



BECCA BERTOK

podium-worthy team on tap, our hopes for a win were dashed in the eighth hour with a differential failure.”

All in all, however, it was a wonderful season for a young driver.

Panic Motorsports, co-owned by the Bertoks and **Jerry Horn**, specializes in Miata and RX-7 parts and racecar prep. Panic also provides track support to team drivers.

“As a business, racing provides Panic [Motorsports] with a wonderful advertising opportunity, but we wouldn’t be out there if we didn’t have fun,” explains Steve. “With Becca there as my crew chief, [our daughter] MariKate ‘helping’ to change tires, and our family and friends, racing makes for a great weekend; and this year, it earned us a big win!”

For more information on the Carolina Cup Pro Series, go to www.carolinacupproseries.com and www.scr-scca.com, and for info on Panic Motorsports, head to www.panicmotorsports.com.

SEDIV'S CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

Longtime “conch” and SCCA racer **Bob Hess** smiles broadly when asked why he’s wearing a jacket in (relatively) balmy weather at Sebring.

“South of the Florida mainland exists one of SCCA’s most enthusiastic group of unrepresented – and possibly unknown – road racers and autocrossers,” he says. “Their history goes back to the ‘50s when the Florida Keys and SCCA hosted annual hill climbs...on islands four feet above sea level. That spawned a local club that exists today, made up of mostly SCCA members who make the long trek north into Florida and Central Florida Regions to race on a regular basis. You could

rightly call this group SCCA’s ‘Caribbean Connection.’

“Autocrossing 11 times a year and road racing as often as possible, this group epitomizes what SCCA is all about! These erstwhile folks include **Jack Fuller** (SPU/Vintage Porsche 914-6), **Norman Fuller** (ITB Golf), **Jerry Dykhuisen** (FP Spitfire), **Jim and Jean Bell** (ITC Datsun 510), **Skip and Joelle Taylor** (ITC Honda), **Dustin Harrison** (AS Mustang), **Al Wicht** (AS Mustang), **Charles Wicht** (NASCAR Cup Chevy), **Lazette Ramos** (ITB VW Rabbit), **Richard Breese** (ITB VW Rabbit) and myself and my wife “**Andy**” Hess, with our Central Florida Region HP Sprite. When you see this group at the track you might think we dress kind of funny, but you have to remember our origin – from a different latitude with a different attitude!”

Will the “Conch Republic” drivers be wearing their jackets or their surfing shorts at the Double SARRC? It’s Feb. 7-8 at Palm Beach International Speedway. See you all there.

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NORTH COAST NEWS

GREAT LAKES DIVISION
BY NANCY SCHILLACE

SOLO NEWS, NEW BEGINNINGS AND CHECKERED FLAGS

After their win for the Tri-Regional PAX Challenge, Cincinnati Region is gearing up for its Solo season with another PAX Challenge, drivers school and test-and-tune and is continuing with the novice mentoring program – and the region is

Panic Motorsports
co-owner and 2008
CCPS Champion
Steve Bertok shows
his daughter **MariKate**
around the paddock
in his Mazda Miata.

(OPPOSITE) Should the SCCA mandate head and neck restraints in Club Racing? This was the topic one Saturday morning over coffee and crullers at BRM Motorsports.

working with Central Kentucky and Central Ohio Regions to get it all done. Also, the chances are good that the Great Lakes Divisional can work out as a qualifier for the Solo National Championships in Nebraska in September.

MAKING TRACKS

Last fall it was the race against time for **Brad Poppell**, CEO and president of the Bluegrass Motorsports Club & Road Course in Sparta, Ky., to get the paving finished in November for it to have time to cure over the winter. Even with many outside factors going on – such as the economic downslide affecting some of the racing – building the new track went from a dream to a reality.

Poppell said the experience offered something new every day. “Meeting people is a good part of it, from members to governors to Formula 1 drivers,” said Poppell when asked about the best part of the project. “But I think the best part so far is that I have seen an idea transform from paper to asphalt. I can see why so many tracks fail to make it off paper because there is a challenge every single day that can jeopardize or delay the project.”

The first phase completed the 2.5 miles of track with a 3,200-foot long front straight and over 100 feet of elevation changes with six possible configurations. Future expansion will extend the track to 3.5 miles.

Regarding some configuration changes, Poppell commented, “The best part about this track is the elevation changes, and the worst part of the track is the elevation changes.”

Prior to contractors moving some 600,000 cubic feet of dirt to build up the run-off areas, one turn was said to require “a parachute and a diaper” as part of the racers’ safety equipment.

Luck played a factor when the price of oil dropped in October – it saved the track millions of dollars. That helped to fund part of the drainage system that went under the entire track. Also taken into consideration was the “green” factor as the timber cut down will be recycled into uses for the clubhouses.

After a touring session on the newly completed track, Vice President of Sales and Marketing – and Club racer – **Kurt Niemeyer** had a chance to take his Miata out on the track. “After months of driving the track in a Suburban, those two laps were worth the wait,” he said.

Knowing the competitive nature of drivers and their need for speed, keeping the speed down to a cruising pace during the touring session only