

Das Herz von Dixie



July 2021



Taycan. Electrifying!

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President’s Corner..... 1
From Your Editor.....2
Heart O’ Dixie Charity.....5
Where We Were.....6
Down the Road 8
Who’s New9
Member Articles.....9

*Cover Photo Credit: Scott Witt
Rae Millin’s Taycan*

President’s Corner
By Jim Cambron



Life is returning to normal after more than a year under pandemic rules and processes, and we have some exciting Porsche events for your enjoyment. In fact, as far as the Club is concerned, we are BACK, with many events scheduled for you and your Porsche:

Monthly Pit Stop Breakfasts are on the first Saturday each month at 7:00 AM in the parking lot and 7:30 AM inside for breakfast. Our Hostess Beth Carlile has a four-restaurant rotation (down from five restaurants after dropping the Madison IHOP based on their recent terrible presentation).

Monthly Membership Dinner Meetings are on the second Thursday each month at 6:00 PM in the parking lot and 6:30 PM inside for dinner. Beth is taking us to new and exciting venues including Guntersville this past month, Hartselle in July, and new restaurants in the months to come.

Monthly Driving Tours are on one Saturday a month. I really appreciate the members of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors stepping up this year to lead the tours; it’s a lot easier when the load is shared. We’ve had some inclement weather cancellations this year, but that happens from time to time.

Dave Schroetter’s February Mountain tour was rained out, now rescheduled in August.

Regan Carlile led 26 members on a great tour to Guntersville in March.

My April tour to Florence was also rained out.

Greg Bayuga took us to Lynchburg and Mary Bobo's in May.

Scott and Fran Witt led a tour to the Henry Horton State Park in Tennessee in June.

I'll be leading us to the Opryland Bierhaus German Cars, Motorcycles, & Coffee event in July.

Ed Stone's September tour to the Lookout Mountain Café on the Corner has always been a Club favorite.

Ted Sendak's October tour destination is yet to be revealed.

I'll lead the Club in November on its seventh overnight trip to the Fontana Lodge and the *Tail of the Dragon*—this is certainly an exciting trip you won't want to miss.

While the Club breakfasts and dinners are nice social gatherings, driving your Porsche is why we are here, and driving tours provide a great opportunity for that purpose. Few experiences beat driving in a long line of beautiful Porsches going across the countryside. If you *like* Saturday day tours, then you'll *love* driving your Porsche through the Smoky Mountains and negotiating the 311 curves in just nine miles on the *Tail of the Dragon*. We'll also share dinner at the Lodge.

The Club hosts and participates in many other events: The July Porsche Parade in French Lick, Indiana; the Smoky Mountain Region's Spring Thing in Knoxville; the Peachstate Region's Rennfest in the north Georgia mountains at Brasstown Valley Resort; and High Performance Driving Events at the Barber Motorsports Park east of Birmingham, Road Atlanta just north of the city, and the Memphis International Speedway in Millington.

Our Club Birthday will be celebrated August 7th with the distribution of 200 freshly minted 60th Anniversary badges and decals to our members as well as five plaques awarded by our Club sponsors to their selected favorite member's Porsche.

See ya on the road!

Jim Cambron

From Your Editor

By Scott Witt



Dare I say that we seem to be back to the old normal now? As Jim pointed out above, our schedule is now full again and we are looking forward to seeing more of y'all, whether it's at early morning Saturday breakfasts, relaxing mid-week dinners, or on the road for the monthly tours.

Fran and I joined the club five years ago shortly after we moved to Huntsville from New Mexico, and our participation has

grown to the point where we enjoy almost all the scheduled events and have taken on some of the staff responsibilities. The only time we don't show up is when we're out of town. One of the best parts about participating in club events is getting to know more about folks other than just the shared interest in Porsches. We're always surprised to learn about the vast array of talents and interests across the membership in Heart O' Dixie.

For instance, Fran and I recently bought an RV. We prefer to travel by road, and we prefer not to put the cats in hack while we are gone (surveys show that over 75% of RV owners travel with their pets). Hence, the RV, where we can hit the road with the cats, take as long as we want to get where we're going, don't have to do a bag drag in and out of hotels, and meet some *very* interesting people along the way. Alas, the only thing missing is that we can't drag our Porsche along behind us. So, we got a little Toyota IM for that (it's a manual shift; big plus and more fun!) and all is well.

We've discovered that we aren't the only ones in HOD with an interest in RVing. Jim and Suki, Ed and Marcia, and Regan and Beth are on the road with RVs as well. There might be more that I don't know about. Let us know if you're an RVer. I think we're going to try to figure out how we can build a monthly tour around that...stay tuned!

Speaking of which, Fran and I just returned from a 6,500-mile RV trip out to the west coast to see family. It was a great trip. As

opposed to our last journey, which I wrote about in the October *Das Herz von Dixie*, this one was interstate highways all the way. Like the last trip in the Macan, we only had a couple of rules, but they were a lot different than when driving the Porsche. First, we were on interstates most of the way. This trip wasn't about stopping and smelling the roses...we were destination-oriented to maximize time spent with the family. Second, we rarely cruise at more than 60 mph, and almost all of it is in the outside lane. Let me tell you, that is a completely different kind of trip.

The RV will go maybe 75 mph but, unlike the Porsche, the faster it goes, the shakier things get. So, we cruise at 60 mph. Saves gas, too.

Driving along in the outside lane is a completely different experience. First of all, you're not constantly doing time/motion analysis trying to figure out how you're going to slot into the traffic or pass the folks in your way. Everybody is faster than you, and they're all just driving right on by. In the RV, nobody expects you to be going fast. Very, very relaxing!

Second, 60 mph is slow enough that you can actually enjoy the scenery a little bit. So, instead of driving 80 mph with a death grip on the steering wheel while crossing windswept Wyoming, you can actually relax and enjoy the wide-open spaces.

Jake, the RV, actually did great for the entire trip. We put him through the ringer. We drove in snow, heavy rain, high winds, crossed Loveland Pass at 11,157 ft, spent some time below sea-level out on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, overnighted in a spectacular RV park at 9,000 ft in Central City, CO, and enjoyed temperatures from the mid-20's in Colorado up to 104F in New Mexico and Texas. Good job, Jake!

A final note...when we drove a similar route last July and August in Fran's Macan S, we got over 27 mpg. This time we got 8.3 mpg for the trip in the RV, with mid-grade gas. With our 80-gallon fuel tank, the gas credit card was smokin' hot by the time we got home!

Last issue, I mentioned that I had signed up to design and put up a new website for the Club. I'm happy to report that we have finished our work on the project. The new website is up and running and you can find it at www.hodpca.org. Please take some time to explore the new website. I am very interested in any feedback you might have; I'm a rank beginner at this and still have much to learn. For now, I want to take just a moment to recommend it to you and point out a couple of features.

Primarily, I wanted it to be a place where you could always go to get the latest information on club happenings. The Events tab has all that, as well as details about the when/where/how of participating in the

event. By clicking on the event in the Calendar, you'll bring up the details. You will also note a small "+add to calendar" tab at the bottom of the event details. Clicking on that will allow you add the event easily to your own Google, Yahoo, Outlook, or iCalendar.

I update the Events calendar almost daily as information comes in, so it should be current when you look at it.

Das Herz von Dixie newsletter has its own tab. Here, I've organized the issues in chronological order so you can easily find the one you might be looking for.

As a subtab under the Newsletter tab, I've put up a Member Articles tab where you can find articles from members that I have published in the Newsletter in the past. This way, you don't have to search through all the newsletters to find the one you want to re-read.

I'm slowly adding pictures to the photo gallery and the sliding banner on the home page. If you click on any of the pictures, you should be able to see more info about what's in the picture.

I'm always looking for more pictures of cars, people, and events. Send them to me at switt50@gmail.com with the words "HOD Newsletter" in the subject line. That way I won't lose them in my mountain of email.

I've got the website to work well on smartphones, too. There are a couple of very minor format issues that I can't seem to resolve, but all the information is there.

Finally, I'm happy to report that we've got four member articles this month. Thanks to you writers for taking the time to share your experiences with us. The articles cover a range of topics, from a deep technical discussion of lug nuts (one more thing I need to worry about!) by Ed Fisher, to a racing summary by our own Club Racer, Joe Still, and a couple of curmudgeonly articles by the curmudgeon himself, Lee Fowler. One of them will take you to Spring Fest and the other will extol the joys of ceramic coatings. A lot to read, but you don't have to read them all at once. Enjoy!

If you have an idea for a story you want to run by me, just shoot me an email and we can talk about it.

Heart O' Dixie Charity

Charity Committee News

By Dave Bender



In the past two years, our club has renewed its support of the community. Although the HOD is a smaller PCA Region, we have traditionally out-performed most of the larger Regions in a number of

areas, including the number of member events and now our charity endeavors with KTECH Mechatronics grants and our monthly food drive. We appreciate your continued support. Our Club is yet another example: "It's not just the cars . . . it's the people."

KTECH Mechatronics grants provide technical training to deserving young people. Our first grant recipient graduated at the top of her class and is now putting her technical training into action at her new employer, Toyota Motor Manufacturing. The second grant recipient graduated last month. He received special recognition in the form of a Lee Marshall Trajectory Award. He also recently started work at the Toyota Manufacturing facility.

KTECH's next term starts July 26th and our Charity Committee has set a Club goal to fund another grant for that upcoming term. Mechatronics grants (scholarships) cost \$3,500. We are asking our Club members to help fund another deserving student, enabling them to reach their full potential in the modern workforce. (Please see www.ktech.org to learn more about the Mechatronics curriculum.)

