between Steve Alarcon and Carl Tofflemire. Alarcon clinched the V3 title by taking first in class on both Saturday and Sunday. Darren Rushin took Fast Time Of Day in his awesome RSR with a 1:22.231 on Saturday and a 1:23.034 on Sunday.



LIGHTEN UP

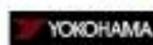
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2011 UPCOMING EVENTS

April 30-May 1 - Willow Springs

Triple Crown Event – Cup Race #5 & 6, Time Trial #5 & 6, PDS exhibition

June 3-5 - Auto Club Speedway

Tribute To LeMans 4-Hour Enduro, Cup Race #7, Time Trial #7

June 18-19 - Streets of Willow

PDS #6 & 7

July 30-31 - Pomona Fairplex

PDS #8 & 9

August 26-28 - Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

Cup Race #8 & 9, Time Trial #8 & 9

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2010

Revenues		Revenues in Excess of Track Costs	53,713.75
Revenue - Registration Fees	528,702.00		
Revenue - Gift Certificate	265.00	Expenses	
Revenue - Refreshments	300.00	Contract Services - Admin	27,900.00
Revenue - Advertising	25,770.00	Advertising	9,090.00
Revenue - Banquet	6,500.00	Bank Charges	136.05
Revenue - Membership Dues	31,764.12	Credit Card Service Charges	15,636.83
Revenue - License Fees	3,865.00	Meetings	3,481.25
Revenue - Track Partners	22,500.00	Miscellaneous Expenses	260.00
Revenue - Sponsorship Fees	11,265.00	Office Expense & Supplies	3,166.27
Revenue - Merchandise Sales	1,170.00	Postage	312.75
Revenue - Fuel	6,469.65	Professional Fees	7,299.90
Total Revenues	<u>638,570.77</u>	Marketing	780.00
		Member Services	1,427.13
Track Costs		Repairs & Maintenance	721.46
Services - Announcing	105.93	Software License Fees	70.00
Services - Corner Workers	70,583.86	Storage	1,185.00
Services - Points	3,600.00	Taxes - Other	911.14
Services - Registration	30,112.18	Travel Expenses	1,335.70
Services - Timing	13,824.08	Website	4,547.40
Services - Race Steward	6,317.50	Total Expenses	<u>78,260.88</u>
Services - Fire	21,794.23		
Services	3,408.10	Other Revenue	
Rental Expenses	3,050.00	Interest Income	1,088.12
Rental - Emergency Vehicles	33,316.25	Total Other Revenue	<u>1,088.12</u>
Rental - Equipment	1,055.40		
Rental - Track	260,711.00	Net Revenues over Expenses	<u>23,459.01</u>
Fuel	8,503.00		
Refreshments	1,546.84		
Catering	8,055.64		
Calendar	7,593.41		
Promotions	14,149.65		
Security	3,502.50		
Track Supplies	1,051.49		
Magazine Production	23,052.19		
Printing	3,934.78		
Awards	21,670.60		
Banquet Food	16,275.24		
Travel - Event	1,998.15		
Insurance	25,645.00		
Total Track Costs	<u>584,857.02</u>		



Robert DeRose



Jan Sussman



WILLOW SPRINGS RACEWAY

Dan Davis Leads The Red Race

The list of Saturday's Time Trial class winners included: Bernie Bogard (BSR), Fred Husted (BSX), Duane Selby (CSR), Carolyn Pappas (GP), Matthew Herrill (GSR), Darren Rushin (GT1), Drew Waterhouse (GT2), William Fox (GT3), Gunter Enz (GT4), Doug Dodge (GT5), Michael Hammond (HP), Paul Young (IP), Chris Andropoulos (JI), Brent Gokbudak (JP), Arnulf Graf (JS), Martin Schacht (KI), Jason Huang (LP), Robert Morales (MP), Jan Sussman (NP), Kent Harmon (V2), Steve Alarcon (V3), Craig Trask (V4), and Marc Holthaus (V5).

Sunday's Time Trial class winners were: Bernie Bogard (BSR), Chad Elliott (BSX), Carolyn Pappas (GP), Matthew Herrill (GSR), Darren Rushin (GT1), Drew Waterhouse (GT2), William Fox (GT3), Gunter Enz (GT4), Doug Dodge (GT5), Paul Young (IP),

Henry Hinck (JI), Brent Gokbudak (JP), Arnulf Graf (JS), Kevin Favell (LP), Jeremy Bernath (MP), Jan Sussman (NP), John Armstrong (V2), Steve Alarcon (V3), Craig Trask (V4) and Marc Holthaus (V5).

For the Saturday Orange/Green Cup Race, I took my position in the Balcony to watch the run to Turn 1 and then catch drivers coming thru Turn 3 and charging up the hill to Turn 4. Into Turn 4 on the first lap, we had Michael Monsalve, Athan Aronis, Duane Selby, and Steve Alarcon. A close and exciting race throughout resulted in Monsalve taking first, followed by Aronis just .169 second behind, and then Alarcon.

Saturday Orange/Green Cup Race class winners were: Michael Monsalve (R5), Duane Selby (CSR),

Craig Trask (R6), Vali Predescu (BSR), Paul Young (R7), Mervyn Rudgley (R9S), Steve Ruckmick (GT5), and Carolyn Pappas (R9).

The Red Cup Race weekend promised a tight battle for the GT2 class crown between Drew Waterhouse and Dan Aspesi, with the two separated by only a handful of points. Unfortunately, the battle never materialized on Saturday due to a track incident that took Drew out on the first lap. Dan went on to take the GT2 win in the race. Saturday's GT1 class -- and checkered flag -- were won by James Sofronas, with Daniel Davis second after a late pass of Darren Rushin, who finished third.

Other Saturday Red Cup Race class winners were:

John Gordon (GT3), Franz Bluschke (GT4), Bob Balsamo (R2), and Iain Stobie (R3).

The Orange/Green Cup Race on Sunday was exciting and eventful, featuring a full course yellow, a black flag, and a restart. The front two rows were occupied by the usual suspects Alarcon, Monsalve, Aronis, and Parker. Entering Turn 1 on the second lap, Duane Selby made a nice outside pass on Steve Alarcon and Michael Monsalve, who had run much of the first lap side-by-side. Fast-forward to the lap 12 restart: Alarcon, and then Monsalve, repassing Selby. On the last lap, Monsalve had a nice run out of Turn 9, and outbraked Alarcon into Turn 1 to take the lead. The finishing order: Monsalve, Alarcon, Selby.

Sunday Orange/Green Cup Race Class winners included: Michael Monsalve (R5), Duane Selby (CSR), Craig Trask (R6), Vali Predescu (BSR), Paul Young (R7), Mervyn Rudgley (R9S), Steve Ruckmick (GT5), and Carolyn Pappas (R9).

