

## Car Control Clinic at Tire Rack

By Rick Mammel

The first annual Car Control Clinic took place the weekend of October 18-19 at the Tire Rack's test track in South Bend, Indiana.

The weekend kicked off Saturday evening, when participants gathered at Tippecanoe Place (a restaurant housed in the Studebaker Mansion) in South Bend for a group dinner. After dinner, Driftmaster Ernesto Roedenbeck presented an audiovisual seminar on vehicle handling. This was laid out with visual aides and videos that displayed the different vehicle conditions such as understeer / oversteer and how best to adjust vehicle inputs (steering, brake, throttle) to correct them.

Sunday morning students gathered at the Tire Rack for the clinic itself. Although the event started out very cold and dark, the sun soon came up and the driving got started. The 16 attendees were divided into groups of 8 led by three instructors each.

Group A headed into the parking lot and began by running a figure eight to practice turn in, trail braking, heel-and-toe downshifting and (for the brave) some left foot braking. Simultaneously, group B headed to the test track to try out a few slalom and chicane manoeuvres. The groups alternated between the technical lessons in the parking lot and the autocross exercises on the test track.

Later in the morning the sprinklers came on and the skid pad was ready for takers. Instructors and students alike were in high spirits as we tried to induce oversteer, practice slide control, and even learn to maintain slides. Not surprisingly, driving through the sprinklers turned out to be everyone's favorite; even though everyone got plenty of runs in, lunch arrived way too quickly.

During lunch instructors made the skid pad their own, taking informal bets on who could hold a slide longest. I witnessed Harris Edwards sliding his M3 two full laps in a slide. Chris Williams also managed to get his Corvette sideways twice around (with student Frank La Marca in tow).

Sunday afternoon the sprinklers went off, the cars got a quick rinse, and the whole group focused on mastering a larger autocross course set up to maximize the skills learned in the morning sessions. The course included faster speeds though the slalom, a large radius high-speed tail out sweeper and a 180-degree understeering hairpin.

### JOIN US NEXT YEAR!

For Rally Sport Region members who are on the fence about participating in DEs, joining us for the next Car Control Clinic would be the perfect opportunity to “explore” your car’s handling dynamics without any pressure to drive fast. At the first CCC, attendance was small enough for the Instructors to spend as much time as each student required to be comfortable running the different layouts.

While the CCC challenged and entertained students of all levels, the event was the perfect place for a green student to safely receive the best instruction available. I’d like to offer a big “thank you” to Chuck Price who ran many sessions with my wife, Lynda Mammel (driving my 993 Turbo). Though very nervous at the start, halfway through the event she was running that beast of a car around solo and never hit a single cone all day. So, if you think “there is no way I could do this,” here is a perfect example of what an expert instructor can do to improve your confidence and driving skills.

In closing, I’d like to show my appreciation to the other instructors who were there to assist track chairman Christian Maloof: Mike Metzler, Chris Williams, Harris Edwards, Ernesto Roedenbeck and Christian Cook. This event could not have taken place without the Tire Rack’s Luke Pavlick, who showed up both Saturday and Sunday to oversee the event and offer us a warm conference room, beautiful wash rooms and even a wash bay for the cars after they came off the wet skid pad (next time you need to order tires, you can reach him at [luke@tirerack.com](mailto:luke@tirerack.com)). Lastly, a big “thank you” to Valerie Roedenbeck and Christian Maloof for putting the CCC together.

Join us next year!