

## ON RALYING

ROADRALLY BY RICK BEATTIE

### AN EVEN DOZEN OR SO

Although sabbatical usually refers to seven, **Jim Heine** has taken leave of the *On Rallying* column after a bit more than a dozen years of his always careful, professional and exemplary writing. He leaves me not so much holding the bag as ready to use it, as my nervousness takes hold at being up to the task of following his perfect course. The readers can never miss his writing as much as I already do.

But 12 has a lore all its own: a year of months, *The Dirty Dozen*, boxcars and, somehow appropriate for this column, the 12th (partly) night running of Detroit Region's Son of Sno\*Drift rally on Jan. 9. The rally began at 1:30 p.m. and finished around 9 p.m. This first Detroit Region and first Great Lakes Division RoadRally of 2010 followed a course through the snow-covered counties north and west of Detroit.

"Son of Sno\*Drift has been the biggest GLDiv RoadRally event for several years now," said GLDiv RoadRally Steward **Mike Bennett**.

"Because it was in the dead of winter, it drew people who spend the rest of the year running Solo, RallyCross or pursuing other hobbies. The total of 35 cars this year was up from 29 last year, but it was a typical turnout."

Rallymaster **Scott Harvey Jr.** agreed with Bennett's assessment of the event's popularity and added, "It was a straightforward Tour rally. I provided a mileage, tulip diagram and written description at every instruction. It had always been my intention to keep course following to a minimum. Speeds were decided assuming the roads would be snow covered and slippery."

"Scott Harvey puts his heart and soul into it each year," observed **Jack von Kaenel**, who along with his driver, **Ron Johnstonbaugh**, won Equipped Class and first overall with a total of 21 points for the two dozen controls. "The combination of precise course layout, measurement and accurate calculations, with great roads, challenging weather conditions and demanding control locations manned by dedicated crews simply can't be beat," Von Kaenel continued.

Although von Kaenel admitted his

driver was a far more important factor, the power and handling of Johnstonbaugh's AWD Subaru WRX and winter snow tires made it an ideal car for this event. **Adam Spieszny**, Stock Class winner with his navigator **Piotr Roszczenko**, has run every SofSD. Spieszny agreed with von Kaenel. "In 1993, I came to the U.S. from Poland where I drove a few Cracow Region Championship pro rallies. Twelve years ago we were here in Novice Class driving a rear-wheel-drive Nissan 240SX with all season tires. We collected so much mud inside the rims that the car shook terribly as we drove it. It was a big improvement when I changed from all season to winter tires. After a few years, I changed to an Eagle Talon turbo AWD, a car very suitable for challenging winter weather and the SofSD course."

For **Brian Line**, who with his brother and navigator **Kevin Line** took the top Limited Class honors driving a 4WD Jeep Cherokee, experience may have played a big part in their success. Like Spieszny, who has run every SofSD, and Von Kaenel, who has run eight events, Brian entered SofSD nine times prior to the 2010 version. They had a different rally style than the Stock Class winners. While Spieszny and Roszczenko liked to keep an eye

on what their competitors were doing and adjusted their focus to suit their current position, Brian and Kevin "tried not to think about scores too much. We just tried to do our best to keep our average low. Anything can happen during a rally."

Rallymaster Harvey agrees that anything can happen. "When I reached Control 22, I was informed that **Bob Martin**, our scorekeeper, had his car break down on the freeway. He was having his car towed home and would return in his wife's car. All of the logs, score sheets, etc., were in his possession. Amazingly, the wait was not as long as I expected."

A number of competitors noticed and commented on the dedication and excellent organization of Harvey's more than 20 member committee who posted scores soon after the Rally ended.

There was one final note that several people mentioned. **Amanda Skelly** who, along with her navigator **Tamika Edwards**, won the Novice Class, noted it in her Detroit Region Web site post. "This was by far one of the most exciting events I had been to. My navigator and I had a blast and were very excited to take first [in] Novice. Thanks to all those who organized the event and made it run smoothly. We met new people, had a great time and left smiling ear to ear! Can't wait until the next TSD."

The same feeling was echoed by von Kaenel. "It was a blast."

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Ron Johnstonbaugh and Jack von Kaenel captured the Equipped Class win at this year's Son of Sno\*Drift RoadRally on Jan. 9.

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SCOTT HARVEY, JR.