The ugly, darkened sky finally made good with its threats as the Red Cup Race got underway on Sunday. Even though Drew Waterhouse hadn't completed the Saturday Cup Race, he and Dan Aspesi entered the Sunday race in a tie for the season championship due to the number of races dropped from scoring. So this was the race that would decide it all. Unfortunately, the rain played a major role in this race, with several drivers bringing it in rather than race on slicks in the rain with poor visibility. Dan persisted with a gutsy drive in the

rain to take the race win and the GT2 championship over Drew.

Sunday Red Cup Race Class winners were: Dan Aspesi (GT2), Darren Rushin (GT1), Gary Tolar (GT3), Ron Palmer (GT4), Iain Stobie (R3), and Bob Balsamo (R2).

By the time the Blue Racer's Clinic group took to the track for their race on Sunday afternoon, the wet track was deemed unsafe for Green Flag racing, so the race was run under caution, but it was far from a boring parade on the slick surface. After the race, instructors congratulated drivers, some of whom were now official POC Cup Racers! It was a fabulous, season-ending weekend.



PORSCHE
 THE PORSCHE OWNERS CLUB
55TH ANNUAL

January 22, 2011
 Old Ranch Country Club
 Seal Beach, California

**AWARDS
 BANQUET**

The entire club thanks and congratulates Banquet Chairperson Regan Steedman for a spectacular evening celebrating the POC members' spirit of camaraderie and commitment to driving excellence.

In addition, Regan would like thank Mike Takaki, Carolyn Pappas, Drew Waterhouse, Kip Waterhouse, Cathy Robson, and Jeff Erickson for their help and support.



Time Trial 1st Place

(L to R) Front Row: Robert Morales, Carolyn Pappas, Steve Alarcon, Bill Fox
 Back Row: Tawfik Benabdejalil, Eric Olberz, Guido Rietdyk, Craig Trask, Arnulf Graf, Drew Waterhouse,
 Donald Neville, Bernie Bogard, Walter Airth, Gunter Enz, John Armstrong, Brent Gokbudak



Cup Race 1st Place Winners:

(L to R) Front Row: Mike Monsalve, Carolyn Pappas, John Gordon, Eric Olberz
 Back Row: Craig Trask, Guido Rietdyk, Duane Selby, Mark Mitchell, Dan Aspesi, Ron Palmer, Donald Neville, Walter Airth



Performance Driving Series 1st Place

(L to R) Arnulf Graf, Robert Morales, Donald Neville, Richard Yochum, Eric Takaki, John Armstrong,
 Eric Oviatt, Jonathan Gerber, Marty Mehterian, Ryan Williams, Victor Villard, Jeffrey Schmidt
 Jon Wierks, Chet Kolley, Dave Elliott



*Cup Race 2nd Place Winners:
L to R) Steve Alarcon, Drew Waterhouse, Bernie Bogard, Bill Fox, Gunter Enz, Tawfik Benadbdejalil*



*Competition Committee
(L to R) Michael Holgate, Steve Parker, John Gordon, Marty Mehterian, Loren Beggs, Jeff Erickson*



*Cup Race 3rd Place Winners:
(L to R) Bob Thacker, Steve Parker, Joel Lepoutre, Bob Ehrman*



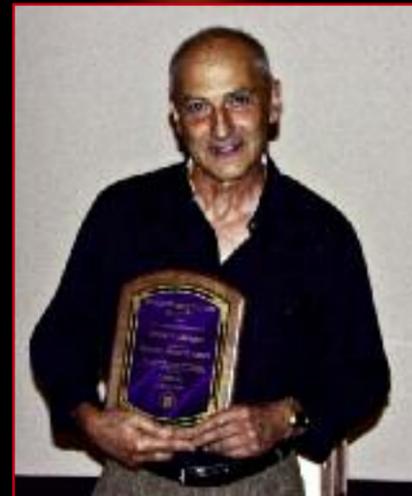
*Committee Heads
(L to R) Front row: Steve Alarcon, Regan Steedman, Nick Richards
Back row: Marty Mehterian, Maia Schenkel, Leonard Schenkel, Steve Ruckmick, Steve Parker, Bob Thacker, Craig Trask, Jack Greening, Kurt Gokbudak*



Member of the Year - Drew Waterhouse



Rookie of the Year - Joel Lepoutre



Spirit Award - Marty Mehterian



*Membership Committee
(L to R) Steve Ruckmick, Andrew Weyman, Eric Oviatt, Carolyn Pappas, Tawfik Benadbdejalil, Ryan Williams*



*Performance Driving Series 2nd Place
Leland McArthur, Jeffrey Takaki, Jacqueline Lu, Patrick Brass*

2010 DRIVER OF THE YEAR JOHN GORDON



*Performance Driving Series 3rd Place
Terry Davis, Kurt Gokbudak*



Driver of the Year - John Gordon

At the beginning of the 2010 season, the POC decided to implement a weight/WHP classification system. It was hoped that the new classes would attract more racing participants to the Red Run Group. Simultaneously, Yokohama Tires via Trackside Performance antied-up a generous contingency program for these new GT classes. I was excited...

I took a long look at the new classes and decided my 996 Spec car could be competitive in the new

GT3 class so I signed up for the first event at WSIR. I came in second and third. At the next event at Spring Mountain, I again finished in second both days and won my first contingency slicks from Yokohama. It became obvious that I had some work to do to if I wanted to win both the class and the tires. I was nowhere near the class limits of weight/HP, so I flashed my ECU and added headers netting me 23 whp. I then dropped 150 pounds of steel and glass from the car. The results were felt

immediately at the next event where I won class both days and 4 slicks for my efforts. Ah, the thrill of victory...

We put a group of 996 Specs together for the handicapped division of POC's "Tribute To LeMans" and remarkably we won. That was definitely a strong candidate for my highlight of the year. I experienced success throughout the remainder of the year and won the GT3 class championship. This was my second class championship (Spec Boxster in 08') and it was equally rewarding.

The final chapter of my 2010 season was being awarded POC's prestigious "Driver of the Year" award at our year-end banquet. I am honored...

I'd like to thank Dan Aspesi of Speed Gallery for building me an extremely competitive Porsche race car and supporting me at the track, and Troy Simmons of Trackside Performance/Yokohama Tires for their generous tire contingency program. I look forward to the challenges of 2011....

