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*OZC Member Diane Dale fearless at the
26th Annual VARAC Vintage
Festival at Mosport*

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OZC TRACK DAY - SUNDAY JULY 10th, 2005

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26th Annual VARAC Vintage Festival at Mosport - June 24-26, 2005

By - Malcolm Haylock

Well, the 26th Annual VARAC Vintage Festival has come and gone for another year! With the superb weather, car count, and on-track action, this year's Vintage Festival was probably one of the best in several years.

Competitors came from many provinces (AB, NS, SK, QC, and ON) and quite a few US states including, MI, MN, FL, IL, PA, NY, OH, MA IN, IA, ME, CT, MD, WA, NH, NC and VT - all in all very impressive. Many of the races had 40+ car counts on track!

G70+ Group

This year's festival marked a new high-water mark for car count in the ever growing and popular G70+ Group. Only in its second full year, this group fielded 24+ cars, surpassing last year's field of approximately 15 cars. Congratulations to Diane Dale and Jonathan Brett! The tireless Diane, assisted by tech-guy Jonathon, has promoted and led the G70+ Group. More later on both of their on-



Festival. Diane was greatly assisted by Greg Whitehead of Whitehead Performance and his crew who tuned and prepared Diane's car. Excellent jobs guys and gals!

Also competing in G70+ was Jonathan Brett in his 1972 240Z. Unfortunately Jonathan didn't get beyond the Friday test day, when coming into the blind corner 4, he unpreventably slid on an enormous oil patch and knocked front ends with Bruce Farrow's Porsche 911, stopped on the track after sliding through the same oil. An unlucky and premature end to both of their on-track activities for the weekend.

Rob McCord, driving his #53 BRE painted replica 72 Datsun 240Z, raced for the first time. Lee Good made his debut in his "new" ex-Greg Stage Datsun 240Z racing in Group 3 for Historic production cars. As an owner of a Datsun 510 sedan in the 1970s, I was particularly pleased to see a couple of 1970 sedans competing—one from Quebec (#65 - Yvon Lepinay) and the other from Michigan (#45 - Doug Respecki)—both competing in Group 4 Classic Sedans.

The Best Race of the Weekend

The final race for group 7 - G70+ on Sunday was the best race of the weekend (in my humble opinion). For added excitement, Blaise Csida started last on the grid in 23rd position. Blaise was the guest driver for Strudwick Motorsport's 3rd Corvette (#82)—a 1982 Corvette fondly known as "Frankie". Late last year Frankie, then driven by Malcolm Strachan, was leading the G70+ race only to blow the engine rather

spectacularly on the front straight, spraying everyone on pit wall with a warm water and oil mixture. So Sunday's race was the first for Blaise and for Frankie with its brand new rebuilt engine. The day did not begin well! Having started the morning qualifying race from the back, Blaise was then sent to the pits during the pace lap when the right rear suspension collapsed. Led by Rob, Phil Strudwick's crew sprung into action and had to fabricate some new pieces for the coil-over shock set up, finishing in time for Blaise to join the grid for the feature race.

The feature race began with action everywhere! Unlike the rest of weekend's races, Marcus Glamer in his exquisite BMW M1 did not lead from the green flag. Frank Fusillo lead in his ex-Peter Klutt big block 69 Stingray Corvette, closely followed by #99 Jerry Simmons and #68 Mike Palledino (both in Strudwick-prepared Corvettes). A close 4th was #40 Marcus Glamer and Blaise picked off about 6-8 cars in the opening lap.



track activities - one good and the other not so good.

It is easy to see why G70+ is both growing and popular with racers and spectators alike. The action and racing throughout the entire field was great in the feature races on both days. The G70+ races include many great cars and sounds! Bring your earplugs! The fabulous sounding wail of Marcus Glamer's BMW M1, normally aspirated 3.5L overhead cam straight 6, announced the approach of the pack followed by the booming thunder of the Chevy small and big block V8's interspersed with the roar of the Porsche flat 6's and the purpose sounding Datsun/Nissan SOHC straight six.

The Datsuns

Led by the 1971 Datsun 240Z of Diane Dale, fearless leader of the G70+ group, the Datsuns were well represented at this year's

Diane Dale, starting in 11th position, continued her weekend-long duel with #73 Paul Roberts in his Rudy Bartling Racing prepared Porsche 911. Throughout the weekend Diane continued to set personal best (PB) lap times in her #13 Datsun. On Saturday when following Paul Roberts for the entire race, she set her PB at 1.38.805 which was actually faster than Paul's best time of the race (1.39.055). Viewing the race from corner 5 (Moss' Corner), I noticed that even though Diane was all over Paul coming into corner 5, Paul was able to gap Diane coming out of 5B every lap. In the after race debrief, it was determined that Diane was coming out of 5B in 3rd gear. This year for the first time, Diane's car has a Nissan comp gear box (5 speed close ratio), so Sunday the strategy was for Diane to come out of 5B in 2nd gear and possibly use more engine RPM to make a pass on Paul.

