

Kryderacing Newsletter

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“HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR RACING OBJECTIVES”

“If you complain about something to someone who cannot do anything about it, it is boring and annoying.” That is one of my sayings, but sometimes a person needs to vent. Please stop reading now if you don't care about Nelson Ledges Road Course. What follows is Reed's report:

Nelson Ledges Road Course Status – Short Version

For 3+ months there have been NO replies to any inquiries from me and many others. Questions have been repeatedly asked concerning schedules, track availability on specific dates, costs, and additional subjects. These inquiries have been directed to the track owner, his son, and the track manager.

Mahoning Valley, Finger Lakes, and Neohio Regions of the SCCA all have meetings scheduled for the first Tuesday in February. Whether to continue with their scheduled races in May and June will be a major topic of conversation. At least two of the three Regions already have had proposals put forth to cancel their events.

The gas tanks at the track will be removed if there is no prospect of sales improving in the 2015 season. The decision to remove the tanks will be made after March 1st.

I will be glad to report any updates from anyone, but I have wasted way too much time trying to obtain factual information from those who actually know the answers. I very much want Nelson Ledges Road Course to survive and thrive. I definitely want to be involved and would love nothing better than to continue being the track's Chief Instructor and having a racing gas concession. Sensing the possible demise of the Kryderacing Series is painful. But the total lack of any recent activity leaves me wondering what is going on and what the future holds.

Nelson Ledges Road Course Status – Long Version/Background

This edition of the Kryderacing Newsletter is dedicated to a single subject – the status of Nelson Ledges Road Course. Since the change in management last May I have been trying to keep people informed of what I know is going on. The main reason for this has been to limit the untruths found in rumor mills. My reports were found in several areas, including editions of this newsletter, Mahoning Valley Region's "Track" newsletter, separate mailings and postings, and on the www.race-mvr.org website. A lot of people followed these reports and following the end of the 2014 racing season I have been swamped with requests for updates, especially plans for 2015. As Fall passed into Winter there was no information forthcoming. Early in December I started asking non-track people to tell me if they had heard anything so I could include it in a future report. Several requests for information had been and were being made to track management by these people. From my feedback, no one ever received any replies. I informed everyone I would wait until January 15th to issue my next update.

What follows is strictly what I know. If I am wrong, it is because no one has informed me of anything different. I will gladly issue corrections if necessary. I also have no problem with anyone quoting me. In the past I have withheld some of my personal thoughts. A few might leak out with this report.

The Mahoning Valley Region held their SCCA Regional races on the last weekend of September, 2014. There had been considerable work done towards improving the facility following the problems encountered during the Finger Lakes Region June races. The grass had been cut, numerous repairs had been made to the track surface, the new concessionaire was a success, the PA system had been replaced, and there were other signs of improvement. Most event attendees left the track feeling there were still some issues to be addressed, but things seemed to be headed in the right direction. During the course of the weekend Mahoning Valley Region received written approval from the track for a June, 2015 race

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weekend. The track surface, while better than in June, still showed signs of not being able to take the abuse of race cars, especially those of the heavier, more powerful variety. We were told the pavement would be an area receiving continuing improvement. The tire wall and continuing issues with the EPA were also being reviewed for possible solutions. We had heard the barn had been scheduled for demolition prior to the event, but it was still standing. Rumor had it the barn's demise was something which had been ordered by the insurance company or some other outside body. The rumor mill said this order actually originated several years ago. Work clearing the contents of the barn and prepping to destroy it were underway. This presented Kryderacing with a problem since the electrical lines supplying the power needed to run our gas pumps had been cut where they passed through the barn. Fortunately, Jim Green supplied a generator and Duane Harrington helped wire it. Thanks to both of you.

A week later I talked with track manager Todd Karom as I left the last Funday event of the year. He was burning some of the lumber left from knocking down an area of the fencing along Route 305. He said his objective was to improve the appearance of the facility to those driving by. He also told me the big trailer he had repositioned near the cross-over gate would become the new registration building. The trailer would have its position slightly adjusted as he planned on making the cross-over road a two-lane affair. When asked about the 'still standing' barn he said they were still talking with several people about the project. This was the last time Todd has communicated anything to me.

