



AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE PENNSYLVANIA HILLCLIMB
ASSOCIATION

UP HILL

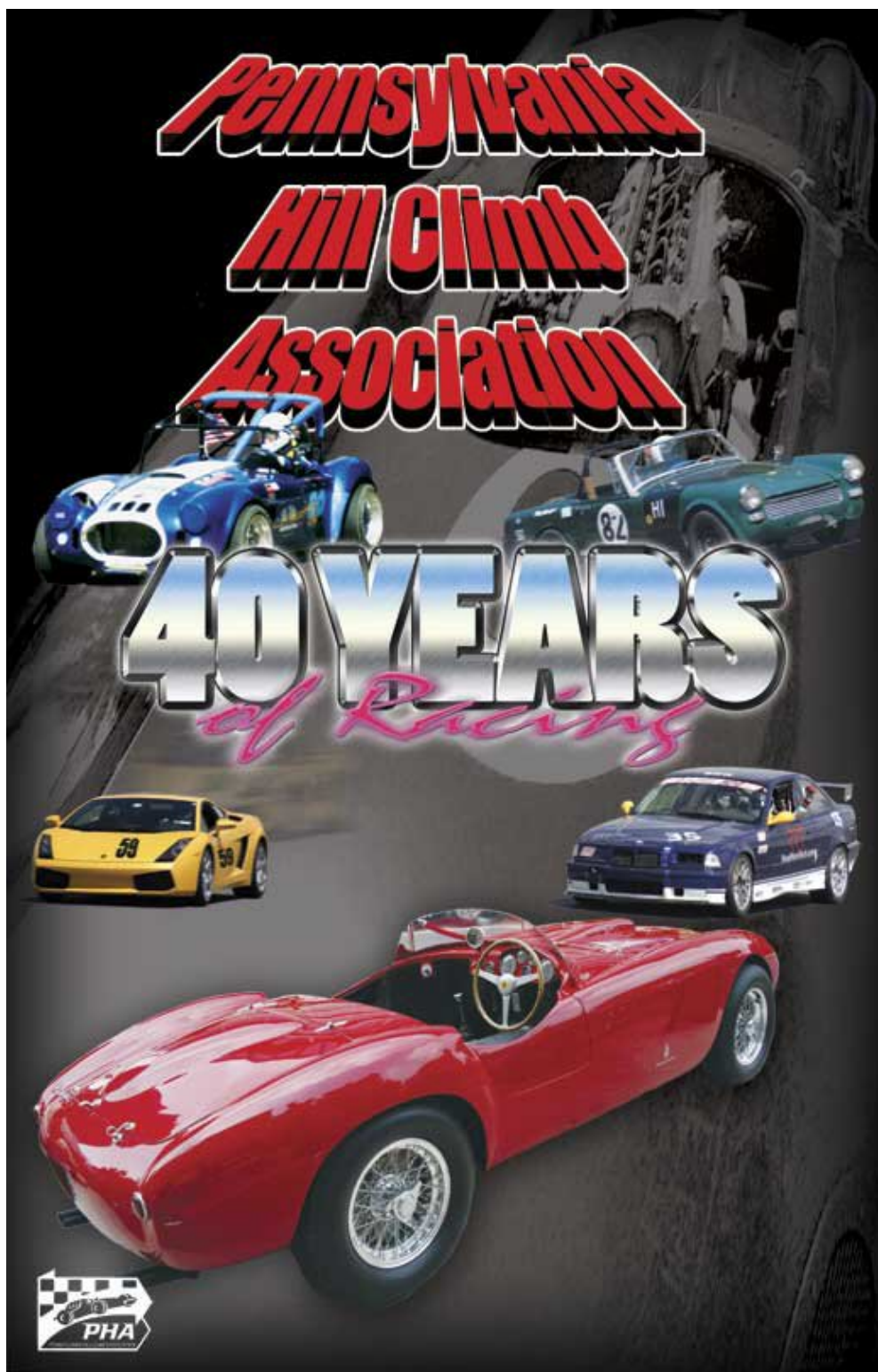
AND THE MID-ATLANTIC TIME TRIAL SERIES



April 2006

www.pahilclimb.org

Vol. 7 Iss. 1



**Next
PHA Meeting
April 8, 2006
12:00 PM
(NOON)
at
Gianottis
Country Manor
On the
Pricetown Rd
Across from the
Alsace Manor
Fire Company**

