

Space City Panteras Springtime Tech Session

Story by Dave Bell
Photos by Louis Schauldt

In preparation for the upcoming track event at Texas World Speedway, the fastest Panteras in Texas (those belonging to Space City Panteras gathered at the rural ranch of Gray Gregory. A recently purchased addition features a giant entertainment complex, complete with a dining room large enough to seat 300 people for dinner. As Gray doesn't have nearly that many friends, he wisely decided to convert it into the mother of all workshops, and this room has now become sort of a Space City Panteras clubhouse.

A dozen or so club members gathered on a dreary morning to make some final preparations, or to have their cars inspected prior to the event. Quite a few people simply came to hang out and enjoy the company and camaraderie.

Kirby Schrader and John Taphorn are the designated safety inspectors and must tech all Panteras entered in TWS track events. This included their own cars plus those of David Bell, Fred Hall, Jim Narum, Dennis Jones, and Gray Gregory's race car.

Rob West, the owner of a beautiful self-restored Pantera as well as an



The underside of John Taphorn's Pantera drew admiration from everyone present, as he carefully checked the torque on each and every suspension bolt

Acura NSX, applied the final touches to Kirby's chassis stiffening kit. He welded in the vertical support braces that connect the two rear horizontal bars.

It was a little tricky to weld the uprights in without jamming the horizontal bars so as to allow them to still be removed if necessary. Kirby was careful to disconnect his electronic ig-



Gray's workshop area is so large it literally takes two pages to show even a portion of it! Projects were underway

niton before letting the welding sparks fly.

Kirby also adjusted the valve clearance on his solid lifter cam (before every track event) and tweaked his EFI fuel map to squeeze out that last bit of horsepower.

John Taphorn checked the torque on all his suspension bolts with everyone else (Fred Hall, Rob West, Tom Upton and David Bell) offering advice. John recently installed a set of custom built Fikse wheels (17" front, 18" rears) along with new rubber. John's monster stroker engine combined with the 28" diameter rear tires (315/40-18 Goodyear F1) provide an exceptional top end for the TWS front straight.

I had my hands full, exchanging the stock clutch master cylinder for a new CNC unit, installing new Porterfield pads, and flushing his brake fluid.

Jim Narum cut out the factory lower cross-brace underneath the oil pan, and replaced it with the lower front



Jim Narum also installed the Hall chassis kit



Rob West did a masterful job welding up the components of Kirby Schrader's Hall Pantera chassis stiffener kit

and rear Hall chassis stiffeners. Jim also installed Hall Super Stopper calipers front and rear to his to his very clean '74. Jim recently acquired a set of 17-inch wheels/tires and removed the factory shock spacers to lower the car substantially.

Dennis Jones discovered that he had a loose tie-rod end. Dennis hustled to complete the replacement at home and then passed the TWS safety tech at the track on race day morning.

Fred Hall and

David Bell rebuilt Fred's 650 cfm Holley carburetor and tightened up a loose rear wheel bearing.

Others present with Panteras were Tom Upton, Dan Mixon, Louis Schauldt and Randy Pike. Also attending were Space City club members John Mixon (Dan's son), Allen Brown and Rob West. Tom brought photos of his recently crunched Pantera race car (he banged the wall at a TWS vintage race a couple of weeks prior).

As is becoming normal, Gray Gregory provided the home-cooked barbecue lunch that everyone wolfed down. Our thanks go out to Gray for providing us such an excellent venue to hold events like this!



in all quadrants, and everybody drove home under their own power at the end of the day!