

velocity

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Member of the Year

Extreme Willow



Driver of the Year

Volume 59-1 / March 2014



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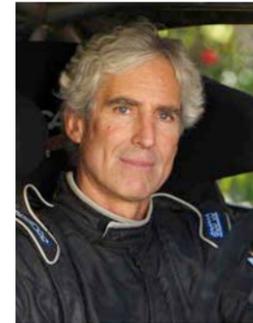
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EDITOR'S NOTE

JOHN ARMSTRONG



That guy on the cover with the fancy headline? He's a rookie. And that's just one of the reasons we think this is an encouraging issue for newcomers. Here's another: our Member of the Year is only 28-years-old. Remember, this is a club already overflowing with seasoned talent and dedication.

And just look at all the articles that have arrived concurrently from first-time contributors about instructing and learning. Aleta Pearce (*The Ambassadors*) discusses her decision to attend our annual Instructors Clinic and start volunteering to teach students. Paul McDonald (*Don't Forget to Breathe!*) writes about his very

first day on track in the PDS Clinic under the tutelage of Andrew Weyman. Further along the developmental scale, Brett Gaviglio (*Bring on the Locusts*) recounts the wild Racers Clinic in December.

Sounding too *Clinic*-al for you grizzled vets? Then try out *The Whipping Willow*, a typically semi-irreverent and insightful Paul Young article about the tempestuous season finale at Willow Springs.

And nuts-and-bolts folks, rejoice. In the first of what we hope will be a series about innovators who dare to design and manufacture parts for our race cars, Jakob Rogers (*The Elephant in the Room*) tells the story of Chuck Moreland. Chuck avows that a day at a POC track event a dozen years ago convinced him to start engineering suspension parts for his car in his garage. Chuck's tinkering evolved into his acclaimed company Elephant Racing.

If all goes according to plan (my plan, that is), this will be my last issue as Editor of *Velocity*. I've been involved with the magazine for four years now, first as a writer, then as writer and proofreader, then writer/proofreader/Assistant Editor, and for the last 2.25 years (but who's counting?), the aforementioned, plus Editor. I've really enjoyed the opportunity to oversee eight issues of the magazine, and along the way I've learned a great deal about Porsches, racing, and our fascinating members. Unfortunately I find that I just don't have the time to continue in this multifarious role. However, I'm not disappearing entirely—I do plan to continue writing articles for *Velocity*.

I'm going to miss collaborating with the small but mighty *Velocity* staff. Cathy's photographic talent and dedication are well known to the club. This is Don's second issue as Art Director, and candidly I'll say that if he had been Art Director when I first started as Editor, I might not be writing this fare-thee-well at all. I'm sure that Production Manager Dave Bruder will continue to keep steady hands on both the tiller and the till.

I encourage aspiring editors to step up and apply for the position of *Velocity* Editor. I would not lead you astray: my successor will most assuredly enjoy approbation and riches. And please, everyone else, submit articles and photographs. This magazine only exists through your contributions. ✓

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From the PRESIDENT

ANDREW D. WEYMAN



Here are a few of what appear to be non sequiturs, which will reveal themselves to have an overall theme. Or not.

You know how we use a pencil to mark a child's height on a wall somewhere in the house to chart his or her growth? We like to keep track of the dates and the inches. Well, we're kinda doing that with the POC.

We've run our first few track events of 2014 under the structure of our new formats and we're keeping tabs on our progress. Are we moving in the right direction? I think we are. Inch by inch.

There's been lots of discussion at every level. After all, we've made changes at every level. PDS drivers, TA drivers, and Cup Racers have expressed their likes and dislikes about the changes in how our events are being run. There has been healthy discourse, and it has led to healthy growth. Some members miss the Streets of Willow and PDS being a competitive series. There's been some confusion about our "One & Done" format, and we'll take a careful look at possible improvements. The great majority of Cup Racers love the three races per weekend format.

Personally, I enjoy hearing from members who have fresh ideas and passionate responses about how our club functions. Often, I'm told how much the POC means to a member and how they are dedicated to giving back to the club that has given them so much. That's pretty cool. The Board of Directors continues to monitor and evaluate how things are going. We'll make adjustments as the realities of implementing policy reveal some dents and dings. So far, so good.

Change of subject: I've noticed something at our first two track events this year that makes me smile. Well, it actually started with our Annual Banquet. I've seen more spouses, partners, children, family, and friends at our gatherings than I've seen in several years. One example is when Mike and Suzie Holgate stopped by at our Willow Springs season opener in February. Mike wasn't driving. Suzie wasn't helping Laurie with registration as she usually does. They just came to see their fellow club members. When my wife Terry needed help adjusting her tire pressures, Mike was right there with pressure gauge in hand, shouting out psi numbers. It's one of the qualities that sets us apart from other groups. The camaraderie and strong friendships our members share are very special.

Change of subject: I've had several meeting with representatives of Porsche Cars North America (PCNA) in an effort to build our relationship with the brand we enjoy driving on the track as well as on the street. These guys have been terrific. They are genuinely interested in our club and are lending us their support in many ways. PCNA has pledged financial sponsorship, and the POC will be promoted through regional dealerships as we strengthen our relationship with the people who sell us our cars. They plan to provide us with website links to Porsche-generated features as well as assistance with market research.

So, there you have it. I leave it to you to figure out if my musings are thematic in some way. Oh, whom am I kidding? They're not. Thanks for letting me muse.

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58TH ANNUAL BANQUET

by John Armstrong
 photos by
 Cathy Robson
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If you could have seen the venerable Leonard Schenkel wrestling boxes of trophies from the back of his car outside the Old Ranch Country Club at dusk on January 18, you would have known already that the POC was in for a big, big night. Leonard, who has designed all the club's trophies for the past 20 years, had custom-ordered 109 awards. It seemed the only people who didn't get one that night were the champagne servers. But we needed a lot of awards, not only to acknowledge our champion drivers, but also to recognize the many club members whose efforts kept this club thriving in its 58th year of existence. With a successful year finished and a new one set to begin, there was plenty to celebrate.



The POC's Annual Banquet was simply killer, thanks to organizers Terry Davis and Carolyn Pappas. Although Terry had to chase a lingering wedding party off our reserved space in order to set up, things kicked off right on time at 6 p.m. with the opening of two bars and an hors d'oeuvres table in the foyer. A slide show featuring Cathy Robson's favorite photos from the year lit up one wall, while POC members and their guests—160 people in all—greeted and marveled over one another's unfamiliar appearances in sports jackets and elegant dresses. Once properly lubricated, everyone adjourned to the banquet hall for the remainder of the evening. During dinner, Alex Bermudez presented a montage of his motorsports photography.

Drew Waterhouse, once again presiding as Master of Ceremonies, kept everyone on their toes with his frequent drawing of raffle tickets for donated prizes. (The lavish grand prize was pilot Guido Rietdyk's donation of a free flight in a combat plane.)

President Andrew Weyman briefly conducted annual business with the help of various Board members and then introduced the 2014 Board, to hearty applause. Returnees are Eric Oviatt, Carolyn Pappas, John Gordon, and Andrew himself, while Nathan Johnson and Kurt Gokbudak are newcomers. Dave Elliott was announced as the VP of Motorsports for the second year. Next, a whole lot of committee heads and members were variously recognized and handed plaques. Then the faithful were entertained by a compilation video about Tribute to Le Mans provided by Mark Hergesheimer.



Rick Knoop

Our guest speaker was Rick Knoop, an endurance racing legend who has been winning and placing in the world's most challenging races since 1978. He won his class twice in the 24 Hours of Le Mans and took third overall at both the Daytona 24 and the Sebring 12. He's been a member of several factory teams, including Porsche, and has raced such exquisite Porsche models as the '84 944 Turbo, 911 Carrera RSR, 935, and 962.



President's Recognition Awards
 Mike Takaki / Leonard Schenkel / Steve Parker



Competition Points Champ
 Brad Keegan



John Deere Award
 Will Marcy



Rookies of the Year
 Time Trial Jerry Hoffman
 Cup Race Blair Boyce



Most Improved Driver
 Andrew Enz

58TH ANNUAL BANQUET



Rick told the audience that most race car drivers are type-A personalities, but those who are low-keyed about it get the job done more often. "Some of the fastest, most respected drivers that I've known were the most approachable. The ego was almost erased," Rick said.

He also offered counsel that he learned at the Bob Bondurant School in 1976: "You have a blender, and the ingredients aren't Jose Cuervo and margarita mix. Into this blender you pour smoothness, then stir in consistency and concentration." Rick advised flavoring the blend with patience and positive mental attitude. "And bring the car home, no matter what," he added.



On behalf of our keen corner workers, Track Steward Dave Jansen presented the Dare to Soar Award to Dave Gardner (in absentia) for his positive attitude and safety consciousness. Gardner has been PDS Chief Driving Instructor and Racers Clinic Instructor for five years.

The many Competition Awards were disbursed by Chairmen Eric Oviatt, Jack Greening, and Dave Elliott to the victors in the PDS, Time Trial, and Cup Racing Series. Afterwards, Jerry Roche handed out trophies to the winners of the JE Pistons Enduro Series: Dave Elliott (1st place), Brandon Griffith/Gene Sigal team (2nd), and Nathan Johnson (3rd).



Next came the year-end special awards. Andrew presented President's Special Recognition Awards to four individuals: Dave Gardner (who could start a scrap metal business with all the hardware he's collecting); former President Mike Takaki; longtime Competition Director Steve Parker (about whom Andrew said, "I'm told he has a heart of gold underneath his gruff exterior"); and Leonard Schenkel (the tireless octogenarian really is retiring from the Board this time).