One of our Club families has made a very attractive offer. They will match all donated gifts up to a maximum of \$500 per Club member up to a maximum contribution of \$2,500. Gifts are needed prior to July 25th.

A donation of \$50 doubles to \$100; \$100

doubles to \$200; and a \$500 gift doubles to \$1,000, etc. What a great opportunity to extend the amount of our Club donations!

Please consider supporting this effort on behalf of the Club. By the way, all donations beyond \$3,500 will be rolled-over to future terms and presented in the Club's name at that time.

Mail your checks to our Charity Committee Chairperson, payable to KTECH/Kids to Love, or hand deliver them to any Charity Committee member before July 25th.

Dave Bender, Committee Chair
8124 Hillside Ln SE
Huntsville AL 35802

IRS rules for our non-profit Club prohibit donations to our Club; donations must be made directly to the Charity. Remember to provide your complete name and address. You will receive a receipt directly from the charity. KTECH/Kids to Love is a 501(c)3, so contributions are tax deductible.

Thank you,

HOD Region Charity Committee:
Dave Bender
Nancy Corbeille
Rita Ferguson
Bill Gilmour

Where We Were

Porsches are showing up all over town as we get back into a more regular schedule of meals and tours, and that's a good thing! Numbers of attendees are slowly going up as people move into their post-pandemic comfort zones. Here are some pics of recent events...



Annual HOD picnic at the Green in Providence



Early morning Pit Stop at Edgar's Bakery



Lynchburg Tour to Mary Bobo's



All shapes, sizes, colors, vintages at Henry Horton State Park, TN

Announcement

I'm looking to do something additional with pictures. When you get around to it, take the best picture you can of your Porsche and send it to me. I want to do a Car of the Month feature for the website, and I'll put the latest three in the quarterly newsletter. Make it look as good as you can: Get the light just right (early in the morning or later in the afternoon); look for the angle on the car that you like best; or highlight a portion of the car that you think looks really nice; stage the background a little bit by looking around Huntsville or anywhere that has a background that really makes the car pop. You can take the picture with or without you standing nearby. Be creative!



Dinner at Wintzell's Oyster House in Guntersville

When you've got a picture you really like, send it to me at swwitt50@gmail.com with your full name and the year/model/official color of the Porsche in the picture. We've got some great looking cars in the club and I'd like to highlight every one of them eventually. I can't wait to see what you can do!

Down the Road

Here's a handy list of upcoming events for your schedule. Jim Cambron, our president, publishes them weekly in his email to the membership, so be sure and check it or the website for changes and updates:

- **Jul 3, 7:00AM Pit Stop Social, 7:30AM Breakfast, Another Broken Egg, 2722 Carl T. Jones Dr SE, Jones Valley Mall, Huntsville, social outside/Breakfast inside. Remember to bring your charity item for the food drive.**
- **Jul 8, 6:00PM, Monthly Membership Dinner, Freight House Restaurant, 200 Railroad St SW, Hartselle, AL. 6:30 PM move inside for dinner.**
- **Jul 11-17, Porsche Parade, French Lick, IN. Eight couples from HOD will be participating.**
- **Jul 24, 6:30AM assemble for the Cambron Tour to the Bavarian**

Bierhaus German Cars, Motorcycles, & Coffee, Madison Planet Fitness 8050 University Blvd. Depart 7:00AM for a quick run north I-65 to Opryland by 9:00AM with one 10-minute rest stop en route. \$12 each collected on-site at Opryland for a plated breakfast.

- **Aug 7, 9:00AM, Heart O' Dixie 60th Anniversary Cars & Coffee Celebration, Old Time Pottery, 9076 Madison Blvd, Hwy 20, Madison.**
- **Aug 12, 6:00PM in the parking lot for our Monthly Membership Dinner Meeting at Full Moon Bar-B-Que, 1009 Memorial Pkwy NW, Huntsville, and move inside at 6:30PM.**
- **Aug 21, 8:00AM assemble for the Schroetter's Mountain Tour, Walmart, 11610 Memorial Pkwy SW. Depart 08:30AM to Owens Crossroads for lunch in individual local restaurants.**
- **Sep 4, 7:00AM Pit Stop Social, 7:30 AM Breakfast, Little Libby's Restaurant, 234 Lime Quarry Rd, off Hwy 20 in Madison.**
- **Sep 9, 6:00PM in the parking lot for our Monthly Membership Dinner Meeting at The Railyard, 209 2nd Ave SE, Decatur, AL. Move inside for dinner at 6:30PM.**
- **Sep 18, 7:30AM assemble for Stone Tour to Lookout Mountain, Walmart**

at 11610 Memorial Pkwy SW, depart
8:00AM for Café on the Mountain.

Who's New

We've had a bunch of new members either join or transfer in since the last newsletter. We're glad you're all here and look forward to meeting you soon at any of our events:

Jack Holsonback

Stan Kirkley

Rae T. Millin

Harold Ortiz

Ronnie Smallwood

Richard Matlock

Patrick Shields

Welcome aboard, y'all!

Member Articles

Ceramic Coating

By Lee Fowler

It was a dark and stormy night, and all the vehicles were snuggled safely in the garages. The 356 on the top of the four-post lift in the main garage. The 912 parked underneath,

and the Boxster next to it. The Toyota Tacoma and Carrera were in the detached garage. Wait! Did that previous sentence say "Boxster?" I had come to the conclusion long ago that we, Suzanne and I, had enough Porsches in our garage(s). I'm not going into the sordid details of how she contrived to add a 2008 Boxster to our "fleet," but she did. With our four-post lift in the main garage plus the detached garage, we could store five cars. The Subaru, 912, and 356 lived in the main garage, while the Carrera and my beloved Toyota Tacoma truck resided in the detached unit. Blissful coexistence. The Boxster was added to our "fleet" and the Subaru banished to the used car lot at Porsche of Huntsville. No tears shed since we didn't particularly like the Subaru anyway. And there's no room in this story to describe how Suzanne completely bamboozled me into buying that Boxster,

But that created a dilemma! Sure, we still only have five cars. But with one car on the lift, the older cars don't get driven enough. Way too much effort! We have to move the "lower" car. Lower the lift. Back out the "upper" car. Move the "lower" car to the lift, etc., etc. So, the old cars don't get driven enough because I'm too lazy (old) to put that much effort into it. Solution? Park the truck outside and leave the Porsches on the garage floors. Park my baby outside? Perish the thought! It's a 2017 Toyota with only about 11k miles. It's always lived indoors. And that finally gets us to the subject of this missive. Ceramic coating!

In a fit of desperation, I decided to have the entire truck ceramic coated. That way it could live outside and be able to withstand the elements. It was a heart wrenching decision, but I thought it to be fair for all the cars.

I decided to take the truck to AutoworkZ, which does all the new car prep for Porsche of Huntsville. Prin Steward, owner of AutoworkZ, as I discovered is a total zealot for quality and customer satisfaction. We took the truck in on a Tuesday and picked it up on Friday. Ever heard the term “blown away?” Well, that was our reaction. The truck looked a thousand percent better than when it was new. The product AutoworkZ uses is called Gtechniq. The company guarantees the product for the full nine years. The technicians who work there have to be trained and certified by Gtechniq before being allowed to apply the product.

I still hadn't informed the truck that it was being relegated to living outside. When we saw it, gleaming with its new coating we started having second thoughts. Maybe we should still put one of the Porsches on the lift.

But when we got home, I parked the truck outside and didn't have the heart to look back as I walked into the house. I'm sure it's sitting out there now, sad and lonely with no walls and roof to offer it security and protection from the elements. In fact, I did sneak a look and saw what I thought was water coming from under the front. I told Suzanne, “My truck is crying about being left outside!” She replied, “You dummy! That's condensation from the trucks air

conditioner!” Well at least it has a coating to protect its finish from the sun and rain. But I didn't want to overreact. Sure, the truck looks great but was it the right thing to do? Dave Bender was the lucky bidder for a ceramic coating at our auction and had his 911 done last fall. I wanted to hear his opinion and here is his response. He's sold on it also.

“Washing is a breeze. I use a pH-neutral soap as recommended. The dirt comes right off. I then remove about 95% of the water with a leaf blower and just have to do a quick touch-up with a chamois. I haven't had the opportunity to see how it handles a bug-plastered front bumper like we get here in the summer, but I am betting removal will be easier than I am used to.”

Next day, guess what. Our weather alert radio started blaring a warning. High winds and hail expected in Madison County. Suzanne said, “Do you think we could wedge three cars into the detached garage?” “No way!” says I. Even if we were able to get three of the Porsches into the detached garage the truck won't fit in the main garage. The four-post lift takes up too much room. The next thing I hear is, “Why don't you get rid of the lift? You're too old to work on cars anymore anyway.” Now how am I to reply to that?

But that's not an immediate solution. The storm is a coming and the truck is outside. Obvious solution is to put one of the cars back up on the lift. And that's what we did.

The truck is happy back living in the garage with its shiny new coating. And we've been sold on that process. Ceramic coating is the way to go. We got the nine-year protection plan. At my age I don't know why I'm worried about the truck nine years from now, but I guess that's just positive thinking. We will take it back annually for a free inspection. That's how Gtechniq guarantees the product for a full nine years. Whether or not the truck gets banished to the outdoors is a decision for another day. But we can certainly recommend putting a ceramic coating on the cars. And yes, the other vehicles may get the same treatment.

The Minefield of Automotive Lug Nuts

By Ed Fisher

From time-to-time, people wonder about the aluminum lug nuts that Porsche used for so many years and whether they are safe on the street or the track. They also wonder about what torque to use and whether or not to lubricate the threads.

A friend asked me a related question. He had just purchased titanium lug nuts for his 993 and wondered what torque to use and whether to lubricate. I had to think about it for a while and do some research. That effort is what led to this article.

