

# MOTOR WORLD

## Road rally!

### Sense of humor helps during a race

By Gary Witzenburg  
Special to The News

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio —  
"Watch out for Copperhead,"  
warned veteran driver Jim Walker.

"It has probably eaten more rally cars than any in America."

Walker should know. He has won this high-speed rally through the hills and forests near Chillicothe, Ohio, twice in the last eight years.

ONCE HE missed a nasty turn in the Copperhead stretch of the course and there wasn't much left of his car when it stopped bouncing through the trees.

"Is that why they call it Copperhead?" I asked. "Because it'll bite you like a snake?"

"No," laughed Walker. "Because that's what you'll find if you end up in the woods."

"In fact, be very careful on all those high forest roads. Don't worry, though. Most places, it won't hurt much if you do go off because you'll starve to death before hitting bottom. We used to run those sections in the morning; now they run 'em at night so you can't see the dropoffs."

Rallyists are great people, but they have bizarre senses of humor.

The August 28th Budweiser Forest Pro Rally was the 8th of 14 on the Sports Car Club of America's 1983 schedule. It was my second, having passed my "rookie test" at the April 30th Northern Lights Rally in Michigan.

BUT THIS was my co-driver's first rally.

European-style "Pro" rallying (as distinguished from the tamer, trick-the-navigator type) involves racing flat-out against the clock on some very difficult sections of unpaved road known as special stages. The fastest time through each stage wins it and the lowest total time at the end wins the event.

There are two classes of cars: Production (unmodified except for strengthening and the addition of safety equipment) and Open (much modified, much faster).

The co-driver's job is to keep his or her dinner down and fear in check while keeping you on course through both stages and the legal-speed transit sections between them. The tools are a time/distance computer and a book of route instructions.

For reasons that will become obvious, my co-driver for this event wishes to remain anonymous.

Our trusty mount was a brand new Datsun 200 SK. A Production-class car, it was powered by a 2.2-liter 102 hp four driving the rear wheels through a five-speed manual gearbox.

WE SPENT Friday testing on a smooth but winding gravel course at Ohio's Transportation Research Center. The Datsun handled terrifically, was surprisingly quick off the line and accelerated strongly to 6000 rpm in first and second gears. Unfortunately, it was less lively in its taller third, fourth and fifth ratios.

Because Ohio's rough and rocky Shawnee State Forest roads are notoriously tough on tires, we practiced fast changes and packed two spares.

Starting order is determined by draw within each of seven "seed" groups, which are based on past performance. Surviving the Northern Lights event provided us the 55th slot in the 75-car field.

At 6:26 p.m. Saturday, 55 minutes after the No. 1 starter had powered away, we were given the starting count-down. A half-hour of relaxed transit driving found us at the first stage. We waited while those ahead of us were flagged off at one-minute intervals, donned our helmets and

tightly cinched our racing safety belts.

On our assigned minute, we check in at the start control, then pulled ahead to the line. A few nervous seconds later, the count-down began: "Five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . go!"

THE DATSUN'S rear tires spun, then dug as the tires grabbed solid dirt and pushed us smartly away. Second gear, third gear, up to 70 or so, then brake, downshift, sideways through a turn, back on the gas, slide right, left, down into a valley, up over a hill, turn, shift, shift, turn, up, down . . . then, suddenly, the little checkered flag marking the finish. Pick up the time sticker, relax a bit and navigate to the next stage.

The first two stages were relatively short (2½ - 3 miles), smooth and easy, but we were still learning, extra careful and a little tentative. By then it was fully dark, and the next two were much more difficult, narrow, rocky, treacherous and intimidating. Our powerful driving lights illuminating tree-lined drop-offs on each side, with little room for error.

At the dinner break, with four of the 17 stages completed, we had advanced to 44th overall. Gaining confidence, we improved steadily through the next five stages and rolled into a service break in 35th place.

