

The "evolution" of the EESCC sponsored Evolution High Performance Driving School

By Paula Loftin

It wasn't that long ago that an Evolution High Performance Driving School was just a gleam in my eye. I remember clearly the events that led to my desire to participate in one... it started with a discussion I had with Doug Drouet about the car I ended up buying, the Toyota 86. He encouraged me to buy it, saying I could drive it right off the showroom floor and onto an autocross course, and that's basically what I ended up doing! However, I bought it so late in the year that I had the chance to go to only one event, the final EESCC autocross at Willamette Pass. What a perfect first event! I had a blast, and was totally hooked, but I had the whole winter ahead of me with no driving events left to attend.

During that long winter, I learned about the Evolution Driving School, talked to folks who had attended one, and began to look for one to attend myself. I found only one event on the west coast that year, at Crow's Landing, but had already missed the closing date. It would have been an exceptionally long drive anyway, so I started trying to contact someone at Evolution to find out when they had a school scheduled for the Pacific Northwest... and got no response. I tried several times over the next year or two, and continued to have no success in making contact or finding an event. It was very disappointing. Then COVID came along and everything was on hold. When restrictions were lifted and we were finally looking at the possibility of having events again I tried once more to find an Evo school... with the same disappointing results as before.

I guess I should confess here that all this time, I was just looking for an opportunity for ME to attend a school... I hadn't thought of any other options. But with continued failure, I tried a different tack... instead of asking when and where Evo was going to be holding a school in the Pacific Northwest, I asked "*what it would take to HAVE a school in the Pacific Northwest*".... And BINGO! I got an immediate response! All we needed was a club to sponsor it, a date, and a venue. Well, I figured, how hard could that be?!?

I think the rest of the story is well known by everyone in EESCC. The club agreed to sponsor the event, and by an incredible stroke of good luck, we got a date at Sanderson Field in Shelton, Washington. The rest just fell into place. We had a well attended event in 2022, and a waiting list of folks who were interested in attending in 2023.

The 2022 school was primarily filled with EESCC members, and anyone else who got registered in time. This year, a few of us from EESCC will be attending again, plus the folks from the waiting list from last year, and then the rest who got registered in time.

I am grateful that the club is still willing to sponsor the event, and as I write this, we have already filled the 2023 school! Again, we also have a substantial number of people on a waiting list, so I

am beginning to think this could be an annual event for the foreseeable future. We will always reserve spots for club members, so if you have an interest, please let me know so I can keep you in mind for next year's school!

We have made one adjustment for this year's school, specifically that we will rent cones and timing equipment from a couple of clubs from the Shelton area, rather than haul up all of our equipment, to simplify the logistics. With luck, we will be able to continue in this manner in future years.

In a recent conversation with Mike Johnson of Evo, I learned that we will always have to cap our registration at 24 drivers due to time and space constraints associated with running on an airstrip. In the future, should we be able to find another venue with a wider chunk of pavement, we could certainly reconsider the location of the school. At this point though, Sanderson is a great venue, at a very reasonable price, albeit a bit of a drive for folks in our area.

In closing, I want to thank the club again for its unwavering support of this very special educational program. We are providing a valuable service that is apparently in high demand, and I plan to continue to advocate for it as long as we have the interest and support of Pacific Northwest drivers.