When I ran my 944 in autocross and my previous 944S2 and a few other cars on the track, I ditched the aluminum or closed steel for open steel lug nuts. I think open lug nuts

were actually required for the PCA track days I went to, but I'm not sure if aluminum was allowed, even if open. In any case, here is where my thinking is these days. Full disclosure: I was a mechanical engineer and designed and analyzed bolted joints for a living on occasion.

First let's look at the ultimate tensile strengths for some lug nut materials out in the market today. I'm going to assume that all lug nuts are the same standard size, shape and 14x1.5 thread. Unfortunately, I have not been able to determine the exact material used historically in Porsche aluminum lug nuts. Almost nobody wants to reveal what material they're using except for the titanium guys! Ever heard of Pexalloy? Me neither, until doing research for this article, but some of the more expensive lug nuts and bolts around are made from it. It may be really great stuff, but there's no way to know what it really is if the seller won't tell you.

Aluminum.....	7075-T6.....	83 Ksi
Stainless Steel....	T304H.....	91 Ksi
Titanium	6AL-4V.....	120 Ksi
Steel.....	Grade 8/10.9...	150 Ksi
Chromed steel...	1080?.....	176 Ksi

(Editor's note: Ksi is a measure of Ultimate Tensile Strength, tensile strength being the amount of axial stress a material can take before breaking.)

Some people are making lug nuts from 6061-T6 aluminum. This alloy has an ultimate tensile strength of 45 Ksi. Personally, I

wouldn't use them, especially since you can do so much better.

The better aluminum lug nuts these days are claimed to be made from 7075-T6. Aside from it being relatively weak compared to the other materials in the list above, the main problem I have with any aluminum is that when it gets hot, like from hot brakes on a track day, the strength goes down fast. At 212F 7075-T6 is down to 70 Ksi. At 300F it's down to 31 Ksi. I do not know for sure what temperature the lug nuts can actually become on a track day, but I've seen 300F quoted in print for wheels on a race track. So, I just say no. I don't think aluminum is a proper material in this application that combines abuse (lots of tire changing, running over curbs, etc.) with unusual heat, even if you always use a torque wrench, know that you have proper thread engagement and know that your lug nuts have never been assaulted by Bubba and his impact gun. (Porsche always warned against letting Bubba the tire changer and his impact wrench anywhere near your aluminum lug nuts.)

Historically the Porsche torque callout in most applications was 130 N-m which equals 96 lb-ft. (Editor's note: Porsche now stipulates 96 lb-ft. for 2008 and older vehicles and 118 lb-ft. for 2009 and newer vehicles.) However, the torque callout was only correct if you lubricated the threads and the shoulders with assembly paste. Optimoly HT (Optimol PASTE HT) was called out historically but may have been discontinued.

More recently Porsche calls for Optimol PASTE TA. *Pelican Parts* sells TA, but it is not based on silver like they claim. (It would be a lot more expensive if it was!) Only the color is silver, guys. It consists primarily of aluminum and zinc powders in a thickened petroleum base.

Here is the key point: No torque for any bolted joint is correct unless a friction condition is specified, i.e., clean and dry or lubricated with something or the other. With lug nuts, there is the lubrication of the shoulder that contacts the wheel to take into account as well as the threads. The lubrication is desirable for 3 reasons: 1) to prevent galling (failure at the surface) of threads and shoulders, 2) to increase the joint clamp-up level and accuracy for a given applied torque, and 3) to prevent long-term corrosion. #1 is, I think, obvious. #2 is often not recognized. 96lb-ft of torque does not produce as much clamp and elastic deformation within the joint if the threads are clean and dry, for instance, as if they have been lubricated. #3 is especially important with aluminum which can corrode badly under certain conditions.

Some modern Porsches use higher torques but with no lubrication. Some use higher torques and lubrication. The lug bolts supplied now, which I think are all steel, have rotating collars of aluminum that contact the wheel and are intended to spin on the bolt shank, not at the wheel. Therefore, they can't gall on the wheel so they need no lubrication at that interface but Porsche may

require them to be lubricated at the bolt to collar interface and on the threads. Find out what Porsche says for your specific model and year and do that! Don't listen to unqualified opinions on the internet.

If you have aluminum lug nuts on your street-driven Porsche I would do two things: 1) if in any doubt about your present hardware, either what they're made of or their torquing history, buy new lug nuts that you know are made from 7075-T6, and 2) be sure to always lubricate and set the torque with a wrench as directed by Porsche. I wish I could tell you that OEM Porsche lug nuts, either new or back in the day, are 7075-T6 aluminum but I can't. I've been unable to find out. I have some that are over 30 years old. Whatever they are made of, Porsche thought they were fine when new so that counts for a lot.

Clamp-up

We need to digress and talk further about clamp-up before going into the other lug nut materials.

Clamp-up, or more technically correct *pre-load*, is the name of the game in bolted joint design. In an automotive application it is the clamp-up that 1) prevents the wheel from separating from the hub flange under load, and 2) vastly reduces the repetitive loading that would normally cause the components to quickly fail from fatigue. The welcome and necessary side-effect of 1 plus 2 is that the nut is prevented from backing off.

If, under a momentary high load, the wheel separates from the hub flange or even comes close to separating, then the load in the threads can momentarily drop precipitously on the rebound. That variation in load can allow the nut to back off. No separation equals low load variation at the threads equals no nut backoff, all assured by proper torque.

The clamp-up does something else very important in this application: it prevents the studs from seeing shear and bending loads. It's not the job of the studs to directly prevent the wheel from turning on the flange. It is the friction between the wheel and the hub that does that. That frictional resistance to the wheel turning is dependent upon, yep, you guessed it, the clamp-up load, i.e., the tensile load within the stud threads that pulls the wheel against the flange. Preloading the studs and nuts is what maintains a high frictional resistance to the wheel turning on the flange. If the wheel turns on the flange it will damage both the studs and the wheel. It may even simply cut the studs off.

Some Porsche engineer way back when, let's call him Hans, either analyzed the wheel bolt joint, tested it, or did a combination of both. Probably more than once over the years. The main purpose of the analysis was to figure out what torque to specify to create the proper amount of joint clamp-up. He had to make sure the materials weren't overloaded, but the bigger worry is that the materials will fail early from fatigue without proper clamp

up. The trick is to assure enough clamp-up to prevent fatigue failure while not driving any of the joint materials beyond their yield strength during installation.

Very few people really understand how preloading the joint reduces reversing loads and thus prevents fatigue failure. For the sake of brevity, let's just take it on faith that it does. It doesn't eliminate all reversing loads, as some people think (even some engineers) but they become quite small as long as the external loads on the joint remain well below the preload.

The analysis that Hans performed also looked at the over-torque limit. Over-torquing your lug nuts or bolts is every bit as bad as under-torquing them. In spite of the studs (or lug bolts) being steel, the threads can be damaged very easily by an air gun set too high or any type of impact wrench or even an owner with simple hand tools and no torque wrench who thinks tighter must be better.

I read a paper that analyzed wheel separations on pickup trucks in the mining industry. The investigators found that over-torquing weekly(!) in the field was found to be the primary cause of numerous wheel separation incidents. Too much torque caused permanent deformation of the threads (in both stud and nut) which in turn promoted crack formation in the studs. The preload was lost and fatigue failure resulted. The threads were 12mmx1.5mm, made from SAE 5140 steel with a tensile strength in the

82 Ksi range. They found that permanent deformation occurred at any torque above the manufacturer's recommended value of 123 lb-ft. In this particular case the specified torque value was actually too high. (Hans had not been available.) The investigators recommended better steel for the studs and nuts that upped the tensile strength of both to 120 Ksi.

Now that we understand how important the clamp-up is we can explain why lubrication is important. Many people think intuitively that lubricant must make it easier for the nut to loosen. This intuition is wrong. The situation is actually that the friction in the joint soaks up a large percentage of the torque that you apply with your torque wrench. Lubricated threads and shoulders soak up less torque than unlubricated threads. So, if you do a fantastic job of cleaning all the threads, maybe with a strong degreaser, and really get any residual oil, grease, dirt, pollen or whatever out of the threads and don't lubricate you've changed the situation for old Hans. He thought the nut factor was going to be 0.1, for instance (nut factor is basically a measure of friction) and you just increased it to 0.25 by threading super-clean aluminum onto super-clean steel. Now, 25% of the torque you applied, 2.5 times the 10% it should have been, went into overcoming friction instead of producing clamp-up. You may have just created a condition where the preload can be lost due to a very small loosening of one nut. Soon after that one studs fails in fatigue and then the rest all go at once like dominoes. You're

left looking at a hub with 5 broken-off studs and the wheel is nowhere to be found.

Another big factor: unlubricated threads create more uncertainty in knowing how much torque was applied. Even though your torque wrench was set to 96 and it went click, Hans doesn't really believe it. Hans isn't allowed to believe it. He knows that the actual applied torque can vary by 25% in either direction. So, Hans applied a factor of + or - 25% to the applied torque of 96 lb-ft in his clamp-up analysis, if he followed standard practice, and made sure everything was fine at both extremes. But, if Hans knew that some internet-obsessed American was going to super clean the threads first and then torque the lug nuts dry because someone he doesn't even know told him to, he would have been obligated to apply + or - 35% to the torque value in his analysis. Hans never really sleeps well. He always worries about this, especially since lubrication wasn't always mentioned in the owners' manuals and was even hit or miss in the shop manuals.