JR Gordon



*President's Awards
(L to R) Front Row: Mike Takaki, Alan Faragallah, Jeff Erickson
Back Row: Steve Parker, Steve Alarcon, Laurie Taylor, Duane Selby, Eric Oviatt*



John Deere Award - Jim Steedman



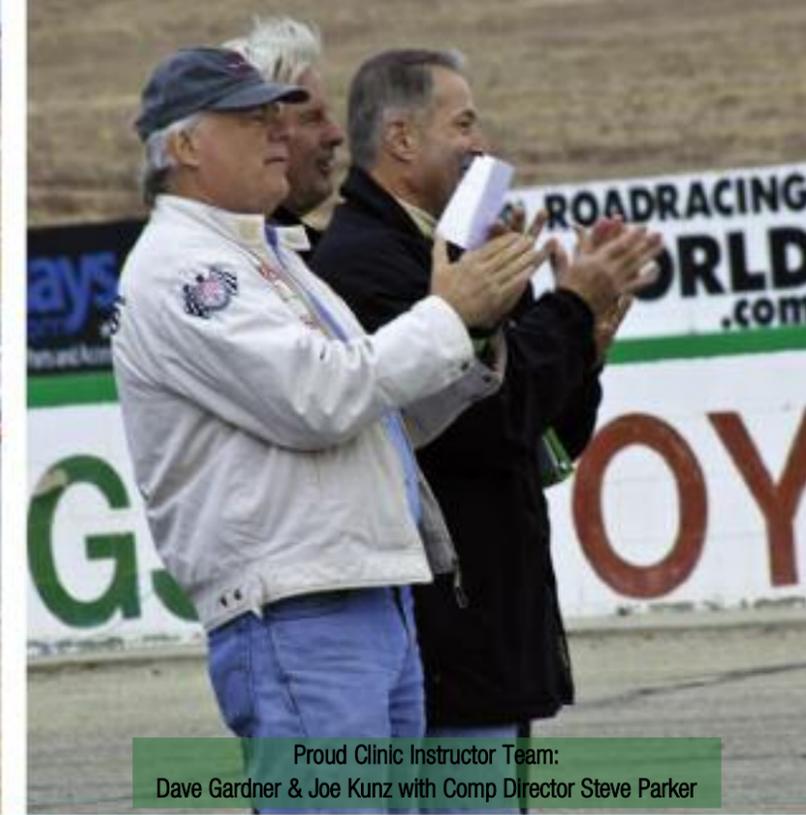
Service Points Champ - Jack Greening



Kent Harmon



John Armstrong and Bob Baird



Proud Clinic Instructor Team:
Dave Gardner & Joe Kunz with Comp Director Steve Parker

A WHOLE NEW REALM: The Racers Clinic at Willow

by John Armstrong
Photos by Virtual Access Photo

On a cloudy December morning, the throbbing roar of Porsche engines on track threatens to drown out the speaker in the classroom. Twenty-three eager heads crane forward.

"We're here to pass on our skills," begins Marty Mehterian, Chief Driving Instructor. "You're bringing it with you already. We want you to show us you're ready to be competitive, to drive fast, and drive safely."

It would be an understatement to say that the excitement in the room is palpable. The legendary Racers Clinic at Willow Springs has begun.

On two race weekends a year, the Porsche Owners Club offers an intensive school that combines non-stop classroom discussions with on-track racing exercises, culminating in a full 15-lap race on Sunday afternoon. To advancing student drivers the Clinics mean everything. If you get through both of them, you will earn a provisional Cup Racing license and finally be allowed to race wheel-to-wheel with the big boys (and girls). For the vast majority of POC drivers, it takes at least a couple of years of steady participation just to get into the Racers Clinic. First you need the Performance Driving Series (PDS) license, which takes two weekends of all-day instruction. Then you must attain the Time Trial license, which takes another two

weekends of all-day instruction. After that you must compete in six Time Trials. Only then can you apply for admission into the Racers Clinic. Acceptance is not automatic. Marty and Kip Waterhouse, Director of Motorsports, must be convinced that you're ready for the class. The racing world holds POC racers in high regard, and Marty, Kip, and fellow instructors Joe Kunz and Dave Gardner are the gatekeepers who mean to keep it that way.

During the first classroom session on Saturday morning, the instructors take turns impressing upon us how we should comport ourselves as racers. Drew Waterhouse, one of the club's elite drivers, drops in to say, "Your reputation starts now. You gain respect through time and persistence. Be humble; don't try to be a hotshot."

Marty emphasizes mental preparation: "Don't smoke crack the night before. Don't come to the track with a bunch of problems. If your head isn't right, sit out. Now there is consequence. It's not like Time Trial."

Dave adds: "In Time Trial you have it under control. In racing, the red haze goes to a whole new level. If you have an issue with someone, don't deal with it on the track. Be in control of yourself, and you'll be in control of the car."

Marty again: "Passing in a corner requires another form of



Robert Morales leads the pack in the Clinic race

A WHOLE NEW REALM: THE RACERS CLINIC AT WILLOW

Racers Clinic Class of 2010 and Instructors



(L-R) 1st row - Dave Gardner, Joe Kunz, Marty Mehterian

2nd row - Paul White, Jan Sussman, Shahin Mobine, David Schlocker, Dan Burnham, Kent Harmon, Jonathan Levey, John Armstrong (crouching)

- Dave Elliott and Brad Pierce

3rd row - Peter Czajkowski, Stephen Jones, John Simone, Steve Floyd, Henry Hinck, Sohaib Kureshi, Jeremy Bernath, Andrew Weyman, Matthew



Henry Hinck leads the clinic pack through the Omega

self-control because it's so damn exciting. You've never been contested in a corner before, but you're not in the protective bubble now. You guys are going into a whole new realm."

Marty explains that in the first driving session we'll do three laps under yellow, spending two of those laps driving off-line, in the marbles. "The racing line is for Time Trial. The racing line is gone now." Then we'll pair up and drive side-by-side around the track for the remainder of the session, switching sides after turns 2 and 9. My palms are getting clammy by the end of class.

As we step outside, clouds are roiling overhead. The weatherman has predicted a 30% chance of showers all weekend. We cross our fingers and try to convince one another that it never rains here in the desert.

The first track session doesn't go all that well. One guy passes during the yellow flag warm-up laps. Another spins off the track in turn 1 while still under yellow and tries to scramble back on in a cloud of dust, in front of traffic, without waiting for a signal from a corner worker. (He and one other driver will be asked to leave the class at the end of the day.) In the two abreast exercise, some guys simply don't pair up.

Marty lays down the law as soon as we get back to

the classroom: "You can't skate through this Clinic. You're going to be forced to run door-to-door."

Steve Parker, Competition Director and the club's chief enforcer, joins the discussion and warns against passing under yellow in a race: "Don't use the excuse that you were racing and couldn't look over at the corner workers." Joe and Marty, both of whom have been injured racing, talk about the importance not only of having good safety equipment, but also using it correctly.

In the second driving session, we start with Australian pursuit: slowest cars up front, fastest cars in the rear. Passing is allowed in the straights, but not in the corners. Cars are sent out on track with a couple of seconds gap between them. The session goes better, with plenty of competitive pursuits and passing. It's great fun trying to overtake slower cars while trying to stave off drivers that are faster. But there are still some spinouts. The Clinic rule is, three offs in a weekend and you're done.

