

## They won

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parts, checked their tires, walked the course (it's different at each event) and offered advice to newer drivers.

Joel Lipperini carefully polished a bright blue and yellow 1972 Mazda RX-2 under the watchful eye of co-driver Nicole Cooper of Shavertown.

She began driving three years ago after Lipperini took her for a fun run at the end of an event.

"I was hooked," she said. "I bought the RX-2 and Joel rebuilt it. It's addicting."

Last year Nicole was the season champion of her class and earned an award for most improved driver.

She's been driving standard shift cars since she was 15 and has competed at events at Weatherly, Reading, Pocono Raceway and the Giant's Despair Hill Climb.

This weekend she took home a first in her class, with a time of 1:05.003.

Back Mountain rookie drivers Chris Jerrytone, driving an unmodified Volvo, and Dave Wojciechowski, behind the wheel of a modified white Mustang, apprehensively eyed the other cars navigating the course as they waited for their turns.

This was their first competition, which they had entered because they like to "drive hard but want to keep our records clean."

"Whoa," they said as the second car out, a maroon Mazda, missed the first turn and rammed the curb in front of the gym entrance, damaging part of its front suspension.

"I don't know about this," Jerrytone said. "This makes me a little nervous."

The only one in his class, Jerrytone finished his four runs with a respectable time of 1:16.334, after getting a DNF (Did Not Finish) on his first try.

"I'm going to keep on doing this," he said after the first lap. "It's definitely something to do again."

Wojciechowski and his Mustang, purchased so recently that he hadn't even had the time to change its number and decals, placed second in his class, with a best time of 1:10.169.

His first run had resulted in a DNF, but he wasn't disappointed. He had three more tries on the course.

"I survived it - that's good," he said. "Now I know the course, so I'll do better on my next runs."

The Mustang ironically sported a decal, which read, "This end up," with an arrow pointing toward its roof. Last year it had rolled over at a similar event at Watkins Glen, NY.

Both Wojciechowski and Jerrytone agreed that the best way to drive the course was by making as many smooth, gradual turns as possible. Every time you turn your wheels, it slows you down, they said.

Kristelle Kocher beat her father, Jean Pierre, driving a stock 1985 Pontiac Fiero, with a time of 1:07.112, to take first in her class, while Dad had to be content with a second-place time of 1:09.901.

"It went great," she grinned. "Want a ride?"

Harveys Lake resident Bil Corcoran, driving his 1983 Mazda RX-7 in C Street-Prepared (the car is street legal but has a special heavy-duty suspen-



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**FIRST COMPETITION** - Chris Jerrytone and Dave Wojciechowski, showing off Dave's mean Mustang, drove in their first SCCA skills event August 28 at the Dallas High School. "It's definitely something to do again," they agreed.

sion), also took home a first place, with a time of 1:03.651.

He was his club's class champion from 1985 until 1991, having accumulated the most points in his class.

While waiting for their next turn on the course, drivers and friends took turns manning five checkpoints to spot competitors' knocked-over cones, missed gates and course conditions.

After the competition came the fun part, the fun run, in which visitors pay \$1 and get to ride with one of the drivers, and competitors drive one another's cars or swap tall tales.

The SCCA plans to hold another skill event Sunday, September 18, with the Wyoming Valley Corvette Club at the Wyoming Valley Mall, behind Sears, starting at 9 a.m.

Volunteers and drivers are welcome. SCCA membership isn't required.

For more information on SCCA regional solo events and activities, contact club president David Estelle at 717-265-5184 or write him at RR 1 Box 54, Monroeton PA 18832.

## Reporter's notebook



Grace R. Dove

The best way to write about something is in the first person, and I'm usually crazy enough to try just about anything for a good story.

I really wanted to enter a car in last weekend's SCCA skills event at the Dallas High School. It sounded like fun, a chance to realize my teenage dream of becoming a competitive driver like my godfather. That pipe dream evaporated very quickly when I learned that my car wasn't allowed in the event.