**2006 PHA
Schedule inside
(see inside)**

Celebrating the Giants Birthday: Jousting with the Giant

By John Stinsmen

The Wilkes-Barre Record in 1906 recorded the centennial celebration highlights including the opening day. *"All Day of May 10 there was a rousing time. In the morning there was an automobile Hill climb contest up the Wilkes-Barre Mt. beginning at Northampton Street".* A.G. Batchelder writing for the **"Automobile"** reported *"twas a rough rugged climb the motor craft had in the ascent of Wilkes-Barre Mt. with its hazardous Devil's Elbow and mocking prospect rock, but the auto unhesitatingly tackled the road which aggressively challenges all through the name of Giants Despair".*

One hundred years later on the bicentennial of Wilkes-Barre, the Giant is having his hundredth birthday bash and you are invited to the party.

The original Giant's Despair course was 5,700 ft and the winner of the first year's competition took 2 minutes and 11 seconds to cover the distance on unpaved road. The first one to make it to the top with the lowest elapsed time was H.N. Harding in a 45 hp. English Daimler. Other luminaries in the early years of the event included Ralph DePalma in a 200 hp Fiat and Gaston Chevrolet. There is an old photograph of Gaston after he rolled his Buick at the Devil's Elbow. It was said that Mr. Chevrolet exited the downed car, kicked it, and lit a cigarette and swearing fluently in French walked away from the wreck. The original course in 1906, as it is today, is steep. The first 100 feet presents a grade of 14 % until it reaches an acute 110-degree right hand turn called the Devil's Elbow. For the next 799 feet, the road gradient is another 14 % after which come the esses at 15 %. From the esses to the finish line Giant's boasts a grade of 20%. Giants is truly a power hill. Pikes Peak by comparison in only 13% grade at its steepest.



One of the best descriptions of racing up Giant's comes from Burt Levy's book *"The Last Open Road"*. *"Going up the hill for the first time, the taste of fear was like dirty pennies in my mouth. As I inched Cal's MG up to the line, I was glad my knees were hidden under the dashboard where nobody could see them shaking. I gritted my teeth, nodded ready to the starter and gave it everything I had. Boy oh boy, was it ever hectic! First you accelerate through the 1st and 2nd gear to a nasty right-left combination called the "*

Devils Elbow", followed by a steep grade, up through a tunnel of trees to a sweeping set of esses that some guys bragged they could take in third, followed by a steep charge to the finish line. I guess it sounds simple now, but that's not what it felt like at the time. Not Hardly! Trees and fence posts and telephone poles whipped past in a frothy blur on both sides, and every damn hump, twist, bend and crest in the road seemed to jump out at me like those spring loaded spooks at Palisades Amusement Park. I swear that was the longest one minute, thirty eight seconds I've ever experienced in my life".

Giants Despair has always drawn crowds. Crowds of 60,000 people were reported for the 1916 event. Despite its popularity, the World Wars and Depression took their tolls and the Giant slept for 35 years, until awakened by Sports Car of America enthusiast's from Philadelphia.

In 1951 the fledgling SCCA created a National Championship Series of racing events, which included Watkins Glen and Elkhart Lake road courses and Duryea and Giants Despair hill climbs. By 1951 the Giants course had been paved and shortened to one mile. Times were accordingly shortened both because of the distance and the machinery. In 1952 Briggs Cunningham in his CRK4 zoomed to the top of the hill in 1:02.03. In 1953 the field was dominated by Allards. These British Brutes with their outlandishly large engines dominated the competition. Ed Smith in the 1953 program writes, *"Suddenly, as if by magic, a hush fell over the assemblage-then, in the distance could be heard the rapidly approaching roar of a car which was obviously being driven at extreme speed. Veteran drivers seem to recognize the sound and*

as the big Allard flashed across the line, excited shouts exclaimed, "Del Lee has done it again". He won Giant's the second time with a 1.04.03. The seemingly impossible minute mile was smashed in 1956 by a tall lank man from Texas who was to become one of America's racing legends, Carroll Shelby. Shelby's 4.5 Grand Prix Ferrari brought the record down to 58.42.

The next milestone, the 50-second impossible mile was broken by hometown hero Oscar Koveleski driving a Can Am McLaren with a 44.07 seconds. Presently Hill climb drivers are working on beating the impossible one- half-minute mile.