Back in class, Marty tells us that next we're going to practice several gridded starts followed by all-out races to turn 6. He advises us to get heat into the tires and warm up the brakes in the yellow flag lap(s) by gassing and braking, not by turning the wheel back and forth. He explains that as we come around turn 9 two abreast, the cars should be tight—just a few feet apart and practically nose to tail. Joe offers a nerve-calming tip as we come around turn 9:

"Open your hands and you'll breathe." And he advises us to have a game plan based on who's around us: "You need 360-degree vision at the start. When the green flag drops, pass left or right—just not over the top."

Passing rules are discussed at length, and the instructors reiterate that this is a gentleman's club. It is the responsibility of the overtaking car to pass safely; no dive bombing into corners; no chopping off the nose after passing; the car being passed must give racing room; a driver can make only one move to defend his position—anything more is considered blocking.

Marty describes the phenomenon of a group of cars going around a corner together: "They start moving in unison, like a school of fish; it's sort of a flow." This strikes me as fascinating, and I know it's something I can learn to believe only through experience.

After the gridded starts, we'll finish the session running several laps three-abreast all the way around the track. After each lap, the cars will change lane positions. Most of us have never tried this before, and I'm sure some did not even realize the track is wide enough to do it. Marty confesses he's getting goose bumps thinking how we're going to feel after this next driving session. And I'm getting clammy hands again.

Out on track, the gridded starts are indeed exhilarat-

ing, particularly when the pack enters turn 1 jockeying for position. This is my second Racers Clinic, so I've had the experience before, but I really need a lot of this wheel-to-wheel racing practice to develop situational awareness. Kent Harmon takes me totally by surprise passing me on the inside of turn 3, and all I can think is, this guy's a natural.

Everybody seems to do pretty well in the first part of the session, but when it's time to run three abreast, chaos ensues. Some people actually think we're still racing and they don't triple up, some can't maintain the three abreast formation, and some forget to switch positions each lap.

When we get back to class, Marty is not pleased. "This is the toughest group I've had to get to understand an exercise. These exercises are not that hard. Get them done or go home." Marty is normally as imperturbable as a Buddhist monk, and his exasperation is sobering. He decides we must repeat the three-abreast exercise in the next driving session.

The rest of the classroom session is mostly spent discussing the art of passing. Marty tells us, "Make sure you present yourself before passing. Let the other guy know you're there to give him a chance to make room. Now that he knows where you are, it's much safer."

Joe urges us to get a tow from other cars whenever we can, and he offers a bit of psychology: "If you see a guy in front of you looking in his mirrors a lot, you've got him." As for being passed, Joe notes that while blocking is not permitted, "You can make your car 'wide' a little to the inside before turning in, and make the guy passing you work for it."

The instructors also discuss the 13-13 rule and explain the consequences for infractions. Bottom line: the POC is not tolerant of contact. This ain't NASCAR.

Needless to say, everybody tries very hard to do the exercises perfectly in the final driving session of the day. The mini-races get gnarly only once, when one driver loses control of his car going around the inside of turn 2 and almost collects my car before spinning off the left side of the track. For a terrifying second, I see my rookie racing season coming to an abrupt end. I don't manage a hedge fund.

In the three abreast exercises I find myself driving alongside Andrew Weyman in his Spec Boxster and Shahin Mobine in his 997S race car, and it truly is a trust-building experience. Both drivers follow the instructions to the letter and handle their cars beautifully. Learning to hold my lane—not my line—in a pack is also boosting my self-confidence.

As we come off the track at the end of that last session on Saturday, Marty, Dave, and Joe are wearing

big grins. We're on the road to redemption. The sky is overcast, but there are patches of blue.

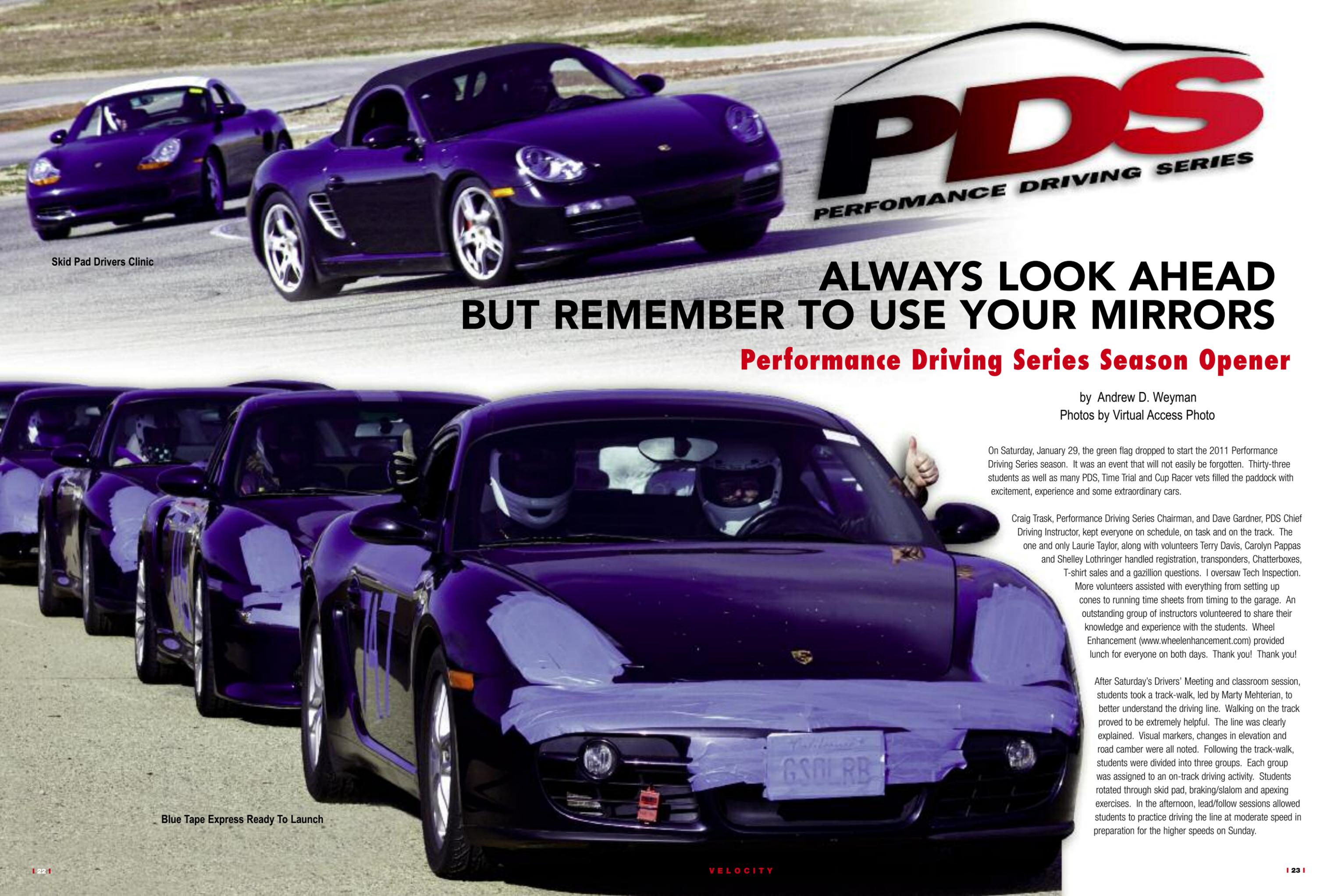
Sunday morning starts off with a gray sky and a review of some questionable driving moves from the day before, followed by a discussion of what we've learned from the exercises. One lesson is the importance of maintaining momentum. We've seen that easing off the gas pedal during position changes in the side-by-side exercises costs drivers a couple of car lengths immediately. "In a race," says Marty, "a slight lift off the throttle and the pack leaves you behind."