So back to our feature race, Diane started behind both Paul and #188 Michael Vong in his Porsche 914-6. For this race, Diane had a great start and was immediately on Paul's back bumper but this time, using 2nd gear, she stayed on his back bumper coming out of corner 5B. Throughout the opening laps, Diane repeatedly pulled along side Paul as they approached the hump on the back straight – again I watched this race from corner 5. About half way through the 18-minute timed race, Diane had a big run on Paul and was alongside long before the hump, finally passing Paul through the 8, 9 & 10 complex. Diane then continued on to finish 8th overall and 3rd in class, setting a new PB of 1.37.991. In the process she had also passed Michael Vong who finished 10th and Jerry Simmons who finished 13th with car trouble. In post race debrief, Paul came over to congratulate Diane and enquired if she had Nitrous when she passed him on the back straight. Diane admitted that she ignored Greg Whitehead's imposed RPM limit of 7200. She shifted this one time at around 8000 RPM, enabling her to shoot by the tough-to-pass Porsche of Paul Roberts and subsequently substantially gapping him after the pass.

Meanwhile at the front of the pack, Blaise was picking off the lead cars one at a time. With about 5 minutes left, Blaise was only 5 seconds behind Marcus and by next lap had narrowed the gap to only 2 seconds. On the last lap Blaise got by the slowing Marcus in corner 8. From corner 5, we listened to the excited track announcer Glen Butt call the finish and describe the excited Strudwick crew, led by Rob, jumping up and down as Blasé came from last to first at the checkered flag.

In post race debriefing, Marcus said he had a started to run low on fuel causing him to slow. Blaise posted the fastest lap of the race at 1.29.829 while Marcus did manage to complete the race in second and make it back to the pits. Blaise was also slowed in the later half of the race as he lost the clutch and struggled getting into the right gear coming out of corner 5B thereafter. Frank Fusillo, had a great race, leading initially and finishing a strong 3rd, managing to improve his lap time by about a second in each of the 4 races he competed in finishing with a PB of 1.32.215. Frank was further disadvantaged because he was using SVRA legal-treaded tires while some of his competitors were using racing slicks that are legal in group G70+. Slicks can improve your times by at least 2 seconds a lap.

Rob McCord completed his first Vintage Festival having a quiet and uneventful weekend for the most part. His laps time showed tremendous improvement starting out in the 1.46/47 range but he finished with his PB in the feature race on Sunday of 1.43.881 and placed 18th. By season end, Rob will probably be into the 39's! Other newcomers Peter Schlag (1987 BMW M3), John Noble (1987 BMW M3), Josip Dukovak (1986 Porsche 944) and Bob Kraus (1987 BMW M3) had fantastic first-time VARAC race experiences – we look forward to seeing them out more this season!

While Diane had a great start in the first race on Sunday, starting has not always been her strong suit. In Saturday's feature race she lost about 3 positions with a poor start. In Sunday morning's race, she got by Paul Roberts at the start and led him until the later stages of the race when she lost her brakes. She finished a distant 10th behind Paul and Michael Vong. The hard working Track Dog crew—led by Blake Nancarrow and consisting of newcomers Eric and Mandy and old timers Rick Higgins, Bill Dawson and Malcolm Haylock—quickly went to work. Bill Dawson was making a rare visit to the track since he sold his portion of the #13 to Diane. The brake pads were all okay. But since Diane was going faster than ever before and using the brakes harder than she ever had, the crew went to work bleeding and flushing the boiled fluid from the callipers. Our work was successful since Diane had no brake problems in the feature race. Way to go Track Dog team!

Class 7B Results: 1st Marcus Glarner, BMW M1, 2nd Tim Sanderson, Porsche 911SC, 3rd Diane Dale, Datsun 240Z

Weekend Recap

The weather and Mosport were at its hottest on Saturday with temperatures around 35C and the humidex was around 40C but we had some clouds and a nice breeze. Sunday was less humid with temperatures around 31C but no clouds and less wind it seemed hotter! As a result, the track was hot and greasy all weekend – a fact that makes the setting of new PB times by some of the competitors even more impressive. Great job everyone! Unlike many of the other races that resulted in double yellow flags and a pace car on track, the four groups of G70+ had no such problems. Excellent job Group 7 racers!

Off-Track Excitement

Additional excitement occurred Saturday night at the annual lawn chair races held in pit lane after the last race. This race featured the debut of the Junior Track Dog team that included Diane's brother, Terry and his two children, Evan and Colin who built a very sophisticated lawn chair racer for two, all closely overseen by Cindy the team manager.

The Junior Track Dog team's entry featured state of the art construction techniques using 2 X 4's along with safety items including quick-release 5-point safety harnesses, run-



flat tires and full-face helmets. The motive power was supplied by the pushers (Terry and Eric). The Junior Track Dog team debuted against an international field with one team from as far way as Florida!

Heading for the first (and only) turn, the race was neck and neck but Junior Track Dog team held a perfect line into the first turn and was able to win the race going away. All in all, a great and successful end to a great day of racing!

Stay tuned for more excitement as the G70+ group takes to the track with ever growing grids and more competitive racing and more excitement. The next Group G70+ activity is at Mosport August 13/14.