



# Pylon Press

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA - PHOENIX AZ SOLO REGION

January 2026 Spring Series #2



## Event Synopsis

BRIAN MILLER  
PYLON PRESS EDITOR

There were two autocross events in January; On 1/25/26 another fine Arizona day blessed the PASR auto crossers as they enjoyed a fun and flowing *Bill Pribil* designed course that provided five enjoyable runs per entry. An enthusiastic 150 drivers lined up for some fast-moving action, with short wait times between runs and a relatively DNF free course. Hats off to the course workers for an excellent job of cleaning up the course between run groups. Corner workers are getting better and more efficient in the management of the Phoenix Raceway Cactus II skid pad run surface with each new event.

The contest for the Spring Series Trophy Class Podium awards are now heating up. In the Ladies class, **Amanda Hitt** and **Jesse Bistras** are slugging it out for top PAX class time, with Amanda taking the honors by a scant 3/10 of a second. Close racing also occurred in the Cam-S class for the top spot, with **Clay Turner** nudging out **Keith Crouse** in the points category by 51.563 to 51.904. In the CPS class a fiercely fought battle took place between teammates **Tim Bergstrom**, and **Kevin Venisnik**. Tim persevered with a score of 50.378 versus Kevin's 51.516 in the co-driven CPS Miata.

In the unofficial Pylon Press Honorable Mention category of drivers, those finishing with overall PAX scores of 960 or higher at this event are: **Dave Bahl**, **Jay Balducci**, **Ron Bistras**, **James Frink**, **Bruce Hanson**, **Daniel Hipskind**, **Brian Peters** and **Ben Zukowski**.



**Kathi Van Der Werf's** journey in the world of high-speed autocross was ignited in April 2017 after enrolling in the Porsche High-Performance Driving School at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, AL.

However, her racing adventure took off when her husband surprised her with a **Fiat 124 Abarth** in July 2017. This led her to compete at her first events, including SCCA races in San Diego and Arizona. Shortly after her Nationals experience, Kathi traded her Fiat for a **Shelby Mustang 500**, a car she fondly remembered, yet felt she never mastered. Her journey continued as she raced locally and participated in numerous West Coast National events, all while eyeing the upcoming Porsche GT4. After racing in Packwood, WA, she transitioned to a **Porsche Cayman 4.0 GTS**, setting the stage for her debut at the 2019 Nationals. Kathi found joy in the Cayman until November 2020, when she finally took delivery of her dream car, a **Miami Blue Porsche GT4**. Unfortunately, shortly after acquiring it, she faced serious health issues, causing her to store the car for 13 months. Despite her struggles, she returned to racing, albeit slowly, yet by 2024 things began to fall back into place for her. The latest twist in her story came when Chandler Porsche reached out with news of a new **2025 GT4RS**. Kathi couldn't resist saying, "It has MY name on it!" Her journey is a testament to resilience and passion, made even more special by her husband's generous support, who jokingly wishes she preferred jewelry instead.



**John Piggott's** 2002 Porsche 996 Carrera Coupe, in Carrera white with a black full-leather interior, has been in his possession for nearly two years. This isn't his first Porsche; he previously owned a 1985.5 Porsche 944 NA for 15 years. After facing high repair costs on the older model, he opted for a 911 and discovered that while many models had become expensive, the 996 was more affordable, though still costly to prepare for track use.



The 996 features a 3.6L flat-six engine, producing 320 hp and 273 lb-ft of torque, humorously compared by John to a Toyota Camry TRD. To enhance reliability, he installed an aftermarket IMS bearing and replaced the original water pump with a more reliable OEM version. John also upgraded the air-oil separator and installed a dry sump with a deeper oil pan to prevent oil starvation.



In terms of performance, he added a short-throw shifter, upgraded to Sebro slotted disks and Ferodo pads for better braking, and replaced the car's 17" wheels with 18" Carrera wheels fitted with Michelin Pilot Sport 4S XL tires. After a catalytic converter failure, John replaced the exhaust system with a Top Gear setup and upgraded the suspension with new sway bars and Ohlins coilovers waiting to be installed.

John describes the driving experience as firm and responsive, noting that while the 996 lacks the rawness of older models, it offers a unique driving experience. He warns potential buyers about the "Porsche Tax" that comes with maintenance.



I've been in love with car racing since I got my first slot car set as a young child in the early 70s. For me, the voice of racing is Jackie Stewart\*\* because he did racing commentary when I was growing up!

*John Piggott*

\*\* Jackie Stewart is a legendary figure in the world of motorsport, particularly in Formula One racing. He is celebrated not only for his remarkable driving career, as well as his contributions to improving safety standards in the sport.

Although he views the 996 as a good entry point for those nostalgic for the Porsche 911, he advises that significant investment in modifications and maintenance is necessary. John enjoys auto crossing with the car, finding it an ideal setting to safely explore its limits. A lifelong racing enthusiast, he also owns a 1990 Miata for more budget-friendly racing, humorously acknowledging his tendency toward financial irresponsibility in pursuing his passion for cars.