One last thing about proper torquing: the situation is not quite as perfect as I've described. When the nuts are being torqued there are generally loads on the wheel, i.e., the car is sitting on the wheels. For this and other reasons such as temperature changes, material creep and loading beyond yield (over-torquing) a perfectly pre-loaded joint is often not realized or maintained long-term. Tests have shown a 10% loss of clamp-up in aluminum wheels within 24hrs of torquing

just from material creep alone. This is why you should always retorque every nut on every newly mounted wheel relatively soon after first use. On the street this means after an hour of driving time and then periodically, say every 3 to 6 months, thereafter. The faster you put miles on the car the more often you should slap a torque wrench on it. At the track, where big temperature changes and very high loads can play havoc with theoretical perfection, that means after every session after you let it cool down. If your lug nuts seem to always be getting loose, replace them immediately. This is not normal. They're probably damaged or badly worn.

This quote is from *meaforensic.com*, a Canadian legal firm specializing in forensic accident investigations: "The most common reason for a wheel to separate is failure of the fasteners, where wheel nuts fall off and/or wheel studs break and release one or two wheels from the vehicle. These failures generally occur 175 to 3000 miles and one to fifteen weeks after a wheel was taken off and put back on during some service, such as a tire installation." The site goes on to say that these unfortunate events can be almost totally eliminated by retorquing soon after installation.

Stainless Steel

These days you can buy lug nuts made from stainless steel, which was rather shocking news to me because the world of "stainless" steel contains some very shady characters.

Most of the lug nuts I found in stainless claim to be made from T304, which at best is only slightly stronger than 7075-T6 aluminum. T304 can be anywhere from 71 Ksi to 91 Ksi, depending upon the exact grade, which never seems to be revealed. Personally, I would avoid T304 lug nuts like the plague. Maybe I'm prejudiced by a career in aerospace structures. We don't use it much. We especially never use it for safety-critical fasteners. It corrodes too easily! There are other stainless steels that are very good, but they are \$\$\$\$. I doubt anyone makes lug nuts out of 17-4PH but if they do I bet they'll tell you and that would be fine. And if you see some A286 lug nuts buy them. Not for nothin' is A286 called a superalloy.

Titanium

6AL-4V (also called Grade 5) is a high-strength, tightly controlled, Ti alloy (6% aluminum and 4% vanadium) with an ultimate tensile strength of 120Ksi. All the Ti lug nuts and bolts I've seen claim to be made from it. So, Ti lug nuts (or bolts) are significantly stronger than 7075-T6 or T304. Since weaker aluminums basically work, we can infer that 6AL-4V is plenty strong in this application. It also has good fatigue resistance. It is only $120/176 = 68\%$ as strong as some high-carbon steel lug nuts, however. So, manufacturers who say, like one maker of 6AL-4V Ti lug nuts advertises, "Titanium is 50% lighter than steel, yet considerably stronger..." are blowing smoke at you. In the first place it's only 45% lighter

than steel. (I warned you that I was an engineer.) Secondly, sure, 6AL-4V is stronger than some types of steel, like what was produced in the Middle Ages, but it is not stronger than the steel used in many steel lug nuts. No matter the advertisement hype, I'd be fine with Ti lug nuts or bolts if I was confident they were 6AL-4V and didn't mind the price.

Some people have claimed that a Ti lug nut should be torqued higher than an aluminum one due to the difference in elastic modulus. I think this is wrong, possibly even dangerous, depending on how much extra torque you want to advocate. The difference in modulus between 7075-T6 and 6AL-4V is a whopping 53%. Do you want to increase the torque by 53% to 147 lb-ft? I didn't think so. Steel nuts have an elastic modulus almost three times aluminum. Do we increase the torque for them? Nope. Last thing you want to do is warp your 50-year-old Fuchs. Have you seen what those go for lately?

The big thing for me is that Ti looks at the heat from a track day and just laughs. 6AL-4V retains most of its strength at some pretty high temperatures. I recommended to my friend with the 993 to torque to 100 lb-ft (assuming that that's the new Porsche number) and lubricate just like aluminum for exactly the same reasons.

We don't have to worry about 6AL-4V corrosion. Not gonna happen. What we might worry about is the Ti corroding the steel stud or the aluminum wheel due to

galvanic effects. I think you want to keep using the paste to separate the dissimilar metals microscopically even if the Ti nuts come with a surface coating.

By the way, don't use regular anti-seize as the lubricant even though 100 people on the internet will say it's fine. You want the paste Porsche calls out or something you know is really very similar. Why? 1) Paste stays put better. Regular anti-seize migrates all over the place, especially when it gets warm. You don't want it to get between the back side of the wheel and the flange. You know why if you read the earlier section on keeping the wheel from rotating on the flange. You really don't want it to get on your brake disk, either. And 2) use the paste so the joint friction is what Hans expects. Think of Hans. Be kind to Hans. He's not getting any sleep!

Steel

Grade 8 and grade 10.9 steels are 150 Ksi and the best of the forged steel lug nuts are made from these materials or something similar. Febi-Bilstein in Germany may be the modern OEM supplier to Porsche of steel lug nuts and steel lug bolts. What they sell are Grade 8 for the nuts and Grade 10.9 for the bolts. Interestingly, they have a phosphate conversion coating. Such a coating is primarily for corrosion resistance but it can also be modified to produce a lubrication layer. It is conceivable that Porsche specifies a modified coating to eliminate the need for additional lubrication at installation in some cases.

Lesser steel lug nuts and studs may be hot forged from cheaper low-carbon steel with strengths only in the low 80 Ksi range, like the ones in the mining industry pickup trucks. They will have about the same strength or somewhat higher than 7075-T6 and T304 but be harder, tougher and have better fatigue properties. Open-ended forged lug nuts are what I have always used, but I didn't know exactly what they were made of. Going forward I won't buy anything from anyone who won't tell me exactly what it's made from. Also, most any steel will get along well with aluminum wheels galvanically. If your steel lug nuts do start to corrode after a few winters on salted roads, well, you can easily see it and replace them.

Some steel lug nuts are made from material even stronger than grade 8, I've seen claims of 176Ksi, which indicates something like forged 1080 high-carbon steel. Such steel is not expensive. High strength stuff like that is relatively brittle and not good for corrosion, which is why the nuts are always chrome plated. How smart is that? Dress up a cheap material with a shiny surface that not only makes it look good but makes it acceptable for the purpose and jack the price. (I once knew a man who invented a process for plating gold very thinly onto plastic to make cheap jewelry. He got rich.) The chrome plate, which on the lower-priced units is probably very thin, can crack or flake and then the material underneath can rapidly corrode. You may not be able to see it. The last thing you want is unseen crevice

corrosion in a brittle material. If you have high-quality chrome-plated lug nuts and don't change the wheels very often they are probably fine for many years. In any case, I'd closely inspect them at intervals, like whenever new tires are being fitted, and immediately replace any with the slightest evidence of chrome cracking or flaking.

Summary

The landscape of automotive lug nuts has become a minefield with a dizzying array of types, materials, colors, and price points. I hope you've now learned enough to be careful when you buy. Beyond that, follow Porsche's guidelines, get a good torque wrench, use it often and don't be slow to replace any components (studs, nuts or bolts) if they show any signs of not being in tip-top condition.

2020 Wrap-up and

Carrera Cup First Race, March 17-19 2021

By Joe Still

Hi folks, long time since my last report. 2020 was a good year racing for me personally, albeit tough on the sport nationally. Due to starting early with races at Sebring in FL and at Circuit of the Americas (COTA) Austin, TX, before the COVID pause, going to a lightly attended Porsche Club of America (PCA) race at Mid-Ohio mid-year and winning my first OVERALL victory really padded the points. I built up a points lead that led to a second

consecutive national championship with PCA (#humble brag 😊), this time in the top Cup Car class made of 991.2 Cup Cars (the factory race cars for those not more familiar with race hardware)—the GTC7 class. Two faster drivers were closing the points gap late in the year and another race or two and I would have been third but you have to run to win.

Irony of irony... the annual championship banquet is held Thursday night before the Sebring race weekend each year. I accepted my first-place championship trophy for 2020 Thursday night and by Friday at lunch I was on probation. I was able to laugh about it as we are targeting the *Carrera Cup* this year and PCA races are not this year's focus. The probation lasts 13 months so the likelihood of making another mistake with PCA and getting kicked out is remote.

Last October 2020, with the GTC7-class PCA national championship in hand, I tried my hand at IMSA (International Motorsports Association) racing with the *Cup Challenge* at Road Atlanta. *Cup Challenge* was a support series for the *IMSA Weathertech* races - in this case the Petit Lemans 12-hour event featuring the big guys in prototypes. It bears repeating I was in a SUPPORT series, not on track with the Taylor brothers and other top pros.

Cup Challenge was a somewhat sobering experience. I practiced well and showed mid-pack pace up to qualifying. In the first race however, I showed my over-eagerness

and smacked a concrete wall totaling the car and ending up with a short visit to the ER. Nothing broken but my chest was too sore to cough for two months thanks to the Hans that saved my neck but nearly put a kink in my chest. I cannot say enough about the track safety and rescue teams along with the EMT's along for the ambulance ride. *IMSA* is a first-class, well-run show and it was a privilege to be allowed to take part.

The race is available [here](#) on YouTube for anyone that wants to see how tough the Porsche factory racing Cup car is. The crash is at 37:10 on the video. I snuck in a few post-crash pics as well. I tracked out too far in T12 on cold tires on a restart and dropped the two left side tires in the wet grass. I tried to straighten my hands in hopes of keeping right side tires on track and slowing to recover. There must have been some steering left in the wheel as it lazily spun left across the track and I hit the inside concrete pit wall with the driver's side. I remember clearly the spin and thinking this would hurt. Then I clearly remember the safety lead asking if I could get myself out. I said "sure" like I was in the pits or something. I walked to the ambulance on my own per the TV coverage.