Next is a seminar on brake zone passing. Joe sums up: "Late braking is not about having bigger balls; it's knowing your car and what it can do. A great late pass is wait until the other guy brakes. Then you brake and take him on the inside or the outside. Usually the one doing the trail braking will get the corner every time."

Marty, on the inside-out pass: "A guy dive bombs you to the inside of a turn; he may then have to track out wide. You had to enter wide, so now you go inside of him at the exit and get ahead."

On the track, we practice inverted starts (Australian Pursuit), race three laps, then re-grid and do it again, over and over. It's tremendously exciting, and there are some great duels. I pass a lot of people, but

Continued on page 32



PDS

PERFORMANCE DRIVING SERIES

Skid Pad Drivers Clinic

ALWAYS LOOK AHEAD BUT REMEMBER TO USE YOUR MIRRORS

Performance Driving Series Season Opener

by Andrew D. Weyman
Photos by Virtual Access Photo

On Saturday, January 29, the green flag dropped to start the 2011 Performance Driving Series season. It was an event that will not easily be forgotten. Thirty-three students as well as many PDS, Time Trial and Cup Racer vets filled the paddock with excitement, experience and some extraordinary cars.

Craig Trask, Performance Driving Series Chairman, and Dave Gardner, PDS Chief Driving Instructor, kept everyone on schedule, on task and on the track. The one and only Laurie Taylor, along with volunteers Terry Davis, Carolyn Pappas and Shelley Lothringer handled registration, transponders, Chatterboxes, T-shirt sales and a gazillion questions. I oversaw Tech Inspection. More volunteers assisted with everything from setting up cones to running time sheets from timing to the garage. An outstanding group of instructors volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with the students. Wheel Enhancement (www.wheelenhancement.com) provided lunch for everyone on both days. Thank you! Thank you!

After Saturday's Drivers' Meeting and classroom session, students took a track-walk, led by Marty Mehterian, to better understand the driving line. Walking on the track proved to be extremely helpful. The line was clearly explained. Visual markers, changes in elevation and road camber were all noted. Following the track-walk, students were divided into three groups. Each group was assigned to an on-track driving activity. Students rotated through skid pad, braking/slalom and apexing exercises. In the afternoon, lead/follow sessions allowed students to practice driving the line at moderate speed in preparation for the higher speeds on Sunday.

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Sunday's lap sessions were the perfect opportunity for students to apply the concepts they learned the previous day: Always look ahead (but remember to use your mirrors). Slow in, fast out. You paid for the whole track, so use it. Smooth is fast.

Students learned a lot about their cars and themselves. More experienced drivers used their skills to improve their lap times and rack up championship points.

Gunter Enz beat his own track record by two seconds! Marty Mehterian had the fastest time of the day at 1:19:50.3. That man knows how to drive! Excitement, accomplishment and huge smiles were evident everywhere.

Here's what some of the drivers and instructors had to say.

Alex Bermudez, driving his Boxster Spec on the track for the first time: "My car corners better than I ever thought. I can't believe I wasted thirty years of my life not doing this!"

Allan Slocum, driving his '07 Cayman S: "I got great tips on slowing down my entry speed before the turns during the slalom exercise. I'm surprised at how well balanced my car is. It's crazy!"

Dave Yasuda, driving a 2010 GT3 had his very first track experience. "The instructors are really

knowledgeable. Everyone is extremely helpful. I've learned a lot. You think you know about driving, but you really don't. I was early apexing. That's something I have to work on." On Sunday, Dave remarked, "Yesterday, I didn't really understand what 'slow in - fast out' and 'use the whole track' meant. Today I do. I'm starting to be able to see the straight lines within the course. It's amazing."

Dave Gardner observed on Saturday that everybody was having a good time and that he repeatedly saw the same mistakes most newbies make: "Not being smooth with the throttle, brakes and turning. Not using all of the track. Steering too much. Overdriving the car. I've been working with seven different drivers and they each have some combination of these common errors." Lots of improvement was evident on Sunday.

Terry Davis had a great time in her BSR. "I felt I was driving more smoothly than I ever have before. I was able to enjoy a lot of open track. I received many compliments about my driving. With great humility, of course!"

Christian Stevens, in his '92 911: "It's all about confidence going into the different parts of the track and knowing what you're supposed to do instead of 'Where am I?'" There are some great instructors here."

Drake Kemper and his brother, Derek, drove their BSXs. Drake: "I don't think I received one bad piece of advice all weekend." He was awarded his PDS license on Sunday. Congratulations, Drake! Derek Kemper has to complete one more PDS event to earn his license. "Each time I get on the track, it's better than before. After each event, all I can think about is getting back on the track and learning more. I'm having the time of my life!"

Leland McArthy: "Instructing is great. Every student is different. Sometimes when you tell a student to go faster, they're reluctant to do that, so you find a way to build their confidence. One of my students had experience racing motorcycles, so he was fearless. During the second lap on the skid pad, he had his car in a slip and he was having a blast. It was cool!"

Rosie Marcy, shared her Boxster Spec with her husband, Will: "Saturday didn't start off too well. The skid pad kind of scared me a little bit. When I was on the track itself I felt better. I had a great instructor (humbly, yours truly) who helped me by using hand signals. It was fantastic. I felt really good. I need to work on my braking and apexing. There's a lot of learning to do." Will Marcy



Evan Fullerton with Instructor Eric Oviatt

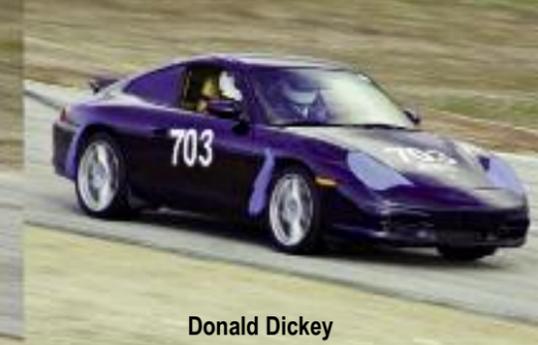




Jason McClure



Richard Healy



Donald Dickey

focused on learning the line. "Slow in, fast out. I've got to remember that. Also, looking ahead rather than just over the hood. I really enjoy this. It's like my third childhood!"