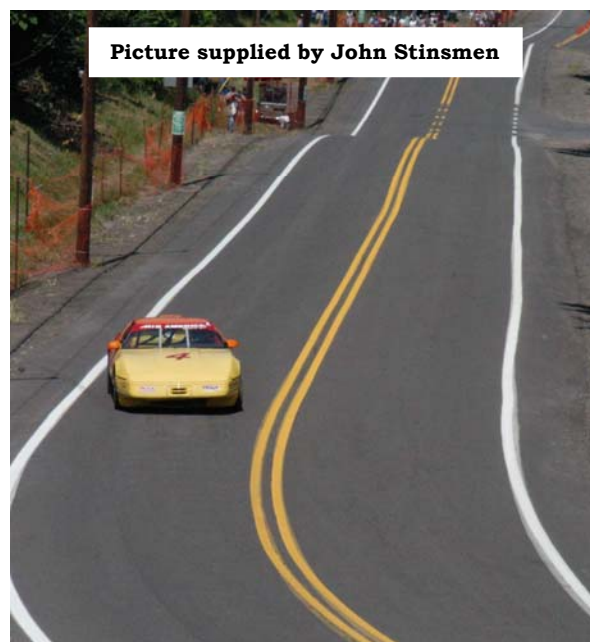
In 1906 the thriving city of Wilkes Barre based its economy on Anthracite coal. Consequently the suburb of Laurel Run the site of the Giants Despair was honey combed with deep shaft mines, which were both the economy's lifeline and its downfall. In 1915 a fire was started by a miner's lamp that had been left on the shoring timbers on Saturday and not discovered until Monday. The resultant mine fire spread throughout the tunnels and shafts the underpinned Laurel Run. Smoke from that fire, although under control can still be seen on parts of the hill climb today. Before its containment it had spread to six square miles of surrounding area undermining whole neighborhoods. It is still possible to walk up the road beside the start line and see the remnants of communities destroyed by this disaster.

In 1959 the Susquehanna River over flowed its banks and broke into the Knox mine and effectively both extinguished the fires and made what coal remained unreachable. The anthracite era had ended, an era that had nourished Wilkes-barre for over a century.

By the early sixties management of the Hill had passed from Northeast PA SCCA to various community organizations. Although NEPA still sanctioned the event, the community had taken over the organization. At the 1974 event a Can Am car had gone off course and hit a spectator who was sitting too near the finish line. The car hit and injured the spectator, then flipped and caught fire.

At the time my wife and I were competing in a Lola T 142, and Indianapolis Car with a 302 Traco Chevy engine. My wife had moved up to the start line after the McLaren's departure in anticipation of her run. Needless to say, she had to wait a considerable time before she got the green flag. I remember distinctly seeing the remains of the McLaren being towed to the pits. It looked like a toy plastic car that some one malicious youngster had set on fire. The result of the accident and the overall problems at the Hill climb Bob McIntyre, the president of Duryea Sports Car Club wrote, *"there is one large problem in the Hill climb circuit and that is Giants Despair. The Giant has a long history of being not only the worst run hill climb, the worst weekend imaginable since the 10th plague hit Egypt. Giants Despair is a Hill climb gone out of control. Witness the ice cubes and beer cans thrown by spectators; remember the game of chicken between drivers and local bikers in the pits: remember the drunken spectators packed four deep at the Devils Elbow and finally remember what happened to the McLaren."*

The Giant stumbled on for several more years until 1979 when politics, safety concerns and financial problems brought the event to a halt. Like Rip Van Winkle, The Giants slept until 1986 when a determining white knight named Dan Lipperini brought the Giant back to life. There have been several individuals who had accomplished the feat in years past but it can be truly said that without the very hard work of the Lipperini family the Giant would have died. Dan, Carol, Dan Jr. and Joel Lipperini resurrected the Giant and returned it to its former preeminent position. The obstacles would have seemed insurmountable to many. The borough of Laurel Run and NEPA region of SCCA were very reluctant to get involved with what had degenerated into a comedy of errors. They had both



been burned badly and didn't relish sticking their hands in the fire again. Dan solved the problem by assuming personal liability for the finances of the Giant. He donated money for a playground near the course to assure the Laurel Run's passive cooperation. He rented the NEPA equipment and refurbished it out of his own pocket. His sons Dan Jr. and Joel designed programs, t-shirts, set up web sites along with setting up and wiring the course. Carol did advertising registration and awards along with being a wife and working mother.

