



The Checkpoint

Official Publication of the Arrowhead Sports Car Club

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Number 3

Skid Marks

---by Bill Taylor



RIP, BIR

I feel like I have just read another obit of someone I didn't know as well as I would have liked. This time the obit was for a place, not a person. The "obit" was an article written for *The Tonneau* by Randy Van de Loo, SCCA-LOL Regional Executive.

Without reprinting the entire article, the gist of it is "Roadracing (*sic*) in Minnesota. For LOL'ers, this is now a term from our past."

In short, safety has deteriorated so badly at CBIR that sanctioned SCCA road racing can no longer be held there. Safety ditches and berms have eroded away. The capper seems to be that there is now a convenience store/gas station placed between turns 8 and 9. A drainage pond for the store encroaches on the run-off area between the two turns.



Jackie Stewart, Carl Haas, Jerry Hansen on the pit wall at Donneybrook, 1971 (My butt has been on that wall.--ed.)

How did this come to be? LOL's three weekends are not spectator events. CBIR makes more revenue from admissions, concessions and camping fees for spectator events. The convenience store/gas station was added to the infield to capture money that has previously gone out the gate to other facilities.

The simple, but sad, truth is that CBIR is in business to make money. The four cardinal directions of basic economics are "If the income doesn't exceed the outgo, the upkeep will be your downfall." They apply to race facilities as well as movie theaters. In addition, sadly, nobody owes anybody a place to race.

Drag and motorcycle races, spectator events, provide a good, steady stream of revenue. While the deterioration of safety facilities can effect those events, they have less impact. It's simple physics. There is less impact on small "club" events, such as Porsche, BMW and Audi Club weekends. Will the deterioration continue and force the shut down of those events, as well? Only time will tell.

For that matter, condos and a golf course can generate more revenue. Tried getting a tee time at Cragun's lately? Checked the greens fees?

If SCCA road racing is to return to BIR, it will take a huge capital investment, mostly from SCCA to rebuild the safety structures. It will also require much larger revenues just to maintain the facilities once they are rebuilt. Then there must be sufficient revenue to provide a return for the owners the "Colonel." The only way that could happen is if SCCA rethinks its stance on making its race weekends spectator events.

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None this month.

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Submissions

Submissions to *The Checkpoint* may be typed, handwritten, composed on diskette or transmitted by e-mail. All submissions should be sent to the editor at the above address

Computer disks with text should be in an IBM compatible format. If material is submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message, notify the editor before submitting. No unknown e-mail attachments will be opened. Deadline for submission is the last Thursday of the month for the following month's issue.

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Another possibility would be to develop BIR as a "Motorhead's Country Club," a full facility devoted to motor enthusiasts. Virginia International Raceway, a smaller track, has been redeveloped this way. The owners rebuilt an old, long closed track. They built condos and motel-like facilities and added a swimming pool, tennis courts and a 9-hole golf course for the uninvolved spouses of the gear heads.



Peter Revson (of Scarab fame & Revlon fortune) at speed in a McLaren M8F. Donneybrooke 1971

A very wealthy private couple who had an interest in racing that matched their capital resources did the project at VIR. Virginia is also a much milder climate. There is a much longer (9-10 months instead of 5-6) racing "season." There are also many more people to provide the kind of fanatic enthusiast base that is needed. Somehow, I can not quite envision the cosmic convergence of zealotry and cash that would be necessary to duplicate that effort at Brainerd.

All of this has happened only recently and with a huge investment. Will it pay off for VIR's owners? It's too soon to tell. All of my assets are tied up in penury and other external obligations; otherwise, I would jump right in brandishing a checkbook.

Think Big, Raise Elephants!

OK, what might be done? The most probable answer is that nothing will be done. SCCA-LOL road racing will be moved to another location and life will go on, but with a longer drive.

The most likely future venue will be Black Hawk. It is relatively close by and track rental fees must be significantly less than Road America.

There is a possibility that a new track will be developed on the Range, but that is not certain. A drag strip and a short, dirt oval are more likely.

However, there is one other possibility. What about the abandoned US Steel Plant? It has a lot of paved roads, permanent buildings with paved floors and all the infrastructure (power, sewer, water, gas) needed for a major facility.

Restaurants, motels, ski hills and golf courses are all within a short distance. Oh, yeah, somebody can take the urchins to the local fish tank or the zoo when they tire of race watching.

Even better, it's already polluted. There would be no concern about spilled fuel, lubricants or anti-freeze. It's well known that if you set foot on that ground today, your skin will slough off, your eyes will fall out before you can go blind and you're going to die a horrible death. What's the concern about another few gallons of various POL substances? Or bad safety structures.

Perfect solution. Where's my wallet? Pass the hat!



LOL Tech Crew at Donneybrooke , 1971.

Keep an eye on these spaces in future issues. This is a perfect venue to run some reminiscences about "The Old Days" (as long as a year ago) at BIR.

NASCAR and the Seven Dwarfs

Back in March I queried Tim Winker about his thoughts on the new "NASCAR and the 7 Dwarfs," that is, the redone SPEED Channel (Speedvision under the care and keeping of Fox Networks.) He replied:

The "**Speed Week**" pre-Daytona 500 coverage was painful. Three hours a night of pre-event B.S., repeated the following day.