Derek Kemper presented an award that nobody particularly wanted—the John Deere Award—which is given to the most proficient earth mover in the club. As last year's co-recipient

Cup Race 1st Place

GT3 Duane Selby
GT4 Blair Boyce
V3 Mike Monsalve
GT2 Craig Ames

Cup Race 2nd Place

GT3 Gunter Enz
GT4 Steve Vandecar
V3 Mike Takaki



Cup Race 1st Place

R6 Richard Yochum
BSR Nathan Johnson
R8 Walter Airth
R7 Keith Hulley

Cup Race 3rd Place

BSR Andrew Weyman
GT4 Brad Keegan
V3 Eric Olberz
GT2 Dan Aspesi



Cup Race 2nd Place

R6 Don Neville
GT6 Carolyn Pappa
R7 Don Matz
BSR Will Marcy

Time Trial 1st Place

K1 William Sander
HP Walter Airth
V3 Eric Olberz
JP Don Neville
V4 Richard Yochum



58TH ANNUAL BANQUET



of the Award (with brother Drake), Derek was pleased to hand the giant plaque over to the next deserving winner, Will Marcy.

The Spirit Award was conferred on Steve Radenbaugh for exemplifying the true spirit of the POC with his infectious enthusiasm and excitement. The Most Improved Driver Award was bestowed on Andrew Enz. This very quick young driver shot up through the ranks in GT3, earning a couple of victories and regularly beating his dad Gunter (who couldn't be prouder).

Jerry Hoffman was named Rookie of the Year in Time Trial. In his GT5-class 911 he won eight of the ten events he entered, and took one 2nd. Blair Boyce was named Rookie of the Year in Cup Racing. Handling his GT4 car like he was born for the track, Blair drove away from the field, earning nine victories and two 2nd places.

Brad Keegan repeated as the Competition Points Champ, a testament to his consistency and love of the sport. He drove in every event in every series (except the very first PDS), taking the GT4 title in PDS, 2nd in Time Trial, and 3rd in Cup Racing.

The evening concluded with the awarding of the club's most coveted honors. Craig Ames is our Driver of the Year, and Eric Oviatt (who earlier had been named Service Points Champ) is Member of the Year. Read more about these gents in the accompanying articles.

We're all grateful to Cathy Robson and Brian Sweeney for sacrificing their evening to take these fine pictures of the winners. And thanks to a certain Cup Race champ for not tripping over a jumbo stand (while running to accept his award) and falling flat on his face again this year.

Judging by the size of the turnout and the joviality of all present, it's fair to call the evening a smashing success, and if I may be so brazen, pronounce the Club's health robust and its future promising. ▣



Banquet Co-Organizer
Terry Davis

Time Trial 1st Place

BSR Nathan Johnson
GT5 Jerry Hoffman
GT3 Bayan Salehi
GT4 Steve Vandecar

PDS 1st Place

KI Glenn Orton
KS Aleta Pearce
IS Jeff Cordill
MS Jay Barton



Time Trial 2nd & 3rd Places

GT3 (2nd) Gunter Enz
GT4 (2nd) Brad Keegan
BSR (2nd) Andrew Weyman
GT4 (3rd) Steve Radenbaugh
BSR (3rd) Will Marcy
V3 (2nd) Mike Takaki

PDS 1st Place

GT6 David Tung
GT4 Brad Keegan
GT3 Joel Silverstein
GT5 Jerry Hoffman
BSR Alex Bermudez



JE Pistons Enduro Series

3rd Nathan Johnson
Pistons Jerry Roche
1st Dave Elliott

PDS 2nd & 3rd Places

KI (2nd) William Sander
MS (3rd) Eric Tung
MS (2nd) Glenn Vega
GT4 (2nd) Steve Radenbaugh
BSR (2nd) Will Marcy
BSR (3rd) Andrew Weyman
GT5 (2nd) Matt Bernath



MEMBER OF THE YEAR



photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

ERIC OVIATT



by Andrew D. Weyman

Face it. The success of our club depends on our membership. No, not numbers. Quality. There's one particular member who has distinguished himself from all others. Eric Oviatt is our 2013 Member of the Year.

Eric is currently serving his second year as a member of the Board of Directors. He earned the Service Points Championship for 2013, with 2,030 points. The shop he co-owns, Hergesheimer MotorSports, sponsored the 2013 Performance Driving Series. He has served as PDS Chairman, overseen PDS Tech Inspections, instructed and mentored new drivers, encouraged new members to join our club, managed club sponsors, and helped formulate our new pricing structure/event format for this year. He's also one heck of a talented driver and all-around good guy. Member of the Year? You bet!

Who is this guy who serves the POC in so many ways? Eric recently turned 28 years old. That's right, 28. He grew up in Huntington Beach and currently resides in Dana Point. Following in the footsteps of his parents Laura and Ken, Eric showed an early interest in motorcycles. He received a 70cc 4-speed Honda ATV for his second birthday. He couldn't reach the foot-operated gear lever so he was stuck in first gear a lot. At five years old, Eric got his first two-wheeler and was soon competing in motocross races at Perris Raceway on Saturdays. Four days after he turned 16, he received his driver's license, borrowed a 914, and ran his first POC event at the Streets of Willow.

Eric's first job, at age 13, was helping out trackside at POC, PCA, and VARA events for his stepdad Mark's company, Hergesheimer MotorSports. By age 20, he was working in the shop full-time. He bussed tables for extra cash and took some college classes, too. Eric has progressed from service assistant to co-owner and VP of Motorsports at the company.

"I feel very grateful to have the opportunity to do what I love, spend time with my family, and work with some great clients," Eric confided. "At the heart of my business is a family fueled by a passion for motorsports. We're really crazy and obsessive about our craft, and we've attracted a great team of others that have become part of our family. We truly love what we do, and our clients are the beneficiaries of our dedication. Those that put their faith in us and help us pay our bills really do become part of our team and extended family."

"Ask not what your club can do for you. Ask what you can do for your club."



Eric has been playing on motor-driven vehicles most of his life.

photos courtesy of Eric Oviatt

MEMBER OF THE YEAR ERIC OVIATT

Laura, Mark, and Eric at the track, circa 2002.
photo by Don Matz



"With the schedule I've kept the last three years, there honestly hasn't been time for much else besides racing, planning racing, thinking about racing, making money to go racing, or watching racing. Even when not at the track, it's on the mind, and I'll end up at cars shows, events, or even the local karting track with the crew. When I do spend some time away, though, I enjoy my two dogs and those few others that can put up with my antics."

I asked Eric about his time at the track behind the wheel, competing with other POC drivers. "Well, the most fun is winning! That enjoyment and satisfaction shared by the whole team and family of a job well done is addicting. I'm sure we take club racing a little more seriously than most."

I asked him about his challenges. He told me, "A huge challenge for me this year was conducting my first drivers meeting at PDS. I was quite nervous to start off. But really, my biggest challenges are mostly business related. I challenge myself and our



Eric races his highly customized Boxster at Auto Club Speedway.
photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

team to be the best at what we do. The most difficult balance is also trying to make a living doing this. Being able to get some seat time and go racing is always a challenge as well. I have some goals that I have not yet met in racing, and I hope opportunities present themselves so I can experience some of those bucket list items."

Bucket list items? "In 10 years I hope to be at the helm of the business and still going strong. I'm doing what I love, and I want to continue down this path of improving the family business, reaching our goals in motorsports, competing alongside my clients, and providing a great workplace for our crew members. Getting a shot at a pro race or a Daytona 24 with the team would be quite fun."

"I've grown up in the POC. I call this place home for many weekends a year, and I enjoy what we get to do together. We're all very fortunate to be able to go out to these tracks and race around with our friends. This organization has given me and my family a lot, and I always try to return the favor. This past year has been a lot of fun. I've always aspired to win the Driver of the Year award, but being honored with the Member of the Year award was truly more rewarding for me."

I asked Eric what he would like to see changed about the POC. "There are a lot of changes coming this year that I think will strengthen the club for the long term. If I could make one suggestion, it would be to remind every member that this is a non-profit club. This club is a group of friends getting together to have some organized fun in the greatest of ways. If you don't like how something is or isn't working, offer to help fix it. We're comprised of some very talented individuals that are capable of great things. Ask not what your club can do for you. Ask what you can do for your club."

In closing, Eric added, "I just want to give a special thanks to everyone in my family and crew: Mark, Laura, Ken, Yolanda, Bobby, Cory, Eric J, Eric H, Evan, Jim, Loraine, Stef, Regan, Ted, and Tyson."



Eric surveys the Hergesheimer corral at Streets of Willow.
photo by John Armstrong

They picked up the slack in the shop and at the track when I was focused on POC stuff, and allowed me to dedicate the time needed to take care of my responsibilities. Without them, I would not have been able to enjoy my hobby and passion as much as I did this year. I owe them."

Sometimes, selecting recipients for our year-end awards is a difficult and stressful task. This year, Eric Oviatt made it easy. I'm grateful that we have members like Eric who are outstanding drivers and give so much of themselves to our club. ▣

Eric, Evan Fullerton, and Mark discuss strategy.
photo by John Armstrong



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DRIVER OF THE YEAR

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

CRAIG AMES

by John Armstrong

Reach for your hankies, all you long-toiling also-rans, and take heart, newbies: the POC's most distinguished driver of 2013—the guy who won 11 of 17 races in the ultra-fast GT2 class and finished off the podium only once—was a rookie. That's right, Craig Ames, who always filled your mirrors fast as he was about to lap you, had never raced wheel-to-wheel prior to late 2012. In fact, he never even raced go-karts as a kid, something we always assume preternaturally gifted drivers to have done.