In all candor, I had my "bell rung" and remember nothing between the split second after hitting the wall and a few minutes later telling them I could get myself out of the car. About four minutes gone right there. I have the video, both in-car and TV coverage. While composed up to the hitting the wall a

split second later my arms were flying all over the place. The brain blocked that out nicely. My pit chief was right across the track and said he was trying to get me to answer on the radio telling me to cut the ignition as he could hear the car still running. Eventually I did kill the master and popped open the driver's door and stuck my hand out (so the video shows) which is protocol so they will know you are not unconscious. Of course, you stay in the car belted in until rescue gets to the car and clears you to get out (the exception being fire which trumps all other protocols—funny that).

My wife Susan was still at the hotel getting ready to come to the track when I hit the wall; 8:00 AM was a little early for her. Yes, there was dew on the grass and the sun straight in my eyes under the Start/Finish bridge but I hate to resort to the old "sun was in my eyes excuse." Anyway, she thought to watch the first race from the room while getting ready and then attending the second race later that day. She hears from TV "Joe crashed hard" and "unforced error by Joe." Knowing I was running with buddy Joe Lombardo from Cincinnati she assumed it was the "other" Joe. Then she saw the car livery and flew out the door. My PCA friend and racing buddy Grady Willingham found her and settled her down. The TV coverage did show me getting out and walking to the ambulance if she had watched a few more minutes.

I climbed in the ambulance to take a seat beside the EMTs. They politely pointed out

I was to use the stretcher and proceeded to de-garb me. It was too early for a nap but there were two of them so I humored them 😊. I begged them not to cut the drivers firesuit; it is a very expensive one-off from *Stand 21* (Internationally acclaimed firesuit maker from France) from my wife last Christmas. So, they cut the cool shirt and fire shirt and hooked up all the monitors, IV's and stuff with just pulling back the fire suit.

I really don't recall much of the ambulance ride but am sure I was joking with them to convince all of us I was still here. They rolled me in the ER past my buddy Grady and wife Susan so I gave them the big OK sign. Not really, Grady said "Are you ok?" I looked at all the monitors and tubes and replied "Obviously not," meaning to be clever. After racing together for a few years, he should have known I am always in search of the next smart alec comment!

Anyway because of the racing suit being impossible to remove without cutting, until they could Xray my chest and shoulders where it hurt to see if anything was broken, they just slid the Xray plates inside the suit. Nope, nothing broken, #luckydog.

So, after all the other tests, I was released from the ER. Susan says we go back to the hotel to rest. I say however we go back to the track to show everyone I am OK. It was very nice that half the guys came by to say sorry and a few said it was the worst hit of

the year in Cup Challenge. Go big or go home, Joe!

My witty niece complimented me for cleverly getting more name recognition and TV time from the wreck than the winner got, LOL!

I looked over the car with Goldcrest while making my post-crash appearance and they could pretty much tell the tub was bent. That is more common in Cup cars than you might think. The tubs (colloquial term for body shell) are comprised mostly of aluminum and have crush zones built in. The motor and gearbox compromise 2/3 of the cost of the Cup cars, so wrecks are frequently re-tubbed.

Unfortunately, I hit sideways (80 mph per GPS) and the lateral impact thru the left rear wheel/axle cracked the engine block and gear case. Car totaled! And while race insurance is available, I did not have it for Pro events like IMSA. The deck is pretty much stacked against you as to cover IMSA Pro races is about \$60k per year for max coverage, \$150k less a \$35k deductible (\$25k if no recent claim on other track insurance). Selling off the wreck is probably \$40k in salvage.

Sigh...

This hole is not supposed to be there!



My Goldcrest friend Jeff M. had the same car as mine but wanted a new one. He sold me his old one for the trade-in value and I got over 25% of the value back in salvage, so still a big hit but a lot less than starting over with new. This was to be my big IMSA year but due to COVID I only made the last race of the year. I made a mess of it so I borrowed from my old age “pension” and gave myself one more year AGAIN (Dave Schroetter laughs every time I tell him this is the last year 😊)

IMSA replaced *Cup Challenge* with *Carrera Cup*, which is brand new to the US. It is the largest one-make series around the world in about 20 countries. Earlier I mentioned the *Cup Challenge* I ran at Road Atlanta was basically moved to *USAC (United States Auto Club)* and runs with *Indy Car* and some other series. *Cup Challenge* runs both models of 991 Cup cars (.1 and .2) along with the 718 Cayman Clubsports as the three classes. Either series is available for my car this year but *Carrera Cup* is more talent-laden given the bulk of the field are pro racers in the latest Cup cars (992). I have come to grips with being the slower of the fast guys and no longer the faster of the slower guys. Gotta reach higher 😊.

Porsche is trying very hard to make this a high-profile series. They even paid for matching driving suits for all of us from *Stand 21*, one of the premiere race garment manufacturers worldwide. Too bad they ignored my sizes on record and used a Munchkin for a garment model. Forming

fitting is an understatement. More like Emma Peele (Dame Diana Rigg- teenage crush) body suits from the Avengers. Stream of consciousness here, as I just saw a classic pic of Ms. Peele on Facebook. No wonder I stayed up till midnight in high school to watch that show, snicker).

Carrera Cup is based on the new 992 Cup cars, of which 15 were earmarked for the US but only if you agreed to race *Carrera Cup*. Then Porsche Motorsports North America (PMNA) got 7 more for a total of 22 for the first year. Those 22 are grouped as Pro (over 22 y/o) and Young Pro (22 and under) and so Porsche decided (to fill the field I surmise) for this one year only to allow us older guys to join use our last season 991.2 as “Masters.” All of us are over 45 (which is not Masters category in my opinion, try 65?). Or better yet, spot me a lap for every year over 45 I am 😊. At Sebring, politics got Masters dropped to 40 years old to add one more runner. The entry list had 33 cars with 32 on the grid at Sebring.

Sebring Carrera Cup First Event

2021 Logistics

Travel

Flights were Delta and well done as usual, except they, as have other service industries, used COVID-19 as a reason to offer less and less service. No beverage service even in first class? Just a baggie with water and Goldfish crackers, really? Just like hotel/motels are now proud to let you know they will NOT come in your rooms. Some

even require the used towels be brought down to the front desk to swap for fresh ones; that is too much for my taste. If nothing else, place a basket inside the front door for linen exchange or something.

Living Arrangements

I rented house about 10 minutes away from the track on a backwater to Lake Istokpoga. Looks like an old fishing camp upgraded with modern-looking materials in places that made it photograph really well for Airbnb. Actually, it was funky and looked like it had been cleaned haphazardly. The trash was empty but all the surfaces had streaks from poor cleaning. I shared the house with Grady W. who gave up his Seven Suite for his Mom and Dad so they could watch races from the balcony. We only used the fish camp for sleeping, so it worked out fine. The actual bedrooms each had TWO King beds, which is unusual. I guess it’s primarily for fishing excursions and those guys must not mind sharing a room. Not me. I like to be the only snorer in the room.

The landlord instructions said be cautious walking outside at night as there are gators in the area - YIKES. I am pro-mammal but decidedly anti-reptile. We never saw a single gator but not for lack of looking. We is city boys!

The Motel Seven on premises at Sebring is usually \$130/night. But they had a real “special” for the 5 days of the 12-hour Race weekend. \$4,500 paid in full, up front, no cancellations. What a bargain---NOT!

Food

Carrera provided a hospitality tent which we LOVED! The food was terrific and the service was exceptional. Usually, you get a short order cook and helper serving the same old BBQ or pizza for lunch only—not this group. They are out of Charleston, SC and the hostesses were terrific! All you had to do was show your driver's badge and you were in. Breakfast, lunch and dinner! On-site prepared Veal Piccata was particularly memorable, along with grilled salmon and other treats! Fingers crossed they do not change vendors!

Tires

Carrera Cup is linked exclusively to not just Michelin but the Michelin vendor with the contract. You only get a fixed number of tires for the weekend (three sets after Event 1) but since this was our first outing, we got two extra sets for the practices - presumably you will use race tires from one race for practice at the next event so you can make it on THREE new sets of tires total for each subsequent event. Presumably 1 set for Quali, 1 set Race 1 and third set for Race 2. Those tires will all have 30 to 45 minutes on them and should suffice for practice at the next event, COTA in Austin, TX the first week of May.

Now the tire guy actually scans bar codes on the tires on the grid and you must have the tires from this vendor for this event or be disqualified. And you typically use the

Qualifying tires for Race 1 but that was waived, this time at least.

Starts

One of the unique features of *Carrera Cup* worldwide is standing starts. We were supposed to have standing-start practice at the Sebring test two weeks before the first race, but for various reasons it never got scheduled. I am hopeful we resort to standing starts soon, as I made a mess of the rolling starts in both races.

While we still use *Carrera Cup* rolling starts, we are supposed to “stay in our lane” until WE pass Start/Finish (S/F). When the pole sitter accelerates on the green flag everyone can move ahead but (supposedly) only as far as the car in front until you cross start finish. No moving along side or splitting the lanes. I tried to behave twice and it appears no one else go the memo. I had people seemingly 4-wide across S/F. I totally blew both starts by following car in front of me.

Timeline

Monday

Registration is set for Tuesday from 7 AM to 4 PM EDT. Since my flight arrived in Orlando at 2 PM, I knew I would not make it to the track by 4 PM if I came in on Tuesday, so I moved the flight to Monday. By the way, heading south out of Orlando is not too much better than I-285 on the north side of Atlanta on Friday evening - yikes!