# The Health Benefits of ESCAPISM



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"AUTO CROSS: WHERE THE ROAR OF ENGINES DROWNS OUT THE NOISE OF REALITY, OFFERING A THRILLING ESCAPE ON FOUR WHEELS."

Auto crossing is more than just a sport; it's one of the most beneficial forms of escapism possible.. With each turn and every cone dodged, racers find a sanctuary where they can laugh, learn, and unleash their inner speed demons. You might even say auto crossing is a good mental health prescription – and here's why:

- 1. Adrenaline Overload: The Ultimate Stress Buster** – As you launch off the starting line, the world around you fades away—bills, work deadlines, and that laundry pile suddenly seem light-years away. The only thing that matters is navigating those cones like a pro. It's a form of meditation, only with more horsepower and fewer yoga mats!
- 2. Cone Dodging: A New Perspective on Life's Obstacles** – Each cone is a metaphor for life's little challenges, and what better way to tackle them than at 60 mph? Auto crossing teaches you that sometimes, the best way to deal with obstacles is to zigzag your way through them with style. Plus, intentionally dodging a cone feels oddly satisfying—like you've just conquered a mini Everest!
- 3. The Friendship Rally: Humor and Camaraderie** – One of the best parts of auto crossing is the quirky community that comes with it. You're surrounded by fellow enthusiasts who understand the thrill of a good lap—and the agony of a flat tire. The pit stops turn into laughter-filled moments where everyone shares their "epic fails," like the time someone mistook the brake pedal for the gas. These shared stories create bonds that are as strong as any racing engine.
- 4. Learning to Let Go: Embrace the Chaos** – Auto crossing is not just about speed; it's about learning to embrace the unexpected. Maybe you took a corner too tight and found yourself in a little "off-road adventure." Instead of panicking, you learn to laugh it off, dust yourself (and your car) off, and try again. It's a reminder that life is full of twists and turns, and sometimes you just must go with the flow—preferably at a high RPM!
- 5. Escapism with a Side of Speed Therapy** – Let's not forget the sheer joy of speed. There's something undeniably therapeutic about the roar of the engine and the wind in your hair (or helmet). It's a form of therapy where the therapist is a race car, and the only prescription is more laps! As you fly around the track, you leave behind the stress of daily life, embracing the thrill of the moment.

**NOTE:** Obviously, this article not intended to substitute for professional mental health care advice! Take everything you read in this newsletter lightly.

Brian Miller, Pylon Press Editor

# TECH TIP

Clean up your act!



Have you noticed any difference in your gas mileage based on your car's cleanliness? The impact of a dirty car on fuel efficiency can be surprisingly significant. Here's how it breaks down:

## 1. Aerodynamics

**Dirty Car:** A dirty vehicle, especially one with mud, debris, or a thick coating of grime, creates more drag.

**Clean Car:** A shiny, clean car has a smoother surface, allowing for better airflow and improved aerodynamics, which helps maximize fuel efficiency.

## 2. Weight:

**Dirty Car** Accumulated dirt and debris can add extra weight, although typically minimal, it can still have a small impact on fuel consumption.

**Clean Car:** A clean vehicle is lighter and optimized for better fuel efficiency.

## 3. Maintenance:

**Dirty Car** Neglecting car cleanliness can be a sign of overall maintenance neglect, which might also affect engine performance and, consequently, fuel efficiency.

**Clean Car:** Regular cleaning often coincides with better maintenance practices, which helps in optimizing fuel efficiency.

**4. Fuel Consumption Increase:** A **dirty car** could lead to an increase in fuel costs up to 3% depending on the severity of the dirt and driving conditions. If gas costs \$3.50 per gallon and you normally spend \$150 on gas monthly, a 2% increase would mean an additional \$3 per month.

While the difference might seem small, keeping your car clean can contribute to better fuel efficiency and savings over time. You might be smirking or feel duped that you read this far – however the real benefit of a **Clean Car** is pride of ownership and evidence of preparation.

# PYLON PRESS QUIZ

## D e t e r m i n i n g   A n n u a l   T a g   F e e s

Ever wonder the formula for determining the annual tag fee for a new vehicle in Arizona? The formula typically includes factors such as the vehicle's value, age, and additional fees. Here's a quiz just to see what you might already know!

1. **What is the primary factor used to determine the annual tag fee for a new vehicle in Arizona?**

- A. Vehicle color
- B. Vehicle weight
- C. Vehicle value
- D. Vehicle brand

2. **How is the depreciation of a vehicle typically factored into the annual tag fee?**

- A. It increases the fee
- B. It decreases the fee
- C. It has no effect
- D. It only applies to electric vehicles

3. **Which of the following is NOT included in the annual tag fee calculation?**

- A. Vehicle age
- B. Local taxes
- C. Vehicle emissions
- D. Vehicle engine size

### True/False Questions

- 4. **T or F** – The annual tag fee for a vehicle in Arizona remains the same every year regardless of changes in vehicle value.
- 5. **T or F** – New vehicles typically have higher annual tag fees compared to older vehicles due to their value.

## PP QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. C – Vehicle value
- 2. B – It decreases the fee
- 3. D – Vehicle engine size
- 4. False
- 5. True



**KEEP IT LEGAL,  
KEEP IT MOVING**