In talking with 41-year-old Craig, it became clear to me that several factors contributed to his precocious success as a race-car driver: his Australian roots, his competitive sports background, his smarts, and his complete dedication to every aspect of racing. Most important might have been his adherence to a comprehensive plan to become a solid driving competitor in a short time. It was a plan that included professional car prep, frequent practice, coaching, and data analysis.

About his youth in Sydney, Craig says, "I definitely come from a highly competitive background. I'm sure you meet a lot of Australians. It's in our nature to be that competitive." A lifelong training demon, he began competing in triathlons Down Under at age 14, and won some. Later, in his 30s in the States, he resumed his participation in triathlons and competed in the XTerra



World Championships in Maui. He even added a couple of Ironmans to his dossier. In recent years he has competed frequently in local mountain bike races.

Craig says that mountain biking is the sport that has most prepared him as a racer of cars. "I'm a lot better going downhill than uphill," he says. "Going downhill you have to make a lot of quick judgments. That's where I get a lot of skill for driving."

He came to the U.S. 17 years ago when, fresh out of college, he was recruited by JP Morgan Chase to work in New York as a computer programmer specializing in information security. He spent 12 years on Wall Street keeping hackers from breaking into Chase's infrastructures.

While living in New York, Craig would come to California four times a year to visit a friend who lived near Dana Strand in Orange County. There he would indulge in another of his passions—surfing. One day while riding glassy waves at Salt Creek, "I had my epiphany." He left JP Morgan Chase and New York, bought a house in Laguna Niguel, and moved west to start a business of his own.

The business, which he named Blackstar after one of his favorite canyons in the Santa Ana Mountains, took him five years to create. Blackstar specializes in internet marketing for large corporations, placing contextual ads on websites—you, know, those little "cookies" that seem to follow you around everywhere, reminding you of things you like, nudging you to buy them? Thanks for those, Craig.

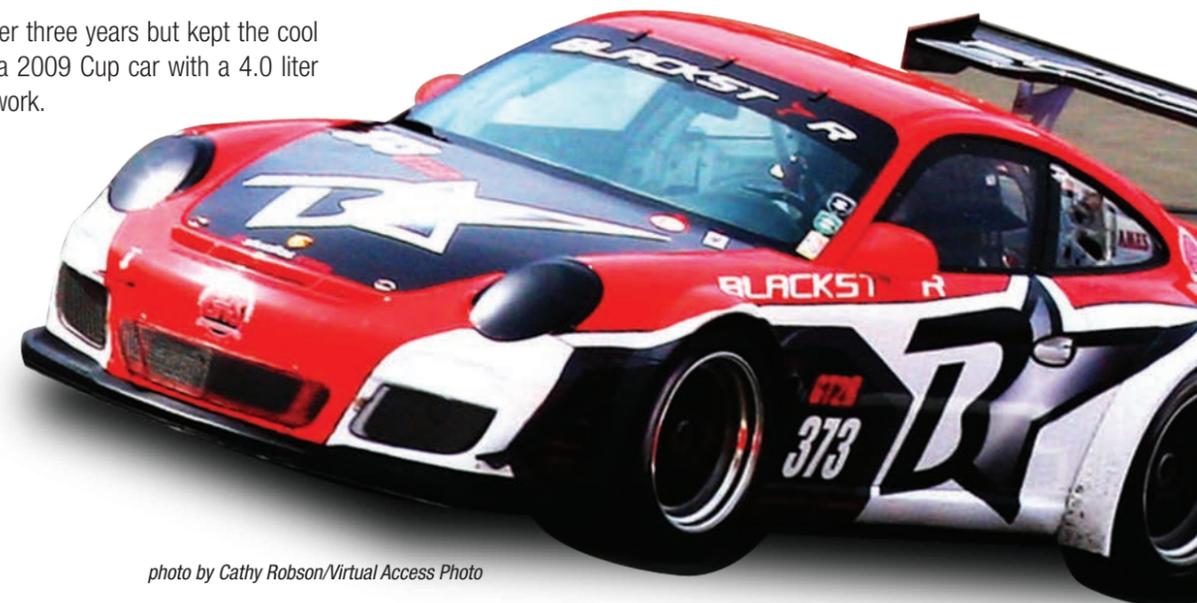
Craig sold Blackstar after three years but kept the cool name for his race car, a 2009 Cup car with a 4.0 liter engine and GT3R bodywork.

So how did Craig make the transformation from human and gravity-powered sports to the internally combusted world? His business partner at Blackstar got him started. Rob McGhee, who was big into motorsports, decided to buy a 997 GT3 street car for track days and suggested that Craig go in halves with him. "I wasn't that interested—kind of scared, actually," says Craig, "but I decided to go for it to try something new."

They shared the car for about six months. "I really enjoyed it, and I realized I was actually pretty decent compared to him—and he had been doing it a long time." Gradually they both concluded they weren't very good at sharing, and Craig bought himself another great street car, a 997 GT3 RS, which he ran for about a year with various southland clubs, including POC.

"Eventually I realized I'd bought the wrong car, and I really wanted to compete," he says, so he acquired the race car. Before purchasing the car, he did his homework and made sure that it would be capable of winning GT2 class. Then he hired the masterful Kevin Roush to coach him and set up and maintain the car. They practiced frequently at Willow Springs.

Craig explains, "Data analysis is how we figure out the areas for me to improve on. He'll drive my car, and I'll go, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe the car can do that.' Then I'll do a lap, and we'll overlay it and see where I need to improve. He can be very specific, like, 'You're braking six car lengths too early here.' He can really tell you where you're not doing well. And the data doesn't lie. Kevin will tell me, 'You can feel like you're going fast, you feel like you're doing this, you feel like you're doing



Ames credits mountain biking with honing his reflexes

photo courtesy of Craig Ames

photo by Cathy Robson/Virtual Access Photo

DRIVER OF THE YEAR CRAIG AMES

that. But here's what the data said. You really did brake this much, you put too much acceleration in here, and that's why you spun.' Yeah, being able to run test days with him was a really big help."

Roush says, "It takes serious effort and time to get very skilled at, first, driving the car. Then there's racing it and that craft to gain. We worked at pretty much every track before the events came, then further at events. So combine this targeted effort with a well set-up, confidence-inspiring car, plus a real solid driver who applies himself and can concentrate on what our data has shown to be the departments to focus on, and you have a winning effort. Amazingly, even if the driver has just started racing."

Craig graduated from his second POC Racers Clinic in December, 2012, and he entered his first POC race with a provisional Cup Racing License in February, 2013. He got a fourth and a third in his first two races, which veteran Blake Rosser won. Blake's engine blew early in the season, but Craig had already started challenging him seriously before then. He proceeded to win all but three of the last 13 races. Needless to say, a lot of veterans were taken by surprise, including Dan Aspesi, last year's Driver of the Year. Aspesi, ever the salesman, helped prep Craig's car by selling him parts off his own car, but ironically could never gain traction against him all year.

A lot of POC drivers might assume that a big factor in Craig's success is that he always drives on fresh rubber,

but the opposite is actually the case. Craig says, "Kevin makes me drive on tires that are just horseshit all the time. It's scary. I hate it. It drives me crazy. But once I get good tires on my car it's unbelievable and really satisfying, too."

"At Miller I was really worried, because I was so far off the pace of the other GT2 cars in practice sessions, and it's such a big track. Finally for qualifying I put good tires on, and I beat my previous best time by seven seconds. Chip Romer was like, 'What's up with that?' Ames won both Red Races."

I asked Craig what the best moment of the year was for him. He replied that, hands down, it was the season finale at Willow with Chip Romer. Romer, another relative newcomer/wunderkind, had been aggressively battling Craig all year, and had beaten him on a couple of occasions. In Sunday's race, Romer qualified on pole with a ridiculously fast time of 1:19.8, while Craig qualified 2.7 seconds slower. Craig nevertheless managed to stay on Chip's tail the entire race. Lap after lap, Craig would get his best launch out of Turn 9, but Chip would keep the inside line on the straight and force Craig to the outside in Turn 1—a sketchy place to attempt a pass when cars are slowing from 150 to 70 mph. On the radio, Roush told Craig it was time to change tactics.

On lap 11 of the 13-lap race, at the entrance to Turn 1, Craig feinted right, then tried a late inside run. But Chip had already closed the door. Roush radioed Craig,

Ames takes an early lead at Miller.
photo by Jeff Erickson



Chip Romer (left) led the final race for 12 laps, but Ames refused to settle for 2nd.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

"If you're going to do that, try it earlier." On the white-flag lap, Craig tried again, moving outside before Turn 1. Romer took the bait and moved out a bit with him. Then Craig dove in. Chip wasn't going to give it up. He braked late—but a little too hard—and locked up just enough to allow Craig to make the pass. Craig held on for the rest of the lap to win by less than a second.

Afterwards, Chip had this to say about Craig: "He is an awesome driver who has a great car and an incredible team. I am very comfortable going fender to fender with the man. He worked very hard all season. I gave it everything I had, especially in that last race. Craig has this incredible winning attitude."

And fellow GT2 driver Dan Burnham remarked, "There is something about Craig that makes it very hard to be irritated that he wins, wins, and wins again. Maybe it's that slightly smart-ass Aussie attitude. Not sure."

I asked Craig what he likes about the POC. Without hesitation he replied, "Everyone's excited for each other. There's a respect as well as a competition. We all want to beat each other really bad, but at the same time we help each other out, and we're really happy for one another's accomplishments."

What about his prospects for 2014? "Oh, it's going to be a challenging year. With Chip always strong, Blake's car fixed, Aspesi consistently having something up his sleeve, and young Brandon Griffith emerging out of nowhere, it'll be hard for me to repeat. Everybody's going to be hungry."

