



# Pylon Press



Arizona Sportcar Club of America – Solo Division

Solo Event #2 Fall 2020

## October Event Synopsis

The Covid-19 Pandemic did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the AZ solo group. We had a full-to-capacity turn out with good attitudes and fast times. The weather was warm, although it did little to hold down some fast times on the course. A shout out of thanks to the AMP crew for working our drivers in for a car sound check at 8 am sharp. This was accomplished even though the track side of the facility was being used by another motorsports group. Each of groups A and B got 5 passes through the course in the morning session and departed in ample time for the afternoon group to check in and tech.

The **Roll 40 Club** from Flagstaff was back in force and made a good contribution to the run/work force. This young group's energy is a welcome addition to the event. The CAM group seems to add another great vintage car each event. This event featured two Vintage Ford pickups and two cool first generation Mustangs. The CAM crew is also laying down some impressive times on the course with these old cars. It's great to see them out in force.

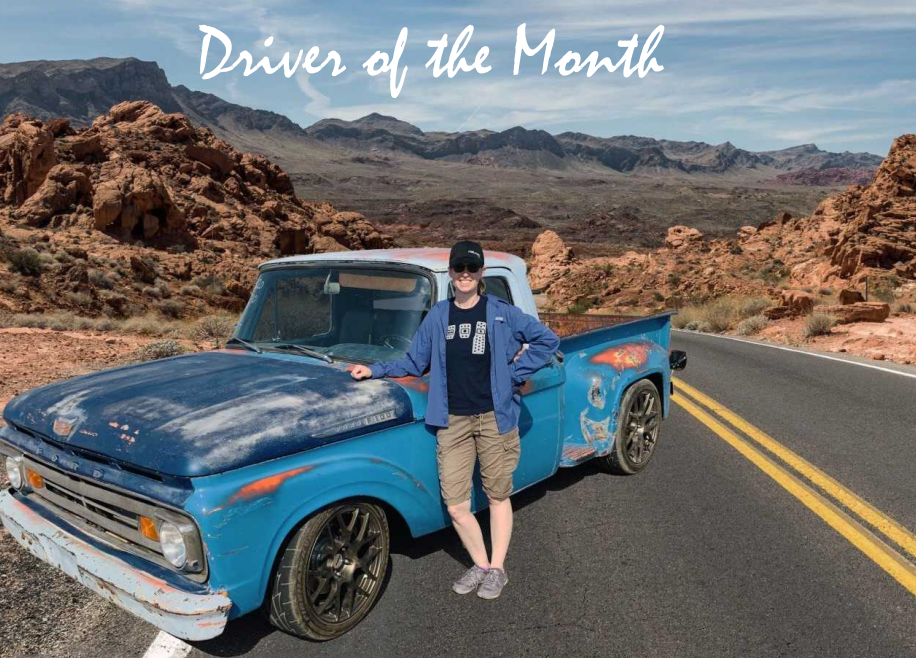
*"Just being a mediocre driver  
has never been my ambition.  
That's not my style"*  
— Michael Schumacher

## Car of the Month



Tribute cars were a big thing back in the day when car owners painted and decorated their pony cars, drag racers and daily drivers to look like the cars of the champions they admired. None was done better than **Eric Gagman's** "Evil Boss Mustang". Eric found his car as a long-time stored barn find-of-sorts and set about rebuilding it into true performance machine. The Mustang has an interesting history as it was painted and decaled to duplicate one of the race cars of the infamous automotive designer Carroll Shelby. Shelby's famous Terlingua logo is featured on the car. The Shelby built cars were very competitive in Trans Am racing and the various long distance enduro races such as the Carrera Pan Americana in Mexico and similar over land races in the late 60s. Over time Eric has made many mods to the car to improve it to its present level as a competitive CAM-T entry. The car looks great; the stoker 351 motor sounds wonderful and it is a welcome addition to the fast-growing number of fine vintage CAM class cars here in Phoenix. *Good luck Eric and thanks for sharing your cars most interesting story.*

# Driver of the Month



YES  
I'M A GIRL  
Yes I speak  
fluent racing



**Amanda Hitt** became interested in Solo racing because her husband, Mike, began racing Solo with SCCA in 2016 when he completed his 1970 Chevelle. Amanda has always accompanied him to events, and has been photographing his adventures.

This October 2020 SCCA event was Amanda's very first event, driving their **1961 Ford F100 truck** that was just re-built, including installing seat belts. The truck was originally built for the Air Force, and still bears the placard on the dash. It was a Craigslist find 3 years ago and the couple swapped out the front clip and rear axle for Crown Victoria parts, with Ridetech coil overs and a 4 link rear suspension. The truck has a LS1 and T-56. They did a final push earlier this year to finally "finish" the truck. It still need a few modifications and additions, however it's finally ready to be driven.

