

2025 PHA Banquet Program



Overall Award Winner — Michael S Robinson
Photo Credit Brian Murray



Lloyd Geib Award Winner — Craig Carpenter
Photo Credit Eric Santiago



Multi Miglia Award Winner — Grace Huntzinger
Photo Credit Tyler Powers





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Welcome to the 2025 PHA Banquet!

The Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association thanks all corner workers, event organizers, fire truck and ambulance crews, timing personnel, and all other volunteers. Our events would not be possible without you. For those of you that are able to attend tonight, we are very glad that you could make it!

In addition, we congratulate all of the PHA drivers. Those of you who are class and overall championship winners will be honored tonight during the award presentation. However, every driver who participated is to be congratulated, as you are part of an elite group who can call themselves "PHA Hillclimbers".

Schedule

Doors open at 6:00 PM

Cash Bar 6:00 PM – 10:30 PM

Hors D'oeuvres 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Buffet Dinner 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Tonight's Program

Slide Show by various PHA photographers (see page 7 for details)

Music by DJ Bad Matt

Door Prizes throughout the evening

Awards Presentation by Rich Rock, PHA President





2025 PHA Series Champions

2025 Overall Award

Position	Points	Name
1	766	Michael S Robinson
2	709	Craig Carpenter
3	621	Theodore Klaus

2025 Lloyd Geib Award

Position	Points	Name
1	370	Craig Carpenter
2	360	Jon Post
3	310	Bryan Dion

2025 Multi Miglia (Mileage) Award

Position	Miles Raced *	Name
1	129.65	Grace Huntzinger
2	104.7	Michael S Robinson
3	95.05	Emily Oswald

*Total miles offered: 140.65



2025 Class Champions

Class	Position	Driver
American Sedan (AS)	1	Brian Halecki
	2	Geoff Craig
B Spec (BSPEC)	1	David Arron
Improved Touring B (ITB)	1	Emily Oswald
	2	Joseph Delaney
F Production (FP)	1	Matthew Hoegg
	2	Joseph Whiteley
Grand Touring 3 (GT3)	1	Grace Huntzinger
Grand Touring Lite (GTL)	1	Eli Sharp
	2	Donald McLaughlin
	3	Vincent Wieczorek
INEX Spec (IS)	1	Todd Burkey
	2	Joe Humanik
Formula S (FS)	1	Theodore Klaus
	2	James Swift
	3	Dave Cutchins
Vintage 2 (V2)	1	Susan Salsburg
Vintage 3 (V3)	1	William Norton
Historic 4 (H4)	1	Michael White
Special 1 (S1)	1	Jon Post
	2	Jon Kurt Eikenberg
	3	George Bowland
Sport Lite (SL)	1	Crystal Hoegg
	2	Donald DeHart
Sport (S)	1	George Witman
	2	Michael Shea
	3	Adam Weaver



2025 Class Champions (continued)

Class	Position	Driver
Super Sport (SS)	1	Keith Gerhard
Sport Max (SX)	1	Bryan Dion
	2	Thomas Daggett
Sport Unlimited (SU)	1	Craig Carpenter
Super Modified (SM)	1	Aaron Bass
Outlaw (O)	1	Michael S Robinson
Street Modified RWD (SMR)	1	Nathaniel Hoopes

NOTE: To qualify for a PHA Championship Series Award, a driver must have competed in more than half of the events in the series. In 2025, there were 8 events in the series, and 5 events were required.



*Eli Sharp at Giants Despair HC 2025
Photo Credit: Eric Santiago*



2025 Hardcore Hillclimbers *

Craig Carpenter
Trevor Filipowicz
Jason Fraley
Matthew Hoegg
Nancy Lewis
Donald McLaughlin
Cory Michael
Emily Oswald
Michael S Robinson **
Rich Rock
James Swift
Ellen Whisler
Ursula Whisler
George Witman **

* A Hardcore Hillclimber is someone who worked and/or competed at all PHA Championship Series events in 2025

** **Double Hardcore Hillclimber:** worked and competed at all 2025 events



2026 PHA Schedule (Tentative)

Carlisle PHA Race Car Paddock	May 15-16 (Fri & Sat)
Jefferson Time Attack	May 23-24 (Memorial Day Weekend)
Spring Weatherly HC	Jun 6-7
Pagoda HC	Jun 20-21
Giants Despair HC	Jul 11-12
Duryea HC	Aug 15-16
Shenandoah Track Sprint	Sep 5-6 (Labor Day Weekend)
Fall Weatherly HC	Sep 19-20
Pocono Track Sprint	TBD, multiple dates?



At the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey

November 22—23, 2025

Welcome Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association! We are delighted to serve you for your annual awards banquet. Congratulations to the class winners, and a big thanks to the volunteers who make the events happen!



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2025 PHA Photographers

Thank you to all of the photographers who not only shared their photos to the PHA community, but generously allowed us to use them in this program, the banquet slideshow and other PHA promotional posts.

- Blaine Rampulla
- Brian Murray
- Bryner Raudibaugh
- Chris Gore
- Chris Matcho
- Daily Driving / Hashira DD — <https://hashirarpmframes.online/>
- Dean Bates — <https://www.dcblmedia.com>
- Don McLaughlin — <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcdallion/albums>
- Eric Santiago
- Grace Huntzinger
- Ian Mont
- Jessica Fessler
- Keith Kennedy
- Matt Yohn
- Mike Robinson
- Mike Vanino
- Rob Leone — <https://www.pitphoto.com/galleries/motorsports>
- Travis Trussel
- Trent Daggett
- Tyler Powers — <https://motorsport.dewitphotography.com>



Photo Credit: Bryner Raudibaugh



Photo Credit: Ian Mont



2025 Carlisle Import Performance Nationals

PHA Race Cars on Display

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bill Ascheman | 1952 MGTD |
| Mike Axarlis | 1979 VW Scirocco |
| Keith Gerhard | 1986 Pontiac Fiero GT |
| Grace Huntzinger | 1986 VW Scirocco 16V |
| Alan Leshar | 2004 Dodge Neon |
| Dan Malave | 1996 Star Formula Mazda |
| Don McLaughlin | 1983 Renault RS |
| Bill Norton | 1958 Berkley Renault Sports Racer |
| Bob Oswald Jr | 1970 VW Beetle |



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- Specialty areas — The Oasis, Kids at Carlisle, and Manufacturers Midway
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- Collector Car Auctions - 717-960-6400 or visit CarlisleAuctions.com

CARLISLE HOLIDAY SALE

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CARLISLE EVENTS 2026 EVENT SCHEDULE

AUTO MANIA ALLENTOWN PA FAIRGROUNDS	JAN. 16-18
SPRING CARLISLE CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	APRIL 22-26
CARLISLE AUCTIONS Spring Carlisle Collector Car Auction CARLISLE EXPO CENTER	APRIL 23-24
CARLISLE IMPORT & PERFORMANCE NATIONALS CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	MAY 15-16
CARLISLE FORD NATIONALS CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS <i>Early-Bird Shopping Thursday - Beat the crowds!</i>	JUNE 5-7
CARLISLE GM NATIONALS CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	JUNE 19-20
CARLISLE CHRYSLER NATIONALS CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS <i>Early-Bird Shopping Thursday - Beat the crowds!</i>	JULY 10-12
CARLISLE TRUCK NATIONALS CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	AUG. 7-9
CORVETTES AT CARLISLE CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	AUG. 27-29
FALL CARLISLE CARLISLE PA FAIRGROUNDS	SEPT. 30- OCT. 4
CARLISLE AUCTIONS Fall Carlisle Collector Car Auction CARLISLE EXPO CENTER	OCT. 1-2

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Season 2025 – From Optimism to Oh S#!T, WTF? to Finally Something that Works!