During the month of October several organizations started making plans for 2015. Questions arose concerning scheduling, rental rates, and other items. For example, Mahoning Valley Region and Finger Lakes Region had decided to co-host the June Regional races. Misery Bay Region became a possible third party when everyone thought it would be a good idea to have several other SCCA activities added on Friday. Naturally, questions arose as to Friday's track availability and costs. I had also received two separate inquiries from other organizations regarding possible dates. Seems their attempts to contact the track went unanswered. These were serious inquiries and represented potential income for the track.

There was a SCCA Northeast Division Mini-Convention scheduled for November 14-15 and much of the 2015 event calendar would be finalized at that time for national publication. Several weeks prior to the Mini-Con I sent an email to track management with several questions. Included were the items mentioned in the previous paragraph. About 10 days prior to the Mini-Con I tried calling Todd, got no answer, and was unable to leave a message. A few seconds after hanging up, Jason (works with Todd) called and told me he was unable to get to Todd's phone in time to answer it. He told me they did have my email and would get back to me before I left for the Mini-Con. I told him answers along the lines of "we'll have that info available by month/day" would even be helpful. Included in the email and mentioned as a reminder in the phone conversation was the offer of two free tickets to the upcoming Kryderacing Awards Banquet. I never heard anything. At the Mini-Con everyone was disappointed at the lack of useful information, but we tentatively proceeded as if all was okay.

As time went on I continued to hear nothing and people I talked with also found no answers in their attempts at communication. On November 18th I wrote a lengthy letter (snail-mail) to track owner Marvin Drucker. The first four pages of the letter covered my involvement with Nelson Ledges, which started in 1970. There were good and bad things, but the general topic was how the track had evolved to its current condition. It also pointed out how other, similar facilities had evolved over the same period of time. The last page targeted current management and the main complaint – a lack of communication. A week after sending this letter I emailed a copy to Marv's son, Rick. As of today, there has been no reply from anyone. Note: This letter will be posted on www.kryderacing.com and is titled: "Nelson Ledges November 2014 Letter to Drucker".

Early in December Sandi and I attended the Performance Racing Industry Trade Show in Indianapolis. We met with numerous racers and clients. The status of Nelson Ledges was a common topic. No one had heard anything. I asked several people who planned on contacting the track to let me know of anything I could include in this newsletter.

While at the PRI we had conversations with Sunoco and Bazell Oil. Kryderacing owns the gas concession at the track, but Bazell is the distributor and owns the tanks. Gas sales over the past several years have decreased from 4-5,000 gallons annually to around 350 gallons in 2014. Declining entry levels are part of the problem, but the bigger issue is a significant decline in cars with competition prepped engines. Typically cars running these types of engines also have expensive suspension modifications which are usually incompatible with the rough Nelson Ledges track. Competitors with lower preparation levels don't have as much of a problem, but they also don't require racing types of gasoline. The lower cost pump gas they can buy at their local gas stations is sufficient. Anyway, the question arose as to continuing sales of racing gas at the track. Kryderacing informed Sunoco and Bazell we WOULD stop selling it unless we saw signs of

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increased sales potential in the future. They agreed and plans are tentatively in place to move the tanks and pumps to another track. A final decision will be made sometime in early March.

On December 27th Sandi and I drove by the track. We didn't expect to see any activity but what we did see was not encouraging. The barn was still standing. The fencing removal project Todd had started along Route 305 appeared to have stopped the day it started. There were a few gaps in the fencing but most of it was still in place. The gates were locked, but there were tire tracks from someone who recently had been through them. The place looked deserted. None of this would be a problem if it weren't for the lack of communication from the track regarding, well, anything. An email report from this trip and several items, including those from the PRI Trade Show, was sent to Rick Drucker (I do not have an email for Marv), Todd Karom, and Charley Tanck (Finger Lakes Region Regional Executive). I included a request for updates to include in the newsletter you are currently reading. Charley sent his own request for info a day or two later and included the statement that Finger Lakes Region would cancel their June, 2015 date if no answers were received. As of today there have been no replies. Finger Lakes Region has not dropped their event yet, but a vote may be held soon.

At one point I thought Todd simply was mad at me and refusing to talk. That could be true, but as time goes on I find out I am not alone in not hearing any updates. The husband of a good friend works with Todd and the motorcycle group as an instructor. As of a week ago he was still trying to make contact with Todd regarding the 2015 motorcycle schedule, both at Nelson Ledges and the other tracks where Todd's motorcycle group runs. He says this may be too early for Todd to reply, but admits there has been no contact. Checking calendars at those other tracks also shows no dates firmly scheduled for Todd's motorcycle organization. The Neohio Region has a SCCA race weekend scheduled for early May. I have been told they have paid a deposit but are starting to get nervous with the lack of communication.