Hamid Saghatchi drove a '73 914. Hamid has been a POC member since 2000 but hadn't attended any events for nine years. Welcome back! "This has been the best learning experience I've had. The skid pad put me more in touch with my abilities to lose it and catch it. The threshold braking and apexing exercises were wonderful because they really put things in perspective."

Farshad Saghatchi piloted his '07 Boxster S. It was his first track experience. "It's great. I'm learning how to control the car, when to brake, when to apex, oversteer and understeer. My second lap session I did really well. I almost passed a Turbo S!"

Patrick Brass instructed on the skid pad and on the track. "It was very rewarding to see the bright light turn on after giving instruction. My student started out slow and cautious in his '06 997. With each session, he made definite improvements, feeling more comfortable with the line and the tremendous horsepower of his car. He stepped it

up, observed the flags, watched his mirrors and was all smiles after every session. Mission accomplished." On Sunday, Patrick finished first in JP with a 1:30.759. He's on his way to a Class Championship!

Luis Pacheco was in his 1988 BMW M3 on the track for the first time. "I've been on the track with a 964 and a 550 Beck Spyder Replica. Going counter clock-wise is always a challenge when you're used to going clock-wise. It's a whole new track. The instructors are great."

Don Dickey drove his '03 Carrera. "Saturday was a fantastic day. The braking exercise was very helpful. I have a lot more brake than I thought I did." On Sunday, Don went on to work on his driving line around the track and earned his PDS license. Congrats!

Michael Bolten was behind the wheel of his '05 Lotus Elise. "This is my second time out with the POC. I'm working on going faster. It's a great event."

Jim Steedman instructed all weekend including the apex exercise during Saturday's clinic. "I like doing it because you can immediately see

improvement from the beginning of the exercise to the end. Many drivers tend to pinch off during the exit of a turn. They're not using the entire track. We have a big range of talent out there. I really like helping people who are out for the first time because you can see the huge improvement. Then, there are people like Evan Fullerton to whom it's like second nature."

Keith Shishido drove his '02 996 Turbo. It was his first POC event and his first time on a track. "I'd like to get my Time Trial license. I'm having a great time. I loved the skid pad and learning to steer with the throttle." Marty Mehterian instructed Keith.

Emeka Okwujs brought out his 2001 Turbo. He hadn't been out to the track for several years. "I came out to have a good time, focus on getting smooth and learn the line." Emeka was instructed by Magnus Walker.

Steve Jones instructed and was having a blast. "There's a wide disparity of starting points for folks. Everybody's eager to learn and seems to be having a good time. I'm both encouraged and a little worried to see the level of talent with the new people driving BSRs." By the way, Steve drives a BSR.

Alex De Maria experienced his first time on a track while driving his '07 Carrera S. "It's amazing. My instructors have been Mike Takaki and Craig Trask. My lap times are improving. For me, the braking exercise was very important and the skid pad was amazing. Super fun! I really enjoyed controlling the car with the throttle. I learned a lot this weekend. I hope to do Time Trials someday."

Andrew Bulczynski was in his '87 3.2 911. Andrew has his PDS license but hadn't been to the track in a while. "I'm here getting rid of the cobwebs and having fun. I'm also testing my new custom exhaust. It's my design. I used to have exhaust note envy. Not anymore"

Dwain Dement drove his V3 racecar and instructed.

"Some students are willing to really push themselves. Others will go to their comfort level and just have fun. I've found my best students to be pilots and motocross racers."

Special thanks to instructors Marty Mehterian, Dave Gardner, Craig Trask, Mike Takaki, John Williamson, Dwain Dement, Jim Steedman, Leland McArthy, Steve Jones, Patrick Brass, Ryan Williams, Eric Oviatt, Jim Duncan, Don Neville, Dennis Bennett, Brent Gokbudak, Richard Yochum, Kent Lothringer, Roy Lothringer, John Armstrong, Gunter Enz, Brian Green, Steve Thorsen, Chris Andropoulos, Henry Hinck, Magnus Walker, Loren Beggs, Antonio Gonella, Jose Alvarez (aka Hose-B) and me!

PDS #1 Streets of Willow (CCW) January 30, 2011 CLASS PODIUMS

BSR	Dave Schlocker Will Marcy Terry Davis	1:30.108 1:34.140 1:34.343	KS	Brian Green Christian Stevens Robert Buchheit	1:32.510 1:35.062 1:35.075
BSX	Drake Kemper Derek Kemper	1:32.444 1:33.098	LS	Richard Healy Allan Slocum Kenneth Lee	1:35.735 1:35.848 1:38.718
CI	HOSE-B Alvarez Roy Lothringer	1:31.661 1:40.492	MS	Donald Dickey Steve Blunt Anwar Thompson	1:32.783 1:36.191 1:39.231
CSX	Kevin Favell	1:32.471	NP	Robert Schad JP Clement Emeka Okwujs	1:27.803 1:29.366 1:30.085
GSR	Dennis Bennett	1:35.223	NS	Kevin Fitzpatrick Alex De Maria Keith Shishido	1:27.442 1:34.803 1:35.502
GT2	Marty Mehterian	1:19.503 FTD	V0	Herman Carstens	1:27.709
GT4	Gunter Enz David Gardner	1:23.898 1:25.148	V2	John Armstrong Chris Campbell	1:23.739 1:27.358
JI	Evan Fullerton Chris Andropoulos Ian Smith	1:29.583 1:32.274 1:36.207	V3	Dwain Dement	1:23.928
JP	Patrick Brass Steve Wong Jack Ehrman	1:30.759 1:31.999 1:32.662	EX	Antonio Gonella Michael Bolten Steve Thorsen	1:29.033 1:29.487 1:31.438
JS	Andrew Bulczynski Shelley Lothringer Jeff Cordill	1:34.613 1:40.140 1:46.413			



Dave Elliott



BRAKING LOOSE WITH THE SILVER FOX

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY WITH DAVE ELLIOTT

by Bill Fox

Photos by Dave Elliott and Virtual Access Photo

My goal for this series of interviews is to give POC members an opportunity to get up close and personal with fellow competitors. For this issue, I sought out a member working himself through the club's educational process. After considering the up-and-coming chargers, I realized that a perfect candidate with the talent and tools to succeed was Dave Elliott. He is passionate and driven. When I first approached Dave about doing this interview, he was running White Group Time Trials. Since then, he completed his first Racers Clinic last December. So I hope my discussion with Dave about his rise up the ranks will shed a little light on him and the POC race driving process.

BF: What is your previous competitive background, either in racing or other sports?