So, I was able to arrive at the track just after 4 PM and get in and look around. IMSA has strict load-in times for the teams, so the haulers are still outside the fence. I found the rental house, picked up a few items at the convenience store and went looking for friendly faces.

Tuesday

Tuesday Registration and load-in began for team haulers right after lunch. They usually let the trucks in at 1 PM for *Carrera Cup* teams. You are not allowed to open up the trailers until ALL trailers are in place, and that is enforced. IMSA officials park you where assigned - no freelancing. Also, they do not allow privateer "Tag" trailers (Tag-along type). Grady brought his Tag trailer as a driver's lounge for us and after everyone else was set up we were able to sneak his trailer closer to the crew tent in the paddock.

Carrera Cup has inspections for several items, some first-come and some by appointment. Safety inspection was for safety equipment, roll cage, fire suppression, and lights. Another tech inspection round was for minimum weight and ride heights. Separate inspections were required for helmets. All this is not to mention the COVID hoops; will cover that later.

We got registered for attendance and then went through another line for parking passes. We went thru the COVID temperature check tent every day for a daily sticker on our picture ID badges. And every day you had

to do another COVID waiver and get a QR code on your phone to show at the temp check tent. As we get closer to round two at COTA in Austin, TX in two weeks, it sounds like the same protocols even with the rising vax rate. IMSA spread the word if you are caught without a mask, you were in trouble. Alas, you cannot possibly get that many Type A's to comply all the time. We would mask up at checkpoints and Hospitality, otherwise...

Oh, by the way all you DE'ers, IMSA will lose their minds if they see open beverage containers in the paddock while the track is hot. Most track events have this in the fine print but it is rarely enforced, but our coach and IMSA pro Bryan Sellers was clear about not violating that one. Also, he cautioned us about pit lane protocols. In pit lane, stay at the pit speed limit (35 mph/58kph) and move far left as able. Do not move right until just before pit box. Two of the brand-new 992's managed to get into it on pit lane, so it is not without some peril.

Wednesday

Wednesday, we kicked tires and looked at video until our first actual on-track practice at 3 PM. I had left Huntsville early the past Monday morning and over half a week later I am just getting on track. If you are looking at track time vs. cost, this series will not compare favorably with open-track events like David Murry or the occasional Chin event.

One wrinkle not used in *PCA* is that the race tech takes the cars to the grid and you just hang around outside the car, helmet off, until about five minutes before roll off. Makes you feel like a big shot!

Dinner at the track was great (Veal and Salmon!) and we headed home about 8 PM as our second track session and busiest day was Thursday at 8 AM. I do not like the early sessions as you have to get there by 6:30 AM or so to get thru Health checks, suited up and in the car on grid with 15 minutes to spare.

Thursday

Thursday was our busy day, so after the early 8 AM practice, we ran qualifying at noon. Bear in mind there are three other series using the track and the big boys in *IMSA Weathertech* split the prototypes from the sports cars, so really five groups using the track overall.

During the morning practice I had a rare experience. Going into Turn 3 a few laps into practice, the gearbox refused to take a downshift from 5th gear. I tried repeatedly while hard on the brakes but it would not downshift. Well, it turns out the throttle was hung open and the paddle-shifted gearbox will not take a downshift under hard throttle. So, it was not a gearbox issue; the gearbox thought I was trying to accelerate.

Surprisingly, with heavy brake pressure (I currently own the brake pressure record at

Goldcrest with 1,300 psi) I managed to kill the motor with brakes...that was a surprise to me. I restarted the car after I came to a stop and the RPM went straight to the rev limiter so I killed the ignition and waited for a tow back to the paddock.

Goldcrest discovered a first-time ever problem of the rubber air induction boot tearing and jamming the throttle butterfly wide open. They preemptively replaced everyone's rubber boot...had to be me 😞.

Qualifying was 12 noon for us, lasting 30 minutes. Qualifying was not great for me, for whatever reason I have never really mastered Sebring. Could be the bumps which are legendary, or it could be the fact I have hit walls in two different places there. Either way I usually am mid-pack there at best.

Side note: Just before race day, *Carrera Cup* issues a schedule described as MxM. That means minute by minute and it is highly specific. It gives exact times related to actions, down to closing the driver's doors in unison and firing up the motors in unison. Fortunately, *IMSA* radio broadcasts real-time instructions to all teams and your race tech gives you verbal instructions. When they say roll off at 8:00 AM they do NOT mean 8:01.

Race 1

Wrapping up our busiest day Thursday was a Race 1 from 5:30 to 6:15 PM. Race 1 was a total blast other than my "lane" being slow

to S/F losing me a spot or two. I was gridded up to the inside, which is a recipe for a road block in T1 at most tracks. I held on thru T3 and things loosened up a little. But the first few turns are always my favorite part of the race! The nearness to the point of “rubbing” at times and sometimes bumping I thrive on. It is like three-dimensional speed chess and I am addicted to it!

Opening lap there was a big traffic jam in T7 with a rear-facing pro car parked in the middle of the track. Everyone missed him somehow. During the race I was able to pick off a few guys but most of my passes were while guys in front of me ran off the track.

So, I had some good luck in Race 1, finishing 4th in class and top 20 overall. Remember there were 22 each 992 model Cups which are said to be 1.5 seconds faster per minute of lap time. Interestingly I had to breathe the throttle on the straights to let the newer cars by. I think the enhanced aero adds drag to them on straights but allows deeper braking and higher apex speeds.

They tech inspect the top 4 post-race (I assume in case P1, P2 or P3 flunks tech inspection they still have the podium). They make you give a fuel sample and defuel the car for another weight check and ride-height check.

Race 1 was undisciplined by some measures but it was EVERYONE’S first *Carrera Cup* race. Lots of contact and spins as well as some hits. And there was one pretty

remarkable “launch” that emulated the *space shuttle* when a car ran off and hit a dirt bank. He went at least 6’ airborne before landing (thankfully) right side up. Keep in mind this series is televised live on NBC Sports Gold so lots of friends saw more of the action than I did 😊 in Race 1.

After the field strings out, the lonesome laps by oneself can be a bit boring and my loss of aggression typically serves me poorly. I need to find a motivator to keep on pace, but mental fatigue is sneaky. I sometimes start to think how much time can I afford to lose rather how much time can I make up - the power of negative thinking I suppose.

Friday

Race 2, 10.30 to 11.15

Race 2, I made a poor start again 😞. On the outlap a car died and we moved around him. I failed to catch that meant everyone moved up a spot and consequently changes side of the track and I lost another position there on Race 2, even before S/F. While pushing hard to regain spots lost on the start, I was chasing a former Goldcrest stablemate hard and spun in T5. “In a spin both feet in.” The car slewed across track and finally stopped in the grass five feet or less from the tire wall. Motor was still running so I clicked down to 2nd and eased back on track. After a quick shake of steering wheel looking for trouble, all seems well. What I would find out later is the curb had taken off half of the front splitter, causing some

anxiety in the high-speed bends. I just put it down to tires going off but it was too early for that. In spite of my best time ever at Sebring (mid 2.07), the unforced error in T5 spinning and tearing off most of the front splitter dug a deep hole. I later learned there was oil dropped in that turn and a few others went off there in race 2. No consolidation, that.

I thought briefly about dropping out after the spin since there was no way to catch back up 20 secs in 30 minutes, but then I remembered that a full-course caution could park me on the rear bumper of the guy in front of me so I got back after it.

I passed another guy or two when they ran off track but started getting lapped. I began accommodating everyone coming up behind me to avoid jeopardizing the Pro battles, but this proved to be a mistake. One guy misread my intentions and ended up going two off just to hit me in the rear, breaking the rear fascia and bending something under there. We need a new rear fascia but can repair the old one for future emergency use.

I gave up so much time to faster traffic, a slower guy caught and passed me for position which was sort of a two-way tie for last place. At the end I did chase him down and could have tried a pass but he is a nice guy and he doesn't get too many passes so I let it be. That spot meant less to me and a lot to him so good for him. Alas, however, now that I see the points, I am already worried about giving up a few. With the 4th place in Race 1 I start the season fifth in points in the

991.2 run group in spite of a dismal Race 2 finish.

Live and learn.

Qualifying is hugely important. Your fastest lap in Quali sets the grid for Race 1. The second fastest lap in Quali sets the grid for Race 2. Effective enough but deadly if you are off pace that 30 minutes. Or like me, slow to build pace.

Stay on the track and in the moment.

Do not give up. I started to call it quits in Race 2 after my spin and I was 20 seconds back, but a few seconds later it occurred to me a full-course caution and if I run hard in maybe 4 laps I am caught up with the main pack and have several passing opportunities. My tires would be hot and theirs less so based on my pushing to catch up.

Regrettably for me, there was no full-course caution in Race 2, but one must be ready to capitalize when good fortune arises.

Fitness of mind is tied to the fitness of the body. I have lost a lot of fitness by missing out on exercise a few times each week with any number of aches and pains. And if you don't work the body the mind will fatigue early.

Value

Carrera Cup is more costly to run than PCA by about 30% over the weekend. The entry fees are close to 4 times PCA and the extra work at the track means we each pay for one

race engineer plus part of three others for data, fuel and tires. There is an endless procession of tires going back and forth to Michelin and the fuel wholesaler. This series gives you less track time than say PCA, which is good in that it reduces hours of wear on the engine and gearbox and uses less fuel and brakes. The downside is guys like me who are slow to pick up pace start well back.

