



DER PORSCHE BRIEF



NORTH FLORIDA REGION

PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

REGION HOLIDAY PARTY

December 15, 2007, was a dark and stormy night, but for the folks gathered at the University Club at Doak Campbell Stadium for the Region Christmas Party, it was a great evening of good food, drink, camaraderie, Porsche talk, warm friendships and great door prizes. See the picture below.

Everyone had a great time and everyone went home with a door prize. Thanks to Don Boggs for again putting together a great evening for us, and to Mindy and Barry Waters for arranging all the door prizes. Also thanks to everyone who attended on a night when very severe weather hit the Tallahassee Area.



Attendees at Region Holiday Party

REPORT ON THE BUCANEER REGION EVENT AT JEKYLL ISLAND

Tom and Evelyn Vlasak

Evelyn and I along with Tallahassee vintage racer Randy Cook and his wife Laura attended the Buccaneer Region annual Social, Business Meeting, Holiday Banquet and Awards Ceremony, and Autocross at Jekyll Island over the three day weekend of December 14 -16. Jekyll Island is a state park. The island has residences along with a very nice RV park, general aviation air strip, marina, and a preserved historic area. The beach front motels are very reasonably priced off season.

We arrived on Friday afternoon after a stop in Jacksonville to pick up some racing parts for the Mustang project and drop off Christmas presents to some of our long time friends. It was a beautiful warm afternoon and after checking in to the Beach Resort went for a long walk on the beach. The sea shell collecting was not good, but quite a few horseshoe crabs were dead on the beach. The beach sand was eroded from a storm several weeks ago and the water was too cold to try swimming. A super size auto transport ship was coming in to the port at Brunswick, they are huge and can carry thousands of cars.

Friday evening, the region hosted a hospitality room with food and drink. It was a time to visit with many of the region members that we have known for many years with out the distraction of a race weekend.

Saturday morning and half of the afternoon was a meeting of the board of the Buccaneer Region. Board elections were also held. After the meeting Evelyn and I went out to visit in Brunswick and see a recently completed Cobra replicar, Viper and restored Indian motorcycle, built from parts obtained over the internet. After that we went shopping in the Jekyll Island historical village center. There are many arts and craft shops, bookstore and other places to drop a dime.

Saturday evening was the dress-up Holiday Dinner. There were two serving stations, one with a Southern Traditional fare and the other with Tex-Mex. It was all you could eat and we tried generous portions of both buffets. Desert was hot

peach cobbler and pecan pie. The region awards were presented for workers and competitors, and door prizes enough for every one to come away with something or two.

Randy Cook received the Vintage Driver of the Year award and **I received the National Driver of the Year award.** (Bold added by editor-**Congratulations Tom.**)

During the night after the dinner, a cold front came through with rain showers (remember Tallahassee had tornado warning that evening) and Sunday morning dawned cold and wet. The autocross was canceled, which was a shame because the event was to be held on the large parking area of the Jekyll Island Civic Center.

You may wonder why I am a member of Buccaneer Region, living in Tallahassee. Buccaneer is a racing region that owns a track and the goals and objectives of the region mesh well with our goals. An SCCA member can join any region, Buccaneer is close enough to be available for their social events, and welcomes members that would like to help work races.

NEW RACING SEASON GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This year we are starting out our racing season with a double national at Homestead Motor Speedway on January 10 through 13. After that Charlie Stratton is going to the SCCA Buccaneer Region's double driver's school at the end of January, where I will be an Instructor, and crew chief for his car.

After these two events we plan to run the Porsche GT2 car in four or five more National races to try to qualify for a return trip to the Runoffs in Topeka next fall. Along with the National schedule, we are planning to take the Formula Vee Lynx to the 45th reunion of FV at Roebing Road in April and hope to have the Shelby GT 350R clone Mustang ready to run a couple of HSR events in the fall. Other than that, intersperse a little fishing, camping and traveling and it should be a busy year.

A Gift Worth Waiting For – My PSDS Experience – Part 1

By Mindy Waters

Last year while my husband Barry was attending a Panoz Advanced Drivers School at Road Atlanta I mentioned my desire to drive a Porsche on an actual race course. Due to being a passenger numerous times at Road Atlanta and having a strong affection for the track, I began looking on the internet for touring sessions at HSR or Walter Mitty type events. In order to keep the costs down, I thought I'd drive my 944. Barry caught on to what I was doing and said that wasn't the appropriate route so I quietly acquiesced. I didn't realize it at the time, but I'd planted a seed in Barry's mind which he'd stowed away for the future.