Savor your incredible 2013, Craig. Well done, mate.

"I wasn't that interested—kind of scared, actually. But I decided to go for it to try something new."



Craig and Kevin go over the data after a session.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



Adrienne Steenblock is one of Craig's biggest supporters.

photo courtesy of Craig Ames

THE WHIPPING WILLOW



The nine turns of Willow Springs.

photo by Caliphography

by Paul D. Young



Paul in the GT6 lead, as usual.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

The season finale at Willow Springs in December is always an event to look forward to: the weather is usually cool and crisp, favoring track records; the Racers Clinic yields promising new racing stars; and season championship titles are often determined in Time Trials and Cup Racing.

The big question would be the weather, as the National Weather Service predicted rain—a cold, windy rain—for Saturday. It seemed to hold off a bit, as Saturday morning on the way to the track we saw a gorgeous sunrise. However, there were ominous clouds building up and spilling over the Tehachapis to the northwest of Willow Springs.

At the track the wind was strong, steady, and bitter cold. During our first Orange/Green practice session, the clouds flowed over the butte and swirled around overhead menacingly. Most drivers in the first set of run sessions were clocking decent times, but it was clear that we were being cautious, feeling out the track surface, the wind, and potential dampness. Several drivers found that far side of the traction limit in the first Orange/Green session.

Steve Floyd on lap two performed a pretty pirouette in Turn 3 directly in front of me, then skated off into the dirt. Halfway through the session the rains started, and Scott Fisher did the 360° dance right in front of me in Turn 5. The rain was intermittent, but definitely a factor already. While Aaron sorted out some transponder difficulties, we sought shelter and something warm to consume.

The White group got off to a good first session. While the rain held off, the wind was a factor, and this was reflected in slower lap times than expected. The rains did arrive during the first Red practice group, causing a spin or two and rather pathetic times by those who did venture out. By the time the Blue Racers Clinic group was on track, the rain was definitely taking over. The first half of the session was under full yellow conditions, and the steady rain produced nice rooster tails from the cars as they “sped” along as best they could.

I skipped the second Orange/Green group practice as the cold rain continued to fall. By now there was a moderate amount of wetness on the track (not simply damp). Those who confronted the elements were well-behaved and driving very gently, but turning laps generally 10 seconds slower than normal. The White Time Trial group also got to

suffer through rainy-day driving, with the attendant slow times. Actually it's really a good experience for those who have never tried performance driving in the rain. I kinda wished I could have been in the Blue Racers Clinic group to practice the exercises with inclement weather.

After lunch, our Orange/Green split qualifying took place under sunny but windy conditions, as the storm was changing its complexion moment by moment. While the constant wind was a nuisance, it did tend to dry things out quicker. Though we were cold to the bone, at least the track was dry.

I am truly amazed to see how the GT4 class has become so competitive. The GT4 times keep getting lower and lower each event as the cars are refined and developed. Blair Boyce spun to the outside of 9 on the first lap, but came back to set the pole and fastest GT4 time with a nice 1:27.1. Steve Vandecar was half a second back, with Eric Olberz right behind him at 1:27.8. It was great to see Eric out again, and very competitive, after his nasty shunt at Laguna Seca in October.

While the wretched wind persisted, the track remained dry, and the White Time Trial group was able to run decently, but definitely slower. Alan

Slocum was in the dirt (mud?) by Turn 7 for a while but finally got cleared. Eventually our benchmark at WSIR, Mike Hammond, was down to 1:38s, closer to his usual times.

The Red qualifying session saw front runner Dan Aspesi off into the dirt, while Bob Ehrman took to doing donuts in Turn 3. Eventually Chip Romer edged out fellow GT2 competitor Craig Ames by only 1/3 of a second at 1:21.3, for the pole. GT3 was headed by Duane Selby with a slight lead over Andrew Enz. Amazing times were posted in V3, with Bob Mueller heading the group at 1:27.5, and Steve Parker just a few tenths back. John Manning was third overall in his Radical, running in Ex-Class. (Does Ex-Class mean he no longer has any panache?)

While some of the 2013 championships had already been decided, there were still a few classes that would be resolved this weekend. In the Time Trials, GT4 was a neck-and-neck points battle between Steve Vandecar and Brad Keegan. GT3 could go to either Bayan Salehi or Gunter Enz. In Cup Racing, those same two classes were on the line. While Blair Boyce had already secured first place in GT4, second place was still a points battle between Steve and Brad. GT3 had a tie going into the WSIR finale, with Gunter Enz and Duane Selby duking it out for the championship.

THE WHIPPING WILLOW

Time for our Green/Orange Race, and even after the rain there was blowing dust across Turn 8, from the pace lap on. One would think that the dirt would be damp, but the wind was so strong that it evaporated the sand and was able to push it across the track. When the flag dropped, Eric got a rocket launch to easily clear Blair for the lead into Turn 1. From mid-pack, Martin Schacht came flying along the right into the turn, passing me and a couple of BSRs to move up a few spots. We all cautiously navigated through Turn 1 and sorted ourselves out after a brisk lap. Eventually, Blair and then Steve passed Eric, and the two of them had a monumental battle for GT4 and overall honors.

Most of the race went smoothly and easily, except for that frightful wind blowing up my colon in Turns 8 and 9. On the final lap, I had caught up with Alex Bermudez in the BSR, but was not quite able to pass him. Meantime, leaders Boyce and Vandecar

had been continuing their race. Steve reeled off a number of superb, fast laps chasing Blair down. On that final lap, the two leaders came flying over the hill nose-to-tail at Turn 6, and quickly lapped us. They stayed close together through 8 and 9, but Blair edged out

Steve for a thrilling victory by less than a quarter second.

In the impound area after the race, Duane Selby asked me, "Well Paul, did you hit anything?"

My reply was, "Yeah, a plateau."

During the official Time Trial runs, although it was cold and sunny, the wind spoiled the recipe for an ideal record-setting weather situation. While decent times were posted, they were definitely off the pace. Steve Vandecar's GT4 time of 1:30.4 was easily two seconds behind his best. Benchmark Mike Hammond was also at least two seconds slower than his norm, at 1:39.2.

Thankfully for the Red Race later Saturday afternoon, it continued to dry out, and the wind perhaps diminished a bit. After a solid start by the grid, Dan Aspesi charged from last through the pack to fourth place, where he eventually finished. John Manning in the Radical had some fast laps, but was not able to hold his early and brief lead from the GT2 pair of Chip Romer and Craig Ames. Craig led most of the race—and at that all-important checkered flag.

GT3 proved interesting, with Andrew Enz putting in a stellar performance of consistent, fast laps. He passed GT3 stalwarts John Gordon and Duane Selby to win the class by over 10 seconds. John made some serious moves to challenge Duane, but eventually had to settle for third in class. Steve Parker was running right up there with Duane and John, and eventually prevailed in V3 after he escaped from Bob Mueller and Rob Tachovsky.

Well, Saturday had turned out to be a good day despite the tempestuous weather.

As Bob Seger sang over 40 years ago (sheez, that makes me feel old!), "Yeah, you just might see—that it's a brand new morning with a brand new sun." And indeed Sunday dawned clear, cold, and mercifully calm. This would be the day for track records, I thought.

For Orange/Green qualifying, Blair turned in a blistering 1:25.8, over a second ahead of Vandecar's quite respectable 1:27, both in GT4. Remember, it wasn't all that long ago when if a GT4 car got under 1:30, everyone said "oooooh!" Martin Schacht went wild with a 1:33.352 in GT5, just behind Alex Bermudez' awesome 1:33.349, first in BSR. My GT6 911SC "Snickers" was mid-pack with a 1:35.6, which would have me gridded amongst the Boxsters as usual.

The Red Group qualifying times were perhaps even more impressive. Chip turned in an exceptional 1:19.8 in GT2, over two-and-a-half seconds ahead of Craig. Drake Kemper had a stunning 1:25.3 in GT3, only to be out-stunned by Andrew Enz with a



brilliant 1:24.9, to lead that class. Duane had edged out Andrew's dad, Gunter in Saturday's Red Race, and now held a five-point lead for the season. Down to the last race, the GT3 Cup Racing Championship was still up for grabs between the two of them.

Right after lunch, the White Time Trial group took to the track in great conditions. While their times were coming down, they were not quite into record-setting territory yet.

Our Orange/Green Race started smoothly and featured fast-chargers Eric Olberz and Blair Boyce starting from the back. The two had opted to grid last for the sporting challenge, as Blair had sewn up GT4 already, and Eric had only recently joined GT4 and was not competing for the championship. They picked their way through the pack deftly, and settled in behind Steve Vandecar, who was leading GT4. Ahead of Steve, however, were two V3 renegades, Rob Tachovsky and Bob Mueller, running in EX-Class Sunday. Bob eventually won overall with Rob second. Vande took top spot in GT4, followed by Blair. With his GT4 win Sunday Vande picked up second in the season standings, just ahead of Brad Keegan.



Top: Bob Mueller leads the pack en route to the overall Orange/Green Race victory on Sunday.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

Bottom: Brad Keegan took a pair of 3rds in GT4 over the weekend.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



Leland McCarthy and Andrew Weyman in post-race giddiness.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

THE WHIPPING WILLOW

Many good times were posted during the official runs of Sunday's Time Trials, but surprisingly only one track record fell on this afternoon of ideal weather. That fast-advancing class, GT4, featured Steve Vandecar and Blair Boyce again. Steve spun on his first lap in Turn 1, yet still managed a 1:41. It threw off his stride, however. In the end, we indeed had a new GT4 record of 1:27.5 set by none other than Cup Racing season champion Blair Boyce. Steve did manage to eke out a first-place season championship in the Time Trials over Brad Keegan. Bayan Salehi held on to his points lead over Gunter Enz for the GT3 Time Trial championship.