DE: I did some off-road racing with SCORE. I ran a Class 12 car which is a spec class car with tube frame, aluminum body panels, really light, with lots of suspension travel. I raced it in the San Diego desert and some stadiums, including WSIR where they made an off-road course in the infield. I did that for about 2 years with some success. But I could not keep up financially or with the amount of time it required with a growing family. Like Marty

Mehterian, I also competed in rodeos and made the 8-second buzzer some of the time. I also made a few trips to the hospital for stitches and cat scans. One of my most memorable rodeos was at the Cow Palace in San Francisco where I was among the top cowboys in the country.

BF: Who else supports your racing passion?

DE: My whole family does. My wife was with me at every race until June of this year when she succumbed to cancer. She was my biggest supporter and is my biggest influence. My son Chad is currently Time Trialing in the BSX class and doing very well. My parents usually stop by for a day at the races.

BF: Who was your most memorable POC instructor?

DE: The most memorable would be Bill Hartstock. He is the only instructor that would reach over from the passenger seat and grab the steering wheel (at speed) to show you the apex. That was exciting.

BF: Who do you think is the fastest driver in the POC?

DE: There are a lot of fast drivers in the club. But if I had to single out just one driver, that would be Steve Alarcon. He is so persistent and accurate. If Steve is behind someone, he will stalk him until he makes the smallest mistake. Then just like that, he is by him.

BF: What do you find is the most challenging aspect of going fast?

DE: Being smooth consistently is something that I could do better. Like turn 4 at Willow Springs -- somehow finding the correct line and speed has been a challenge for me.

BF: How do you stay in shape for racing?

DE: For various reasons I did not do much before I started racing. But as I've gained experience driving, the need to become a more accomplished driver has motivated me to run and go to the gym a couple days a week. I want to be in good physical condition to run those enduro races in 100-degree heat.



Off-Road Racing with SCORE



Cowboy up!

BF: How has competing with the POC influenced your life?

DE: Seeing the talent and the will to be a better driver from my fellow POC racers has inspired me to strive to do the same. At first it was just a lot of fun. Now it is still fun but I am taking it to the next level, trying to improve each time out as a driver and competitor to win a class championship. I ask a lot of questions and try to learn not only about driving lines and braking but also suspension set-up and tires. I have had a lot of help from my fellow competitors in that regard.

BF: When and why did you get interested in tracking your Porsche?

DE: About four years ago I purchased my first Porsche and brought it to Steve Alarcon for suspension mods. Steve invited me to Willow Spring to watch POC cup racing and that was all it took.

Watching the V3 and V4 cars battle was great. The next day I was at his shop asking him to help me find a race car. A couple months later, he called me knowing one of his customers was thinking about moving to a different class, so I picked up the car and put my street car up for sale.

BF: What is your current Porsche track car?

DE: 1984 Carrera, V4 Class. I bought it from a fellow POC member. He had purchased the car in stock form and then brought it to Steve Alarcon and Jeff Erickson to develop to compete in the V4 class. From the first day I brought the car to the track, it has been fast and reliable. Steve and Jeff still work on the car. Before the Carrera, I drove a 2002 C4S street car in the PDS events.

BF: What modifications have you made?

DE: Mostly minor ones that help the car fit me better

like seat, seat belts, rear view mirror and shifter. Oh yes, I can't forget the all-important cool suit.

BF: What was the inspiration for your car's graphics and number?

DE: My car is original paint, grand prix white, with no fancy graphics. You may have noticed the script behind the rear wheels reading: "Embrace The Journey" with a pink ribbon. That is a phrase that my wife Julie told her family and friends when she found out she had terminal cancer. My son Chad thought that would be a nice tribute, so he and I have that phrase on both of our race cars. His car number is her birth date.

BF: What does your car weigh and what is the horsepower?

DE: 2733 pounds with myself and no fuel, with approximately 220 RWHP.

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY WITH DAVE ELLIOTT

BF: Why did you think you were ready to take on the challenges of a Cup Clinic?

DE: My goal from the start was to race at the Cup level. My first day at the Streets of Willow with the PDS clinic was my first day of preparation to get to Cup racing. By the time I qualified to apply for the Racers Clinic, I was turning times that were consistent with my fellow class cars and I was comfortable driving alongside and passing cars. During my practice sessions I would sometimes stage at the back so that I would have cars to pass just for practice.

BF: What impressed you about the overall Racers Clinic experience?

DE: The expertise of the instructors like Marty, Joe and Dave. They are the best. My fellow classmates really stepped up to the challenge. To drive the track three-wide, at speed, off-line, and complete a race start through turn one without anyone touching, was impressive.

BF: Were you intimidated by the side-by-side drills?

DE: Not really. I was looking forward to it. But I was a little nervous not knowing who was next to me and if they were going to be able to handle it.

BF: Which drill did you find the most enjoyable or most difficult to do properly?

DE: The most fun were the practice starts. Entering turn 9 and slowly heading for the start/finish line looking for the green flag has got to be the most exhilarating part of the race. The start is also the most difficult because you are so close to each other front, back and side, every one hitting the gas at the same time, cars pulling out of line to pass and then jockeying for position entering into turn one at speed.



Four Hooves Off



Father Knows Best -- Dave and Chad Elliott

2010 MEMBER OF THE YEAR DREW WATERHOUSE

First off, I am fortunate and wouldn't be doing what I am without my best friend, supporter, and father, Kip Waterhouse. My Dad and I joined the Porsche Owners Club together back in mid-2000 with the intention of running at the Streets of Willow events. After just one event, Kip decided he needed his own car. By the second weekend of racing in 2001, he and I were driving our own cars to every Streets event the POC offered.

My first full year in the club, I raced a 1969 911 in V4, won my class, and took the honorary Rookie Of The Year award. That just further fueled me to want to do MORE. Over the following years, Kip and I upgraded our cars to join the very competitive V3/R5 class and set out to conquer the away tracks in the Time Trial and Cup Race series. This was a lot of fun. But soon I got, or should I say we

got, an itch for even more. My mother, father and I decided that it was time for me to go cup racing and purchased a 2004 GT3 Cup car which I have run ever since.

Works for me, but need to verify that the years were 2006 -2009. I also meant to say that I won the year-end Championship for my class in each of those years. Not that I won every race...

Between 2006 and 2009, I won the GTC-3 Class Championship for the Red run group. In 2008, I received the prestigious Driver Of The Year Award which was a real milestone that I was honored to have achieve. During that same year, Kip was elected to the Board of Directors and I became the Club's By-Default Race Event Master. I've had a blast doing this and really enjoy giving back the club by helping

to put on great events. This year I was graciously honored with the Member Of The Year award which I am deeply appreciative to accept.

2010 was a real growth year for the club. There were GCR changes that impacted the Race groups by adding new power/weight GT classes. For many, this provided tighter competition among a different combination of teams. Facing new competitors meant seeing new car set-ups at each event.