Unabashedly Amanda said, "I've never participated in racing events, with the exception of 'Ladies Day' at AMP a few years ago. Yet I've been wanting a truck for several years! The protouring community has really embraced trucks, so the availability of information was just right for us when doing this build." When asked what her autocross aspirations for herself and the new truck, she explained, "We built my truck for comfort and drivability – so really I just want to improve my car handling skills and have fun!"

Amanda grew up in southern New Jersey and moved to Casa Grande, Arizona in 2007. She and her husband like to build and modify vehicles, go camping/off-roading and enjoy time at the track. They have two rescue mutts at home.

The cars we drive say a  
lot about us.

Alexandra Paul

# Volunteers Of the Month



Ramsey Crenshaw, age 24, is the Volunteer of the Month for October. He is pictured standing with his sister, **Xiana Crenshaw**, age 19

**Ramsey Crenshaw** was born and raised on the Island of Maui and came to Arizona to pursue his education in Communications. He is currently a Master's student at Northern Arizona University, while working for United Airlines at the Flagstaff Airport.

He started racing in autocross roughly three years ago by invitation from one of his best friends and rivals Travis Williams. Although Ramsey knew nothing about auto crossing to start, thanks to the friendly staff at the SCCA events he has continued to refine his skills and currently remaining competitive in the Street Modified class.

The car Ramsey drives is a **2014 WRX Hatch**, which he bought it bone stock with 20K miles on it in 2016. The mod list is long; it's found a solid home in Street Modified thanks to its shorter than stock final drive gear ratio and full polyurethane bushing kit keeping it a snappy, well-planted, and fun car to drive.

Ramsey shared this, "As fun as it is to autocross, it only gets better when I get to share racing around cones with friends. A group of us come together as a team to learn and improve our driving skills down here in Phoenix!" He continues by explaining, "**40 ROLL Garage Club** is a competitive bunch and I'm proud to travel down here with them every month. It's amazing to see a group of youth drivers come out to autocross with the support of multiple Northern Arizona Businesses. Without their support many of us younger drivers would not have the opportunities to race!"

Their sponsors includes : **Autorehab Flagstaff** – an Autoshop; **KNA Racing** -- a performance parts dealer and **Flagstaff Powder coating**.

Quite proudly Ramsey beams, "A good example of somebody new to the racing world would be my very own sister. She has started her racing career here in Arizona this Fall Series in her **2015 Evo X**. It's only been two events and she is already showing me that she is the faster learner. I won't be ahead of her for very long. Regardless, racing with my sibling is something of a dream come true. For we both take the time to work on our cars together to get to the racetrack."

Outside of the car hobby, Ramsey is active snowboarder during the winter season in Flagstaff. He's also a big fan of billiards, and before the pandemic, could be found at the pool houses in the evenings.

## Holiday Gift Suggestions



T-shirt available at <https://claudetee.com>

# Jason and Jay Report on their West Coast Autocross Tour



This summer **Jason Bucki** and **Jay Balducci** were fortunate to participate in the only 3 west coast SCCA National Autocross events. Early in 2020, the site in Packwood, WA was sold and then add in Covid-19 – both National events there were cancelled. Fortunately, the events were reinstated in June with just enough time for them to head in that direction. The SCCA Fontana, CA ProSolo was the last of 3 weekends in a row in July. Off Beth and Jay Balducci went – towing Jason's **B Street BMW M2**. Jason would fly back and forth from AZ<-> WA between events.

Jason's quick recap below sums up the fun and friendship they have: *"Back to reality this week after 3 straight weekends of SCCA Solo national events spent between Packwood, WA and Fontana, CA. The Packwood Champ Tour and ProSolo weekends were memorable for so many reasons and we had some great competition results, taking 1st & 4th in B Street at the Champ Tour and the top 2 spots at the ProSolo. Passing through Mount Rainier National Park on my way from/to Seattle was icing on the cake and I really cannot wait to get back up to the area - hopefully for some more Packwood events next season."*

*"Fontana is always a mixed bag, great to spend a weekend ripping around in cars with the Cal Club folks but we typically struggle in the M2 due to the low grip surface. Thankfully, we were able to get some testing done at the site in June and felt good about our setup heading into the ProSolo weekend. The testing paid off with Jay and I once again taking the top 2 spots in B Street to cap off a successful string of events. If all goes according to plan, we'll compete in 3 more national events this season between the September Solo National Championships and ProSolo Finale in Lincoln, NE and a late October Champ Tour event in Marana, AZ. Hoping we can keep things rolling heading into the final events of the year!"*

Jason summarized on July 30<sup>th</sup>... *"Well, Nationals never happened and there was a long pause for us afterwards, but it's great to run with our Solo friends in AZ again this fall. Jason and Jay plan to make another run for the B Street Solo and ProSolo Championships in 2021."*

July 10, 2020 to July 12, 2020 Packwood, WA  
Championship Tour;  
Jason 1, Jay 4.