With the weather holding perfect, there was much anticipation for a great Red Group race. We watched excitedly as the pack grunted around Turn 9 toward the start. Waiting...waiting... waiting... Finally a very late green flag, throwing utter chaos into the field. There then ensued a dreadful mess, with parts flying and tires screeching. I couldn't tell who hit who, but John Gordon was off in the hot pits citing non-dictionary words, Gunter suffered a flat tire from contact with Duane Selby, plus Mike Monsalve's V3 car had altered bodywork.

Okay, let's regroup and try this again. Black-flag all, bring them in (those who are still able), and restart the race for 13 laps instead of 15.

Take two went better—much better, thank you. Craig Ames got an early lead, but Chip took over fairly soon. Lap after lap Craig would knock on the door, especially on the inside of Turn 1, only to have to ease out of it. Chip obviously could not sustain his sub-1:20 qualifying time, but drove solidly to keep Craig at bay. The two were conjoined for practically the entire race. Meanwhile, John Manning was getting more comfortable in the Radical and caught up to join the Chip and Craig show. He got between them and for a lap or so kept them separated, but he took over the lead with just a few laps remaining, allowing Craig to pester Chip once again.

Back a bit, Brandon Griffith had gotten around Dan Aspesi, who was nipping at his heels practically the entire race. Meanwhile, Andrew Enz was pecking at Doug Baron and his Cup car, and appeared to have GT3 easily sewn up. But John Gordon and Drake Kemper were also turning mid-1:25s while exchanging places with each other. John finally passed Drake and turned up the wick, but Andrew kept it steady and stayed ahead by a few seconds. Then, with just a couple laps to go, Andrew bobbed in Turn 2 and found the dirt. He scrambled back quickly and rejoined the group, but alas, about 15 seconds behind John and Drake, to finish third in GT3. In V3, Steve Parker had managed to get ahead of Steve Alarcon, and kept a nervous but tenable lead of a couple seconds throughout the race.

The white flag signaling "last lap" flew over leader John Manning in class EX, with Chip and Craig just seconds behind and nearly glued together. After pinging away at the outside, Craig finally took Chip by surprising him on the inside of Turn 1. Craig held on to the lead for the remainder of the lap, claiming an exciting and well-fought GT2 win. While John Gordon won GT3, the season championship went to Duane on account of his win Saturday. Ironic that both GT3 contenders Duane and Gunter were disabled in the mêlée of the final race start.

That Sunday Red Race was a fitting climax to a great weekend, capping off a great season. I don't know if it's because these are all my friends, but I can't imagine seeing or experiencing better racing anywhere. ▣

Martin Schacht topped the podium both days in GT5.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



Will Marcy placed 3rd in BSR Sunday.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo





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the Porsche cars up to and including the newest models. You see all generations of Porsches represented here: a bunch of 911s, a couple of Boxsters sitting on the floor, a 996 on the lift with its guts hanging everywhere, and a brand new 991 GT3 prominently placed by the open garage door.

Chuck explains, "When I began tracking the early 911 cars, they were relatively inexpensive and had great performance potential. But I've always owned and loved modern Porsche cars as well. The declining prices of the 996 and newer water-cooled cars and their performance potential make these attractive track platforms. So we've been devoting a lot of time and resources researching and developing performance suspension components for these cars".

The decision to focus so much on suspension was not accidental. Inspired by the POC track day so many years ago, Chuck recognized both the opportunities and challenges that suspension development presented.

Oil coolers on the assembly floor.



"The suspension is perhaps the most complicated part of the car. There are so many interactions and trade-offs. And it all has to work together as a properly balanced system. By specializing, we are able to bring a greater level of knowledge and experience than we could if we divided our time with building engines or some other function."

Chuck continues, "Plus, as Porsche introduces new models, we have a steady flow of new challenges. We are now developing parts for the 991 series, and that will keep us

busy for a while. I think of Elephant Racing as a sort of R&D factory. We have the tools and processes to take products from idea phase through to general availability fairly quickly. We are constantly developing new products and striving to innovate."

It shows. While the company may have started with bushing replacements, they now manufacture products for every category of suspension component for cars ranging from 356 to 991.

The bulk of Elephant Racing products are shipped to customers worldwide, but the company also does custom suspension installation and setup on customer cars. Chuck explained that they provide customers with assistance choosing suspension components that are matched and balanced to meet their objectives. Choosing the right mix of components is really difficult—yet critical to getting optimum performance.

"Some of our customers are very knowledgeable and know exactly what suspension parts they want," says Chuck. "But the majority look to us to provide expertise to help them get a system that works. We provide that expertise on every order."

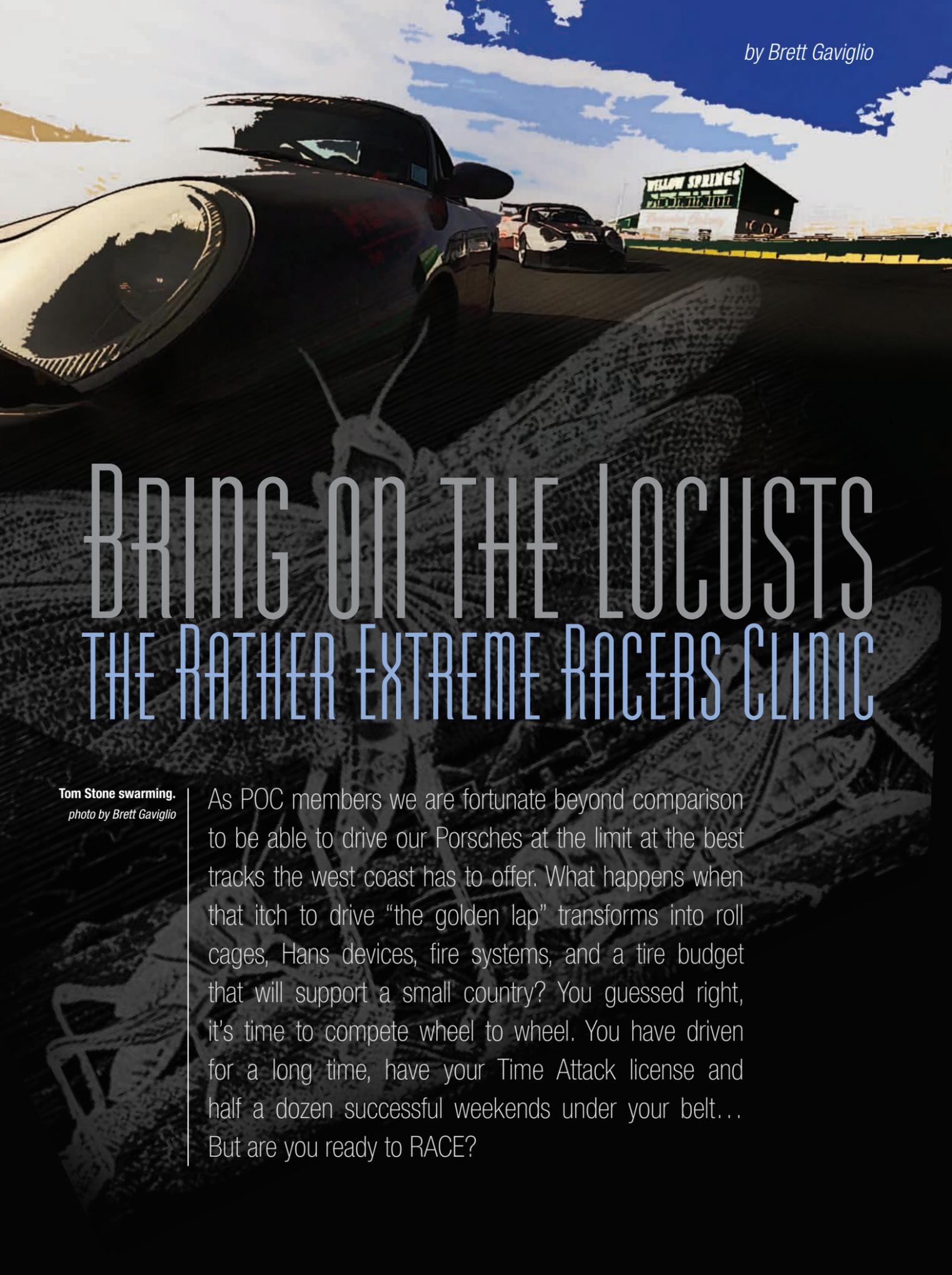
We've noticed that the Elephant Racing website has gone through quite a revision lately and has some pretty impressive interactive tools. Web designer Bart tells us, "We released our Suspension Builders—tools that make it easy to configure a complete suspension. You can choose from proven, fully-engineered suspension setups, or customize them to your own needs. We've also rolled out our Suspension Navigator, which shows an interactive CAD model of the suspension and makes it easy to find components and understand how they interact with each other."

Bart adds, "While we're happy to help customers configure their suspensions on the phone, many like to try out the Suspension Builder and Navigator on their own. It lets them explore different options and gain knowledge about the products in a relaxed way."

Spirits seem high at Elephant Racing. Chuck has an explanation for that, too. "There is nothing better than when a customer calls to tell us how happy he is with our products, or that he shaved two seconds per lap. This is why we get up in the morning. We love researching and developing new products and refining these cars."