As far as 2011 goes, I think it will bring another great year. We have an exciting schedule of PDS and TT and Cup Race events. We also expect to see continued support and growth from our Spec Classes in the Green, Orange and Red run groups.

--Drew Waterhouse



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A WHOLE NEW REALM: THE RACERS CLINIC AT WILLOW

Gustavo Bogo and Matthew Herrill Clinic Drills



Shahin gets inside me and passes brilliantly in turn 1. Later, I have a great passing—re-passing joust with Bradley Pierce, but he eventually gets me as well. Towards the end, the double yellow flags come out, and we do a single-file re-start. Some of us blow it. One guy passes under double yellow.

In class again, the instructors emphasize car preparation. Have your car thoroughly checked before heading to the track. Get it up in the air and look underneath. Tighten all bolts and lug nuts. Check your oil, gas up! The list goes on and on. And have the car ready to go before the drivers meeting.

Other highlights from the instructors: Practice with a purpose. Don't use up your car needlessly, especially with new tires. Work on your braking zones. When the tires are cold, always late-apex. In qualifying, don't go out with the crowd. Wait until the leaders are most of the way around the track, then go out in the clear. Never do more than four qualifying laps. Put heat in the tires on lap one, get up to 90-95% of speed in two, then nail it on the third lap. Marty checks his RPMs coming out of turn 9. If they're up where he wants them, he'll go for it on that lap. If they're low, he'll take it easy on the lap and try again on the following lap.

And then it's back to the track for more practice starts and mini-races. In thrillingly close racing, I improve from 9th to 5th place. I'm beginning to feel more comfortable as I develop confidence in myself and in others. Maybe we can all just get along.

We bounce right back into class for instruction on how to manage car and tires during a race, and how to prepare mentally on the grid before the race. Marty's "Fall asleep," draws a laugh. Actually, Marty will size up the competition around him once, then lock into his own world, hoping to sweat to loosen up his body and mind.

Kip and Drew pitch in: Get to the grid early. Have everything organized so there won't be any last minute panics. With five minutes to go, make sure you're breathing! Pre-visualize what you're going to do at the start. With three minutes to go, start your engine. Make sure the engine and transmission have been pre-warmed.

And we're out on the track again, once again doing an Australian pursuit. I'm beginning to think I'm going to survive this weekend when suddenly I find myself driving 90 mph in the dirt at the exit of turn 6. This is not a good place to be. As I was passing a slower 911, he tracked out wide. I felt I had to go off track to avoid a collision. In fact, I thought we had touched. Luckily, I'm able to keep it straight and gradually ease the car back on track. The other driver later tells me he never thought we were that close. Maybe I'm just gun shy.

In our final classroom session, Marty, Joe, and Dave, who have been observing our driving from various vantage points, give us final critiques: We're not using all the track at the exit after turn 1. We're over-braking going into turn 2—all that's necessary is a left foot tap on the brake while keeping the right foot on the throttle. We're all braking way too early in 9, and we're not unwinding the wheel enough coming onto the first straight. Joe's mantra: "Open the wheel; let it breathe... and breathe yourself!"

My palms are now sweating as I think ahead to the upcoming grand

finale, the 15-lap race. I'm feeling pretty wrung out by a super-intense day. All of these exercises have required a lot of concentration, and nobody has been slouching on speed or giving anything up easily. All weekend it's been class, track, class, track. There has barely been enough time to change tires at lunch.

We'll be gridded according to our fastest times of the day. That means I'm number five of 21 cars. The four cars ahead of me are fully prepped race cars, all on slicks. My car is a much heavier street legal 996 GT3, and I'm running slower R-compounds. A lot of fast cars on slicks are gridded right behind me. I will have my work cut out for me.

We walk out of the classroom, and it starts to rain. Everybody runs to their cars to roll up the windows and cover their tools. Then as quickly as it started, the rain stops. The sun parts the clouds, and a glorious double rainbow appears. An omen?

Our race is in an hour and 15 minutes--just enough of a wait for the tension to peak.

The Time Trials start—the weather behaves itself throughout the event.

Next up is the Red Cup Race—and the weather continues to hold back—until the last few laps, when droplets begin to fall. Now it's our turn.

We grid up in a light rain. I have mixed feelings. On the one hand I've been waiting for this moment, this race, for two years as I've worked my way through

the PDS license, the TT license, and now both Racers Clinics, not to mention all the events, all the tracks that I've driven over the last four years. And I was inspired by an article I read in Velocity a few years back, written by a guy who ran as an underdog and finished on the podium in this very race. And now, gridded fifth in a competitive car (but certainly not the fastest), I actually have a shot at the podium.

But as we sit there on the grid, the drizzle does not let up, and the other side of me is saying, 'Let's just call it a day.' So many of the drivers are on slicks, or near-slicks, and there are enough gunslingers in the group that carnage will be likely on a wet track. Plus, we've driven three passionate sessions already today.

Joe comes by every car and tells the drivers the same thing: "We're starting single file under a double yellow. It might stay that way the whole race." Naturally our instructors have already thought it through.

We go out, the rain increases, we put our wipers on; lap after lap, double yellow. Another beautiful rainbow comes out. Maybe it will clear. But the rain continues. The first four drivers—Jon Levey, Dan Burnham, Dave Elliott, and Bradley Pierce--pull into the pits. They are not going to risk their expensive cars. Now I'm the pole sitter. I'm liking this. But I don't want to risk my car, either. Nevertheless I stay on the track and lead the parade around. Every corner worker continues to fly the double yellow. If the track would just dry out...

But it doesn't. After about seven laps, the checkered flag is thrown, and it's over. Back at impound, there's lots of boisterous joking about the race that wasn't. We are overcome with giddiness after all the suspense. Andrew screams with joy and later calls the Clinic "one of the most exhilarating, intoxicating adrenalin rushes I've ever experienced." I'm on board with that.

Then we gather in a room, out of the rain. The teachers tell us that we've come through, and one-by-one, Kip hands us our logbooks with the simple words "Passed Racers Clinic" scribbled in. This is all I want for Christmas. The first timers will now be eligible to take their second race clinic at Spring Mountain in March, and the second timers are given provisional racing licenses. Even without the race, it's a pretty great feeling. We line up to thank our phenomenal instructors, Marty, Joe, and Dave. We high-five one another. We have a beer.

I feel really good about most of the guys I'm going into racing with. Driving three-wide, side-by-side with Andrew and Shahin gave me a lot of faith in their car control abilities. Dicing it up with Bradley Pierce, Jan Sussman, Kent Harmon, and Jeremy Bernath during the simulated races gave me similar confidence in them, and in myself. The leaders--Levey, Elliott, and Burnham--seem to have it dialed in with their speed machines.

It's well after dark by the time most of us get our trailers loaded and head out. It rains hard the entire drive home, but I barely notice.

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