



# AT SPEED

## *Emerald Empire Sports Car Club*

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July 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2010

### 2010 EESCC Club Officers

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### Upcoming EESCC Events

**Monthly Meeting:** Aug 4th  
7:00pm the Sizzler  
Postal Way and Gateway, Springfield  
**2010 Series, #5 & 6** Aug 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>  
**90855 Roberts Rd Coburg OR**  
**Flyer Enclosed**

**NOTE: THE NEXT EVENT IS AT COBURG!!**

#### **Larison Rock Recap 2010**

Larison Rock is now in the history books, or at least the history cyberspace. Bonnie, will after a few days of final paperwork, get back to a normal life.

This year we again had the sacrificial Steck car, with Peggy winning the "coveted Stuff Occurs" trophy. King and Queen of the hill went to EESCC members, Nathan Korstad and Peggy Steck. Nathan had a real battle as Dave Kipperman came within a half second of grabbing the crown. Robert Steck got his first podium finish with third overall.

New Class Records went to Andrew Bacon in STU, Nathan Korstad in SPU, Lorin Mueller in TR, Kris Myers in SS, Peggy Steck in BSL, Robert Steck in

### **\*\*\* In this Issue \*\*\***

- Officers of EESCC
- Upcoming Events
- Larison Recap
- Book Review
- Lemons, Part 1 The Build
- Events 3 & 4 Results
- Larison Hillclimb Results
- Events 5 & 6 Flyer

BSP, Jen Ocker in BSPL and Dave Kipperman in HCP.

We got two new Sub Two Club members, Greg Ervin and Soren Rounds (finally). Rob Ocker, Kris Myers, and Aaron Shelton all came within a second of qualifying-see you next year.

As always the event was made possible by hundreds of hours of volunteer time. We love all of you that help. We really can't do it without you. See you July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011.

#### **"How to Autocross" – the newest book on solo racing**

*- a book review by Bruce Harmon*

Among the hard-to-find things in our sport are useful books on Autocrossing. Now, however, there's a new one available by Andy Howe, titled How to Autocross (\$24.95 and \$16.50 on Amazon). Since I know Andy, who is a fellow autocrosser in the Oregon Region SCCA Solo club, I bought the book as soon as I heard about it. What an excellent book! The 144-page magazine-format book, published by Car Tech of North Branch, MN, addresses the full spectrum of autocross (solo) racing and is the most up to date of any available. Published last year, it is a complete, well-illustrated and valuable reference for the novice as well as the experienced solo driver.

Every page has complete and detailed explanations of every aspect of the sport, fabulous photographs by

*Continued page 3*

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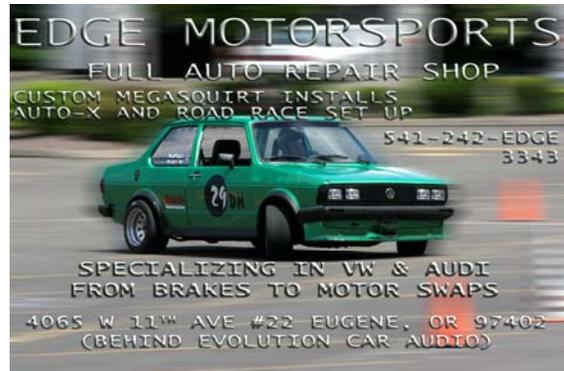
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Bryan Heitkotter, and informative captions. Coming from Andy's engineering mind (he's a civil engineer), the details get pretty technical but useful for those who want to go to that level. The cars pictured throughout the book include those of many of the nation's best solo racers.

As most of us know, autocross is a precision sport and can be very difficult. How to Autocross covers every aspect including car setup, tuning and modifying your car, stock and modified classes, driver schools, and driving techniques. In the driving sections he covers accelerating, braking, weight transfer, shifting, various corners, slaloms and how to find the best line through a course.

Andy's treatment of driving techniques fills 45 pages and after reading his explanations he validates my theory that winning in this sport is really 80% driver and 20% car, no matter what class one's car is in. His explanations are complete and very valuable for the novice. There are also many things the experienced driver can pick up or be reminded about.