Carrera Cup, as a support race before the Sebring 12-hour, was over by noon Friday and IMSA asked everyone be gone by midnight to dedicate the paddock to the Weathertech cars. Grady and I hung around to watch some later support races, including the Continental tire series. We stood in Bishops Bend and had a beverage or two. This was outside the paddock so beer is not only permitted but recommended 😊. After two hours we got bored and left for good, back to the rental house on gator alley (j/k, never even saw one). Had an early dinner which was wise, given all the people in town for the big race start the next day. Grady and I spent Friday night watching the races on YouTube and had a blast swapping stories about what was happening at those moments. Of course, I got TV time in Race 2 and am told another showing during the highlights during the big race. You can now legitimately say one of your HOD colleagues was shown and named during the 12 hours of Sebring. Now, granted it was the highlights from support series to fill time during the 12 hours and my TV time showed

a lazy spin off in the grass, but as they say “no such thing as bad publicity 😊”

Next?

IMSA has *Carrera* next at Watkins Glen, but not until June. Actually, they had a race planned in Montreal in May, but due to Covid and international quarantine restrictions, IMSA is dropping that event and adding COTA in Austin TX where we join our kindreds from Sprint Challenge, the series from IMSA last year moved out to make way for *Carrera Cup*.

The COTA AUSTIN, T event has now offered Monday and Tuesday test days, which they seemingly plan to do before each race. However, we don't have *Carrera Cup* practice until Friday. So, we are supposed to fly in to Austin Sunday, run Monday and Tuesday, sit idle (other than easy stuff like registration and tech which in IMSA is all handled by the teams, and then run Friday, Saturday and Sunday? I cannot take that much time from work, not to mention the cost of the running the car, coaching, lodging and wear and tear on the car. And the Test registration fees. COTA AUSTIN, TX is not a cheap track to rent and the fees show it.

Hopefully even after missing the test and practice days I can report better success from COTA AUSTIN, TX in May!

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Still

(Editor's Note: You can see an excellent inside-the-cockpit video of Joe racing at COTA [here.](#))

Spring Thing 2021

By Lee Fowler

I quit writing trip reports a couple years ago after my irreverent sense of humor got a negative reaction from some folks. Also, in regard to Spring Thing, I've exhausted my line of jokes about Jamie Parton being related to Dolly. I kept asking him to put the touch on her (figuratively speaking) for tickets to Dollywood. I still can't believe that two people from Tennessee with the same last name ain't related. But no more trip reports!

Then Suzanne showed me the Smoky Mountain region web site where there was a post about my trip reports. Well, Jamie sure knows how to play to my ego. But I could have easily ignored that. I'm the Supreme Curmudgeon! I have no ego! Then Suzanne found a Facebook post by Matt Fischer that also mentions my Spring Thing trip reports. What can I do? They're making me into a celebrity. I can't disappoint my fans, so I reluctantly agreed to write a trip report for Spring Thing 2021 scheduled for the end of April. Jamie and Rich, you owe me!

It's late February and there's no point in waiting so I'll just go ahead and start writing this trip report. If it doesn't play out how I write it then we'll do some editing. Or maybe I'll try to influence Jamie Parton and Rich McGowen to change the events to match what I write. They are the two who

volunteered to organize and run Spring Thing 2021. However, I suspect that two people named Rebekah and Wendy put in just as much or more effort planning the weekend.

So, what is Spring Thing? It's one of several weekend events hosted by other PCA regions. The activities may or may not include a Concours, Autocross, Tours, Rally, Tech Quiz, and of course social gatherings. Winterfest is hosted by the Tennessee Region, usually in February. Spring Thing is in April, and Peachstate's Rennfest is over the Labor Day weekend. There are other weekend events in Zone 3, but these are the three Suzanne and I try to attend every year. All the scheduled activities are optional, so you can choose to participate in all of them or just have a relaxing weekend with PCA folks from all around the Southeast. As of early April, the registration list showed attendees coming from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, and Ohio.

Matt Fischer first attended Spring Thing in 2016 as a new member of Smoky Mountain region. He jumped right in and was in charge of Spring Thing in 2017, 2018, and 2019 and did a great job of organizing and managing the well-run events. When I asked him about his involvement in Spring Thing 2021 his reply was, "*I just get to sit back and relax this time!*" I was expecting Matt to say, "*And obviously it takes two people to replace me.*", but he didn't say that.

Suzanne and I had lots of conversations about traveling. At our age the concern

about COVID is a high priority. Then we realized that mostly old people like us attend these types of events and have probably been vaccinated. Well, not that old, but close.

We found out that Dave and Ann Schroetter were planning to attend with their new (old) 928. We hadn't decided on which car we would take but we realized that if we took the '65 356 or the '67 912, we would be in the same Concours class as them. Suzanne said, "Let's take the Carrera," "Are you kidding?" I replied! We'll take one of the old cars and compete against Dave and Ann. Dave was a naval officer, and I was a naval enlisted man. I can't resist the temptation to best a former naval officer.

Then I found out that Bill and Mary Caldwell from Clearwater, Florida, are attending. Nobody is going to beat them in a Concours, and I certainly don't want to be in the same class as them, which I would be with the Carrera. Dave told me that he didn't expect to win a Concours trophy. Having just had hip replacement, he didn't feel that he could do a proper job of cleaning the 928. I told him to just let Ann do the Concours prep. His response, "Like I said, no chance for a trophy!" Ann will help with the cleaning, but she'd rather take walks and look for antique stores. In the end Dave, decided not to concours at the event.

Rich and Nancy Corbeille also plan on attending with Rich's brand new 2021 911 Turbo S. They got really close to winning a Concours trophy at Winterfest last year with their blue Turbo S. I guess that Rich figured they could do less cleaning and have a better

chance for a trophy if he acquired a brand-new car. Some people will do anything to win a trophy. We'll see how that goes.

We decided to take the '65 356C, and we signed up for one of the mountain tours. Upon learning this, Dave suggested that I wouldn't be able to make it up the mountain. "Heck!" says I. Told Dave that I would just make sure I was first in line. That way nobody would be able to get to the top of the mountain before me. Most everybody these days orders those sissy automatic transmissions. They can just let their four-hundred-plus horsepower cars decide to stay in a lower gear waiting for me to struggle through that mountainous terrain in our eighty-eight-horsepower machine.

The only problem with taking that car is how to take all our luggage and Concours cleaning gear. For Winterfest and Rennfest we usually take two cars....one for the event plus an equipment car. That also gives us more flexibility if we want to go out for dinner. Since we usually go to these events a day early, it helps to have that extra car. That also works out good because we usually tote some of the Schroetter's stuff since their Boxster Spyder has limited carrying capacity.

But now that they have a 928, they have more room for luggage and equipment. Dave had to explain to Ann that they still had limited carrying capacity. That there is an engine under that front lid and not more trunk space. We can carry some of our stuff on the rear luggage rack but if it rains that becomes a problem. Also, the problem with

putting a suitcase on the luggage rack is that I can't see out the back window. The right hand outside mirror can't be seen from the driver's seat so it's non-functional. But that's another story.

We decide that we won't take all of the cleaning gear and we'll try to minimize the amount of clothing we take. We'll need room for Suzanne's craft stuff. She likes to crochet on long trips. I like that too 'cause I don't have to carry on a conversation. It also helps that I can turn off my hearing aid on the right side and pretend that I hear what she's saying. If I grunt occasionally, she actually thinks I'm listening.

Dave suggested that we all meet in Scottsboro and caravan to Johnson City. Then he suggested that I lead the pack to avoid being left behind by a 928 and Turbo S. I told him that I could go just as fast as them. It just takes me a little while to get up to highway speeds. Spring Thing is still two months away and a lot of things can change before we head out to Johnson City, Tennessee.

Mid-April and I haven't started cleaning the car. Still got to get it down off the lift. No sweat! Plenty of time! Then I get an email from Dave Schroetter with a "cc" to Rich Corbeille, pronounced "Cor Bay." "Lee, you organize our caravan to Johnson City!" My reply was, "You ain't HOD president no more so you can't tell me what to do!" Silence! No response!

I'm retired. I don't need this stress. But I reluctantly started mapping out a travel plan. Interstate most of the way is about five hours

driving time. Back roads would be six and a half hours or more. I hate driving on Interstate highways but in this case, we have no choice. With an hour's time difference, we need to get an early start so as not to arrive too late in Johnson City.

Me leading this caravan has its problems. If either of the other two cars try to call us, we wouldn't be able to communicate. In the 356, with wind and engine noise it's absolutely impossible to talk on the telephone. Rich and Nancy will have the only car with a built in Navigation system. At the HOD trip to Fontana Village a couple of years ago we followed Rich from the lodge to the marina, just a mile or so down the road. At least we tried to. He got lost. Not sure we want to follow him all the way to Johnson City, Tennessee. We might wind up in West Virginia. To say that he is "directionally challenged" is an understatement. I reluctantly agreed to be the leader of the pack. But I warned Dave and Rich that those old four-cylinder engines have been known to spew droplets of oil from the tailpipes. I wouldn't want to be driving behind one.

The plan is set. We'll meet in Scottsboro at 8:30am on Thursday, the 29th of April. That should get us through Chattanooga after rush hour traffic. We'll stop at a rest area just north of Knoxville for a picnic lunch and hopefully arrive in Johnson City mid-afternoon.

It's Friday, April 23, 2021. The car is 99.5 percent Concours ready to drive through a potentially rainy trip to Johnson City. I

received an email from Spring Thing organizers. Attached were two documents. One is “*Club Gathering Procedures During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Revision 01.*” The second document is entitled, “*Communicable Disease Exposure and Infection Assumption of Risk, Hold Harmless, Release, Waiver of Liability and Indemnity Agreement.*” The latter to be signed by each participant. I wonder how many PCA lawyers came up with that one. These documents will be required for PCA activities through February 28, 2022. (Editor’s note: PCA has since rescinded this requirement. Effective July 1, 2021, COVID-19 waivers are no longer required for PCA events.)