By Mike Thomas — Sport Lite #5T

My story begins late December 2024. Coming off my first full season with PHA, my excitement was high, motivation was high, and I had a garage full of Go-Fast parts waiting for their new home.

After pulling the tired old 1.6L Miata engine and a janky shifting gearbox, we were banging on all cylinders. We followed up with a fresh and perky rebuild and a matching Walter Motorsports gearbox. Taking our time and double checking our work, confirming we had good fuel pressure, solid compression numbers and spark, it was time to roll it over to confirm oil pressure.

Once we assured that it all checked out, we were good to fire. After a couple of turns, a burp and a cough or two, she came to life. As we patiently waited for her to get a little bit of temperature, we checked our connections once more, confirmed we were secure and leak free with only a single fitting that needed to be addressed.

As we built temp to get the thermostat to open, we adjusted the idle and watched anxiously until we would build the RPM's. Satisfied that we had a firm foundation, over the next couple of weeks we continued to put time on the new engine and continued to button up all our other racecar activities.

I was able to register for what would be my first event of the year, Spring Weatherly. As the day neared, I readied the car and loaded the weekend gear to shove off Thursday afternoon. After an uneventful drive north, I pulled in and had a relaxed evening with the early crew. As per usual, there was a campfire, adult beverages and some light shenanigans.

The following day is when optimism ended. Expecting a lazy Friday, it wasn't going to happen. I rolled the car out of the trailer with no indication as to what I was in for.

Just trying to get a little bit of heat in the engine and get the car tech inspected, it was acting up and just not running well at all. Checked all connections, looked at live diagnostics on the ECU, found loaded spark plugs and cleaning everything up it still had no power and would just barely idle.

I repeated the cycle numerous times trying to get it worked out until I threw in the towel for the weekend after I tried finding a new O2 sensor. After loads of support from Mike R, Matt H., Jimmy S. and Anthony L. my weekend was done. Time to spectate for the weekend and regroup for Pagoda.



Fast-forward a week. I replaced the O2 sensor and discovered the injector pulse was not firing. In hindsight, I chose the wrong path by trying to dual path by replacing like for like ECU's and scrambling to find a tuner. This begins the Oh S#!t part of my season.

Long story short, no Pagoda but got things together for Giants. Fresh dyno-tune and a new ECU box in I was certain I was good to go! Made the trip to the hill got everything in place for my first event of the year. Found that we had a comm port failure and could not connect to disable launch control on the ECU.



Giants 2025 — Photo Credit: Brian Murray

Now you are certainly questioning why a Miata runs launch control. I tried to run but couldn't get away from the line and it cost me tremendously. So here I sit with two SpeedyEFI boxes that basically shit the bed. And trying to work with a pair of Westcoast arrogant douche-nozzles that own the company, so I overnighted a box for them to diagnose.

I got a load of shit from these punk asses regarding my lack of expertise in cracking into these boxes as well as my ability to understand the English language. They presumed I had a master's in computer design and held the resident knowledge of printed circuit boards required to fix it.

I installed the second "fixed" box just prior to Duryea weekend. Everything seemed OK, lined up for run #1 and didn't even make it to turn 1. At this point I thought I was going to drive over a cliff but luckily I didn't have a running car that would support that option.

Fortunately, I had the foresight to put all the mandatory OE parts in the trailer as a fallback. Upon retrieving the OE parts, we cobbled together the old parts to get a working intake and ECU with tie wraps, wire and duct tape that would rival the artistry of Vice Grip Garage!



So, at this point I was able to line up at the bottom of Duryea Drive for attempt number 2. Not the greatest run out of the box but we made progress and picked up time on each subsequent run. The stock ECU was relearning its job and making micro adjustments along the way.

Thus ends the "WTF?" portion of this season!

Moving into the Shenandoah weekend, my plan was that I wasn't going to touch a damn thing! Fuel, tires and a finger crossed this was going to be the final test. We had a beautiful weekend with perfect temps and finally started to compete at a level I was expecting at Pagoda.

We managed the weekend very well, doing "normal" racecar stuff like dialing in tire pressure and pushing the car forward to wrap the weekend on a well fought finish securing 2nd place finish by 0.882 seconds. My last run I strapped in and felt at ease driving in deeper, smoothing out the corkscrew to gain and over 1 second from my best. With a surge of optimism, we executed the weekend very well.

At Pocono on Friday night, a small group did a course walk in the dark trying to put the best thoughts together for the following day. Sunrise over Long Pond greeted us with perfect temperatures and weather couldn't have been better!



Saturday morning started with a slick "recon" run that I wasn't uncomfortable with at all. Run 2 was the beginning of the push to see finally where the car topped out. I was able to hold the class lead through about lunchtime Saturday. All day was spent making up time and tweaking my lines and at this point, as all year, chasing Crystal to try and reclaim the top spot.

With steady improvement all day we took another course walk and created several changes for Sunday. Throwing everything I had at the Miata I was smoother in my lines



and found the difference between 100mph and 105mph and how much breaking I do not currently have.

Taking every opportunity to do additional runs as the number of cars dwindled, I took my 25th run to capture my best time of the weekend. I certainly could not have asked for any better support and coaching from Geoff, Mikey and Matt! 2025 is in the books and time to take a big breath and make all the winter adjustments for 2026.

Below is the list of my learnings for the past year.

1. It's just a hobby.
2. Simple is elegant
3. SpeedyEFI promotes a horrible business model!
4. Your PHA Family is awesome!
5. SpeedyEFI Customer/Tech Service sucks!
6. Be persistent in your efforts!
7. Sometimes going backwards IS moving forward
8. SpeedyEFI can bite me!
9. The PHA Family is always cheering you on!
10. Chris and Isaac (SpeedyEFI) are a pair of arrogant A-holes that aren't worth a pint of piss!



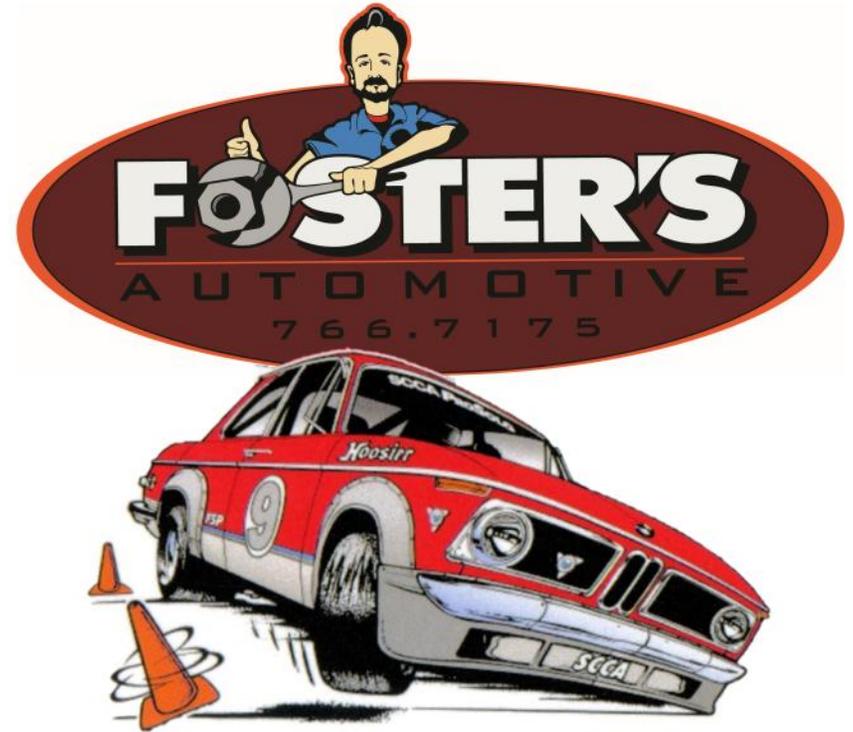
For Sale: 2 SpeedyEFI ECU boxes PNPNA Miata, extra ECU board, 2 TPS units, Cables, Speedy COP assembly. I will let all this stuff go for a case of warm beer and a frozen pizza!