July 17, 2020 to July 19, 2020 Packwood, WA ProSolo:  
Jason 1, Jay 2

July 24, 2020 to July 26, 2020 Fontana, CA  
Jason 1, Jay 2



# *Driver Tip of the Month* **What are some common Novice mistakes?**

By Brian Miller

1. **They think, “How hard can this be?”** It is a slow speed event around a bunch of cones in a parking lot! Surprise! Even for the veteran track racer the brain speed rate required in solo racing is often more demanding than that on a racetrack. Drivers must make multiple split-second decisions to secure the correct line and get a good time. The gates come at you at a very rapid rate and beginner’s often simply underestimate the degree of difficulty finding the correct path through the maze of cones before them, get discouraged and do not return in the future. The solution: Lots of repetitions on various autocross courses. It gets easier with experience.
2. **Novice drivers fail to hang in there to improve!** Most top level national solo champions will tell you they were not all that great starting out in the sport as beginners. Some took years of solo experience to reach national level abilities. The solution: Stick around! You will improve with time.
3. **Beginners often do not seek assistance!** Their mind set is often, “Hey I have driven a performance car for x number of years, and I do not need anyone to help me drive around a bunch of cones in a parking lot!” Solution: Go to solo schools, have better drivers ride with you, have an experienced driver drive your car with you as a passenger. You can also read about autocross and become a student of the sport.
4. **They do not come prepared to race!** Often novice drivers have no air gauge, air pump, or water spray can or other needed supplies. And to some, it is a social gathering not a competitive event. Having a ‘social’ mind set is ok, however just do not be disappointed with your results on the course if that is your goal in coming to autocross events
5. **Personal pride can be a problem here also.** It relates to suggestion #1, in that, novice drivers who are or were good at other sports simply cannot handle being at the bottom of the leader board in a new sport, and consequently drop out.
6. **They fail to have fun!** To these drivers their results on the score board is all that counts. These types miss the simple pleasure of zooming around a parking lot at speed, sometimes whacking a bunch cones in the process. Win lose or draw its just fun to be out there in your car having a blast! Solution: Come to the event and enjoy the day regardless of your scoreboard status.
7. **While on the course they tend to look only where they will immediately be next!** Rookies often fail to look ahead to see where the gate is following the one they are presently entering. The result – brain panic – slowing down to look or misdirection resulting in a possible DNF. Solution: Looking ahead; your head needs to rotate constantly seeking the next gate beyond to one you are about to enter.
8. **Beginners are too violent with their movements in the car.** They jam on the brakes, jerk to wheel and stomp on the gas to go fast. Smooth movements are the key here. Violent actions upset the car and slow it down. The solution: Control the adrenaline and become aware of any violent actions with the wheel or pedals while on the course.
9. **They think the cones are sacred or going off course by missing a gate is a big no no.** (This problem is just the opposite #8) Consequently, they drive very cautiously to avoid any damage to a cone or their car. Solution: Hitting an occasional cone is a good thing as it indicates that you are finding the limits of your car and your abilities. Novice drivers can benefit from looking at the scoreboard and observing that many of the better drivers will have an occasional DNF or cone penalty posted there.
10. **Novices show up with an ultra-performance machine or poorly prepared cars.** A ultra-high performance and high horsepower car such a Dodge Viper, Corvette Z06 or Porsche GT 3 are all super cars. These types of cars are more difficult to control then less powerful cars that might better be suited to beginners. The intensity of the acceleration, average speed on the course and handling capabilities of super cars is best left to those with a modicum of experience in the sport. Or conversely, newbies bring a car that is very poorly equipped for solo racing. Poor tires, sloppy suspension, worn steering parts etc. All these factors contribute to being a difficult car to control on the course at speed. Solution: Start out with a car that does not create handling problems on the course and work up to a hot ride as you gain experience. (Expense does not have to be a deterrent here as many top drivers are driving older finely tuned cars that are very economical to purchase.)

# Pylon Quiz – Important Driver's Contemplations

*Read carefully – Answer True or False*

1. Auto cross is more like boxing than it is like ballet.
2. Horsepower is as important to good lap times as is a precisely tuned suspension.
3. Given a choice between spending some bucks on making your ride a better auto crosser by buying better tires, a more productive purchase would be upgrading the car's brakes.
4. National level drivers in solo racing were superior in their abilities as rookies in the sport as compared with middle of the pack level competitors.
5. Setting a driving strategy for a particular auto cross course by walking the course is a waste of time because until you drive it once little can be learned as to how to approach it.
6. A tire pressure gauge is a more important aid at the track than a map of the course.
7. If you do not hit a at least one cone at a solo event you are not trying hard enough.
8. If time only allowed you to choose between checking the corner weights on your car on a set of accurate scales and adjusting accordingly or reducing the weight of the car by putting on lighter wheels the best choice would be to replace the wheels.
9. Improving your raw time is more important than increasing you PAX score within your class.
10. There is a definite pattern on the score board as to when drivers lay down their best run and it is usually run number four of four.



Straight roads are for fast cars, turns  
are for fast drivers.

— Colin McRae —

AZ QUOTES

**Answers to Pylon Quiz:**

*There is no best or correct answer to most of the above questions, yet they do make good food for contemplation.*