I guess I’ve just been around too long. I remember when we joined PCA back in 1966, the club was managed by an Executive Secretary who ran the club out of her home in Alexandria, Virginia. Now it appears to be a major organization that is intent on controlling every facet of local activities. My apologies! The purpose of this document is to report on our participation in Spring Thing. Instead, I have gone off on a tangent like so many sports and entertainment celebrities and spouted off on my opinion. I won’t mention it again.

Way too early Thursday morning, April 29th we’re cruising up to Scottsboro when I spied way behind us a low wide white car. It had to be the Schroetters! We were all to meet in the Huddle House parking lot. Dave and I pulled into the adjacent gas station to top off the tanks. He said, “I saw Rich go by. He missed the parking lot.” Not a good start.

But we were able to converge at the same spot in the parking lot.

Ann, Suzanne, and Nancy were off in their own world while us guys debated about who should lead the caravan. I lost! We pulled out just after 8:30am. The first stop would be the rest area just west of Chattanooga. I led the way. Dave then took over the lead position until we reached the rest area just north of Knoxville. The plan was to stop there for a picnic lunch.

As we got ready to depart the rest area Dave turned to Rich and said, “You lead!” Rich said, “Why?” “Because it’s your turn!” Dave replied. Rich then wanted to know how to get to the hotel and Dave just told him to enter the address into his navigation system. Rich said, “How do I do that?” I’m standing there thinking, here is a guy who doesn’t wear a wristwatch and doesn’t own a cell phone, and Dave wants him to lead the final leg of this journey. Dave just said, “Let Nancy do it!”

Back on the highway and we’re again cruising at about seventy-five miles per hour. The tachometer is reading about four thousand RPM. I can’t help but think about it. Those pistons are getting hit with an explosion in the cylinder about sixteen times a second. Mile after mile. And those little buggers just keep on doing it. That engine doesn’t loaf along at highway speeds like those six- or eight- cylinder engines. It works hard for every mile. But like the Energizer Bunny, it keeps going, and going...

We arrived at the Carnegie Hotel okay, except that Rich almost drove past the entrance. And to think that he was an engineer for a major helicopter manufacturer. When I asked him what exactly he did, he said something about aircraft reliability. But he was obviously being modest because it appears that he allowed Igor to put his name on the helicopter.

The little 356 made the trip on three-fourths of a tank of gas. Rich said that his Turbo S did about the same. Dave told us that his 928 only used about a half a tank of gas. Must have a heck of a big gas tank. He was running on two more cylinders than Rich and twice the number of cylinders than the 356 has.

We checked in then drove our car to the fifth floor of the parking garage. It has six floors, with the top floor reserved for the Concours. We were supposed to park on the fourth floor but I mis-read the instructions, or the instructions weren't clear. Since that happened several times during the weekend, Suzanne decided that maybe she should be reading the instructions. She said that they were perfectly understandable.

After unpacking our suitcases, we went down to the lobby to see who else might be showing up a day early. Lo and behold, there was Jamie Parton sitting there watching the front door. Now that's dedication. After all the work planning this event with Rich, Jamie positions himself at the front door to welcome all the participants.

Thursday night it was dinner at the hotel restaurant with the HOD crowd. We had the three ladies at one end of the table and us gentlemen at the other end. Two completely different sets of conversations. Us menfolk mostly talked about how we were going to clean all the bugs splatters off the cars. The ladies probably talked about the same thing except for Ann. I kept hearing her say, "Where's the antique shops?"

Our friends Bill and Mary Caldwell drove up from Clearwater, Florida. They know more about cleaning cars for Concours than anybody. And they're always willing to share their expertise. I said to them, "Bill, I've learned a lot about cleaning cars from you." He replied, "I've learned a lot from you too, Lee. Except nothing good." At least I know I'm consistent. Bill and Mary are always the first to start cleaning their car and the last to leave. Which is why they always win.

So early Friday morning we walk across to the garage to start cleaning the car. Bill and Mary are already there, of course. They're parked next to us. All the cars are covered with pollen. We were concerned about the bug guts on the paint and windshield but didn't expect to have to deal with pollen. There are no trees around this six-level parking garage and we're not even on the top level. So how in the world can all the cars be covered with pollen? Didn't matter since everybody had the same problem as us. We spent until mid-afternoon cleaning the car and checking every little nook and cranny...several times. Suzanne works on the inside and I take care of the outside.

Then we swap and check each other's work. You get to the point where there is really nothing else you can do. Plus, you know that you're going to do it again after staging the car the next morning.

Registration start time is 3:00 PM Friday afternoon. That's about the time we were ready to stop cleaning the car, so we walked back to the hotel to see if we could find the registration table. Wasn't hard at all. Just had to find the Four Amigos, masks on and ready to work.



From left to right: John McDermott, club treasurer, Rich McGowen, Jamie Parton, and Bob Baugh, club president. We handed over our signed "we won't sue PCA" forms but what I wanted to know was, where's the "goodie" bags? Right down the hall was the answer I got. Sure 'nuff, Wendy and Rebekah were waiting with smiling faces.



Their job was to sign us up for tours and give out the goodie bags. So, who would you rather deal with? Four masked men or two smiling ladies?

Friday night was the Welcome Reception. Jamie and Rich...or more likely Rebekah and Wendy had the hotel lay out a sumptuous array of light hors d'oeuvres, or what I would call "finger food." It was a great evening of seeing friends that we haven't seen in well over a year. Spring Thing and Rennfest were cancelled last year and Winterfest this year, so the last event we attended was Winterfest in February of 2020.

Saturday morning the schedule called for the Concours participants to take their cars to the sixth floor of the garage. I got up way too early 'cause I read that we were supposed to position our cars between 7:00 and 7:30. Should have asked Suzanne to read the darn instructions. We got out there and doggone if the cars weren't covered in pollen again. I looked around and there were still no trees anywhere near the garage. This was perplexing and I set out to find out why. Truthfully, I didn't set out to do anything.

While talking to one of the local Smoky Mountain participants he explained it to me. There is a railroad track not too far behind the garage. Trains go by numerous times during the day. There are lines of tall trees along both sides of the track. Every time a train goes by it blows the pollen off the trees which then floats over to the garage and lands on the cars. So, Jamie and Rich, next year please put curtains on the back side of the garage.

There were so many cars up there they spilled over onto the ramp coming up to the sixth level. Many were there just for show. My understanding is that there were a lot of

first-time Concours entries and that was good. These regional events are more low-key than Parade so there's a lot less stress. Even though we have the "serious" and "not-so-serious" participants, everybody has a chance for a trophy. And as with every Concours we enter, we always learn something new. Everybody is willing to share their knowledge. There's more socializing going on during the Concours than anything else. There were a lot of very nice cars on display and a wide variety of models. Our own HOD member, Dave Schroetter, was one of the judges. Smoky Mountain region hosted its first Spring Thing in 1974 and it continues to be a premier event for PCA members and one of our favorite Concours competitions.

Saturday afternoon was set aside for touring. Several tours had been laid out and participants could choose which tour they wanted to go on. Instead of going on one of the tours, Suzanne and I decided to explore the inner layer of our eyelids. The Schroetters and Corbeilles both went on tours and said that they were great. The roads were fun and the scenery fantastic. I told them that I spent the afternoon confirming that my eyelids will actually keep the light out.

Saturday evening is banquet and awards time. Another feast was laid out but before we could eat, we were subjected to the usual speeches. Well, they put a lot of work into this event, so they have a right to talk about it. And rightfully so. They all should be recognized for their efforts. The awards went well for the HOD group. Suzanne and

I took First in Class with a score of 139.6 out of a possible 140. We also were awarded the Peoples' Choice trophy, with 24 of the 80 Peoples' Choice ballots going to the 356. Much thanks to all of those who voted for our car. Rich and Nancy won First in Class, also with a score of 139.6. It was only their third Concours. I guess getting that new car paid off. Allan Cox was awarded the Judges' Choice trophy and it was well deserved. Here is Nancy Frye saying to Jeff, "Why did you sell that car to the Fowlers?"



Sunday is Autocross Day, but I can't report on that since we elected to head for home. The Corbeilles cut out early. We departed about 8:45 Eastern Time. The Schroetters 928 was still in the garage when we left. They all elected to return via the Interstate highway route. Suzanne and I decided to travel home on back roads and avoid most of the Interstate travel.

But before we got out of Johnson City, we had to make one stop. Our favorite restaurant for breakfast when traveling is Bob Evans. We saw one as we were heading into Johnson City and there was no way we were going to leave without eating there. I had my usual "Homestead Breakfast." They

even gave me a discount for serving in the military over fifty years ago.



Our route home took us through several towns which lengthened the trip, but it also took us through some outstanding mountain scenery and fun roads. We did have to get onto I75 at Cleveland, Tennessee. We were on it less than a mile when we encountered “Interstate Maniacs.” Four of them, with two on motorcycles. Speeding and weaving in and out of traffic. And as usual, the traffic in Chattanooga on I24 eastbound was backed up for miles and miles. Westbound traffic was routed off the Interstate onto a secondary road. Road construction in Chattanooga is a year-round activity.

We pulled into the garage almost nine hours after we left the hotel. About twice the time as driving on the Interstate. However, I was a lot less stressed. The gas gauge was pointing to “reserve.” Used a full tank of gas on the return trip.



Can’t emphasize how much fun the weekend was thanks to Jamie, Rich, and the rest of the Smoky Mountain team. Jamie is all smiles since the weekend is almost over and Spring Thing has been a roaring success.

Our only regrets! Never enough time to talk to people we only occasionally see. We’ll pick up where we left off at Rennfest in September and Spring Thing next year.