For Christmas 2006, Barry gave me a gift certificate for what was then called the Porsche Driving Experience. The course has recently been renamed the Porsche Sport Driving School and will hereafter be referred to as PSDS within this article. When I received the gift, I sat there looking at it thinking, "I can't do that! Something bad will happen, I'll wreck a car or something." When Barry attended the course in 2002 it was held at Road Atlanta and the course has now been moved to Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama. We both were aware of the location change, but couldn't quite understand why Porsche would relocate the course to Birmingham; we were soon to find out why.

One night in January 2007, we had a planning session to arrange our racing endeavors for the year. We decided not to run the Panoz series race at the 12 Hours of Sebring, but instead run the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta in October. Luckily there was a PSDS class right after the Petite, so we decided that was the one. We then proceeded to book what became known as our "10-day Racing Extravaganza"! Friends and co-workers could not understand how I could wait to enjoy my Christmas present until October, but maybe the patience that comes with age is a virtue (combined with a bit of fear and trepidation)!



Since the Petit Le Mans story was covered in a prior article by Barry, I won't go into any details, except to say, that we had a blast (refer to the last issue of Der Porsche Brief if you missed it). On the Monday morning after the Petit we departed Road Atlanta for Birmingham, AL. It was a pretty uneventful trip except for us dodging thousands of NASCAR fans leaving Talladega. After hitting a great barbeque joint, which is a Birmingham tradition called the "Golden Rule", we settled into our room at a rather nice Holiday Inn Express which was fairly close to the track. The hotel of choice for PSDS is called the Ross Bridge Resort, a pretty pricey place, which in our opinion, is a bit far away from the track (more on Ross Bridge later).

After a good nights rest, in true Waters' style, Barry and I arrived at the track very early on Tuesday morning (this was an ongoing joke with Lisa Kay Golde, Program Manager for the Panoz Racing Series). As we entered the Barber facility, we observed that the grounds were laden with gardens, numerous sculptures, and stunning buildings. Our observations confirmed what we had been told by others who had been to Barber; this was different than any other racetrack we had visited. We had also been warned about the price various organizations and individuals have paid for the destruction of landscaping at the facility and those stories were not pretty! One of my friends actually presented me with a spade and trowel prior to leaving for the trip (just kidding)!

After driving around a bit we found a building, which had a Porsche plinth surrounded by numerous Porsche's in the front of it, and it became evident we were in the right place. Upon entering the building we were greeted by the instructors, (many of whom we already knew from Panoz, Porsche Driving Experience and Audi Driving Experience) and then completed the appropriate paperwork. Since Barry was a paid guest he would be permitted to attend the classroom training and ride with the instructor on the track at their discretion.

Our classmates began to arrive and after a light breakfast we assembled in the classroom where the course schedule, objectives, and rules were discussed. We were then briefed on driving principals for approximately an hour, during which the instructors presented the curriculum in a manner that was engaging, but got the point across effectively. We were then split into groups and went outside for picture-taking, after which, we were loaded into vans headed for the track.

Boy was I getting nervous!

After a van ride around the scenic track, we went to one of the off-track areas for our first exercise which consisted of some high speed lane change exercises in the Cayman S equipped with a manual transmission. I'd been waiting to drive this car for a long time and have a wish to own one someday, so the prospect of driving one was pretty intriguing. In the end, this was not the most fun or memorable exercise of the course and was more tedious than some of those to come. However, I did become aware of some bad habits I had regarding my downshifting techniques and, of course, knowing you have an issue is the first step to remedying it. The instructors were very patient and conveyed their instructions/recommendations in an effective manner.

Next we rotated with another group to the skid pad and then, it started raining! I was jokingly thinking, "Do we really have to do this (the skid pad was one of my biggest fears)? It is raining after all."

For the skid pad exercise we drove a 911 Carrera with a Tiptronic transmission. The skid pad is a very large, open asphalt area with a "course" marked with orange traffic cones; additionally the pad is saturated constantly with water coming from numerous sprinklers. On this course there were two centrally located circular areas marked by cones, as well as, a boxed area to stop the car in when finished. The instructor explained that the objective was to drive the car in a figure-8 around the two circular areas, steadily increasing our speed until the car lost control. This of course was in an effort for us to feel the car lose control and learn how to recover, then regain control of the car. For this exercise, the instructor rode in the car with the student coaching them, which ensured the student received the full effect of the exercise!

Before I knew it, it was my turn. Being trained for so long to stay in control meant that going out of control was difficult, but when I finally did, boy did I giggle (weehheeee). I didn't just do a 360, but at least a 540 (degree spin that is)! The exercise was great and it taught me exactly what I was supposed to learn. The concepts taught in this exercise are so important for street driving and I personally feel a lot more confident having done this in a controlled environment. I didn't know it the time, but I would be back on the skid pad again, during those times though I would be eagerly looking forward to it!