By 1989 the local JC's and NEPA took some of the burden from Dan's shoulders however publicity almost ceased and entries dropped from close to 150 entrants to 50. Financial obligations to the Fire Co and community weren't paid and again everyone turned to the Lipperini's for help. Dan and family were put back to work from 1991 to 2001 and Giant's was returned to it's position of prominence that it retains today.

The intense and difficult process of running the event took its toll on the family and by the new millennium, Jack Danko took over the running of Giants. Jack has doubled the pit area and camping area. He and his employees and family now run the event. Jack hopes to expand the area to include a park on the land devastated by the mine fire.

The 2006 Giants Despair Hillclimb will be held July 7th, 8th and 9th in Wilkes Barre, PA. If you would like to joust with the Giant or just watch others, information can be obtained from the following sources.

**For Lodging, tours and general information:
The Luzerne County Convention
and Tourist Bureau
Merle D. Mackin
56 Public Square
Wilkes Barre, PA 18701 1-888-905-2872**

**Scheduling and general race information:
Race Chairman
Jack Danko, D.G. Formula Motor sports
122 Parrish Road
Wilkes Barre, Pa 18701
570-823-1947**

PHA ANNUAL BANQUET

TO ALL PHA MEMBERS AND FELLOW ENTHUSIASTS:

Each year we celebrate the conclusion of a season with a gathering of competitors and fellow enthusiasts at our annual banquet.

Here we join together to honor our series champions and hall of fame inductees not only by the presentation of awards but also by sharing our recollections of the season with each other as we dine (and dance) through the evening.

Unfortunately, one of the realities that we have to face is the rapidly escalating cost of such an evening.

One way to attempt to offset these rising costs and to help us keep the cost of attending the banquet from increasing is to solicit new patrons. A \$25 contribution from a "patron" will help defray the costs. The more patrons we have, the less we have to "make up" overages from our treasury and/or charge for the banquet.

For his contribution of \$25, the patron's name or business or corporation or "team" will appear in the banquet program and the patron should be assured that we support those who support us.

For patron forms or additional information, contact any member of the PHA Banquet Committee.

**Joe Foering, Chair (610-944-9515)
Tom Knorr (610-863-4709) Gordon Wise (717-964-3044)
John Pitman (717-241-9758) Rich Rock (610-970-9330)**

PHA Team Performance Challenge Sponsorship Application



The PHA, Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association, has become the model for the new National Time Trial Series sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America. The PHA events will be scheduled in the Mid Atlantic states. At present, there are eight established events from West Virginia to the New York border. Some of them have been in existence for 100 years and most for the last 20 years. These events, unlike Road Races, are within ten miles of

Metropolitan areas and are free of charge to the public. Last season over 150,000 spectators attended the events and with the appropriate marketing, that number could be tripled.

One major award that will be announced and given out at each event will be the Team Performance award. Teams will consist of five members who can either be selected by PHA or the sponsor. The award will be based on participation, class finish, and hill records. This will give an equal chance for all teams to compete and win, regardless of what class they race in.

As a team sponsor you will receive the following:

- a. Registration for the team and members
- b. A 3' X 4' Banner with your team logo
- c. 30 Stickers 8 1/2" by 2 3/4" with your team logo to be displayed on the team cars.
- d. Your logo and team members listed on the PHA annual poster
- e. Team affiliation and sponsor announced as each team member competes
- f. Special mention of each team at the awards ceremony
- g. The introduction of the team at each awards ceremony if they place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.
- h. Web site coverage of the results of each event.
- i. Press releases for results of each event.

Because 2006 is the 1st year of the time trial series going national, it is projected that within the next several years, at least four more events will be added to the schedule. The initial fee for sponsorship this year will be \$1,500.00. Additional costs will be charged for designing the banners and stickers if applicable. Money gained from team sponsorship will be applied toward trophies, cash awards, and administrative costs.

The deadline to apply for team sponsorship is March 24, 2006.

