

KRYDERACING NEWSLETTER

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“HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR RACING OBJECTIVES”

NELSON LEDGES – JUST WHAT IS/HAS BEEN GOING ON?

The vast majority of this newsletter covers the various race events Kryderacing has been involved with over the past couple of months. But a couple of recent conversations led to the above question.

Actually, conversations we have had dating back to the late 1970's are part of this discussion. Back then we had a friend who was part of a group wishing to purchase Nelson Ledges Road Course. He related the story of the group's reaching an agreement with the owner. The only thing left to do was to sit down and sign the final papers. At that point the track owner (substantially) increased the price and the deal was off. Over the years we heard similar stories from several others. While some of these stories could have been rumors, several came directly from the individuals involved. And they all followed the same pattern. A purchase was agreed upon only to have the asking price increased just as the papers were to be signed. One individual we know who had this scenario happen to him still wants to buy the track, but he refuses to sit in the same room with the owner. We know another individual who has the financial resources to buy the track but knows what will happen in the end if he starts negotiations. Back in the 1990's Sandi and I were personally involved with an attempt to buy the track. One of the potential buyers flew all the way from Portland, Oregon to investigate the facility. His first impression was "we'll need to level everything and start over". But he still wanted to buy it. For several weeks we asked a lot of questions and collected a lot of information from the track manager. Then the answers stopped coming as the questions got more serious. We don't know why the info flow stopped, but eventually the two people involved in the potential purchase lost interest.

In 2008 the track supposedly was sold, but something happened in August which saw the buyers back away from the sale. We don't know what happened, but have always speculated the economy (it was about to collapse) scared them away. These particular buyers had lots of money and went on to build several high-end getaways, including a race facility in California, all across the country. We are now beginning to wonder if something else led to the collapse of their deal to buy the track. Maybe the decision to stop the transfer of ownership was instigated by the owners and not the buyers as everyone was led to believe.

Sandi and I divorced ourselves from being involved with the track earlier this year. Throughout all of last year there was a continuing communication problem. This problem was not limited to us. Many other individuals and groups had the same problems. The new management group came from the local motorcycle organization which had held events at the track for years. While they always claimed to want the auto crowd involved it seemed as if there were always difficulties (usually communications) in actually making it happen. Phone calls, emails, registered letters were continually unanswered.

Three recent conversations combined with the historical happenings mentioned above make us wonder just what is going on. Are they related?

First, three of the SCCA Regions which ran events at the track up until this year had been asked by the current track manager to consider scheduling future events. The manager had contacted one of the Regions a few months ago. This was a good sign and a change from last year. Several weeks ago members of the three Regions proposed a meeting with the manager. It was to be held at the track. The purpose was to discuss how to go forward and have SCCA races return to the track. As far as I know we are still waiting for a reply to this proposal.

Within the past two weeks I have been told the story of a group who, in 2014, had reached an agreement to lease the track. The agreement included many improvements which would be paid for by the group leasing the track. These

improvements included a complete repaving. A lot of time and money went into reaching an agreement and the group believed they had an agreement. At the final meeting to sign papers they were informed the owners had decided not to sell. Sound familiar? By the way, one of the people we heard this story from was associated with the group desiring to lease the track. This story was not a rumor.

On July 29 Sandi received a phone call from Chrysler. They had been testing at the track for at least the last couple of years. These tests were lengthy and generated a substantial amount of income for the facility. A lot of Chrysler's data was based on previous testing at Nelson Ledges and they desired to continue testing at the same location. But every avenue they had tried to establish contact the track had met with no replies.

So, why would the owner repeatedly over many years welcome potential buyers, reach agreements with them, and then slam the door on the deal at the last minute? Why does the current management talk a lot about wanting to make improvements but does little to communicate with people and organizations who actually want to spend money renting the track? Why turn down a lease program which would have done wonders, including paving the track, and instead continue to let the current group manage the property?

