



It was just one of those weekends – you know the kind, massive doses of adrenaline pumping willy-nilly through your system one minute – no need for the boost the next. We used up a year's supply of that stuff over a two day period thereby making it unlikely that a collapsing New York City bridge with me on it will so much as raise a hair on the back of my neck.

Now stay with me here. This is not a pretty story but one that hopefully provides a reasonable picture of emotionally soaring to the stratosphere and plummeting through terra firma to the Yangtze.

Soar: It's a Friday; we've taken the day off and we're on our way to our first PRO-rally of the year. The Mazda-Pocono Divisional Pro is enticingly close and we can feel cabin fever abating as we pack up to head west.

Plummet: It's a rainy, lousy day and my TH and I have had words. Towing the MASS in the rain on the Cross Bronx Expressway has annihilated his patience and my resolve.

Soar: We negotiate a reasonable detente over better than good hamburgers someplace in New Jersey after brief OC excursion.

Plummet: There is a three mile backup at the Delaware Water Gap due to the traditional opening of the road construction season. Construction workers look smug, toll collector inquires where stock car race is being held. My TH bites his tongue, I stifle hysterical ranting.

Soar: We get to the hotel and they HAVE our reservation plus the promised TH-sized sleeping platform.

Plummet: The bathroom in our room is flooded thus creating a greenhouse effect throughout this hermetically sealed chamber. Even the towels are damp.

Soar: Housekeeping arrives pretty quickly and abates the flood first with a plunger and then a mop.

Plummet: The leak returns as do early signs of science projects. We move about the room like spores in agar.

Soar: We breeze through event paperwork at registration. Workers are cordial and we see lots of familiar faces also shedding cabin fever. There is a better than 99% chance that significant partying will occur all evening.

Plummet: Tech inspection irrationally thorough. Checking blood lines seemed a

bit much since we weren't at Churchill Downs. We fail on a dubious technicality and local vendors have no replacement parts. WE'RE OUT.

Soar: EXPRESS Editor runs into L. Mark, describes the problem. L. Mark mentally inventories his larder and pronounces, "I have spares."

(Pause for Keystone Kops episode. My TH, L. Mark, Editor, Bob, Brian and I pretend we are on a mission from God, bumping into each other while racing from the L. Markmobile to the MASS with factory bagged replacements and appropriate tools in hand.)

Plummet: Parts don't fit.

(Pause number 2 while we watch another team fashion a skid plate for their car in the middle of the parking lot)

Soar: The bar is open and pours what we drink.

Plummet: They pour too much and we each lose 13 IQ points.

Soar: It is now Saturday, the sun is shining and a communique on the event message board advises us to return for MASS reinspection pronto. Seems that personnel who failed us were not appropriately licensed to fail us (this will result either in a double whammy or a full pardon). Adrenaline screams, "GO FOR IT." Breakfast for my TH deemed frivolous.

Plummet: Because of the felonious assault on our IQ, RI's were necessary to locate Tech.

Soar: After modulated questioning of unlicensed tech personnel by licensed tech personnel, the ruling is overturned. WE'RE IN!

Plummet: We now have only two hours to set up Service Vehicle 18 miles away from start, run the ODO check, attend the MANDATORY drivers meeting, get routes, get dressed, get some more adrenaline.

(Reenter Keystone Kops)

Soar: We make it to the starting line with five minutes to spare taking deep, cleansing

breaths. First stage and stage of the season successful despite co-driver's inability to read tulips or form words other than AGGGGGGG.

Plummet: Stage Two very rough and results in eerie noises coming from the underbelly of the MASS.

Soar: During 10 minute service, my TH pronounces problem is not terminal and we will proceed. Preliminary diagnosis is a U-joint abrasion. Co-driver offers a bandaid. Driver fervently prays for deliverance. Dorothy Stone obliges.

Plummet: Stage Three completed but now maybe the problem is a bent drive train. Thinking and competing simultaneously is, at best, taxing. Adrenaline level dropping rapidly, need for sanitary facilities rasing commensurate with drop.

Soar: Complete Stage Four. Driver and Co-driver in sync now that forked tongue syndrome has abated and interpolative powers have revived themselves.

Plummet: Transit to 1 hour service slowed due to failed gas pump requiring a side-of-the-road alteration to the backup electrical system. Closer inspection of MASS after arrival at service gleans new diagnosis: Blown Transmission. We retire and seek to relieve ourselves of excess adrenaline...in the woods...because the Port-O-Potty that was supposed to be there...wasn't.

Soar: We are comforted with the knowledge that while we didn't finish, our alacrity with a squeegee may have figured somewhat in assuring a finish for Editor/Schneider team, a place in class for Dalton/Kwiatek and a class victory for L. Mark and No L Marc. The real rush about our sport is that if positions were reversed, they'd do the same for us!