John E. Stinsmen Sponsorship Chairman
3436 Lincoln Ave. Allentown Pa. 18103
610-432 7254 j3stinsmen@aol.com



2005 PHA Hillclimb Team winners OTHGPOYP

(Over The Hill Gang Plus One Young Pup)

From Left to right: John Stinsmen, John Pitman, Thor Pitman, Ted Klaus, Bob Oswald SR.

(Photo by Linda Young/Casual Photography)

2005 PHA ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET "AND SO IT ENDS..."

The Seventh Annual Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association Banquet was held on November 19th at the Holiday Inn in Fogelsville, PA.

The Banquet proved to be a suitable climax for a season that was the first under the new TIME TRIALS Program within the CLUB RACING Division of SCCA and the best season that PHA has had in recent history. Eight events (six Level 4 and two Level 3), each with more entries than in previous years, no serious weather delays, and no major incidents at any of the events resulted in a season to be remembered and reminisced over during the coming winter months.

Competitors, officials, and friends gathered to eat, drink, listen to pleasant music, and relive the past season before pausing to honor the Hall of Fame Inductees, the 2005 Series Class Champions, and the Team Champions.

The 2005 Hall of Fame Inductees are: BOB ALSPACH (dec'd), a true sportsman, competitor and enthusiast whose name is synonymous with Volvo; DON DEHART, a quiet man in a family of strong women who contributed much over the years to our sport; and JIM OSWALD, a relatively young man in years but a long-time first-class competitor and tireless worker.

The following drivers met the criteria (compete in more than half the events and have the most points in class) and are the Series Class Champions for 2005:

AS: Steve Tumolo, ITA: Glenn Hoffman, ITB: Joe Foering, ITC: John Champion
ITE: Gordon Wise, CSP: Greg Kasprzyk, SPECMIATA: Don Newcomer
GT3: Paul Behofist, GTL: Bob Oswald, Sr., EP: Dave Miller, FP: Steve Hirschtritt
GP: Dave Aaron, SM: John Dexheimer, SM2: Fabio Vlacci, RALLY: Mark Childs
F500: Bill Kotyk, FV: John Pitman, SOLOV: Bob Oswald, Jr., CF: Jack Danko
FF: Kurt Eikenburg, FC: Tim Royer, FA: Darryl Danko, FSV: Ted Klaus
CSR: John Stinsman, DSR: Joe Rausa, S1: John Hartnett, S2: Joe Hoover
S3: Joe Perlo, H1: Rich Rock, H2: Peter Stilwell, V1: Mary Anne Fieux
SSA: Alvey Ford, SSB: Gene Brown, SSC: Chris Mower

The Team Competition Winner for 2005 is the "OTHGPOYP" (Over The Hill Gang Plus One Young Pup) consisting of: Alvey Ford, Ted Klaus, Bob Oswald, Sr., Thor Pitman, John Stinsman and the Alt.-John Pitman. The team competition was close all season and it was the bonus points for competing in all the events that determined the winning team.

Thanks to the event sponsors, officials, competitors, workers and spectators for a GREAT season. We certainly gave the new TIME TRIALS Program a super inaugural season and next year promises to be even better!

See you in the Spring!

Joe Foering, #37

New PHA Hall of Fame member
Jim Oswald (right) with
PHA HOF Chairman Bill Weaver (left)



(picture by Linda Young/Casual Photography)

2006 SCCA TIME TRIALS SERIES

"ENIE, MENIE, MINIE, MO..."

With the 2006 season rapidly approaching, it is time to start considering which events to enter... In the best of all worlds we would simply compete in all of them but, then again, not all of us are fortunate enough to live in that world and we have to choose which events we will run.

2005 was the inaugural year for the TIME TRIALS Program as part of SCCA's CLUB RACING Division and talk about a successful first season! All eight of the series events had more entries than any recent prior event with an increase in the number of novice drivers boding well for the continued growth of the sport.

In 2006, like 2005, there are eight events: 6 Hillclimbs (Level 4), and 2 Track Trials (Level 3).

What follows is a brief description of each event from this driver's perspective; you will have to decide which ones are for you...

May 27-28...SPRING JEFFERSON TT

A Track Trials event held on the Jefferson Circuit at Summit Point Raceway. An excellent facility that affords you an opportunity to meet old friends and rivals and get your "ride" ready for the season.

June 10-11...SPRING WEATHERLY HC

The first Hillclimb of the series...the organizers and the townsfolk are welcoming, the "boathouse" parties are becoming legendary, and the hill is a real driver's hill. Try to make this one.