Track owner Marv Drucker and Rick, his son, may have good answers for all of these questions. There are always different viewpoints, and opinions of what happened vary between the parties involved. That may be the case, but there is a pattern here which extends decades. There was an old rumor around the track which said the vanished labor union boss Jimmy Hoffa was buried somewhere on the property. Maybe it, or something like it, is true and no one wants the skeletons dug up.

All of the items I have discussed above came from people who had first-hand knowledge of what I wrote. None were rumors. We would truly love to see automobile racing return to Nelson Ledges. But it is hard to believe it will happen if the types of things discussed above continue.

LIME ROCK TRANS AM

The event was held on Saturday of the Memorial Day weekend. It was a short schedule with no pre-event test day. Practice and qualifying occurred on Friday with only the race (no warm-up) on Saturday. Saturday did feature a "FanWalk" during lunchtime. All the cars were lined up on either the front straight or in pit lane. The spectator turnout was fantastic. This type of activity should be scheduled whenever possible at future events.

The TransAm entry was split into two races with the TA2 cars getting their own event. David's TA competitors shared their race with the TA3 classes. The TA field of cars has gotten tougher this year. David's seventh qualifying spot was very good and we know he races better than he qualifies so everyone was hopeful. The race went well and there were no full course cautions until near the end. When the pace car pulled onto the track David was in sixth. On the restart he passed Simon Gregg for fifth. Simon and David had a fierce battle to the checkered flag with David holding onto the spot.

There were a couple of side notes to the weekend. Reed and Sandi were driving their Passat from home to the track on Thursday. The plan was to pick up the crew (they had traveled in the rig) at the end of the day and take them to the motel. All was going great until shortly after crossing the Hudson River. A warning light appeared on the dash and the car no longer seemed to have full power. Stopping the car and restarting cleared the warning light, but only briefly. The local VW dealer was found and we paid them a visit. The problem was determined to be turbo related but the dealer would not be able to look at the car until after the Memorial Day weekend. They also had no loaner vehicles available. Since the only problem seemed to be a lack of turbo boost (confirmed by the "codes") we decided to drive our now unboosted and underpowered car. We took back-roads to the motel and the plan seemed to be working. Driving from the motel to the track to pick up the crew the car seemed to be back to normal. Reed spent some time the next day examining hose and wiring connections but found nothing wrong. He then test drove the car and the lack of power returned. Believing a wiring connection could have been the problem he wiggled them again. Power was back and he decided not to touch a thing until returning home and letting the dealer look into the problem. The car ran fine all the way home. We even averaged 52+ miles per gallon on the trip home.

Another side story concerns lodging. Lime Rock has always had a reputation for a lack of good choices to stay. The Interlaken was the only truly good place with the rest of the local selections being run-down motel types. And they were all very expensive. There were better choices but the travel time between the track and them was usually an hour or more.

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During a One Lap of America trip many years ago Reed stayed at a place called the Sharon Motor Inn. It was small and very run down. But during One Lap you rarely stay in the room for more than a couple of hours. A few years later Matt and David stayed there and swore never to return. This year we could not find anything close to the track and the Sharon Motor Inn (now renamed Sharon Country Inn) was promising a new owner and improved facilities. We held our breath but the promises turned out to be true. We would not hesitate to return in the future. There was a similar motel Sandi and Reed had experienced over twenty years ago and we had promised never to return. While at the track relating our experiences with the Sharon Country Inn we heard the Wake Robin had undergone a similar ownership change and massive improvement.

We had also anticipated visiting longtime IMSA partners Frank DeVecchio and Jeannette. But Jeannette had some recent operations on her foot and getting around in the paddock was going to be a challenge.