### Lemons: Part 1, The Build

Bonnie Mueller

A few years ago my initial reaction when my son Lorin mentioned that he wanted to build a racing Caravan for Lemon's racing was maybe a little skeptical. Does the word "racing" and "Caravan" belong in the same sentence anyway? I soon found myself actually thinking of doing it also, and then last fall I found myself checking the want ads for a cheap (interpreted POS) Dodge Caravan or Plymouth Voyager. I found a lot of cheap vans with bad transmissions but they were all automatic 6 cylinder ones. We needed a five speed, 4 cylinder. I finally found the perfect van and it too had a bad transmission - but it was a five speed! It was not much to look at, kind of an ugly green with a dirty interior. The asking price was \$100 and was within my budget.

I picked it up at Newport in November and luckily it actually hadn't spent much of its life on the coast, but rather it was a central Oregon car originally. So it was mostly rust free, just lots and lots of dirt and pine needles packed into every opening. I talked Edge into letting me park it near their shop (not actually in front because they didn't want to claim it either) until Lorin could come home and help us with the tranny.

At Christmas time we put in a new (old) transmission that I had purchased at a local wrecking yard, and later for in January invited the other local drivers Ruben Cruz & Jen Ocker to come join Lorin & Jim & myself for a weekend of fun. *Continued page 4*

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(continued) We had weighed the vehicle in December and had a starting weight of 3246 lbs. We basically gutted the van down to a mere shell, got rid of the interiors of all the doors including the large slider one, and with hood pins we pinned the skins of the rear door and the slider back on. We replaced all windows but the front door ones with lexan for weight saving. We would remove the 2 front ones when we raced. I hauled 2 loads of interior metal, seats, and plastic pieces to the dump.

Now it was on to Edge to get a roll cage fabricated. Phill did a super job; probably the only Caravan roll cage he will ever build. While it was at Edge getting the cage Ruben continued to work on it. It was at this time that we really started to think about going all out with weight savings, so he removed what remained of the dash and substituted dryer hose for heat and defrost vents (we might encounter rain and fogging at some races). He fabricated a clever seat mount for our new racing seat, incorporating the old original seat mount. Off went the parking brake for a weight saving. This was mid February and the vehicle was still in Eugene and needed to get down to Lorin's house in California for the remaining build.

I towed the van down to California in mid February. By that time it weighed 2740# and that included the cage. Over the next 2 months I flew down to the Bay area (thank goodness for Allegiant cheap flights to Oakland) 4 more weekends to exclusively work on the van. Each weekend I went down alone because Jim was still busy with taxes. Don Curiel-Ruth was our fifth driver and lives in California also. He came over from Merced each weekend that I went down just to help us out also.

The first thing we did was yank the engine out and pull it apart entirely. We replaced the head gasket and decided that the first junkyard tranny was defective so in went another equally old one.

Using junkyard struts we replaced the fronts with ones from a Sundance, but used the stock springs and cut two coils off. That lowered the front perfectly. It seemed fairly stiff also. We lowered the rear by putting the axle on top of the leaf springs, but then it was too low so we had to build the springs back up 1 1/2". We attached a junkyard swaybar to the rear and put a bigger one up front to replace the old one. We cut a hole in the floor in the center back and relocated the battery from the front to below the floor in the back. We kept the stock shocks in the back, but because of the lowering had to cut holes in the floor and fabricated an attachment upright thru the floor. With all the loss of weight the shocks and springs worked amazing well!!

Lorin worked for hours rebuilding a custom wiring harness and only having the necessary wires. He fabricated a lighter custom exhaust system. Seems like some things we did were very easy, other things required hours and custom fabrication. Even trying to put in a new steering wheel that was not meant for an airbag car became hours.

We hit the junkyards several times and also I learned which were the best hardware and auto parts stores in town. Every step of the way as we removed parts we weighed them and we weighed everything that went in. The final tally: 2660 pounds total!!

The weekend before the race Lorin and a friend painted the van and we all decorated it! Finally, it was ready. I learned so much more than I have ever known about working on cars and I had an absolute blast each weekend, even though it was hard work. And you know what, when the race weekend came, it all was so worth it.