A project started by Chuck 12 years ago to improve his suspension is still going strong today, with no sign of slowing down. ▣

by Brett Gaviglio



BRING ON THE LOCUSTS THE RATHER EXTREME RACERS CLINIC

Tom Stone swarming.
photo by Brett Gaviglio

As POC members we are fortunate beyond comparison to be able to drive our Porsches at the limit at the best tracks the west coast has to offer. What happens when that itch to drive “the golden lap” transforms into roll cages, Hans devices, fire systems, and a tire budget that will support a small country? You guessed right, it’s time to compete wheel to wheel. You have driven for a long time, have your Time Attack license and half a dozen successful weekends under your belt... But are you ready to RACE?



The author drives in the Racers Clinic.
photo by Cathy Robson Virtual Access Photo

Dave Gardner, Dwain Dement, Dave Elliott, and the POC board have you covered. They just have one quick question before you start racing: can you show up and SHOW US for a couple of weekends?

A POC license is one that is earned through great preparation and ability to adapt, as it is no longer just you and your car out there. You are about to enter a fraternity where many are called and few are chosen to carry the coveted POC racing license.

Dave Gardner, the director of the race school, admits, “I love messing with these guys—throwing every challenge possible to test their awareness and skill.” Dave has some help, as a storm blows into Willow Springs on the cold December morning of Racers Clinic. This will be my first time on track with 15 other drivers with cars ranging in horsepower from 150-hp GT5s to the awesome 450-hp GT2s.

Dwain advises that we should go out and “get to know each other at speed,” looking at us all as if it isn’t raining and this is just a walk in the park. Welcome to racing—be ready!

Dave says to find a partner and drive around the track at a good pace side by side, then change places on the front straight. “We’ll checker you when it’s time to stop.” Already a bit nervous, the low visibility and lack of windshield wipers cause me to question my sanity for a few moments.

Most of us enter the track driving on slicks in the rain. Exiting the pits Tom Mueller puts his #667 360-hp GTC-3 cup car into the wall. The rest of us make it to the track. Tom Stone in the #254 BSR car lines up next to my #428 V3 911, and we do a slow lap. We soon start picking up the pace as there is actually a bit of grip out there. Initially we go through slowly with about two cars spacing be-

tween us in corners. We end the drill running over 100 mph down the straights and 70 through Turn 9, with about four feet between us. The rain turns out to be a desirable difficulty; the 15 of us that have made it to the track find we can trust each other at speed in the rain. The graduated system of driving at the POC club works very well.

The Zen masters Rick Knoop (Le Mans/Pikes Peak/NASCAR winner), Mike Monsalve (POC V3 champion), Dwain Dement (lost count at 11 driving championships), and Oscar from the Porsche Deutschland factory driving team teach us, each with his own wit. Combined, they have over 100 years of racing experience.

Legend of motor racing Rick Knoop comments on how we begin to go from driving cars alone in Time Attack to “the dance” with other race cars. When we return from the rain-soaked track, Rick immediately labels our group his “ducklings.” He tells us that a good racer is “smooth, consistent, and concentrates all the time.”

We are sent back out for a pre-lunch session to set up passes and get side by side as a group at speed on the now-dry-

ish track, but get the passes done in the straight. A blue Boxster spins in 5, but other than that the group is fairly clean and fast in the dry. Rick brings more Zen of driving advice about landmarks and turn-in points: “Start with a telephone pole; whittle it to a toothpick.” After watching us drive next to each other, he says, “This is like a middle school dance. I want to see the awkwardness disappear, and later in the day you get to graduate to high school dancing, with everyone closer.”

Mike Monsalve stresses that we should constantly visualize our actions to premeditate even what oth-



Chris Thompson hangs on under pressure.
photo by Cathy Robson Virtual Access Photo





Frank Powell races down the main straight.
photo by Brett Gaviglio

ers will do. Dave Gardner tells us we need to be able to close our eyes and mentally drive the track using a stopwatch and get the same lap time we normally drive. Oscar suggests increasing the detail of our preparation and debriefing each session to continue learning. Now it's time to go out and dance—SHOW US. One thing, guys. This time you are ONLY allowed to pass in corners. I find the outside line of Turn 2 to be quite a fun passing zone. I have a thrill-of-a-lifetime view of the Audi R8 as we both slide around the sweeper.

Wet has turned to dry and windy. The track is getting heavy gusts in Turns 8 and 9, causing instability in the cars coming out of 8 at over 135 mph and setting up for 9. Difficulty is increasing with this new challenge. One gust blows over the blue porta-potty in Turn 9 and creates a dust storm that catches the pack in the darkening apex—three seconds of zero visibility. If you have been through 9 at full tilt in

fourth gear, you know it's a little freaky. But add in huge gusts of wind and blinding dust at full speed in a pack of cars all dancing together at apex... that's now moving toward one of the craziest things a driver can experience. No contact, though—everyone stays in the throttle in a moment of faith...

The ducklings return to the nest, having passed yet another tough test of trust. Dave Gardner tells us in debriefing, "This is my ninth racers clinic. I've never seen rain, dust, and wind at the same time, ever." Rick Knoop says, "Bring on the locusts, because this is wrath of God stuff!"

Dwain Dement tells us, "Time to focus on better race starts. We want to see every car in a big perfect rectangle nose-to-tail when the green flag drops." The group gets the opportunity to do over 20 race starts, all but one of them in Australian pursuit where the slowest cars are gridded in the front



Racers Clinic graduating class. You'd be smiling, too, if you'd just showed 'em.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



and fastest at the back. Each race start is controlled mayhem and very addictive. One thing we all learn: every race start is different. The index of performance of each car varies; the drivers' tendencies continually adapt. It feels as if millions of decisions are being made in the course of the first two turns, and the driving is just automatic, with a new line every start.

The biting cold of the day is so intense that the only place many of us find any comfort and warmth is in the pure focus of race mode, in the car. Progressively, with every start, the comfortable separation tightens up to inches between cars, and we are continually reminded to LEAVE RACING ROOM as we get more comfortable. Jerry Hoffman in #120 GT4 and I trade some late-brake passing in very well-matched cars. Randy Takaki runs his green #454 Boxster BSR like he was born for the Racers Clinic. Rick Knoop says, "While in defensive mode you want your car to appear like it's three cars wide." Randy knows this one move quite well—that green Boxster seemed five cars wide in Turn 3. Dave Gardner reminds us that we get one move to defend our position.

In qualifying for the Blue Race, Chris Thompson in a GMG prepared 997 Cup GT2 car has a big off in Turn 2, then later has a rear suspension failure in the jump at Turn 6, spinning in front of me. Figuring his weekend is done, with the race grid coming in just 85 minutes, we exit and go to the classroom.

As we are all about to race each other, we are told how impound works and what not to say immediately following a race. We are reminded that the club upholds sportsmanship at the highest level. Rick Knoop tells us, "Do it for the art of it, not for the ego. You are about to be turned loose as racers representing the POC. You will always be a part of this small fraternity of drivers who have a special bond. Your reputation starts today."

We prepare ourselves for the planned 12-lap race and make it to grid. Alongside pulls Chris in his GT2, all fixed and ready to race! How GMG fixed that car so fast I have no idea... but there he is, gridded seventh, right behind me in that great sounding Cup car. Very cool.

Tom Mueller leads Kevin Wilson.
photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



As the green flag drops on a flawless start, the front straight shudders amid the cacophony of screaming Porsche power. Rich Knoop turns to Dave Gardner and remarks, "There go my ducklings."

The first three laps have some real battles and clean passes. Roland Weedon loses a wheel in Turn 9, but otherwise we find ourselves in our starting positions by lap five. This means I'm still ahead of Chris and trying my best to check out—fat chance of that. I spend lap after lap stalked by Chris, who oddly seems to disappear at around lap 10 as my focus moves forward on turns and flags.

Dave Gardner gets the last laugh, extending the race to 15 laps without warning. We keep on driving, and by the white flag I think I've made so much space all I've got to do is bring this car home. Then, after a slightly off-pace Turn 1, I get a glimpse of the #485 GT2 back there about 40 car lengths... uh oh... I've gotta drive the best, most focused lap

possible to win a drag race to the end. "Drive your last lap as hard as your first," Rick Knoop's advice from an hour ago comes to mind. Thanks, Rick. I put in the best nine turns I can muster and get all 229 ponies shrieking up the straightaway.

Checkered flag waving and that line is closing in fast while Chris' white and blue Cup car rockets out of 9 about 20 car lengths back. I try to make my V3 car fill the track... but find the front straight is really, really wide. Race Monitor shows Chris beating me by .001 second in a finish that has a difference in speed of over 30 miles per hour as we cross the line together. What a rush!

We are all so fortunate for this experience. All I can feel is gratitude for the efforts of the club to put such a great clinic together to make as challenging an experience as possible. We are definitely all racers now. It felt like such a short time ago that Time Trial was a monumental challenge. This is a whole new level. If you have the itch to be a racer, POC is the right place to scratch it. See you at the next Racers Clinic. Number 428 wants to race you.

The light's all shining on Tom Stone.

photo by Cathy Robson
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DON'T FORGET TO BREATHE

by Doug McDonald

The author learns the limits of traction.

photo by Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo

Rounding the apex of Turn 9, heading down the long straight towards Turn 1, I hear in my head, "Breathe! Relax your hands and just Breathe! Doug... I don't hear you Breathing! Slowly... Inhale and Exhale!" That voice in my head is not the master from the heavens above, but my master for the weekend, Andrew Weyman, riding shotgun in my 1986 Porsche 951.

Having never driven a race car or been on a race track at speed, with 911s of all stripes wanting desperately to pass me through the Omega at Willow Springs, who has time to breathe? With so much going on, this basic task simply seemed overrated.

For some fifty-odd years I have been breathing. I double-checked my notes, and I have been breathing continuously for most of this time. I like to think I'm pretty good at it. That is, until my introduction to the Porsche Owners Club and Willow Springs Raceway during the recent PDS Clinic in January. On this particular weekend, I apparently stopped breathing, or at least I thought I did.

It all started with the drivers meeting at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, where introductions were made, flags

and passing rules were presented, and PDS Clinic students were paired with their instructors. I was assigned the club's president, Andrew, who helped me digest the classroom instruction led by Mike Takaki. Mike did a masterful job of explaining the line at Willow and what to do and not to do in order to stay safe on the course. Some experienced instructors were also in attendance throughout the day, interjecting their thoughts.

But driving theory and practice, I quickly learned, can often be two separate things. Everyone I met promised that this would be the most fun I have ever had, so I took this at face value with a wait-and-see attitude. However, early Saturday morning was kind of like standing in line for some crazy roller coaster with a name like Death Demon. People say how great it is, but having never experienced the ride you quietly quake in your Pilotis at what may lie ahead. The only way to know for certain was to get out on the track and do my best to shake off the nerves.

Initially, we went through some exercises to help ease into driving on the track. Hitting an apex, braking, and passing were all explained, and the development of

these skills was then enforced and built on. "Don't look down at the track over the hood of the car," Andrew would say through the headset. "Look far down the track towards your next turn. The car will take you where your eyes are focused," he continued.

I must have been looking at a bird or something, because as I was turning towards the apex of Turn 3, the front of the car turned west and the rear of the car turned north, and I had spun.

I had now experienced something I had feared doing. We were immediately black-flagged, and Andrew directed me to the black flag station to explain what had happened. I hadn't a clue. He explained that I did not open the wheel soon enough, and the car was trying to go where I told it. So much to learn, such a short amount of time. The black flag official was very patient with my stumbling explanation, and back onto the track we went. Sunday went better, however. After a good night's sleep, all of the instruction seemed to gel, and my lap times started to fall.

Even though having an instructor is part of the PDS program, it should certainly not be taken for granted. These men and women place their lives in the hands of inexperienced students who may be behind the wheel at speed for the first time. They should be congratulated and saluted. Andrew Weyman is one such instructor. Patient to a fault, he looks and acts more like a college professor than a Boxster Spec race car driver. He constantly provided instruction when appropriate and also provided quiet at times and did not flood me with too much information. He has finely balanced teaching skills that can only have come through experience, practice, and patience. I'm indebted for his calmness and sage advice. Here are some of his takeaways:

- 1) *Smoothness is key to fast driving—almost like a fluid dance with a willing partner.*
- 2) *Don't turn in too soon; wait a half second more and aim for the apex.*
- 3) *If you mess up on a turn, forget about it; it's history. Focus on the next one. Don't let a bad turn or spin ruin your day.*
- 4) *And my favorite: Even though this sport can be crazy expensive, tell your spouse it's cheaper than you thought. (However, since Andrew's wife Terry drives a Boxster competitively with the club as well, I think she is savvy to this proclamation.)*

The front of the car turned west and the rear of the car turned north, and I had spun.

I seemed to attract flags during the weekend, as I received a trifecta of open and waving black, closed and pointing black, and the dreaded meatball. I had a few mechanical faults with the car that had to be overcome before I was allowed to get back on the track. One was with fuel, and one was with brake light failure. The former was a relatively easy fix, but the latter turned into a real nightmare of sorts. Both of these issues brought forth some helpful club members who were tenacious with their problem-solving abilities. Tim Comeau, a 924/944 guru, spent more than a reasonable amount of time working on my car. He went above and beyond to get my brake lights fixed so I could finish up my sessions on Sunday. Jim Duncan and Mike also lent hands and have my deep appreciation for doing so.

I had no idea what to expect when I drove down from northern California for this event. I was going to drive a race car I had never really driven, I had never been on a racetrack, and I had joined a club that was totally new to me. What could possibly go wrong? Was this going to be fun, or was it going to be like a bad rollercoaster experience that I would never do again in a million years?

On the long tow home I began to reflect on the experience, the people, and my training. The experience had been like no other—it was simply fantastic. Death Demon, be damned. This was a blast! POC is a very professional and safe organization to be driving with, and I had a wide grin on my face that lasted until Wednesday. The people are simply fantastic, knowledgeable, and friendly. The skills I learned were invaluable, but thanks to Andrew, Mike, and the others I now feel I have a solid foundation on which to build. Now if only I could remember to BREATHE! ▣

THE AMBASSADORS

INSTRUCTORS OF THE POC



by Aleta Pearce

Part One: prior to the rubber meeting the road

Settling into my chair at the front table at the recent Instructors Clinic, I took stock of the situation. Gathered in the shop at Dwain Dement's Vision Motorsports, surrounded by the sights and smells of the very cars we all love, were about 30 participants, of whom only two were women. I represented the singular demographic of the middle-aged, red-headed grandmother, proud parent of four boys, and former basketball mom. For a moment I was wondering, how did I find myself amongst these machines and men?

Future ambassadors of the POC.

Photo by Aleta Pearce



One could make an argument that the corruption began in utero: my mother drove a BMW Isetta while I baked in her oven. Or, perhaps I'm genetically predisposed for this Porsche affliction, since both my grandfather and father were Porsche nuts. I've got it bad—so bad that I'm publicly known as my father's favorite son. The deal is, I love Porsches, not as trailer queens to be carried about, made immaculate with a q-tip and put on display. From where I sit, Porsches should be dirty—and sideways.

One of the longstanding traditions of the POC is offering a safe, affordable environment to learn, develop, and continually improve one's driving skills. The POC provides exceptional training that's free. Hmm... *exceptional, free, training...* three words scarcely seen in the same sentence. I had recently benefitted greatly from this training as a student in the Performance Driving Series.

This year I decided to share my enthusiasm for performance driving and learn to become an instructor at the annual POC Instructors Clinic on Saturday, January 11 at Dwain's impressive Laguna Hills facility. Breakfast and lunch were provided, and the hospitality was much appreciated.

Dwain started Vision Motorsports over 20 years ago with little more than a tool box and enough cash to rent a small shop. It was around that time that he joined the POC. Dwain has the Porsche mark in his blood. He possesses a remarkable enthusiasm for building and driving these marvelous machines. The POC is fortunate to have him as our Chief Driving Instructor.

Dwain presided over the clinic with longtime instructors Dave Gardner and Jim Duncan at his side. Dave, a valuable asset to the club and previous CDI of the PDS, has done a wonderful



Instructors Clinic leaders Dwain Dement and Dave Gardner.

Photo by Aleta Pearce



Aleta in the early '80s.

Photo courtesy of Aleta Pearce

job with our new drivers. His ability to mentor drivers is unparalleled. The coaching of both Dwain and Dave have become integral to my driving. Jim, one of our senior racers, has been serving the POC for over a decade. A dedicated and treasured contributor to our instructors, Jim emphatically believes that “Instructors are the lifeblood of the POC.”

The clinic got underway with questions posed to the attendees: Why are you here? Why do you want to be an instructor?

The participants responded:

“To keep us connected when we’re between race cars;”

“To give back to our volunteer organization;”

“For the satisfaction of knowing you helped another driver improve their skills and enjoyment of the sport;”

“To earn POC bucks to offset fees.”

I think, though, that Dave Buckholz gave the most thought-provoking answer: “Our instructors represent the front-line ambassadors of the POC.” Wow, I’m about to become an ambassador. When I signed up to be an instructor, I had never thought of it like that.

Jim shared with us these “Top 10 Reasons To Be a Driving Instructor” from Ross Bentley’s *HPDE Instructor Manifesto*:

- 10 Instructing leads to free or near-free track time.
- 9 You’re a thrill-seeker.
- 8 You want to give back to others for all the enjoyment you’ve gotten from performance driving,
- 7 Instructing is good for the ego, since you get to tell others how to drive.
- 6 Instructing makes you a better driver.
- 5 You get to thrash... er, I mean... drive other people’s cool cars.
- 4 To see the light bulb go on when your students “get it.”
- 3 It’s fun.
- 2 It gives you more time to acquire helmet hair.
- 1 You grew up in a country where they drove on the opposite side of the road from where you live now, so you often find yourself habitually getting into the passenger seat anyway.

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Our curriculum is actually based on Bentley’s *Manifesto*. Safety is the most crucial aspect of the curriculum. Dave, Dwain and Jim made sure to drive that message home. The fundamental responsibility of an instructor is to control the student, insuring the safety of the instructor, student, and car. Other important components are establishing good in-car communication and understanding how to assess the student’s confidence, skills, and car. Other important components are establishing good in-car communication with your students and understanding how to assess their confidence, skills, and car. The three phases of the program are classroom teaching, in-car instruction, and finally, coaching of self-evaluating students.

Some of the tips that were shared at the clinic were very useful. Dave said, “Make sure your students are as calm as possible. Tell them to breathe. Any athlete has to have good, proper breathing to function properly. If you cut the oxygen off to your brain, you won’t do too well.”

President Andrew Weyman added that the first thing he’ll say to a new student is, “I’m already scared, and I’m already impressed, so we don’t need to do that anymore.”

Dwain said, “There is no right line; it’s the one that doesn’t crash. The line depends on the combination of the car and the driver.”

Jim explained that “Ocular vision is tough. We have to force ourselves to lift up our eighty-pound bowling ball eyes and look ahead. The further down the track you look, the better you’ll be. This is the most difficult thing to do in performance driving; even the pros agree with that.”

Dave quoted Jackie Stewart who said, “The fastest way around Monaco is the slowest.” Dave also said, “If a car is upset, you can’t control it.”