Now there are many NASCAR programs, all covering the same information:

- 1) **NASCAR Victory Lane** - One hour of rehashing a three hour race that had 15 minutes of action on the evening of the race.
- 2) **Inside Winston Cup Racing** - One hour of rehashing a three hour race that had 15 minutes of action the day after the race, but with three drivers who didn't have a clue of much that was going on beyond their team.
- 3) **NASCAR Today** - a half-hour program that covers the same information as the previous two and several others, but with a different host.
- 4) **Totally NASCAR** - Daily NASCAR highlights, just in case you missed the all other shows.
- 5) **NASCAR Tech** - an oxymoron
- 6) **NASCAR Classics** - Three hours of races run in the past. All of the boring non-action, as well as the few minutes of actual racing.
- 7) **Men Behind the Wrenches** - Crew chiefs and owners mostly
- 8) **NASCAR Past Champions** - These interviews were done before in a show called "Legends of Stock Car Racing"
- 9) **Winston Cup Racing** - "Each week Winston Cup Wednesday will offer a unique screen-within-a-screen viewing approach, breaking down the previous week's race, getting exclusive commentary from the drivers and crews in the middle of the action." Didn't we see this race at least once already? And all of the "exclusive commentary" is the same thing that has already been said on at least three other shows.

10) **Trackside** - 90 minutes of the upcoming race, once again covering all that has been said before in many other programs.

11) **Winston Cup 2001** - Last year's race at this week's venue in its entirety.

12) **Racing Across America** - Other NASCAR racing series such as Busch North Series, Featherlite Modified Series, Featherlite Southwest Series, Goody's Dash Series, Hills Bros. All Pro Series, Raybestos Brakes Northwest Series, RE/MAX Challenge Series and the NASCAR Winston West Series. Just in case you haven't had enough.

But Wait, There's More!!!

A) **Speed News** - The weekly summary of racing news, which must include a large portion of NASCAR.

B) **Qualifying and Happy Hour** - Live coverage, but more of the same crappy interviews that say nothing new.

C) **Car and Track** - A half-hour program that was part of the Speedvision schedule, often featuring coverage of one or more races from the 1970s.

All of these programs are repeated several times a week. In reality, most of the interviews can be summed up into a series of very brief shots with the same script:

DRIVER (or crew chief): Our [insert about a dozen sponsor names here] [Chevrolet/Dodge/Ford/ Pontiac] [is/is not] working pretty well here. The crew tried a new set-up and we're [pleased/not too happy] with the results. But I figure we should have a pretty good weekend.

(repeat script as often as necessary to fill time allotted by/coerced out of sponsor. -- ed.)

Somebody's on *Speed* (pun probably intended. -- ed.) if they think there are enough fans who will try to absorb all of this. It's as repetitive as a Southern Baptist Preacher on the evils of sin.

--Tim Winker

Matters of Record Minutes of Meetings

Thursday, 3-14-02

The Local
4767 W. Arrowhead Road
Hermantown, MN 55811

Board Meeting omitted

General Membership Meeting

Called to order at 8:15 PM

Roll Call: omitted

Members Present: Jon Anderson, Bill Taylor

Reports

Vice Pres.: Absent
Competition: No Report
Treasurer: No Report
Publicity: No Report
Checkpoint: April issue: 50 copies printed/\$8.60 to mail.

Old Business:

North Woods Drift Winter Rallye Results

<u>O/A</u>	<u>Cl</u>	<u>Driver/Co-Driver</u>	<u>Points</u>
1	1B	Phyllis Carlborn Scott Carlborn	44
2		2B Steve Kemp Rolf Strand	90
3	1C	Bill Taylor Tobin Goetz	103
4	2C	Joe Lipinski Brian Naughton	250
5	1D	Mark Crawford Trevor Nolte	486

New Business:

Land O' Lakes Region SCCA racing will be held at Black Hawk Farms instead of BIR

Minneapolis Auto Show: Randy & Jon went. There was no New Mini on display, only just a bad billboard. LOL booth was across the aisle from the CBIR booth, but there was no gunfire. Randy drooled on a new Lexus IS300. No street or race Viper present.

Tommy Archer's Auction: Bill went, but spent no money. It wasn't terribly exciting unless you wanted to stay to try to buy an out of date helmet or an old Dodge Daytona hood.

General LOL Dinner/Meeting will be April 19, 2002, 7:30 PM. A Pinewood Derby-style event will be held. ASCC will enter a car for \$10.00.

Adjourned: 9:15 PM

NOTICE

The LOL event at Blackhawk over Memorial Day weekend is currently shown on the CenDiv calendar as being May 25 - 26th.

In fact, this is (and always has been) a three day event, May 25 - 27th.

Talking to various people at the Open House last week, we found that there was some confusion and some people had assumed that this was only a two day event.

Rob Woolston
Assistant RE

**All Parts Falling Off This Car are of
the Finest English Workmanship.**

---Seen on a Triumph TR6 at the
1997 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix...