

Mississippi Region # 73



SCCA

Sports Car Club of America

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SkidMarks

Up Coming Events

- August 17, @ Fairgrounds
- September 20 @ Columbus Air Base
- Tri-State Challenge:
Arkansas Oct 10-12
Memphis, Oct 25-26
Grenada, Nov 7-8

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Latest News and Tire Tracks

AUTO CROSS

So far for 2003 the crowds at the monthly Solo II events have been great. The Region has picked up several new members and the competitiveness shows. We were fortunate to have a driver's school in conjunction with the April event at Grenada (See page 2) and we were also able to host an event at Columbus Air Force Base (See page 3). The night events, held under the lights on Saturdays, give the drivers a different challenge than day events.

ROAD RACING

Skip Brunson and Jim Bishop have been campaigning their Nisan 280 Z in the Mid-West Division with races at St. Louis, Halett OK, and Memphis Motorsports Park. They have competed in 4 events this year and are 1st in the points race in their class. Several region members have attended the road events as spectators and crew members.

BARBER MOTOR SPORTS PARK

The new road course in

Birmingham in open. Several MS Region members made the trip to view the inaugural Trans Am race at the Park. All agreed the facility is truly world class..

DRIVER EDUCATION

No Problem Raceway is a hit among members with its Driver's Education events. Several members make the trip to flog their cars around the road course under the supervision of instructors. Similar events are also held at Memphis Motorsports Park and in Birmingham at Barber Motorsports Park.

<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	<i>6/30/2003</i>	
Beginning Balance		\$ 2935.86
Income		1185.00
Solo II	927.50	
Dues	257.50	
Expenses		662.34
Lights and Misc	372.14	
Sanct. Fees and Insurance	290.00	
Ending Balance		\$ 3458.52

GRENADA AUTOCROSS SCHOOL and EVENT

by Don Johnson

Saturday, April 26th, was an Autocross school for thirty lucky students at a concrete ex-military airfield in Grenada, MS. The teacher was none other than Mississippi native and 11-time national champion John Thomas! Talk about quality training! We started with a two-hour classroom session, with John and two of our senior members talking theory and strategy. We then went out and started driving. We had three small courses set up, with each one covering different features of a typical autocross course. John Thomas, Jim Bishop (our R.E) and Ricky Ricks split the class of 30 into groups of ten. We rotated through the courses, taking turns driving, riding, observing and critiquing each other. Some lucky ones even had John drive them around his course in their own cars! Saturday night included a great meal and full story-telling session at Jake & Rips Restaurant and Pub in Grenada.

Sunday was a beautiful day for autocross with full sunshine and temps around 80F. The three smaller courses from Saturday were incorporated with some new sections to form a fabulous autocross course. The recycled sections were run backwards from Saturday to make it more interesting of course! We were happy to see quite a few Novices at the event, along with a few 'crossers who'd been missing recently. We had 56 drivers, including 24 novices. Everyone got 6 runs in well-run event that saw over 350 runs in 4 hours! The Open Class winner and FTD driver (no surprise!) was John Thomas in Chris Cornett's Street Prepared BMW 325is. John was followed closely by Lance Coley in an STS Nissan 240SX and Richard Holden in a Prepared Datsun 280Z. Street Tire Class was Don Johnson (HS Ford Focus), John Smith (SS Viper!) and Grant Green (BS Honda S2000). The big surprise was Novice Class winner (and novice for the last time!) Teddy Gibson in his GS BMW 318ti with a time that would have won Street Tire Class or taken 5th in Open Class. Jeff Walin in an HS Protege and Nick Conklin in a DSP Sentra Spec-V battled it out for 2nd and 3rd in Novice. Holly Thomas took the honors in Ladies Class in a BMW 325is.

The weekend was a great success, with the Thomas's going the extra mile to help their old friends in Mississippi (John's job recently moved them to central Florida). Special thanks are also due to John Green for facilitating our club's return to Grenada, to all the MSSCCA club members that put the weekend together, to the Timing & Scoring team of Cheryl Ricks and Kim Shumaker, and to all the participants/volunteers who made the weekend a success!

*The Grid gets set
to start runs as
the temperature
heats up on the
tarmac at
Grenada Airport!*



Columbus Air Force Base hosts a fast event!

By David Shumaker

Joel Wahlsten should receive the Mississippi Region Medal of Honor, or at least free autocross entries for the next year. The site at Columbus is fantastic. There are acres and acres of grippy concrete, and Joel ordered up beautiful weather just for us! Yes, we had to jump through a few more hoops to get on site, but the effort was well worth it. Be sure to tell Joel thanks for his efforts.