Dwain, Dave, and Jim—accomplished drivers, top-flight instructors, and mentors—represent the heart and soul of the POC embassy. I’m happy to report that I left with a revised outlook and much more information than I had prior to attending the clinic. I’m looking forward to the adventure of guiding others through the process of learning more about performance driving. I also look forward to testing Dwain’s observation that “I’ve learned more from teaching than anything else I’ve done.” I only hope I can live up to the reputation of the ambassadors of the POC. I guess we’ll find out when the rubber meets the road.

Part Two: the rubber does meet the road

With the first PDS clinic just around the corner, I wanted to be prepared for the event. The responsibility of teaching another driver is something I don’t take lightly at all. The potential for something catastrophic to occur is always there. I wanted to do my very best not only to be a part of teaching performance driving, but also to help my students realize that when it comes to driving, the learning never stops. Heck, even if you are a Formula One driver, you’re still learning.

I remembered my first experience with performance driving instruction in the mid-1980s. I was in my early 20s when Dad and I went on a three-day retreat to Skip Barber Racing School, which at the time had an operation at Willow Springs. That experience in Formula Fords changed my driving forever. It was then that I realized that there’s no substitute for a curriculum-based, hands-on learning experience from someone who really understands the subject.

Instruction:
a time-honored
POC tradition.

photo by
Cathy Robson
Virtual Access Photo



I went from thinking I could drive to actually learning how to drive and realizing how much more there is to learn. Imagine that. The conclusion that I drew from that experience was that a learning driver is a safer driver who will enjoy the adventure much, much more. My wish is to help other drivers have this experience.

I read the *Manifesto* and the *POC Driver's Handbook* prior to making my appearance at the first clinic. Both of these manuals are packed with great information. I also thought back to my first time out at a PDS event, and I remembered what I wished I had brought with me. I packed my car with some of the items first-timers would likely not think to bring, so I could help my students learn about preparation.

We all attended the drivers meeting in the lunch room, after which Dwain Dement took great care in matching students with drivers. There were close to 30 new drivers on the first day of the weekend, and that's a lot of information to keep track of. Ages, personalities, cultures, and driving backgrounds all come into play. All in all, it seemed like Dwain did a stellar job of pairing up new students with instructors.

We then ventured off to a garage that would serve as our classroom for the day, with a whiteboard, projector, and screen. Mike Takaki presented the curriculum in very understandable terms. He went over the flags, the rules, some driving basics, and the course itself, and he covered much of the information in the *POC Driver's Handbook*. An unexpected perk was the camaraderie amongst the instructors. They share a wonderful spirit of teaching and learning that was quite a joy to engage in.

The student assigned to me was a nice young gentleman named Bulut Ersavas. He was ready to learn and open-minded—he didn't seem to care

that he had a female instructor. I had been a bit worried about that one when I signed up. Let's face it, some men aren't having a woman tell them about performance driving, or really much of anything. The good news: Bulut isn't one of those dudes. I had a willing student to work with. Life was good.

The first order of business for me was to find out rapidly as much as I could about my student. I asked pointed questions about his employment, whether he had kids, and if he had any experience or other previous training. He informed me that he was a professional with a wife, kids, and a business. He had been to the Porsche training program in Birmingham. So far so good. The most important evaluation for me was determining his balance of confidence versus actual skills. Also I wanted to figure out how receptive he would be to instruction and the actual process of learning.

After the classroom session, we prepared his car for the first set of drills on the track. In anticipation, I had brought along a big empty duffel bag so he could empty his car of all the loose items. He got a transponder, and we quickly taped his number and class on the car doors. We let a bit of air out of the tires, and I showed him my pyrometer, which we would use to check the tread temperatures when the tires got hot.

Bulut did a great job on the drills. In the afternoon we ran laps. I wanted to make sure to get him through the weekend and home safe to his wife and children. I had him start out slow so he could get the feel for his car on this track with the current weather conditions. I wanted to have him work his way up to speed in a gradual progression, so he would build skill, environmental awareness, and self-confidence in a balanced way.

After the first session, we checked his tire temperatures and determined that they were too hot in the middle, so we let out some air. We both felt the difference when we went back out for the next session. Afterwards, we measured again, and the tire temperatures were more equal across the tread.

Bulut was a great student who was able to assimilate quite a bit of instruction and carry that information into action. By the end of the day, he had a solid basis to work with.

The second day of the Clinic was more of an open track run, and the instructors covered the curriculum individually with their students. New students showed up, and suddenly we were short instructors. I suggested to Dwain that Bulut was good to go on his own. Dwain agreed, so I took on a new student named Yariv Shochat. He told me to call him Leo to make it easier. Leo, another young family man with his own business, was also eager to learn. Yippee, two in a row! How lucky was I? Again I started Leo out slow, and we worked him up to speed. He was driving a stick but didn't know how to blip-downshift or heel-and-toe. This had to be fixed.

After the morning sessions were over, and I had a feel for Leo's driving, we went out onto the back roads of the track compound so I could share a new tool that

he could add to his collection. Teaching him how to properly downshift and heel-and-toe was like giving candy to a baby. Witnessing his excitement as he accomplished his first smooth heel-and-toe downshift was super satisfying for me. He exclaimed, "This is so much fun, I'm gonna do it all the time!"

I replied, "See what you've been missing? You keep practicing and it'll become second nature to you. You'll be doing it smooth, like room temperature butter." I felt the same pride that a mother has for a son. Another unexpected perk.

As I was riding with Leo, Bulut passed us, and I was pleased to see that he was doing quite well on his own. His times improved throughout the day, as did Leo's. Both of my students came away from the weekend with cars intact and skills bolstered. I felt like I sent them off into the world with new experiences that would help them move forward with their performance driving adventures. ▣



Advice to instructors: don't let your students drive this close.

Photo by Aleta Pearce

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Auto Club Speedway, March 2007
(didn't win, again)



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REVENUE		EXPENSES		CASH BALANCE	
Advertising	10,335	Advertising	5,730	Points Services	475
Banquet	8,055	Auto & Gasoline	12	Postage	5,486
Fuel	4,503	Awards	16,902	Postage & Mailing	221
License Fees	3,940	Bank Charges	390	Printing	4,041
Membership Dues	56,772	Banquet Food	10,141	Professional Fees	7,891
Merchandise Sales	200	Banquet Supplies	80	Promotions	150
Misc Income	6,820	Catering	1,096	Purchases-Merchandise	4,078
Registration Fees	425,390	Office Administrative Fees	37,100	Refreshments	3,228
Sponsorship Fees	19,000	Corner Workers	49,472	Track Registration Fees	33,580
Track Partners	300	Credit Card Service Charges	4,564	Rental-Emergency Vehicles	27,782
Total Revenue	535,315	Dues & Subscriptions	399	Rental-Equipment	3,778
		Equipment Rentals	575	Rental-Track	246,736
		Fire Services	4,450	Rental-Miscellaneous	106
		Fuel Charges	5,298	Security	2,400
		Insurance	27,629	Storage	1,014
		License & Permits	76	Taxes-Other	771
		Magazine Production	13,080	Telephone	10,443
		Marketing	6,361	Timing Services	10,306
		Meetings	1,638	Track Supplies	1,759
		Member Services	270	Travel-Event	19,679
		Miscellaneous Expenses	429	Travel Expenses	534
		Miscellaneous Services	3,400	Website	29,237
		Office Expense & Supplies	5,278		
		Total Expenses	608,447		
		Net Income	73,132		

Submitted by
John Gordon, POC Treasurer

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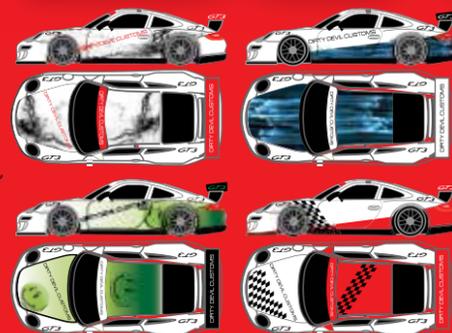
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2014 Schedule

Check porscheclubracing.org regularly for exciting news and updates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Track</i>	<i>Description</i>
January 18	OLD RANCH COUNTRY CLUB, SEAL BEACH, CA	58th Annual POC Banquet
January 25 / 26	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Racers Clinic #1 PDS Clinic #1 Open Testing
February 8 / 9	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Cup Race #1, #2, #3 Time Attack #1, #2 PDS #1, #2
March 8 / 9	CHUCKWALLA VALLEY RACEWAY	Cup Race #4, #5, #6 Time Attack #3, #4 PDS #3, #4
April 12 / 13	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Cup Race #7, #8, #9 Time Attack #5, #6 PDS #5, #6
May 2 / 3 / 4	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Saturday, May 3 Tribute to Le Mans four-hour Enduro Cup Race #10, #11 Time Attack #7, #8 PDS #7, #8
May 31 / June 1	AUTO CLUB SPEEDWAY	Cup Race #12, #13 Time Attack #9, #10 PDS #9, #10
June 28 / 29	MAZDA RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA	In association with Competent Motorsport- 105db sound limit Cup Race #14, #15 Time Attack #11, #12
July 26 / 27	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Racers Clinic #2 PDS Clinic #2 Open Testing
September 6 / 7	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Cup Race #16, #17, #18 Time Attack #13, #14 PDS #11, #12
October 4 / 5	CHUCKWALLA VALLEY RACEWAY	Cup Race #19, #20, #21 Time Attack #15, #16 PDS #13, #14
November 8 / 9	BUTTONWILLOW RACEWAY	Cup Race #22, #23, #24 Time Attack #17, #18 PDS #15, #16
December 6 / 7	WILLOW SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	Cup Race #25, #26, #27 Time Attack #19, #20 PDS #17, #18