MID-OHIO MAJORS (May 28-31)

This was Bill Pintaric's first 2015 opportunity to get behind the wheel of his GTL Nissan. Unfortunately the weekend didn't go smoothly. There was a test session planned for Thursday evening. As he was about to head for the track we discovered the car had reverse gear only. As darkness approached and no solution had been found the decision was made to take the car back to the Kryderacing shop. Fortunately it is slightly more than an hour away. Matt and Colton removed the transmission, disassembled it, and found nothing wrong. They did solve the problem, but you'll have to ask them what it was. They managed to get back to the hotel and sleep for less than two hours. During Friday's sessions Bill qualified and was running in the top four places (there were close to twenty GTL cars entered). But he was hit by other competitors at least three times and pitted early when it started to rain. Then the engine seized. Matt and Colton returned to the Kryderacing shop that night for an engine swap. Their total sleep for the two nights was less than three hours. There was still some body damage from Saturday which would need band-aiding. The weather forecast looked "wet" and Bill decided he had had enough problems for the weekend. Back at the shop we discovered a small nut had come off of one of the intake "horns" and been swallowed by the engine. Damage appears to be minimal but we are going to investigate further before putting everything back together.

We were all happy to see Gary Martz at the track. Matt helped drive Gary's motorhome to the track and David Pintaric volunteered the use of the golf cart from his TransAm team. Gary put a lot of miles on the cart as he watched races and visited friends. Gary has been out of action since close to a year ago when he was diagnosed with a serious case of cancer. He isn't cured, but is doing a lot better than doctor's projected. His mind is as sharp as ever and he demonstrated it with his comment that "Bill Pintaric is the only person he knows who paddocks in Canal Fulton for races at Mid-Ohio. He just needs a two-hour warning for reporting to the grid." Kryderacing is located in Canal Fulton and Clinton, Ohio.

Bob MacDonald had raced his Spec Miata earlier this year. The 2016 SCCA Run-Offs are scheduled to return to Mid-Ohio and the entry list of forty-five drivers included most of the 2016 championship contenders. Bob did well, but isn't quite up to the level of the top competition. Kryderacing is still working with him and we have a few ideas which will be evaluated during future events.

Chris Dercole was also running his second race of the 2015 season. His Thursday night test session also started with a problem. Sometimes new parts are defective. Chris discovered he had a stuck piston in one of his new brake calipers. The heat from the "dragging" brake pad quickly cooked the seal around the brake piston, making problems worse. Chris' girlfriend Beth made a trip to the local auto parts store for another caliper and the problem was fixed.

But Chris had more excitement in store for him and his STL Mustang. The track was dry prior to Sunday's feature race, but rain looked possible. Chris inquired as to whether we could have a crew standing by to help in changing to rain tires. All of our other races were finished and most of the crew had left the paddock. Colton and Reed stood by as a light drizzle started. As the Mustang left the grid on dry tires car the drizzle turned into significant rain. Chris pitted at the end of the first lap. Colton, Reed, Beth, and Don Harrington (who just happened to be in the pit area) swapped Chris's tires to the wet variety and he rejoined the race. The crew, totally soaked, headed for shelter. We don't know where he finished since about half the field of cars made the same incorrect guess as we had (resulting in pit stops) and there were many spins and off-course excursions during the event.

MID-OHIO NASA (June 5-7)

It was good to see our Canadian friend Doug Weaver for the first time in 2015. This time there were several new things for both Doug and some of the Kryderacing crew. Doug was driving a 1.8 liter 1999 Spec Miata. It was entered in

NASA's PTE class due to tire choice. Previously Doug had driven a 1.6 liter Miata in SCCA events. Many things are different between SCCA and NASA, but most of them are simple variations in ways of doing things. It is easy to become comfortable with one system and then stumble when negotiating the other. Adding to the NASA newness was the fact the Kryderacing crew was led by Reed and he was also new to NASA procedures. Matt Miller normally handled these items, but he deserved a weekend off and Reed and Colton went to Mid-Ohio. Jerry Palmer joined us on Saturday.

Things actually went very smooth during the early Saturday morning sessions. There were minor adjustments made to the car based on Doug's comments. Doug qualified third in the PTE class. For the first few laps he found himself locked in a battle with the fourth place qualifier. He slowly pulled ahead until the engine started to overheat. He pitted and we later found a blown head gasket. The weekend was over.

NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK TRANS AM

One word can describe this weekend – HOT. It started out in the nineties and was still in the high eighties by Sunday's race. The sun and humidity made it feel even hotter. Friday's test day went well, except for a transmission change for a broken fourth gear. David qualified seventh on Saturday but felt the engine didn't sound quite right. An "oversize" lash gap was discovered, adjustments were made, and the engine sounded better in the final practice session. David said it felt stronger and everyone was hopeful for a good race.

There were no sessions prior to Sunday's race, but there was a "Fan Walk" in the pit lane during the lunch break. This was similar to Lime Rock and continues to be a great idea. As the cars approached the green flag to start the race Amy Ruman drove into the pits with a power steering problem. It vanished as soon as she stopped and she rejoined in last place. Amy proceeded to move through the competition, eventually winning the event. Meanwhile, David was in a multi-car battle for second. A late race spin to avoid a "limping" competitor was followed a couple laps later by a spinning competitor causing David to come to a complete stop. He did finish sixth in what turned out to be another hot and exhausting race. This was David and the team's fourth consecutive finish following a DNF at the Sebring opener. David continues to climb in the points standings and is currently seventh, but knocking on the door of those in front of him.

COLTON'S FIRST

Some of you reading this heading need to get your mind out of the gutter right now. What we are talking about is Colton's first automotive competition as a driver. On June 21st the Northern Ohio Valley Region of the SCCA held a Solo at Salem High School. It was a charity event and thirty-plus drivers took part in a well organized, low pressure event. Colton Kask had never done this type of thing before and while he has been part of the Kryderacing crew for the past couple of years, he had never had the experience of pushing a car for all it is worth while still maintaining complete control. We had warned him that "first-timers" are usually slow and/or hit numerous pylons. We forgot to tell him it is sometimes easy to get disorientated and go off course. The entry list featured everything from well-prepped and well driven autocross vehicles to lot's of beginners. Colton's time on the first run put him in the middle of the pack. It was an outstanding performance. His second run was his first off-course experience. He came back on the third run with a three second improvement (57+ seconds to 54+ seconds) and what would turn out to be his fastest time of the day. Run's four through six also featured off-course problems. Brad Morris hooked up his GoPro for these runs. The mistakes are all minor and in different locations. We might make a game out of the video by having people watch all three tapes and see if they can find the three different mistakes.

In all fairness to Colton, the course layout resulted in some confusion and many, if not most, competitors experienced at least one "did not finish" run due to going off-course. A couple "unofficial" fun runs were allowed at the end of the day and Colton, being frustrated with his off-course problems, took advantage of the opportunity. His run was slightly slower than his best, but it was on course for the entire circuit. All kidding aside, Colton did fantastic and is looking for future opportunities.

GRATTAN REGIONAL

Bob MacDonald entered the June 27-28 Regional races at Grattan in order to get some extra test time with his Spec Miata. There was a lot of work to do on other cars back at the shop so Reed and Sandi ended up crewing for Bob. That arrangement had other logistical benefits as visits to Reed's sister in Freeport, Illinois and his Mom and Art in New Richmond, Wisconsin took place between the Grattan event and the Brainerd TransAm race one week later.

The Grattan weekend went well and Bob got a lot of tracktime. The original schedule of six run groups was reduced to four and an additional session was added for each group. Since Bob was entered in two different classes he was on the track six times on Saturday and an additional four times on Sunday. Sometimes only a few minutes existed following one of Bob's sessions and the call for Bob's next group. Fortunately the Saturday lunch break occurred when we wanted to change brake pads. And Sunday's lunch break fit in perfectly with the need to change a wheel bearing. Next on Bob's schedule is the Gingerman Major's weekend scheduled for July 11-12.

BRAINERD TRANSAM

This was David Pintaric's first visit to the 2.5 mile Brainerd race track. Reed had raced there over thirty years ago when the circuit included the dragstrip and was 3.0 miles in length. Removing the dragstrip from the circuit was a good idea for a variety of reasons. One of them was both road course and dragstrip could be in use at the same time. And they were on this 4th of July weekend. A large number of campers were also enjoying the holiday weekend.