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Thank you Workers!

Thanks also to my Wife, Mom,
and Eagle Auto for another safe year



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PHA Humor

By Todd Burkey

How can you tell if someone is a hillclimb racer?

They 'll tell you.

How do you know if a hillclimb racer wants to go fast?

They're breathing.

What do Olympic gold medalist diver Greg Louganis and hillclimb racer Ron Moreck have in common?

They both made psycho innovative backflips in competition. [Greg did his into an Olympic pool. Ron did his while driving a car at Summit Point.] Neither required medical attention but the brain compartments are questioned.

How do you know if a hillclimb racer wants to be fast but isn't fast?

They always say "It's just a test run".

I'm so slow that when they said "**Just send it**" I thought;

with the US Postal Service?

Should I go get a postage stamp?

Priority mail or ground?

My car is so slow I accelerate every time I fart; aerodynamics man.

My car is so slow that the only way it can get any faster is to get crushed and come back recycled as a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade float.

Knock knock. Who's there? Hillclimb racer. Hillclimb racer who?

WTF's a hillclimb racer?

Knock knock. Who's there? Pothole. Pothole who?

Pennsylvania chicane.

I'm so fast the squirrels had to build a walking bridge. Now they charge tolls.

Hillclimb racers and hillclimb porta potties are a perfect match. They're both full of crap but one actually smells better.

My hillclimb race budget is so low I need an underground shaft to reach it.

How do you spell hillclimb race?

M-O-N-E-Y

I tried to get a sponsorship deal. They said sorry for your loss and mailed me coupons for oil absorbent.



THANKS TO ALL PHA WORKERS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE PHA DRIVERS FOR A VERY GOOD 2025 SEASON!

2025 NEPA Region Drivers

James Apgar, Andrew Baylor, Charles Baylor, Sarah Baylor, **Todd Burkey (1st place IS)**, **Craig Carpenter (1st place SU, Lloyd Geib Overall Award)**, James Chernavage, Jason Chernavage, Dominic Cirelli, Joshua Company, Kenneth Company, Albert Corazza, Shane Corcoran, Darryl Danko, **Joseph Delaney (2nd place ITB)**, **Bryan Dion (1st place SX)**, Steven Espaillat, Bill Feist, Bob Feist, Chuck Fetterman, Billie Fink, Lorne Fritz, Michael Frohman, Jared Frye, Ryan Goble, Kyle Graham, Phil Grasso, Ed Grega, Alan Grula, **Brian Halecki (1st place AS)**, Patrick Harrison, Donald Hearst, Ryan Herbert, Kevin Horn, **Joe Humanik (2nd place IS)**, Michael Hunter, Dan Jones, Matthew Jones, Joseph Katarsky, Robert Katarsky, Michael Kester, Charles King, Chris King, Jacob Knapko, Raymond Kochin, Heather Long, Daniel Malave, Steve Marsh, Ron McCarty, Jody Miller, Kevin Miller, Doug Mirabelli, Ronald Moreck, Neil Morrissey, Dan Persing, Gary Polakoski Jr, Gary Polakoski Sr, David Purvis, Rory Quinn, Michael Radjavitch Jr, Adrienne Reed, Dennis Rings, Randy Ross, Jack Rowley, James Rowley, Paul Rowley, Frank Scavo III, Frank Scavo IV, Jeremy Sereyka, Jonah Serfass, Stephen Sincavage, Robert Siskovitch, Aaron Soffel, Jolene Tavaglione, Joseph Tavaglione, Brandon Usloski, David Vehoski, Mary Vitale-Sincavage, Gerald Woody



The Mighty Thor

By John Pitman

When Thor was 32 years old he suffered a stroke, went through a divorce and lost his employment. The stroke made his left arm useless and he had difficulties with his left leg. A disastrous year, but did he quit? No, not THOR.

Between then and 2025 he pressed on. He drove in PHA events, passed SCCA Drivers School and ran road races in his own FV.



Then he moved to Florida to help his mother. There he took up SCUBA Diving and occasionally road raced at Roebing Road. Not only did he qualify as a deep water diver, he became a master diver and did some instructing as he planned to set up programs for handicapped veterans.

What stopped him? A massive stroke in June 2025, which he never recovered from, passing peacefully on July 7, 2025. His cremated remains are now part of a reef where he loved to dive.

That is anything but quitting. As I look back at what he has done I can only say I never gave him credit for how smart he was, and his ability to overcome challenges. I will always remember him as the Mighty Thor, my son, my hero.

Additional Note from Grace Huntzinger:

Thor was one of the first to befriend me when I started hillclimbing in 2005. I actually met him the year before at an SJR autocross when he brought his Formula V. He took one look at my car (the silver Scirocco that I race to this day) and asked me when I was going to hillclimb it. His enthusiastic endorsement of the PHA Hillclimbs was one of the main reasons I joined the PHA.



There are so many similar stories from many PHA Drivers, as he welcomed and helped all alike. He was especially encouraging to female drivers, and not in a creepy or inappropriate way :-)! Thor is gone too soon, and I will miss him!

Congratulations to all PHA drivers, and thank you to all workers.

It was a great 2025 Season, and I'm looking forward to 2026!

John Pitman & Sons Racing Team

John, Pit Crew Linda, Eric and Thor (RIP)



John Pitman at Fall Weatherly 2014

Photo Credit Mike Vanino



www.phillyscca.com

Philadelphia Region SCCA
congratulates PHA
on a terrific 2025 season.

Congratulations to the drivers
and thank you to all the
workers and volunteers.

Best Wishes for 2026!

Philadelphia Region 2025 Drivers

**Aaron Bass (1st place SM), Kyle Brown, Francis Calhoon,
Nathaniel Hoopes (1st place SMR),
Grace Huntzinger (1st place GT3, Molt Miglia Award),
Kristen Israel, Eric Johnson, Chris Leasure, Anthony Lepera, Chris Mower,
Brian Serfass, Michael Shea (2nd place S), James Swift (2nd place FS)**



**Congratulations to PHA on another
great year!**



Donations to the SCCA Foundation support the
SCCA Archives, which is working to preserve
and make available for future generations the
history of Pennsylvania hillclimbing.
Contributions of historical materials welcome.

www.SCCAFoundation.org



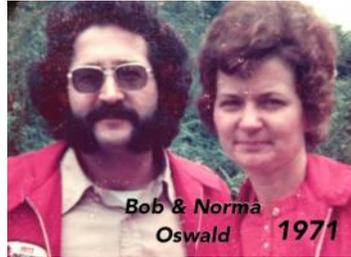
Bob Oswald Sr

By Grace Huntzinger



Bob Oswald Sr, passed away on Thu Dec 12, 2024. He was a long-time and legendary BMR and PHA member and a 2002 inductee into the PHA Hall of Fame. Bob was one of a kind and will be missed.

Bob started with PHA in the 1970s. From the beginning, he was a fast driver, winning his class at most events as well as the PHA Class Championship.



I am convinced that pretty much every person who met Bob (also known as Oz), can tell us a story of him helping them out. There are many stories from drivers who crashed or broke their cars on Saturday, and with Oz's help, had their car back in racing form in time to finish the event on Sunday.

One of my favorites is from George Bowland:

My story begins in 1987, when my son Todd and I entered the Duryea event. On Saturday, Todd missed his brake point at the right hander at Pagoda, and hit the one way sign in the island. Suspension and front frame damage would have ended the weekend, but along came OZ.

