



Un-sponsored pro rally teams need all the friends they can get. They also need things like unlimited greenbacks, a direct line to a well stocked parts facility and an un-failing sense of humor. Wolf Creek Racing, our un-sponsored rally effort, has an abundance of friends and this month's column is about them and what they have endured during the reincarnation of the beige MASS. This process is known as MASS hysteria.

I'm not exactly sure what prompts folks to agree to give up a day (or a bunch of days) to assist in the rebirth of a motor vehicle. The pay is lousy, the bologna sandwiches at Chateau Walrich aren't anything to brag about and the working conditions are usually determined by Mother Nature. There must be this need to conquer inanimate objects, to manipulate metal, to join in some spiritual way with machinery that lures them to our driveway weekend after weekend. Whatever the reasons, these champions, these friends, have earned our undying gratitude (in lieu of cash).

SCCA is real persnickety about safety equipment in competition vehicles so one of the first headscratchers was the construction and installation of a roll cage in the MASS. Since the MASS came without seating the process of installation was simplified by not having to take anything out first. The cage was constructed out of inch-and-a-half diameter, eighth inch wall DOM - hereafter known as ugly steel tubing. Installation of said ugly steel tubing was accomplished a section at a time by using grade 8 fasteners where things had to be fastened, and by a mig welder to join each section. Mig welding, I am told by a knowledgeable volunteer, is accomplished by the mixing of seven parts argon, an inert gas, with three parts carbon dioxide, an inert gas. This makes absolute sense to me since this is also the exact formula for the perfect martini! The only difference being that both the ingredients in a martini are *ert*.

Once the roll cage is bolted and welded in place, phase two is the installation of the Pyroprotect 6 point harness system for both driver and co-driver. This dual system assures that in the unlikely event of a mishap, the occupants of the rolling vehicle will not be inconvenienced by a collapsing roof or be discomfited by falling into each other's arms (or feet). I am greatly relieved to learn that my TH's size 13 wheels will not land up in my nose.

With all this safety equipment in place there is still enough room for driver and co-driver padded seating, an unexpected bonus. A previous Walrich rally vehicle had a pair of

hard molded plastic things that were as comfortable as the seating provided convicted felons. The MASS now sports a Moroso racing seat on the right side and a 260Z stock model on the left. After the installation of wiring for the navigational light and the co-driver's odometer, plus a few necessary gauges, the extremely heavy duty battery, the fire extinguisher and the first aid box, the interior of the MASS is complete. Sparse, but complete. I did attempt at one point to make a case for a small swatch of carpeting for my feet but was gently told this was a frivolous request. I took that to mean no.

The brains and brawn of the MASS are pretty standard stuff functionally - it's the names of things that befuddle me. We've got your basic L-16 Datsun engine with four -count them- four L-24 flat top pistons. Good thing this is not the 60's or we would have been forced to find L-24's with an afro! My knowledge of pistons is limited to the fact that six is better than four but eight uses too much gas. I conclude that we may be slower but we're really saving gas in the process! I also learn that the installation of said engine cannot be accomplished without creative four letter conversation. I am amazed that grown men have the temerity to verbally abuse objects that have never demonstrated an interest in defending themselves. I try to time beverage and meal breaks around the deterioration of our language. A preponderance of S and F words are my cue for action.

I was gratified to learn that the dual SU/SSS carburetors are on a ported and polished head but wondered how it got that way. My TH has never before demonstrated an inclination toward polishing anything. I mentally credit a volunteer one point for cleanliness. I am thrilled with the information that the MASS is equipped with Safari Springs. These will certainly be useful on events that double as a hunt for wild boar. The Tokico Kontrolle shocks were obtained via bartering for some fibreglass parts - I guess this is a good deal except for that smell I will have to endure yet again.

The day the Panasport cast aluminum wheels arrived prompted celebration since it coincided with the week I coupled a business trip with a visit to KT Motorsport to pick up six Hakkapelitta tires plus two Nokia patches for our driving suits. I figure

the patches are worth about \$300 each. I am told that Hakkapelitta's are Finnish - a state I hope we enjoy at each event.

During the process of MASS reincarnation we have developed a first name friendship with our UPS delivery man. He is a very pleasant chap and he knows just where to hide the day's larder if no one is home. This friendship was sorely tested the day the five foot long, quarter-inch thick piece of aluminum had to be delivered. This stuff that skid plates are made from was heavy and unwieldy, and, as luck would have it no one was home to help. I got a stern lecture the next time he arrived with my order of argyle socks from Lands End.

At long last the day we had all been working so hard for arrived. It was the moment of truth, the ultimate test of man manipulating machine. My TH positioned himself over the ugly steel tubing and slid into the driver's seat. He gingerly placed the key into the ignition, turned it and got noise. This was progress. After some brisk conversation and analysis with our partner and intrepid volunteers, a few screws were turned and he tried again. Better noise. A piece was removed, more prestidigitation and voila, the engine sprang to life with what I can only describe as a severe bronchial condition. I am assured that the cure is simple and within minutes the MASS is humming quite normally all by itself. Had there been gas in the tank I'm quite confident it would have kept humming too, but you can't think of everything!

So, to Kenny, Tim-San, Rich, Tim, our UPS delivery man, the Lava Soap Comapny and the makers of Oscar Mayer Bologna we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We stand ready to return the favor whenever any of you are overtaken by the need to reincarnate a MASS of your own.

Next month we'll talk about body building and cosmetology. Does the word BONDO mean anything to you? Stay tuned.