Besides learning a new track the team had a couple of additional challenges. After David's issues with dehydration at the last event several changes were made to decrease the likelihood of a repeat. A revised drink system, roof vents, and improved cool-suit measures were undertaken. Race day was hot and there was only one caution during the race. David commented after the event that he was able to drive hard at the end as opposed to trying to survive. It paid off when he passed another competitor for an extra position during the last few laps.

The race did have its challenges. While the team has three engines, two of them were at the end of their normal life-cycles and in need of a rebuild. The third was still being rebuilt and not available. Matt and the crew had installed the better of the "tired" engines back at the shop. It might have been a little bit down on power during the sessions prior to the race, but David managed to qualify seventh in a very competitive field. He moved to sixth prior to the start when another competitor had his qualifying times disallowed due to changing tires after the qualifying session. When the starter waved the flag David moved to fifth by passing one of the series title contenders. He held onto the position for about four laps, then the engine lost power. He gradually gave up positions as his lap times suffered by a couple of seconds compared to the first few laps. After a few laps he had dropped to eighth or ninth and looked as if that was where he would finish. The race itself had settled into a three car battle for the lead, three more cars further back debating fourth place, and the rest separated by considerable distances. The race continued like this well past the midway point. Two of the cars battling for fourth then made contact. One of them was unable to continue. The other car had damaged a tire and continued for several laps before being forced to pit. The third car in this battle made one additional lap from when the other two hit each other before pulling off the track with a mechanical problem. All of this brought out the only full-course caution of the event. David was now in fifth. When the green flag waved he closed on fourth and eventually took the position. It was David's and the team's best finish of the year. And it came with a sick engine. Sometimes you just have to work with the hand you are dealt.

This was the fifth consecutive finish of the year after a dnf at the Sebring opener. David has moved into sixth place in the points standings and has a great shot at being in the top five at the banquet.

GINGERMAN MAJORS

Matt traveled with Bob MacDonald to the Gingerman Majors during the July 11-12 weekend. The Spec Miata competition was fierce and his results were not as good as hoped. But they did learn a few things. Next up on Bob's schedule is the Mid-Ohio Regional scheduled for July 18-19.

MID-OHIO DOUBLE REGIONAL

4 Spec Miata's wearing Kryderacing logos on their hoods were grouped together in the Mid-Ohio garages for this July 18-19 event. Bob MacDonald, Brian Vondran, and Doug Weaver were all entered in the SM class. Greg Alley decided to run in ITA. Doug Weaver was double-dipping by running ITA also. In addition, Doug had originally entered the 1-hour endure, but mechanical issues kept him on the sidelines. The weekend went well for just about everyone. All four cars had at least one small bodywork ding, but that appears to be normal for Miatas.

The only major problem was a differential issue with the #27 Miata being driven by Doug. There is a harmonic balancer attached to the front of the dif and the rubber had deteriorated to the point the balancer no longer was doing its job. Sandi found parts while the crew of Colton Kaisk, Lanny Ritz, Jerry Palmer, and Jim Ritz made the repair. Doug missed the endure, but the car ran great on Sunday.

The four cars being in the same garage area created an enjoyable social atmosphere. They are returning as a group for the August event. We even reserved the same garages.

QUOTES TO LIVE BY

"When you feel the pressure of limitations, then you begin to die – in a prison of your own mind."

"You cannot back into the future."

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

CLOSING COMMENT

Sandi and I celebrated our 44th Wedding Anniversary on July 10th. We went to a local establishment, drank some wine, and watched the boats come and go out on the lake. It was very peaceful. We reminisced, mostly about racing and the business we have run together for many years. One thing that stood out is the wide variety of people and things we have experienced and been involved with. It was also very evident the business had constantly evolved over the years. Even now, the large gap in our schedule created with the loss of Nelson Ledges activities has vanished. We didn't look to fill in this gap, it just happened. Sandi and I also wondered what the future will hold. Stay tuned.

Check www.kryderacing.com for weekly updates.