He had me bring the car to his shop, and he and Jim helped me repair all the damage by midnight that night. I ran the event Sunday, while Todd was too upset about his adventure Saturday to get back in the car. Jim awarded Todd the one way sign, which still is on display in his garage.

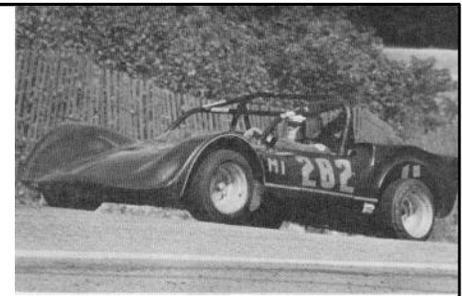
Amazing man with an amazing wife and four great kids. I believe that there are a whole gaggle of folks up there that are VW lovers and are holding a large welcoming party for him.

There are so many other similar stories, particular with VW owners. I personally met Oz right away when I started hillclimbing in 2005, and he always took the time to talk to me and offer suggestions. Of particular note was Spring Jefferson 2006 when the eye of a hurricane passed over the track Sat morning, and it was a complete washout.

I had planned to sit it out and wait until the weather cleared when Oz asked me: "What are you going to do with your rain tires, let them dry rot in your basement"? So I put on my rains, and I went out on the track and discovered how much fun it was to play in the rain. All these years later, if I even think about skipping a run just because it's raining, I can still hear him, and I go out anyway (and he is still right).



Bob ran a number of cars through the years, and I had a little fun going through the PHA Museum & Archives Facebook page to find this picture of his VW Kellison that he ran in Modified 1 back when he first started. He had his first championship in this car in 1975.



And then there are the cars that most of us are familiar with — his VW Karmann Ghia and his VW Beetle. I've lost track of how many championships he won in these cars, but I know he was always really fast.

Bob will be missed!



**The VW Scirocco Drivers of the PHA
would like to thank
the workers, organizers, and all other
volunteers who make our events possible!**



2025 PHA Season in Review

By Grace Huntzinger

With the 2025 PHA championship series now behind us, it's time for me to reflect on the many highlights of the season, or at least those that I have room for here.

From a personal perspective, I wasn't particularly fast, although I was faster than last year at every event, meeting my main goal. Even better, something flipped for me midway through Pagoda when I found myself trying to beat Don McLaughlin's times in the rain. I chased him for the rest of the events, trading times back and forth after nearly every run, and I finally caught him on the last run of the last event at Pocono. My car has a lot more time left in it, but I was still happy with my performance, and really enjoyed having someone to compete against. Enough about me...

As usual, our first event was the **Carlisle Import and Performance** show, and we had a great display of 9 cars. A list of the drivers and cars as well as more photos from the show can be found on pages 8 and 9.



Carlisle

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

The entire show was reorganized this year, and the PHA Race Car Paddock was in a new location — Building R — but it didn't slow down the traffic, and our display was very popular with show attendees. I chose this photo to feature the show as this kid saw me taking pictures and proudly photobombed it. He was really enthusiastic, as were his parents, and it was fun to talk to them.



Race Car Paddock at Carlisle
Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

Jefferson TA was the first event in the eight event PHA Championship series. This was the first event running the eight new "Solo and Time Trial Derived" classes that replaced the Solo classes, and they proved to be very popular. We had only 47 entries. The weather was perfect with temperatures in the 70's both days, and no



Mark Aubele

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

rain except for a brief shower or two Friday night. Mark Aubele ran a 70.506, taking FTD and setting a new Special 2 (S2) class record in his 2012 Wolf GB08. He beat his own record that he set in 2024 in the same car by almost 2.5 seconds, and is just over a second from the course record of 69.354 that has been held by Bob Gardner since 2015.



At **Spring Weatherly HC**, we had 83 entries. The weather was less than ideal, with heavy rain here and there, but the course did dry out at times, especially Sunday morning.

Justin Reed took FTD, running a 49.327 in his DFkitcar Goblin that he runs in Special 2 (S2).

With the exception of the new classes for 2025, there were no class records set at this event.



Justin Reed

Photo Credit: Brian Murray



Bryan Dion

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

But Bryan Dion went fast enough to finally break Matt Phillip's SMF record — Matt set the SMF record of 56.359 at the 2021 Fall Weatherly event in his 2000 Honda Civic. Bryan's car was moved to the new Sport Max (SM) class this year, but he ran a 56.267 in his VW GTI. Congratulations Bryan!

Pagoda HC was next, and we had 78 entries. While it was hot and humid, Saturday was dry, and there was no rain in the forecast for Sunday. We were all joking after Ron Moreck went home after Saturday's runs that he must have seen a forecast of rain somewhere in the country, giving us a guarantee of rain free remainder of the weekend. But Ron had the last laugh!

Sunday morning was dry, but the rain started around lunch time, turning into torrential downpours at one point. After 3 wet runs (and the beginning of me chasing Don's times), very few drivers were participating so the event was called.

Ron Moreck took FTD with his time from Saturday, running a 75.708 in his Norma M20.



Ron Moreck

Photo Credit: Eric Santiago

Our next event was **Giants Despair HC**, and we had 120 entries! The hill was paved about a year ago, and we were all hoping for fast times. But the weather forecast was dismal going into the weekend. Fortunately, it was mainly dry all weekend, with an occasional rain shower or two here and there, and it was not too unbearably hot and humid.



Ron Moreck

Photo Credit: Brian Murray

But who cares about the weather? Let me get to the actual and amazing hill news! **Ron Moreck took the Hill Record with a 37.692**, dropping almost a second on his last run. The previous Giants Despair Hill Record was set in 2014 by John Burke with a 38.024. **Congratulations Ron!**



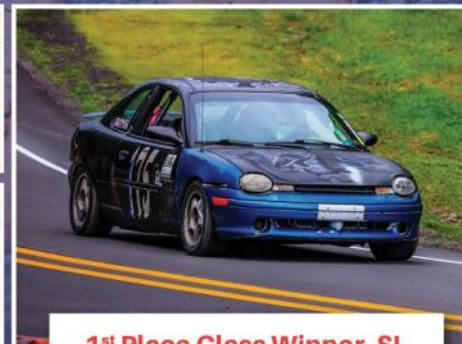
CONGRATULATIONS PHA

2025 CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES COMPETITORS!



SUSQUEHANNA REGION MEMBERS:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Joshua Bittle | Alan Leshar |
| Craig Bucher | Jake Lewis |
| Geoff Craig | Bryan McCrea |
| Thomas Daggett | Donald McLaughlin |
| Donald DeHart | Ian Mont |
| Jon Kurt Eikenberg | Justin Peachey |
| Jason Fraley | Zachary Platts |
| Bryan Fritzler | Tim Stein |
| Greg Hagan | Michael Thomas |
| Clair Harris | Joe Whiteley |
| Crystal Hoegg | Matt Williams |
| Matthew Hoegg | |



1st Place Class Winner, SL
Crystal Hoegg



1st Place Class Winner, FP
Matthew Hoegg

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| Dean Bates | Chris Matcho | Tyler Powers | Daily Driving |
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THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!
YOUR TIME AND SUPPORT IS SINCERELY APPRECIATED

2025 PHA Season in Review continued



Eli Sharp

Photo Credit: Eric Santiago

In addition to Ron's course record, 17 class records were set, and unfortunately, there is no space to talk about all of them here. But Eli Sharp's record stands out in GT Lite (GTL).

Eli ran a 53.558 in her 1965 Austin Mini Cooper S, taking the 20 year old record by .055 seconds from Bob Oswald Jr in his VW But. Congratulations Eli!

