

## **Mt. Philo Hillclimb**

**October 14-15, 2006**

**Chairpersons: Stephen Jones #702 and Nick Wheelock #832**

### **Summary by Michael Wilson #6 (f/k/a #25)**

There are 2 clichés for October 2006 Philo:

- 1) It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.
- 2) The season ended with a bang.

Take your pick. Excellent weather all weekend, if a bit cool. Light on the entry for some reason; the usual of 5-10 local Burlington entries did not happen. Roy Hopkins & Adrienne Hughes finally got to a hillclimb this year. 7 runs Sunday and 6 for the lucky early-in-line people Saturday.

**Lots of personal bests.** Sherman Baumann started the weekend with one, a 1:07.42, and continued down from there to a 1:04.18 on Sunday, making him the second fastest man up Philo (after Dan Rutan). Also the only finisher in P1 since Jerry crashed at the infamous 110 degree left hand turn just below check 6, marked turn 16 for this weekend. Maros Zelina dropped a similar amount of time, from a previous best of 1:09.75 to 1:06.34 for second overall and 1st in U2. Although he probably will be north of the equator next year, not much else is certain, but at least I hope to see him (and Ingrid) again soon. Michael Wilson dropped a second to get to 1:06.86 on the 7th run of Sunday. Arlo did a 1:07.82 in the STi for 4th, 1st in S1, a best by a big margin since it is the first dry weekend at Philo with that car for him. Don Taylor used his new tires to advantage for a 1:09.66 for 5th and 1st in FL. 6th, and 1st in S2, in what I am told is the ex-Denmeade Mitsubishi EVO II, was Alex Graneau with a 1:10.39, leaving early on Sunday before the road gave people the last second. This was probably a big jump over his previous best. Rick Young did a 1:13.42, also a personal best, for 7th and 1st in S3.

Other personal bests are probably there but I am not sure; I suspect however that Sarah Gardescu outlasting all comers to win S4 against Jimi Heyder and a newcomer in a real mini is a personal best.

**The worst of times?** I had 3 cars there for 5 drivers. The SSZ Stradale (also in P1) broke a differential with a very loud noise; we think an actual differential spider gear, so Brian & David C Dennis each only got 2 runs on Saturday. They claim to be happy, but I do not care for having one of my cars let down another driver. My brothers Nicholas and Peter brought my 1993 Mazda RX-7. Nicholas has autocross, road course and one hillclimb experience from Colorado; Peter had only done one run of Hunnewell hillclimb in 1980 in my Fiat. The car seemed to be running well, but on his 3rd run Sunday Nicholas had a problem in the same place Jerry did, hitting the same tree. He said the car just would not turn\*; there were no visible tire marks on the road. Fortunately Nicholas had no injuries other than pride and possible soreness. He had done a 1:17 on Saturday which was about a second faster than my best in the car. Also fortunately my parents were there, so he could get a ride back to Boston to catch the 8 AM Monday

flight back to Colorado. Peter decided to stay through the rest of the runs to watch, and go back with me.

**The best of times?** We had an excellent dinner at the Black Sheep Bistro in Vergennes VT. As good as I have had in Vermont, and on a par with the best in Boston, and a remarkable value. The Dennis family got to enjoy a dinner without cooking. The weather was great, and despite having 2 running cars move to non-running status, I was enjoying myself and the company. Maros & Ingrid were there after a several-event hiatus, and Roy Hopkins & Adrienne Hughes got to a hillclimb this year. The Ferrari tour was good, although the highlight in some ways was the De Tomaso Mangusta, where nobody (or at least not I) could fit under the steering wheel or behind the pedals.

**Going out with a bang?** There were the aforementioned: Jerry's crash, the SSZ banging its gear, and the RX7 crash. Ralph Cota ran up an embankment with the left tires only, ran over a tree and flipped his Peugeot when the car would not turn after going airborne over the turn 2 crest, ending Saturday's runs and that car's day. Ralph returned with Arlo's number 45 Peugeot for Sunday, finishing 8th overall. Jimi Heyder started (and ended) his Sunday by losing it over the turn 10 check 4 crest, and flipping the car into turn 11. And Brian Blow narrowly avoided the bang 15 feet below where Jerry and Nicholas had their problems, but did relatively little damage. He also reported that he could not turn. At this particular hill he was consistently a bit slower than Jennifer Ricker; some weekends one is faster, other weekends the other is faster.

A great event put on by Steve Jones and Nick Wheelock of the SCCV; Andy Jones did a good job at Control, as did Kevin Gale and Michele Baumann at finish, and of course a lot of other workers whose names I do not know filled out the hill for us.

Now to sort out what to do with the leftover RX7 pieces, both at Arlo's and at home (offers accepted), and what car gets the green plate.

- Michael Wilson

*\* Turn 16 (or 17 as it may usually be called) - the 120 left just below check 6: Charlie North claims that this section of road (he did not say where it started) has less traction than the lower part of the course. I have never consciously noticed this; Charlie thinks I may just have that noted subconsciously. However I can say that much of the time I do not use the modern technique of late brake, late hard turn in, early gas and late apex. Due to brake issues with both the Alfa Romeo and the Corvette I learned to brake earlier, and turn a bit earlier. This caused me to start to feel the turn-in better with more margin ahead of me for error. I used this very successfully at Bryar in the Corvette. I do not know if I do this at Philo or not. I believe that Roy mostly uses the standard modern technique.*

**Another few notes:**

This makes Sherman the second-fastest man ever up Philo (after Dan Rutan).

I do not know the exact order of Doug Valliere in the Formula Ford, Jerry Driscoll in the Patriot, and Maros Zelina in the EVO, but Michael Wilson is behind Maros.

My understanding is that Don Taylor is using the new Kumho V710 tires to his advantage to set faster times than before. Not clear why others in S are not using these since they are reported to be very fast.

Rick Young's 7th was in a non-turbo 4 cylinder Neon.

Roy Hopkins got 9th, also a 13, in a stock-motor 4 cylinder M3 on non-sticky tires (although probably more sticky than the SSZ stones).

From Roy Hopkins: "Thank you again, hard to believe it was that long ago (1992 or 3?) for my first hill climb and meeting you at Philo."

Turn 16/17 also appears to be 'less steep' than other parts of the hill. I believe this creates less traction on turn in, and less effective brakes. I also slow a little earlier for this corner, and try to start the turn earlier (than say corner 3 at check 1) and adjust speed with throttle throughout the corner.

I don't know my best times in the 'Orange M3', but was very happy with breaking into the 13's with a 240,000 mile stock M3 on 5 year old S03 tires. I tried to maintain smoother corner entries and get on the gas earlier (all long straights after 3, the rock, corner 16/17). Seemed to help.

Most exciting moment was rear loosing traction at 10 and dancing all the way past 11 before getting under control. Jon was working that corner and commented. Faster to slow down for 10 and drive up to 13.

Most impressive sight: Maros launching out of the rock turn in first gear, clearly gained time there on other competitors, if he could catch second gear before the limiter.