June 24-25...PAGODA HC

Tight turns and a high speed "straight" make this one-mile event a real challenge. Don't miss this hill...especially if you plan on running Duryea.

July 7-8-9...GIANTS DESPAIR HC

Celebrating its' 100th Anniversary this year, Giants is a must attend- even if you don't get to compete. A full field, constantly improving facilities, a superb event made even better this year, I intend to be there. July 29-30...ROSE VALLEY HC...2005 was this driver's first time at this event. Wow! Beautiful sylvan setting, wolves, bears, snakes, creek to swim in, friendly townsfolk, a challenging course...I don't know why I haven't competed here before! A bit of a drive to get there but worth it!

August 19-20...DURYEA HC

As I've said before, I'm prejudiced...2.3 miles of tight turns and high speed straights make Duryea a must! Register early!

September 2-3...FALL JEFFERSON TT

What a great place to spend Labor Day weekend! The course is run in the opposite direction than the Spring event. There are races on the Summit circuit so you get not only to drive but watch!

September 16-17...FALL WEATHERLY HC

The foliage is beautiful, the organizers just as friendly as in the Spring...a chance to correct that earlier mistake. Try not to miss this one.

With Class and Team Championships at stake, you really don't want to miss any event. See you at the races!

Joe Foering, #37



**New PHA Hall of Fame member
Don DeHart (left) with presenter
Marc Gerstein (right) and
PHA HOF Chairman Bill Weaver
(center)**

(picture by Linda Young/Casual Photography)

**Wife Pat Enzman-Alspach (center)
and son Paul Alspach (right) accept
the PHA Hall of Fame plaque for Bob
Alspach from PHA HOF Chairman
Bill Weaver**

(picture by Linda Young/Casual Photography)



2006 PHA/SCCA TIME TRIALS SERIES

- May 27-28...SPRING JEFFERSON Level 3 Time Trial, Jefferson Circuit, Summit Point Raceway
NEPA, Tim Royer 610-689-5440 timetrials@nepascca.org
- June 10-11...SPRING WEATHERLY Hillclimb (Level 4 Time Trial), Weatherly, PA
NEPA, Tim Royer 610-689-5440 timetrials@nepascca.org
- June 24-25...PAGODA Hillclimb (Level 4 Time Trial), Reading, PA
BMR, Rick Kase 610-987-9646 mgbgt13@ptd.net bmrevents@comcast.net
- July 7-8-9...GIANTS DESPAIR Hillclimb (Level 4 Time Trial), Wilkes-Barre, PA
NEPA, Tim Royer 610-689-5440 timetrials@nepascca.org
- July 29-30...ROSE VALLEY Hillclimb (Level 4 Time Trial), Trout Run, PA
SUSC, Matt Rowe, mattrowe@drexel.edu
- August 19-20...DURYEA Hillclimb (Level 4 Time Trial), Reading, PA
BMR, Rick Kase 610-987-9646 mgbgt13@ptd.net bmrevents@comcast.net
- Sept. 2-3...FALL JEFFERSON Level 3 Time Trial, Jefferson Circuit, Summit Point Raceway
BMR, Nelson Kase 610-944-8376 nelsonkase@comcast.net bmrevents@comcast.net
- September 16-17...FALL WEATHERLY Hillclimb (level 4 Time Trial), Weatherly, PA
NEPA, Tim Royer 610-689-5440 timetrials@nepascca.org

2006 PHA Team Championship Form

Team Name: _____

Captain _____ Class_____

Driver #2_____ Class_____

Driver #3_____ Class_____

Driver #4_____ Class_____

Driver #5_____ Class_____

Substitute_____ Class_____

Contact information:_____

Rules: \$50 per team with a minimum number of 3 teams to make up the championship. Teams will consist of 5 members plus one substitute is allowed per year with only one member per class. Teams must be submitted to the points keeper by the start of the first timed run of the second event (Spring Weatherly).

Scoring will be as follows.

2 pts. per event per team member, must have 1 run.

1 pt. for each car beaten in class.

2 pts. for breaking an existing class record.

1 pt. per event if, member completes one timed run in all events.

Please send or give completed form and money(Make checks out to Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association) to Rich Sweigart 1004 Broad St. Perkaise, PA 18944