Duryea HC — event number 5 — was next, with 85 entries and 11 new class records. The weather forecast wasn't great, but fortunately we only had rain Fri night and then again around 4 AM on Sat. The course was a bit damp for first runs Sat, but dried up and we had good run conditions for the rest of the weekend.

Mike Robinson ran FTD, with a 110.101 in his 1999 Chevrolet Camaro that he runs in Outlaw (0). That is a really fast time for a door car, and only .101 seconds from the 110 elusive time. Congratulations Mike!



Mike Robinson

Photo Credit: Mike Vanino

This event had 15 drivers under 2 minutes! Of special note are Bryan Dion, who ran a 119.363 in his 2007 VW GTI, and Tim Lewis, who ran a 119.982 in his 2007 Honda Civic. Both cars run in Sport Max (SX).

Bryan and Tim are the 3rd and 4th drivers in FWD cars to run under 2 minutes (first was Matt Phillips, and second was Hunter Huffman). Congratulations to them both.



Bryan Dion

Photo Credit: Mike Vanino



Tim Lewis

Photo Credit: Mike Vanino

There was a fully restored 1906 Duryea Buggyaut on display Saturday, courtesy of the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. The car was built in Reading, PA, and had a 2 cylinder, 12 Horsepower air cooled engine. Pretty cool to see the history!

Charles Duryea used the hillclimb road to test drive his cars. Actually, it was his daughter Rhea who did 28



Duryea Buggyaut on Display

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger



most of the test driving, making her the first holder of the Duryea Hill record.

Also of note was the fact that the all three east coast hillclimb groups were represented at Duryea — NEHA and AHS in addition to PHA! The campfire Friday night was a lot of fun. I hope we will start seeing more of this at all of the events put on by all three groups.

But enough about Duryea, as there are still three more events to cover!

Next up was **Shenandoah TS**. We only had 56 entries, but thanks to the sponsors, BMR was able to make this event happen! Of all the track events we run, I personally find Shenandoah the most interesting, and I would hate to lose this event.



Sunrise at Shenandoah

Photo Credit: Ian Mont

The weather couldn't have been better, with temperatures in the upper 70s all weekend and no rain.

The battle for FTD was between Dan Foley in his 2008 Mitsubishi Evo X

that he runs in Sport Unlimited (SU), and Mike Robinson, in his 1999 Chevrolet Camaro that he runs in Outlaw (0). By the end of the day Saturday, Dan Foley was in the lead by .340 seconds. Mike was not able to catch him, and Dan took FTD with an 87.88.



Eli Sharp

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

Sixteen class records were set at Shenandoah. I wish I had room to mention all, but of special note, In GT Lite (GTL), Eli Sharp took the record by 2.473 seconds with a 103.667 in her 65 Mini Cooper S. She held the previous GTL record, set in 2023. She is on fire recently, setting course records at the last 2 events (Giants Despair and Duryea).

The seventh event in the PHA Championship series was **Fall Weatherly HC**. I was unable to make this event, but from all reports, the weather was once again perfect. It wasn't too hot during the day, and not too cold at night, although it was still perfect campfire weather.

Edward Smith took FTD, running a 50.838 in his 2014 Suzuki Cross Kart that he runs in Special 1 (S1).



Edward Smith

Photo Credit: Weatherly HC Assoc



Dan Foley

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger



Speaking of Special 1, there was a tight battle on Saturday, with Dermot Treanor taking the early lead, and then Leon Jordan. On Sunday morning, Jon Kurt Eikenberg took over top spot in S1 with a 51.312.

But then Edward Smith rolled in. He originally couldn't make the event but found a way to make it happen for Sunday only. Edward unloaded his car, and took FTD away from Kurt by .474 seconds. Who does that? 😊



Bryan Dion

Photo Credit: Don McLaughlin

Up for special mention is Sport Max (SX). This class, new to our series this year, is where the modified FWD cars run. The top two cars were in the 55's, which is a very respectable time for a FWD car. Bryan Dion was first in SX in his VW GTI with a 55.602. Ian Brown was only .062 seconds behind, with a 55.584 in his Mini Cooper S.



Ian Brown

Photo Credit: Don McLaughlin

Ian's car broke on his first run Saturday, but thanks from parts from fellow racer Aaron Bass, he had the car repaired by Sunday and was able to continue try catching Bryan. I love the way the PHA family helps each other!

Pocono TS was the eight and final event in our series. While the PHA has held events here in the past, it was long enough ago with who knows what course configurations to consider this a new event. We really lucked out with the weather, with the highs in the 70's both days. Everyone (and their cars) behaved themselves aside from an occasional mechanical issue, and we managed to offer 28 runs!

Without further ado, Ron Moreck took FTD in the car he borrowed from Bill Feist -- a Stohr F100-- running a 42.804, and 2.253 faster than anyone else.



Ron Moreck in Bill Feist's Car

Photo Credit: Daily Driving Hashira DD

Feedback from the event is positive, and I'm hoping we can return there next year for at least one event. Please don't quote me, but I hear 2 events are being considered for next season.

Congratulations to all of the class championship winners!

In addition to class championship awards, we have three overall awards — Overall, Lloyd Geib, and Multi Miglia (also known as Mileage — translated from Italian it means "Many Miles").

The **Overall Award** is based on overall finishing position. 100 points are awarded to the driver who finished first, 99 to the second, etc. This award is intended to honor drivers who are consistently fast regardless of what class their car falls into.

This year's Overall Award goes to Michael Robinson, who had a total of 766 points. Mike placed consistently in the top 10 overall at all events and had an FTD at Duryea.



Mike Robinson

Photo Credit: Eric Santiago

The **Lloyd Geib Award** is based on position in class and on how many participated in that class. 10 points are awarded for yourself, plus 10 more for each driver that you beat in class. This award is intended to showcase drivers who are winning against other similarly prepared cars.

Craig Carpenter is the Lloyd Geib Award winner, with a total of 370 points. Craig runs a 2016 Audi A3 in Sport Unlimited (SU). In an interesting note, Craig has exceeded the break-out times for all of the HC events this year, so he plans to be back next year in a different car with a full cage.



Craig Carpenter

Photo Credit: Brian Murray

While we only give an award to the first place winner, I need to mention that Jon Post narrowly missed tying for first place, ending up with 360 points. He only needed one more entry in S1 (that he was faster than) at Pocono.

The **Multi Miglia (Mileage) Award** goes to the driver who has driven the most miles in competition. This award is intended to honor drivers who will race under any condition.



Patrick

Photo Credit: Grace Huntzinger

Yours truly won this award! At every event I ran, I took all runs offered except for two I accidentally missed at Pocono.

But I was unable to attend Fall Weatherly — there are some things more important than racing, if you can believe it. 😊 Also, Patrick has fully recovered and is back to his regular shenanigans.



Grace Huntzinger

Photo Credit: Blaine Rampulla

It has been a fun and excellent season. I'm looking forward to 2026!

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Reading, Pa

THANK YOU
to all of the volunteers
who make these PHA
events possible.

Congratulations to the PHA
class and overall winners.

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John Stinsmen

By Grace Huntzinger

John Stinsmen passed away on Sunday, May 25, 2025. John has a long history hillclimbing with the PHA, starting in the 1960s.

He was inducted into the PHA Hall of Fame in 2009.

He had many different cars over the years, but most recently ran his 1994 Van Dieman, co-driving with his wife Jane.



He and Jane celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last December.

His accomplishments are many, and I don't know where to start. For one, he joined the National ski patrol when he was only 15 years old and remained a member for over 64 years before retiring in 2020. He also built 238 specialized racing bikes for the track and road!