The course started with a quick right-left kink, into a ninety-degree right-hand turn, leading up to a very fast slalom. By the end of the slalom I was on the rev-limiter in the Miata. (This is where I thought for sure that someone was going to get shot. The Military Police were waiting, guns loaded, for an errant car to careen towards a few \$ billion worth of aircraft. Fortunately, there were no fireworks.) Following the slalom was a 180-degree, multi-apex, left-hand sweeper that opened up for a full throttle charge up to the box. Unless your car had an eight or nine thousand rpm redline, third gear was required in the "straight" section. The box was not the normal, "My-gosh-I've-got-to-go-to-first-gear!" Jim Bishop special. Cones were spread out nicely so a quick downshift to second was all that was needed. Just past the box was a fairly tight right-hander that quickly turned into another multi-apex, left-handed sweeper. This, the final major left turn, was probably about a 240-degree turn. The finish was a very tight (first gear), right-hand turn followed by a quick little kink while hard on the gas then shut her down. (At least, eh-hem, you were SUPPOSED to shut it down...) The course was long, but very fast. Fun, fun, fun!

The largest class for the weekend was the Novice Class with a record twenty-six entrants! Greg Altorfer took top honors in his WRX with Charlie Ohliger placing second. Johann Gomez put the power down in his Scooby to finish third and David Mazzara took fourth. The Novice group did a good job of handling the faster-than-normal course. A notable entrant into the Novice class was one "Officer of the Law". Yup, the aforementioned MP's sent over a base hot-shoe to give the autocross a try. With lights a blaze and a blip of the siren, Mr. Lawman squalled around the course (in a basically stock Impala) to the delight of the whole assembly! I hope none of you met him personally while exiting the premises...

In Open Tire, the most feared car and driver of the event had to be Joe Golden, with his Hoosier shod Corvette Z06. Joe ripped off a 29.559 second (PAX time) pass to leave the rest of us crying for mother! Lance Coley was the closest to Joe in Open Tire with a 31.134. Somehow, I managed a 31.245 for third place. Any pride that Lance and I might have had in our runs was soon crushed by a couple of guys in Street Tire.

Daniel Mahon turned in an incredible 30.191 to take the Street Tire class win. Second place went to Teddy Gibson who peddled his BMW 318ti to a 30.306. Further back, the family feud continues to heat up as Laura Johnson put the hurtin' on hubby Don to take third place honors in the family Focus. (For all the results, check out Mississippi Region's fantastic web site at www.msscca.org.)

Once the dust had settled on our four timed runs, there was way too much time to call it a day. To the delight of local tire dealers, all entrants were given three "time improvement" runs that did not count toward the final results. Most everyone found another tenth or so, and all had a great time. These extra runs would not have been possible without the clockwork precision ... (See *CAFB*, page 4)

***Class winners pose
with their trophies in
front of the Control
Tower at Columbus Air
Force Base***



Mississippi Region # 73
 Sports Car Club of America
 751 Avignon, Suite F
 Ridgeland, MS 39157

Phone: 601-605-9740
 Fax: 601-605-9780
 Email: tgibson2@jam.rr.com

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 authors who have submitted articles.
 The editor reserves the right to edit all
 material for clarity and space.

CAFB Continued...

of the "Trailer Queens". Cheryl, Kim, and Emily
 deserve a hearty thank you!

Again, many thanks to Joel Wahlsten,
 Jim Bishop, and Skip Brunson for working so
 hard to make the Columbus event a reality.
 Everyone pitched in and helped out once on
 site, which made for a very enjoyable day. If
 the rumors are true, we WILL be back!

CLUB BIG WHEELS

<i>Regional Executive</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Membership Chair</i>
Jim Bishop jimb@sun-pine.com	Ricky Ricks ricksfam1@juno.com	Skip Brunson georgebpainter@ aol.com
<i>SkidMarks Editor</i>	<i>Competition Rep</i>	<i>Webmaster</i>
Teddy Gibson tgibson2@jam.rr.com	Festus Simkins Fsimkins@msdh. state.ms.us	Brian Berryhill solo2probegt@ cableone.net

Minute by Minute

Minutes from July 12th

After the meeting was called to order, the June minutes were read and approved. Skip Brunson has been in contact with the National office about hosting a National Tour and/or Pro-Solo event at Columbus AFB in 2004. Don Johnson reported he, wife Laura and Teddy Gibson are working on PR and a newsletter. Trey Walker showed the layout for club business cards and they were approved. Bill Bissell who promotes the car shows at the fairgrounds sent word that everybody had a good time. Bill reminded the club of the January Race Car Extravaganza at the Fairgrounds. The club will have its January 2004 event to coincide with that weekend. The Tri-State Challenge is coming up fast. Confirmed dates are: Ark Region on Oct. 11-12, MS. Region at Grenada on Nov. 8-9 with Mid-South region TBA. The next Columbus AFB event is set for Sept. 20. The Comfort Inn will serve as event central for the CAFB event.