

TrackSide, June 2004

by Diane Dale

April Showers...

Right...

But did it have to be every track weekend???

Saab School started out in the rain and misted nearly all day. BMW School was plagued with torrential downpour, FREEZING winds and a power outage that shut us down early. Spring Fling was drowning pellets of rain (with sessions stopped for lightning threats to the track marshals). The BARC-OC Ontario Grand Prix, the first regional racing weekend of the season, was fogged in and postponed for the first couple of hours and then never let up... it just got colder and colder and wetter and wetter! The trip down to the Thousand Island Zed Club day was miserable. BUT... forever the optimist - I know we all had fun and certainly learned a lot about driving in the rain. Plus, the TIZCC day turned out to be stunningly beautiful and I believe we've set a precedence for the rest of the season! (Right Mr. Weather Man?)

Spring Fling, April 16/17

Bill Dawson and I had a great time at Spring Fling this year (we were able to sneak the Friday off work and get a good solid day of testing in before the rain started for Saturday). Greg Whitehead was out monitoring our progress and testing air/fuel ratios, timing and the overall success of our motors. (Whitehead Performance rebuilt both Bill's and my engines over the winter - what a spectacular job!) It is GREAT to see Bill's street car out on the track again after its few years of hibernation. Yeah!

For those of you new to racing - Spring Fling is the celebrated annual weekend to get the cobwebs off your car, out of your engine and from between your toes. It's an opportunity to have your car scrutineered against CASC's racing regulations, test the winter's work, and discover all the little items that you've forgotten to pack in the trailer.

(If you're smart you'll actually write these items down, and remember them for the first race weekend!) It's also very much like the first day back to school - lots of socializing, catching up and bragging about "what I could have done to my car, but didn't get around to" this winter.

What DID you do to your car this winter?

Hats off to Mr. Jonathon Brett. This winter he DID get a lot of work done on his car. (Jon's car is the white 1972 Datsun 240z, #9 running in VARAC's Group 70+ and Regional GTB Sprints). My personal Trophy of Awe goes to him for following through on the finer points of car improvement. And it was all rewarded on his first day out at the BARC-OC regional racing weekend. Without much of an effort he was able to beat last year's personal best, take 3rd place in the GT Sprints grid and most importantly, finish a race without any mechanical difficulties! (Those of you who know Jonathon might remember the albatross around his neck last year!) I got the scoop on Jonathon's car and here it is:

- 1972 Datsun 240z, stock body, stock glass windshield and quarter windows, standard racing safety equipment
- 2.8L engine, triple 50mm webers, 46mm choke
- Quartermaster clutch/flywheel, 3:9 welded differential with aluminum drive shaft
- MSD ignition, electronic distributor



Jon's 1972 Datsun 240z, #9 running in VARAC's Group 70+ and Regional GTB Sprints



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- Front and rear disc brakes, aluminum lightweight calipers on the front, stock master cylinder and pedal assembly
- Coil over suspension with camber plates, Eibach springs and Tokico racing struts
- Dual 2-1/2" exhaust with Nissan Motorsport header (bought at Brantford Nissan!), racing oil pan and custom oil system
- Aeroquip fittings and steel braided fuel lines
- Stock 4-bolt 15"x7" wheels, Toyo RA1 tires

Work done this winter included having the motor freshened (new rings, new bearings) and installing a racing cam (porting, polishing and geometry setup by Malvern Racing in West Virginia). The bottom end now has Cosworth racing pistons, Carrillo rods, a custom steel crankshaft and a 14:1 compression ratio! (Ok – and now that you've read all this you're under oath not to divulge his car preparation secrets – just as I did when I asked for the details!)

BARC-OC Ontario Grand Prix, May 1/2

The race results are in! (www.mylaps.com if you're interested in checking any international race results – including all Ontario regional events) Jonathon Brett and myself were the only zeds running this weekend as part of the Ontario Regional GT Sprints Class. Yes the weather was miserable, but to tell you the truth – it is also the great equalizer! Cars with 350+ horsepower quickly learnt that you can't over throttle the least bit. At one point I thought I was in one of those Sports Blooper movies – many cars found themselves 'off-piste' the first session in the heavy rain. Corner One – yellow flag, between Corner Two and Corner Three – yellow flag, Corner Five a, b and c – yellow flag... you get the picture. But on the other hand there was the Nissan Sentra cars – they EAT UP the rain and just love it. I guess that's what happens with a close-to-stock, fairly new car. Heater, defroster, windshield wipers, glass windows, stereo, good suspension - all the comforts required for driving in the hard rain – plus a whole lot of rain practice and good consistent driving! All in all, a good racing weekend, and a huge round of applause to the volunteers, marshals, grid workers and spectators who endured! (A great way to get involved in racing if you're not ready to sit in the driver's seat yet!)

Thousand Island Zed Club, May 10

Marc Guimont does a tremendous job of organizing this event every year. I've gone for the last five years and it is a fantastic group of friendly, fun and responsible drivers. And did I mention it's a great collection of zed cars as well? This year many of the regular attendees appeared, along with some new race car blood. Gord Ballentine with his new 1970 Porsche 914 and Ron Wanless with his 1970 Lotus Elan ran some practice sessions (They run in VARAC's Historic Production class). Peter Skillins and Blaise Csida finally got some dry laps



Marc Guimont



Ron Wanless' 1970 Lotus Elan



Peter Skillins' race-prepped 280zx

with their race-prepped 280zx – equipped with slicks. (Usually Peter is the one caught lounging under an umbrella praying for the rain to stop.) Brad, Kathy and Taylor Gates were out (Taylor's into some serious Karting now – the zed will be next!) The Z association of New York had quite a few representatives. It was fun to meet up with them – they promised to forward information regarding their fall events – apparently they hold a great rally/wine tour! Other returning Porsche, Toyota and twin Miata drivers joined the fray. A splendid day was had by all!

240Z Race Car Restoration

Daniel Thompson of Montreal is about to embark on a "close to perfect" restoration/preparation of a early model Datsun 240z race car. I'm hoping to follow up with him regarding this long-term project – but for now he's looking for a starting shell. He's been searching down south – but if anyone happens to know of a good solid 240z that's available (with no rust or as little as possible), you can contact him at dthompson@gbc.ca

