



Well here we are. Right smack dab at the start of a new decade and the final one of this century to boot! How can our generation be so lucky? Oh, I know there are a few of you out there that are thrilled to see the 80's pass into the archives while others are just mystified they have made it this far. While there is no doubt there were a few moments I would like to play back and improve upon (STPR '88 and Tiadaghton '89 leap to mind) I think the '80's were a major improvement over the 70's. Think of it this way, any decade that produced the '80 U.S. Winter Olympic Hockey Team, Rubik's Cube, Cabbage Patch Dolls, all five Clancy books, ET, Trivial Pursuit, the Ringling Brothers Unicorn, the '86 Mets, "glasnost", Alf, C. Everett Koop, Toons, Live Aid-Farm Aid-Band Aid-Comic Relief, Lech Walesa, a new and improved Miss Liberty, Mickey the Moose and his best gal, Jessica, Lake Wobegon, marketing chunks of the Berlin Wall and the California Raisins rates right up there with the best of them.

Of course, in the spirit of balanced reminiscing it's only fair to mention some of the decades more notable turkeys: Swaggart, Mount Saint Helen, "Heaven's Gate", Black Monday, Ivan Boesky, "cold fusion", Tammy Faye, Imelda's shoes, Pete Rose, Gary Hart, Tiananmen Square, the garbage barge, Mary Beth Whitehead, the quake, new Coke, Iran-Contra, "Friday the 13th" (all of them), medical waste, Chernobyl, the trade deficit, drugs, Ben Johnson, Mark David Chapman and, someone, please deliver us, George Steinbrenner.

The 90's? In our quest for a kinder and gentler decade, we here at Chateau Walrich have established a rather uncomplicated but prioritized view of the years to come. After half a decade of marriage, TH and I have pretty much worked out the pecking order of life with each other. I know how much starch he likes in his shirts, he knows to refill the ice cube trays. I understand the importance of MIG welders and drill presses, he appreciates my need for flowers. I am sensitive to his periodic cravings for biscuits and gravy, he understands my need to leave the room while he's eating them. He's really good about taking his shoes off after a session in the garage, I hardly ever ask how he got grease on the bottom of his socks. Matter of fact, after all this time I don't think either of us has ever complained about the status of the cap on the tooth paste tube or the position of the toilet seat cover. Isn't it comforting that we have progressed beyond the "Honeymooners" mentality?

Having successfully scaled these critical marital hurdles we feel safe to move on to the uncharted territory that will be the 90's with a new and exciting set of challenges for this matrimonial cruise. Given what follows, the 80's will seem like little more than a dress rehearsal!

Priority # 1: With the selection process narrowed to any place on Long Island that does not sit on a major artery, TH and I optimistically maintain that with 25,000 or so houses on the market there has got to be one we'll both like. This view is sorely tested every time the phone rings and yet another real estate gnome reports they have found "the" place. This requires one of us to actually go see "the" place and inevitably explain, yet again, that we weren't kidding about the garage.

Priority # 2: Once ensconced in our mortgaged nirvana and have resigned ourselves to life with furniture that does not fit its new surroundings, we can resume playing with the MASS. This process, as well rehearsed as the most delicate brain surgery, has a cleansing effect on TH and will be an important diversion from my interior decoration schemes. Moving a queen size sofa bed three times in one day and having it end up in the very spot he put it originally was the only course he failed at Husband School!

Priority # 3: Establishing a fiscally responsible competition schedule for 1990 will be a little bit like frosting a cake in a wind tunnel or predicting which events will actually come off. Pro Rallying (or any kind of rallying for that matter) has gotten to be an awfully tough business to be a part of. Event sponsorship is hard to come by because sanctioning bodies don't market them. This trickles down to the individual competitor who can't find a sponsor because the national championship series is so poorly advertised and hardly ever reported on. The one small light we have seen in the past year has been the 30 second spot on the occasional "Speed Week" (ESPN). This coupled with the occasional feature story on a national event in "Autoweek" that is usually fitted in behind the advertising section is not what I consider to be "comprehensive coverage" of the sport. At any rate, we have no grandiose plans for the 1990 season but we do have one firm tactic - one stage at a time - one

event at a time. That's about as fiscally prudent as one can get!

Priority # 4: Out on the eastern end of our tight little island sits an untapped resource called the Bridgehampton Motor Speedway. While badly in need of sprucing up, this chunk of real estate could be a viable testing and proving grounds for the novice interested in learning about the sport at the most basic levels. The New York Region of SCCA could provide a valuable service to the sport by establishing a comprehensive schedule of schools and coefficient 1 events for the coming season. The *Bridgehampton Rally Sprint* held early in December, sponsored by NYR/SCCA, and chaired by Tom Barker with a lot of help from the good folks of the Blue Mountain Region demonstrated that despite lousy accommodations and worse weather competitors could get a bit of a bang for their buck. It strikes me that with some more planning (and a lot of help) a couple of very viable runs could be designed specifically for the novice level pro competitor. Sessions on car prep and service procedures should be offered so a team is not disqualified because someone forgot the fire extinguisher during a fill-up. Invaluable instruction for the co-drivers defining exactly what their role is and should be are a must. In an age of sparse resources and tight dollars the co-driver's classic role as team manager has never been more important. That needs to be said out loud over and over again. If we want this sport to survive we should be doing everything in our power to produce well educated and safe competitors and knowledgeable crew members. Seat of the pants may be okay for the TSD rallyist - it's not half good enough for a pro team.

TH and I stand ready to do our share. It would be a delightful change of pace to only travel one hour to an event or a school instead of the normal six or seven. Bridgehampton's location on the far eastern end of Long Island also affords you out of towners with a bird's eye view of those traffic conditions I spend an inordinate amount of time complaining about.

And lastly, Priority # 5: A gallant effort on my part to maintain my literary equilibrium while Satch is on sabbatical. Whew, this is gonna be tougher than I thought!