Here are some of the many cars that John and Jane hillclimbed over the years:



Bill Weaver

By Grace Huntzinger



And the hits keep on coming... Bill Weaver passed away on July 4th, 2025, at the age of 90. Our condolences go out to Judy and the family.

Bill was inducted into the PHA Hall of Fame in 1999, one of our first inductees.

I did not know him well, but I knew of him, and he was always present when I first started, especially at the

Reading events. He ran a Cobra Replica in SPO during the years I knew him, and always placed well. In addition, he was really friendly and always willing to step up when an extra hand was needed.



Some highlights from Bill's obituary: He served for 10 years in the Army National Guard as a tank driver. He was an entrepreneur and owned/operated several businesses.

In addition, he was a Private Pilot who owned and maintained his own plane, and was also a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. If that wasn't enough, he also volunteered at Seisholtzville Fire Company where he served as Treasurer.

And for the side of him most of us knew: His love of automobiles had him building and racing his own race cars. He competed in many circuits including Hill Climbs and ran road courses at NASCAR tracks.



Bill Weaver

By Rich Rock

Bill was a GREAT guy, always eager to help anyone, any way he could. I remember meeting him when I was just getting started 25+ years ago. At that time, he was running the Turbo T-Bird, but he told me he had a new car in the works. That car, the Cobra (Robin) was the Reading Hillclimbs poster car in 2014.

Bill hasn't been active for a while, but when he was, he was VERY active!

Among his many contributions to BMR, perhaps the most lasting are the steps from Hill Road up to Turn 7, the steps outside Turn 4 to the spectator area, the worker platform at 5, and the steps at Turn 2. Those were built, almost single-handedly, by Bill!



*Rich Rock and Bill Weaver install steps at the path to turn 7 for the Reading Hillclimbs in 2016.
Photo Credit Mike Vanino*



*Sue Salsburg, Weatherly 2003
Photo Credit: Ursula Whisler*



CONGRATULATIONS

to all of the 2025 PHA competitors...

And a huge

“THANK YOU!”

to all of the Workers.

Without you, none of this would be possible.

Steel Cities Region 2025 Drivers

Mark Albers, Mark Aubele, Michele Aubele, Gibby Bozicevich, Dan Foley,
Hunter Huffman, Kristie Reid, James Weinheimer, Jim Weinheimer

**Celebrating 64 years
of Hillclimb Racing in
Weatherly, PA!**



“It’s been a good year!”

Compliments of

The officers and members

of the

Weatherly Hillclimb Association.

See you in 2026!!

I Can't Drive 147,840

By Todd Burkey

I had fancied a Legend race car after seeing one in person at a race themed block party. They are for race only and are not street legal. The car is a single seater wrapped in roll bars with a fiberglass body using a motorcycle engine and gearbox and is a five eighths scale model of a 1930's era Ford or Chevy. US Legends International manufactures these multi-faceted race cars in North Carolina starting back in 1993.



The only places near me I could really locate that raced these Legend cars were on paved short track ovals. After about twenty-five race watching trips to places like Evergreen Raceway and Wall Stadium, I happened upon the first "For Sale" sign on a Legend car while at the track.

As I shy away from social media institutions like Facebook, Instagram or TikTok – I had needed to come across one of these race cars in person. And now I had. After all the many lemonade stands, I had out front of my house, the proceeds were going to get lumped together and buy this very used Legend race car. The seller and I did a handshake deal, and the car was mine. After a bunch of years hankering for a purpose-built race car, I had finally procured one.



The kind family I bought the race car from also delivered it to my house and loaded it into my tiny garage. I didn't have a trailer at the time, so the gesture was fantastic and greatly appreciated. Incidentally, I purchased the car from Kevin Ward Sr. as can be seen in the film "[The Hit: An Investigative Documentary](#)". The documentary chronicles the horrific story of his son Kevin Ward Jr. being struck and killed on track by Tony Stewart at a sprint car race in 2014. Tony Stewart the three time NASCAR champion, INDY Car champion, team owner and current NHRA top fuel drag racer. It is a poignant film.

There is about a one-year timeline to this story that begins here. Being that I have no



actual car racing experience of any sort, nor have a car trailer, the sad fact I'm mechanically declined, I also have no spare race parts, I have insufficient tools etc. – my thought was to make the Legend car street legal. You know, just make a cool race car into a cool street legal race car. This plan sounded easy enough to me. It would fulfill my desire to drive around in a race car.

I know and understand that I am not particularly fast at driving a car. I get that I don't have immense natural ability. This doesn't negate the fact that I like to put my race face on and go "my" fast even though it may not be as fast as another. It's fun.

Apparently, the only way I can get any faster is if I die and come back as a piece of rhubarb. Luckily, I happen to adore rhubarb. I'm so slow that I tricked myself into thinking I'm fast after I converted the speedometer in my regular 'ol street car from miles per hour (mph) to furlongs per fortnight (fpf). I got pulled over by the police for driving 55 mph in a 45 mph zone. The officer comes up to my car and says "do you know how fast you were going?". I said "yes of course 147,840 furlongs per fortnight". I got out of the ticket based upon creativity the officer said. And holy crapes, 147,840 furlongs per fortnight sounds freekeen fast.

I received the car when the outside weather wasn't all that great so I couldn't drive it right away. I was pacing around the house for days anxiously awaiting a first drive in the car until I could finally give myself the all clear.

I live out in the country with not too many cars around, most of the roads don't even have painted lines so it seems like a good spot to do a shakedown run of my Legend car. By shakedown run I mean, the first time driving this wicked tiny race car. I had figured out how to start the thing, get in and out of it and so putt-putttt-putttt up the road I finally went. Short shifting, trying to be discreet on the street where the car isn't legal at all. No registration, no inspection, no insurance - no problem!



The first drive on public roads in the non-street legal race car went good enough but it wasn't what I had expected. My eyeballs bulged with frightening brain wave concerns. It felt as if the car was broken, but I didn't understand how or why. I guess I was under some impressions I made up that it was going to be more user friendly or something.

The second drive on public roads a few weeks later in the non-street legal race car was not what I desired, expected and was also rather harrowing. Let's just say I had to take



evasive measures from law enforcement such that my race car didn't get impounded or confiscated. Or worse. I do not want the police to locate me. Turned out that this was the first time I didn't short shift the car.

Crap. I'm not sure about this street legal race car thing anymore. I'm not even sure about the Legend car itself. It is shockingly difficult to drive on the street. It makes sounds I'm not familiar with. Clanking. Something seems broken when I matriculate forward. It is actually rather violent.

All right I think, just take a third spin in the car, deep breaths, no worries, no biggie. So, I went out and fired up the car. It's a quiet sunny cool Monday afternoon. I run the car around a few miles on the rural roads near my house getting the hang of it and feeling better about myself when I see my wife's car with my wife and daughter in it, coming towards me. Again, crap. The look on my wife's face is a new emoji called "you cannot drive that tiny puny clown car that nobody is going to see on public roadways". She was surely correct. Shoot though, now what to do with the race car. Hm.

It became unambiguous that I needed to go to track days or race the Legend car to facilitate using it in any form at all aside from merely looking at it. My investigations lead me back to short track paved oval racing. It would be me against five or ten or twenty other legend cars racing around at the same time smashing and banging and perhaps breaking on the track.

I thought perhaps I could do a few events a year or something like that. I read up on the rules, found a schedule to attend and found out what gear I needed to wear on my person during this short track oval racing. I would have a few months to figure out a lot of logistics.

