



Ron (yellow car in right lane) and Todd (near lane) line up for the first pass of the Buckeye Brawl. The duo led the way to presenting the event and had the honor of being first on track after waiting many hours for track conditions to be favorable.

Mustangs on the Move

THE BUCKEYE BRAWL

› text and photography by Larry Jewett

It would have been easy to throw in the towel, but that's not what this group is all about. The 4.0 Collective had been building up to this day and rain, cold temperatures and gray skies were not dealbreakers.

The 4.0 Collective is a family. It is apparent by visiting their Internet forum, which began in February 2006. You see the helpful spirit of cooperation as members get Mustangs, improve Mustangs, and seek guidance from those who have been down the road before. There is good natured kidding and personalities become obvious. The First Buckeye Brawl, scheduled for April 2007 at Summit Equipment Motorsports Park in Norwalk, Ohio, gave many members a chance to meet, for the first time, people that they regularly engaged on the forum. It was a combination of family reunion of kindred spirits.

Those who attended Norwalk were primarily V-6 owners who have been searching for speed and performance. GTs were on hand. The club doesn't discriminate. It doesn't want V-6 haters

and you know who you are. If you can't accept a Mustang as a Mustang, if you're caught up in some sort of bigger is better idea when it comes to cylinders, you're in the wrong place.

About that day, take a look at the picture. Rain in the morning. Gloomy clouds hanging low. Many of the members had met the night before and had dinner and socialized. They came to Ohio from the Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic, the Midwest, even as far away as Colorado Springs, a 1,330-mile drive each way). Instant friendships were the result. As they gathered on race morning with the hope of making passes, Mother Nature had other ideas. The hardy group waited, passing the time by looking at each others' cars, by talking about planned changes and getting advice on what to expect. They greeted those who

arrived after the first wave, hopeful of getting on track. Rain had to stop by 9:30. It stopped at 9:30. The track needed time to dry. Hours later, dry spots appeared. Lunch was ordered and a nearby fast food restaurant served up 70 double cheeseburgers and 40 orders of fries that were transported to the track.

Miraculously, the track was ready in late afternoon, but a local planned event put the Buckeye Brawl on a time crunch. Undaunted, experienced and novice racers brought their cars to the line and the good-natured "I'm faster than you" began. Grudge matches, built up over time, were settled. Though not all timeslips were accounted for, drivers got passes to see how the cars performed.

A wrap-up banquet was held at the host hotel and the evening ended as, one by one, members filed out, some hitting the road for home. Over two dozen cars from 13 states made the scene. It may not sound like much to some, but it is hard to quantify the friendships made on the forum that were solidified that day. Plans are in the works for a return,



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perhaps an event of similar nature for those living near the West Coast and there's plenty of action on the forum that's keeping the spirit of Norwalk alive. It was a weekend that shows the good that can come from the right attitude, desire and perseverance. It's all about turning a negative into a positive.

(The 4.0 Collective can be found at www.mustangcollective.com.)

1 Club members from over a dozen states braved the cold weather, awaiting the chance to go racing. Many said racing was just the bonus of the weekend with the face-to-face meeting of those known only by screen names proving to be a real asset.

2 Chris won the long tow award, traveling all the way from Colorado with his children, a 1,300-mile journey each way. He made several strong passes in his Legend Lime V-6.

3 Steve and Tino check out their time slips after making some runs. The group included experienced racers and several who had never put their car on the strip before. By the end of the day, everyone was understanding six-foot times and striving to lower their e.t.

4 During the morning delay, it was a common sight to see everyone gathered around a car. Here, the group checks the

shaker designed by Joe for his convertible.

5 Jen's "Bad Wolf" carried badging for the group on the trunk lid. The 4.0 Collective has organized group buys to get deep discounts on products and has apparel, branded decals and other items for members.

6 There are many who simply would have gone home after seeing these conditions. No one from the 4.0 Collective left, waiting hours for the track to clear. It is a good indication of how committed the group really is. They made the best of a bad situation simply by spending the time making new friends.