Last year's problems with the track led to more racers starting to drift away from the facility. Drivers of race cars had been slowly doing this for several years as the track conditions worsened. But the problems of last year accelerated this trend. Racing is an expensive hobby and most drivers schedule only a couple of weekends a year. A less than desirable track surface combined with no firm 2015 schedule information along with many people spreading the word there has been no information forthcoming from track management has led many racers to fill in their 2015 calendars with dates at other facilities. Adding last minute race dates to a Nelson Ledges calendar will get some of the racers to return, but many of them have been lost until they believe there is a better future for the track. Something major needs to happen in order to reverse this trend. "Major" could be a complete track repaving, major investment from someone, or even a massive promotions campaign with the car crowd while the track tries to make improvements. It should be pointed out this negative outlook has also become noticeable in many of the volunteers who have been regulars at the track for many years.

Fundays was probably the most profitable activity at the track in 2013. There were numerous dates and my estimate of the average 2013 attendance would be around 25 cars. The 2014 turmoil led to all scheduled dates being initially cancelled after the change in management. Several Fundays were added as 2014 progressed but notifications were issued only a week or so prior to their happening and these notifications were in the new track website. Most of the loyal Funday followers from previous years had been lost and getting them back was going to be a slow process. Track management's decision to not bring an ambulance to the track for a couple of the Funday's also made several participants nervous and hesitant to return in the future. This led to several of them questioning the track's insurance. On January 16th I drove past the track with two of the most active Funday participants from previous years. There had been no change since my December drive-by and even the entrance had no tire tracks. The deep snow covering the entrance had fallen more than a week prior. These drivers and I enjoyed a pleasant breakfast surrounding unpleasant speculation regarding the track's future.

The fact three websites have existed the past year has done nothing but cause confusion. I have asked several people involved with these websites what is going on. I usually find them pointing the finger at someone else as being the problem. I do not know what the truth is. Prior to sending this email I looked for any newly posted information on all three sites. I did find a posting on a www.motoseries.com forum site from Todd Karom. It was the only one I could find after much searching (there may be others but this could be my shortcoming since I spend virtually no time on forums or similar sites). It is posted January 13, 2015 and is his reply to inquiries regarding the 2015 schedule. Note, his motorcycle organization runs at many tracks and I believe his reply covers much more than just Nelson Ledges Road Course. You can read it and the replies surrounding it (probably all from the motorcycle group) by going to the Moto Series website forums, clicking "General", and then clicking "Re: 2015 Schedule".

Todd does say you can contact him directly by email (info@motoseries.com or info@clevelandarmory.com) or calling him at 216-224-6901. Track owner Marvin Drucker's phone number and address can be found in the Cleveland "white pages" directory.

CLOSING COMMENT:

I usually include a few sayings in the Kryderacing Newsletter. Recently I have been updating these files and found several sayings which are connected in one way or the other with the above subject.

"Change is like a curve in the road. It's only a problem if you don't follow it."

"There are things you can control and things you can't control. Don't drive yourself crazy when stuff goes wrong that you can't control."

"A x B = Results" (You cannot control 'A', don't waste time on "A")

"Life is 10% what you make it and 90% how you face it."

"Always leave things better than you find them."

"The best is yet to come."

"Adaptability is the essence of survival."

"The most certain way to defeat is apathy."

"Embrace change whenever the opportunity presents itself."

"Relax, laugh a lot, and enjoy yourself."

"Only by taking part in events can one hope to exercise any influence."

"In order to respond to a situation, it must first be understood."

"An effort by me to improve you does not mean I think I am better than you."

"Sometimes you must do something. It may be wrong, but do something."

"Good advice is always irritating."

"The heaviest thing you can carry is a grudge."

"Defer judgment and think positive."

"Nothing moves you forward faster than letting go of the past."

"However good or bad a situation is, it will change."

"A wise man will change his mind. A fool never will."

"Rather than presenting personal ideas to win approval, present them to stimulate thought and discussion. Try to do it in an honest way and with a broad outlook on the subject at hand."

Check www.kryderacing.com for weekly updates.