Next we headed for even more fun, the autocross course. The first run was with the instructor, we drove a Boxster S with a Tiptronic transmission and although the rain had subsided, it was a bit wet. My fear level had decreased immensely and I was really excited about this exercise; I love to autocross, especially the slalom! I took my turn with the instructor and had a blast; I was able to work on my trail-braking techniques, general car control and build quite a bit of speed to boot. Fun, fun, fun!

After finishing the autocross we loaded back into the vans, we were headed for the track, for the real thing, and yes, the apprehension level was back up again. It was raining again, harder than ever!

I was hoping that my preparation for the class was to pay off; attempting to gain some familiarity with the course, I had studied the track layout and films online numerous times. Barber is a very challenging course, dubbed the Augusta of race-tracks; it is one of the newest in the country. The track represents the state of the art in race circuit design and consists of 16 turns, over a 2.38 mile circuit with 80' of elevation changes (a literal rollercoaster). There are a variety of high- and low-speed corners as well, thus making it a great track for training. All in a manicured, landscaped, state of the art facility; Barber is definitely a world-class operation.

While on the track we drove the 911 Carrera with a manual transmission (Tiptronics are available as well for those who desire them). Three groups of four or five students were each led by an instructor car. The instructor car is equipped with a radio to transmit instructions to the student cars within its group, students must remain behind the instructor at all times and no passing is allowed, except during rotations on the front straight. Once we got on the track, things were a bit shaky at first and the pounding rain didn't help, I was praying I had some Hans Stuck in my German blood. As the instructor coached us over the radio, things began to settle down, including the rain and my nerves; too serious to be having fun yet though. Incidentally, Barry was able to ride with the instructor for many of the laps and got some great films that we will cherish for a lifetime. We broke for lunch around noon and headed to the lunch facility in vans. After eating we received more instruction and piled into the vans to return to class activities.

Things got better thereafter; we did more of the same exercises from the morning on the skid pad, lane change, and autocross. We then piled back into the vans and headed back to the track, I was super-excited about the prospect of getting out there again! As we continued to drive the track throughout the afternoon, our familiarity and general comfort level increased, as did speeds. For the remainder of the first day, we were kept in fourth gear while at speed and the instructors encouraged us not to worry about shifting, but to just learn the track. At the end of the day, we were brought back to the main facility and re-grouped in the classroom for a brief overview of the day, and were given a preview of the next day's events as well. Additionally, we were invited as guests of Porsche to have dinner at the Ross Bridge Resort.

Barry and I decided to go to Ross Bridge for the dinner, although in the end it was quite a hike. The Ross Bridge Resort is a Renaissance-style luxury hotel; it is a large, extremely elegant facility and is a sight to behold. The dinner was held in a banquet room and was presented with fine Porsche-style; it was a "sit-down" dinner consisting of multiple courses, fine wine (I personally limited this to one glass) and a wonderful dessert with coffee. Afterwards, we returned to our hotel and got a good night's sleep in preparation for what was in store the next day. I must have dreamed about the track the entire night (building that muscle memory) and awoke happily anticipating what lie in store for that day.

Join us in the next issue of Der Porsche Brief for the conclusion of this article describing Day 2 of the course (expect things to be kicked up a few notches)! There will also be further information regarding PSDS, the track and courses that are offered.

In Memoriam



Beverly B. Rasmussen

June 20, 1940—November 16, 2007

Long time North Florida Region Member and Former President of the Region. Co-founder and sponsor/host with her husband, Robert, and daughter, Kay, of the Squeals and Wheels Event.

Region Calendar—JAN/FEB/MAR 2008

January 2008

26-27—1:30 PM, Rolex 24 at Daytona International Speedway

February 2008

7th—6:30 PM, Social at Cuvee Beach and Wine Restaurant, 36120 Emerald Coast Highway, Destin, Florida. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at the Cuvee.

20th—6:30 PM, Social at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee. Socials are the third Wednesday of every month at Gill's.

March 2008

6th—6:30 PM, Social at Cuvee Beach and Wine Restaurant, 36120 Emerald Coast Highway, Destin, Florida. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at the Cuvee.

9th—Amelia Island Concours, Amelia Island, Florida, <http://www.ameliaconcours.org>

15th—Twelve Hours of Sebring, Sebring, Florida, <http://www.sebringraceway.com>

19th—6:30 PM, Social at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee. Socials are the third Wednesday of every month at Gill's.

Let's hear your preferences for the kind of events we should schedule for 2008..

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