I had a grand reopening of my lemonade stand out in front of my house and was able to garner enough sales to buy a race car driver suit and the associated gear. This included helmet, Hans devise, fire suit, fire retardant socks, gloves, under garment, baklava, raceciever, gear bag and race shoes. My lemonade is the absolute shnizz. So, in my mind, since I'd be doing just a few events a year – I'd just rent a U-Haul, or something as needed because I still didn't have a trailer. At this juncture of life, I haven't even pulled a trailer behind a vehicle.

As my first perceived Legend car event is approaching, I find myself learning quickly that I need a trailer. Looking into borrowing a trailer doesn't work out of course. Looking into renting the requisite U-Haul trailer doesn't work out of course either. Too many variables.

Erstwhile, I had been learning about trailers and went shopping around the region



looking at trailers. I came across a trailer that met my criteria and was of great value compared to the other sixty trailers I had looked at on various trailer lots. I fired up the old lemonade stand for a third time and miraculously came up with enough money to buy the trailer. Holy crap, I bought a trailer.

This is very exciting dawg, because I now have the trifecta: Legend race car, race car drivers suit and race car trailer. Outstanding. This is way more than I thought was going to happen with this car. It also has intimidating aspects. But it's also awesome.

Picking up the trailer day arrives; the trailer shop guy hooks up the new trailer to my truck and off I went pulling a trailer for the first time. Turns out it's easy going in the forward direction but if you don't know that ahead of time it doesn't do you any good. I can back the trailer up in a straight line but have difficulty trying to turn the trailer in the reverse direction. Guess I'll try to avoid that turning in reverse scenario and deal with it as it comes up.

Anyway, I set the trailer up in minimalist fashion to haul the Legend race car and the few pieces of gear to my first event which is coming up soon. I am as ready as I can be. I will confront issues and handle stuff as required. I remind myself that I'm in this for fun. So far, it's been sort of a stressful anxiety filled quagmire of facts, fiction and fun.

As the calendar tells me my first event is one week out, I get prepped with everything I have and am ready to go. And then with remarkable disappointment the event gets cancelled due to rain one day before it's supposed to happen. Dang. Dang it all. I will have to wait three weeks until the next event and until then I can work on my very rainy disappointment with the canceled event.

I watched the clock go by like a sloth race. A sloth race in slow motion. I'm not a tropical rain forest animal researcher so you can imagine how annoying this was. I just wanted to hurry up and get to the track already. The event I'm waiting for is on a one third mile paved oval.

The first day is to be open practice sessions and the second day are the races, known as stock car racing. The open practice is good for me as I can get some much desired and needed seat time. Sloth o'clock finally ends, and it is now open practice day.

A spectacularly gray sky and rain in the forecast meets me at the track but I didn't really care. I was finally going to drive the car unimpeded. It was also surprising how few cars turned out – good for me though. Due to the weather, almost everyone chose to stay home except a very small number of cars. Rain and oval racing just don't mix well. Mixing of the two would be like a vegan restaurant selling meat, it just doesn't mix.



First day at the track went well. Real shakedown runs. Eye opening. Eye bulging. First time wearing all of the safety gear, five point harnessed in, in a race car and going around a track? Gosh darn awesome mang!

There is also a big dose of relief that I feel. The Legend car had last been used on paved ovals and was thusly set up for ovals. The camber on the front left was negative and the front right camber was way on out there. The car was hooked up though and I went around the oval with reasonable confidence.

I now understood why trying to drive this car in a straight line on the public roadways was so difficult – it was purely in the car set up for ovals. Left turn oval good. Straight line bad. Right turn bad. And to reiterate, rain is bad.

After I got home after the open practice that day, I got the dreaded cancellation text from track personnel. The following days races had been cancelled due to rain. This was disappointing to say the least. The next oval race on my calendar is four weeks out. That is if it doesn't get postponed or rained out again. Spring of 2025 in the region has been very rainy on the weekends messing up a lot of people's plans.



Over the course of a few days, I investigate what else I could possibly do with this car while awaiting the next oval when bingo, a car show appears on my cellphone search. The show isn't too far away, it's in a few days, any car can enter and it's for charity.



Good combo. I figure I'll go there and hang out talking about cars and listening about cars with whoever wishes to engage. Initially I thought it was a cars and coffee situation, but it turned out to be a judged car show called "Cruisin' for a Cause! – 2025". And then low and behold if my Legend race car didn't win first place in the category of "Exotic". Wow. That's cool and unexpected. I even received a nice trophy.

What was more interesting than the trophy though, was a question I had heard five or six times through that afternoon. "Did you race this at the Weatherly hillclimb last year?"

Of course, my reply was no because I had not raced at a hillclimb last year called Weatherly. Then another person asked, "was this what I saw at Weatherly last year?" My brain was tripping on this hillclimb thing. What the heck is it? Accordingly, and post haste I get home and investigate Weatherly hillclimb.

First, I Googled it, then I read the PHA site, then I YouTube'd it and then it seared upon my brain. Then I found out that the only known cure for a brain sear is to sign up for the 2025 spring Weatherly hillclimb. And so, I did sign up. And I went to my first ever hillclimb. The second run I ever took was in the pouring rain. Hillclimbs and rain mix!



*Spring Weatherly
Photo Credit: Blaine Rampulla*

And now it is the end of that same season. It is the end of the story's one year timeline. For me it is a rookie season. The first time I ever raced a car. The first time I ever even pulled a trailer for gosh sakes.

The Friday afternoon I pulled into the Weatherly pit area I was hooked. I knew at once that I wanted to try to do the seven of the eight events that remained on the published schedule. And I did.

Well, I missed sign-ups for Giants Despair, and it capped out. Instead, I volunteered to be a corner worker and was stationed on the outside of turn two on the aluminum stairs. It was a great experience for sure. On Sunday, I added a whistle to my corner worker uniform with much effectiveness.

I began my whole rookie car racing season at age 60. You know, I'm sixty years old. It is therefore why I chose to race with the number 60 on my Legend race car. In my rookie



season I raced six times garnering three third place finishes, one second place finish, two first place finishes and one class record in the INEX Spec (IS) class. These results were enough to win the IS class championship in my rookie year. Thanks to the Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association. And thanks to all of the corner workers and volunteers that makes it possible to race.



A toast to PHA!

Kudos to the Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association for another Great Year !

*Congratulations to all the highly skilled PHA class winners,
and a huge thanks to all the indispensable volunteers who
make it happen.*

From your friends in the South Jersey Region

2026 SJR SCCA Road Racing Events at New Jersey Motorsports Park

Jersey Devil Majors US Majors Tour Series (Thunderbolt) — May 1-3, 2026

Lightning Challenge (Lightning) — June 26-28, 2026

Summer Lightning (Lightning) — August 14-16, 2026

Jersey Road Racing Classic (Thunderbolt) — October 23-25, 2026

Autocross, Time Trials and Rally dates will be available on www.sjrscca.com when finalized

South Jersey Region 2025 Drivers

**David Arron (1st place BSPEC), Ethan Fifield, Tim Fiordaliso,
Susan Salsburg (1st place V2)**



Don McLaughlin the Photographer

By Grace Huntzinger



*Don captured in action
Photo Credit: Eric Santiago*



*Don McLaughlin at Giants Despair HC 2025
Photo Credit: Chris Gore*

Don has been shooting the events for almost as long as I have known him. When I mentioned to him that some events are poorly covered, making it hard for me to write the blog posts, put together the year end slide show, etc., Don made sure to take a ton of photos at every event, sometimes even skipping his runs to take pictures.

Here are a few of my favorites from the 2025 season:



You can see all of Don's photos here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcdallion>



Ralph Weaver

By Mike Ancas

Over the years, Ralph had an intense love affair not only with his wife, Jenny, but with art, photography, heavy metal music and motorsports. He started with autocross, as many of us do. But when Pittsburgh area drivers were making the transition to Hillclimbing, Ralph and Jenny also got caught up in the thrill and camaraderie that is unique to being part of the Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association family.