It isn't discrimination. It didn't even have anything to do with the hot pink windshield wipers or Native American decals.

For safety reasons, four-wheel-drives may not compete because they're too high, which also excluded my husband's pickup truck.

Too bad I had gotten rid of my Rabbit 14 years ago. She would have been ideal, with her hopped-up carburetor and other barely street-legal modifications.

And the boss wouldn't let me enter a company car, so I was out of luck.

The next best thing was to hitch a ride with SCCA regional Solo II president Dave Estelle and #48, a bodacious black Celica sporting a sassy bright yellow skunk stripe on the hood, roof and trunk.

"Scared?" joked a couple of drivers as I signed the insurance waiver (my estate won't sue Dave or the SCCA if I'm killed), left my eyeglasses, notebook and camera on the judges' table and fastened my seat belt.

"Nah," I fired back. "I used to drive truck."

## My wild ride on the course

"This isn't anything like it," they said.

They were right. After donning a borrowed helmet - we're talking real designer stuff - at the starting gate, I braced myself with my legs and got a firm grip on the safety handle over the door.

That safety handle and I became inseparable for about the next two minutes.

The green light flashes and the Celica sweetly snarls into the first turn and straightaway, flashing past the football field and screeching into the second turn by the gym door.

Ulp! Hope this guy knows what he's doing. Even my mother doesn't drive like this.

Floor it through a wicked S-bend and across the pavement to the parking lot overlooking the middle school, where we do a complete loop, then on to the next parking lot.

As I lean into the turns, I momentarily worry about the car rolling over.

This is like being inside one of those high-speed chases on TV.

Where's the A-Team?

Swing into the visitors' parking area and slide through the slalom, tires howling in protest.

Slither through the S-bends into the football field parking lot and around a second smaller loop, made nastier by a couple more curves.

After this, most theme park rides will seem tame. That bottle of Advil that Dave keeps in the glove compartment must be for dessert.

Here comes the finish gate, much too fast.

SCREECH! The brakes work. I can breathe again. Thank you, Creator. I survived.

Cruising too tamely back to our parking spot, Dave asks me how I liked it.

"It was cool," I grin. "Do you have an extra car?"

The other drivers paid me what I thought was a great compliment. They said that I was one of the few people whom they had ever seen still able to smile after a ride with Dave.

Does anyone know where I can get a small car by the next meet?

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## Students

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them to improve their behavior so that they can return to regular classes in their home school districts.

"During the 1992-93 school year, a study identified approximately 180 students in Luzerne County who needed an alternative education class," O'Connor said. "Eleven districts have indicated that they're interested in the program."

Getting the school ready for the students has been a challenge.

With IU #18 picking up the tab, the entire building has been cleaned out. Usable furniture and other items have been moved to the two first floor classrooms, lavatories, the gym and an office/time out room which have been painted and equipped with baseboard heat.

Although the school board had discussed the alternative education program at the August 9 committee-of-the-whole meeting, it had decided to get an

*Difficult students will have a place of their own until they graduate, are expelled, or return to regular classes*

estimate of the cost of refurbishing the building before approving the program's move to the district.

When IU #18 offered to pay for building renovations, board members gave Wycallis permission to make "an advance decision" to open the building to the program.

The board will formally vote on accepting the alternative education program at its September 12 meeting, when a lease agreement and rent will also be worked out, Wycallis said.

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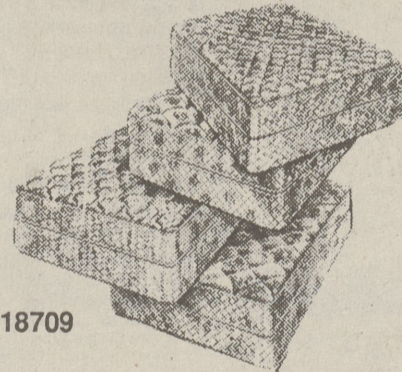
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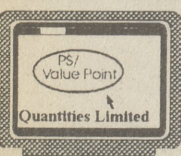


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