NEXT CAME the dreaded seven-mile Copperhead stage, which turned out to be much less fearsome than I'd expected. It was narrow, twisty and very rough. But it was also relatively slow, mostly second gear (45-55 mph); and it's easy to be brave in second gear. I found myself driving more aggressively than before diving deeper into the turns

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R.G. Shannon B.J. Carroll

been controller of the former GMC Truck & Coach Division, which has been merged into the new Truck & Bus Group. Carroll, with GM since 1960, had been assistant controller of Cadillac Motor Car Division and Schweibold, who joined GM in 1974, was director of the forward program analysis section of the GM controller's staff.

**American Motors Corp.** named **D. Dean Greb** as central region sales manager with responsibility for zones in Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh. Greb, who joined AMC in 1962, had been director of Jeep marketing since June, 1981.

**Chrysler Corp.** appointed

**Ford Motor Co.**, appointed **L.M. Albertson** assistant public affairs manager, succeeding **A.C. Marcaccio**, who recently accepted a post in the company's radio, television and film department. Albertson has been with Ford since 1977.

**John W. Haines** is the new manager of minority supplier development for **General Motors Corp.** Haines, 43, a graduate of Lincoln University in Oxford, Pa., and the University of Pittsburgh, had been a senior buyer at Fisher Body Division's Central Office in Warren.

The **Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association** announced the appointment of **Jane Lightfoot** to the new position of legislative information associate in the state relations department. Ms. Lightfoot previously was a legal assistant at Harper-Grace Hospitals. She has a bachelor's degree from Albion College and a juris doctorate from Wayne State University Law School.

The **Pontiac Motor Division** of GM named **Norman L. Pilcher** assistant chief engineer for

**Inaba**, executive vice-president; **Robert J. Caulfield**, vice-president-current products; **Jimmy L. Haugen**, vice-president-market planning; **Philip V. Monnin**, vice-president-sales; **Lothar Rossol**, vice-president-research and development; **Donald G. Shelton**, vice-president-administrative and support activities; **Bruce A. Potts**, finance manager and treasurer; and **Dennis B. Wolcott**, general counsel and secretary. The company was formed last June.

**W. Douglas Large** was named to the new position of automotive marketing specialist in Detroit for Rovel Polymers in the Rovel Polymer Group of **Uniroyal Chemical Co.** He has been with Uniroyal since 1978.

**General Motors Corp.** named **Gerald E. Bodrie** executive director of logistics. He had been director of purchases and traffic at the GM Assembly Division since 1981. Bodrie began his GM career in 1959 with Chevrolet in Ypsilanti.

**General Motors Corp.** appointed **Kenneth P. Clayton**

Division. He is a graduate of Wayne State University and Michigan State University.



K.P. Clayton H.L. Barton

**H.L. Barton** joined **Chrysler Corp.** as general manager-fleet operations, coming from Ford Motor Co. where he was leasing and fleet sales manager for the Lincoln-Mercury Division. Barton, 55, will be responsible for fleet, leasing and rental market sales and marketing activities for the auto maker, reporting to J. B. Naughton Sr., executive vice-president-sales and marketing. Barton graduated from Syracuse University.

— Norman Goode

## A sense of humor helps during a road race

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braking less. Overall, we moved up to ninth with just two stages to go. It was almost daybreak, and I hadn't put any tree-prints in the car.

Then we made The Big Mistake — arriving two minutes late

(we thought) at the next start control — a 200 point penalty. Thinking we had left too late from the previous service stop (my fault), I was mad as hell at myself. I drove my tail off on the last two stages, trying to make up that two minutes, and even scored the 18th fastest time over-

all on the last one.

The next morning at the awards presentation we discovered that my co-driver had made a ten-minute addition error; we really had been eight minutes early at that check-point! The resulting 800-point penalty dropped us to a lowly 41st out of 50

finishers, 14th of 26 in our Production class.

Still, we enjoyed ourselves. Pro rallying is one of the most fun things we've ever done — and, despite the number of crashes, it's amazingly safe.

We can't wait to give it another try!