He moved on from his Honda DelSol autocross car to a GTi, which he co-drove with Jenny, and they made an instant impression on the sport. As a novice, Jenny was presented with the “Brass



Balls” award by the Steel Cities Region of the SCCA. She occasionally could be seen visibly shaking after completing a hillclimb run, but with Ralph’s love and support, she strapped herself back into the driver’s seat ready for another run.

Ralph was like that. He was

always there to provide encouragement with a dose of witty humor. His roots as a heavy metal vocalist in the 1980’s stayed with him throughout his motorsports career. His 3 year long battle with cancer ended on September 15, 2025, less than 2 months after the death of one of his idols, Ozzy Osbourne.

Rock on Ralph!



Driven by the Hill

By Ray Kochin

In the rugged, rolling landscape of Pennsylvania, there’s one challenging stretch of asphalt in a small town that defines a community and a competition: the windy, one-mile, five-turn road locals call The Weatherly Hillclimb. For me, this is where it all started.



From an early age, the roar of those engines echoing through the town was a siren call. It was a sacred, yearly tradition: waiting for my Dad to get home on Friday, then being out bright and early Saturday morning at Turn 1 to watch the cars tear up the track. And though he and my Uncle were my early mentors, I always knew my Mom and Sister were there, attending nearly every race and serving as my constant support system.

As a teenager, I moved from spectating to the pits, fueled by a desire to race. The dream became real when a neighbor, serving overseas, offered to sell me his neglected, weed-encircled 2001 black Camaro. I sold everything I owned—my dirt bikes, quads, even my pedal bikes—just to save up enough to make the Camaro mine.



The next hillclimb approached, and I was running on pure excitement; I finally had a car! The immediate thrill of ownership was quickly replaced by the heavy reality of racing: I was 17, making minimum wage, and needed another \$5,000 for the safety cage and gear. After a year and a half of dedicated saving and scoring a better job, the Camaro was finally transformed.

The first event, "Spring Weatherly," had me instantly hooked—the speed, the adrenaline, the risk—it lured me in fast. I got through my novice period and earned my race license, only to put it into the trees before the season was over.

With the car wrecked, I thought everything was gone. But with the help of my then-girlfriend's dad, we had ten days to perform a miracle rebuild.

We worked tirelessly, pulling the frame, hunting down parts, and wrenching until 2 AM the Friday of the Fall Weatherly race. We fixed every leak and set the alignment with a string line.

Against all odds, we passed tech inspection and raced the entire weekend problem-free. In that moment, I knew hillclimbing was going to be a huge part of my life.

The passion exploded in 2012 when my uncle joined me. Running two mirrored Camaros gave me the seat time to set several class records.



Seeking a new challenge, I transitioned from the Camaros in 2014 to a powerful 1982 Troyer Modified—a true open-wheel monster already prepped for left and right turns.



Before that season ended, my uncle suffered a brain aneurysm. This was a very hard point for me because he was a huge part of my racing career. While he was forced to walk away, he urged me to keep the legacy of that modified going—and I did, in his honor. In 2015, I gave the car a full wrap to look like the General Lee, as a shout-out to The Dukes of Hazzard, my favorite childhood show.



Over the years, I refined my craft, swapping engines and tuning suspensions to shave off every fraction of a second. I loved the community—everyone knew my name, and they knew my car. I even set a class record in a new, bright orange modified, and the locals nicknamed it the "General Lee."

Back in town, though, I was more than a racer; I looked after my neighbors, helped at the garage, and mentored younger kids. The hills of Weatherly were my backyard, my testing ground, my proving ground. Up until about 2020, I was in the top three for the most runs completed in a decade, rarely missing an event.



But as life changed, I had kids who were getting older and demanded more of my time, plus I opened my own business in 2021, and my time grew scarce. Still, I'm now entering my 15th straight season of hillclimbing.

Now, as both my kids are racing, my attention is moving toward their programs. This isn't a goodbye; it's just a 'see you later.' To everyone who met and helped me out over the last 15 years, I appreciate and will remember you all.



I'll still cherish those quick seconds before a run where my kids are blowing me kisses at the start line.

Over one-third of my time here on earth has been devoted to the hills, so now it's time to take a step back and focus on my kids' race programs. We need to remember to make this sport attractive to young, upcoming racers like it was for me back then. Let's dial back the internal politics, the protests, and the class debates, and focus on the core reason we're all here: to RACE and have fun! The heart of this sport is the community, the challenge, and the speed... and of course, the bragging rights.

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CONGRATULATIONS PHA

For a successful 2025 Season!

**THE GIANTS DESPAIR HILLCLIMB ASSOCIATION
WISHES TO**

Say THANK YOU to the volunteer workers, inspectors,
and organizers for making these events possible!

We especially appreciate all of you — the drivers,
family and crew members — that come to Laurel Run
each year to assault the GIANT, continuing the long
running history of motor racing in North East
Pennsylvania.

**We are looking forward to seeing you on the 11th
and 12th of July, 2026.**



Dateline Reading PA. 06-25-2000



(picture courtesy of Rich Rock)

A short but very loud profanity was heard coming from car #114 following a mishap at turn 7 during today's running of The Pagoda Hillclimb. On his second run of the morning, Rich Rock, driving a silver 1970 TVR Vixen, approached turn seven at what can only be described as "a little too fast".

The tail end of the car swung out dramatically as Rich turned in to the corner. According to the corner workers, for a split second it looked like he just might make it, but when the tires on Rich's car regained their grip, the car abruptly changed direction and headed straight for the outside of the corner, coming to rest with the nose of the car in the sloped dirt embankment. The bonnet, torn from three of its attachment points, opened straight up on impact.

Corner workers jumped into action. After quickly determining that Rich had sustained no injury, evident by his animated gestures and colorful language, they pushed the car back on to the road for a closer inspection.

Finding nothing on the car severely damaged, the bonnet was loosely attached, and Rich slowly drove the car away, to the applause of spectators.

Asked later about his initial outburst, Rich replied, "I'm sorry, I misspoke. What I meant to say was 'OOPS'". Rich continued, "It was an experiment, you see. I was trying to find the fastest way through the turn. It didn't work out this time, but I'll be back".

Rich didn't make another run after the incident, finding prohibitive damage to the suspension, but his earlier times were good enough to earn him a first place trophy in his class, besting a TR4 and Opel GT.

Rich Rock



BMR would like to thank all the Workers, Drivers, and Sponsors for another great year!

Thank you for your support and see you next year.

Blue Mountain Region 2025 Drivers

George Ackerman, Bill Ascherman, Dustin Axarlis, Melinda Axarlis, Mike Axarlis, Jacob Ballou, Kurt Bartholomew, **George Bowland (3rd place S1)**, James Cosner Jr, Jessica Fessler, John Fiore, **Keith Gerhard (1st place SS)**, Randy Hartinger, John Hartnett, David Hoppe, Donald Kennedy, Matthew Kennedy, Michael Kurtz, Skip Levengood, Dave McFarland, Steve McFarland, Chris Merring, Gary Newswanger, **William Norton (1st place V3)**, **Emily Oswald (1st place ITB)**, James Oswald, Tammy Oswald, Robert Oswald Jr, Bryner Raudibaugh, Gary Reider, **Michael S Robinson (1st place O, Overall Award)**, Mike Sacks, William Sekella, **Eli Sharp (1st place GTL)**, Peter Stillwell, Paul Vanbemmelen, Boyd Wagner, **Adam Weaver (3rd place S)**, **Michael White (1st place H4)**, **Vincent Wiczorek (3rd place GTL)**, **George Witman (1st place S)**, David Yeager, Aaron Yeager

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