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## Ridgefielders part of reality TV car race rally

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In films at least, amateur street car racing has established itself as a mesmerizing activity. The thrill of watching drivers maneuver through dangerous twists and turns has proven a commercial hit with audiences.

And yet, something is always missing from the caliber of street racing seen in movies. The courses seem fake, the drivers all have unrealistically expensive cars, and the danger is only simulated. Although some have come close, no one has ever been able to provide viewers with authentic street racing action.

Until now.

Starting in the fall of 2010, viewers will be treated to real life amateur street racing in the form of a new reality TV series called The Robin Hood Rally. The show, originally designed by Stephan Condemetraky, will feature 55 amateur racers from across the country competing for the grand prize of a Ferrari F430, priced roughly at \$250,000.

Racing will take place on 10 public roads in 10 different towns throughout the United States, with the first event two weeks ago in Berlin, N.H. Each of the 55 drivers will be scored based upon his or her best five results from the 10 races.

Ridgefielders may have an added interest in the show: Three of the 55 drivers are from here.

Tim Klvana, Tony Castle and Matt Nilson all entered and were accepted to participate in the TV series, giving Ridgefield more contestants than any other town. As is the case with a number of the contestants in the show, though, their hometown is about the only thing the three share when it comes to the cars they'll be driving.

When Castle drives up to the starting line, he'll be sitting behind the wheel of a number 22 Porsche. Castle, who is an experienced amateur driver, believes that his car will be the right fit for the curvy, unpredictable public roads on which the contestants will have to navigate.

"Porsches are very nimble, and good in turns," said Castle. "The finesse of the driver and their car will be what's most important in winning these races."

Fellow Ridgefielder Nilson will be driving a Toyota Supra in The Robin Hood Rally.

"I learned to drive from another amateur racer at a very young age," said Nilson. "I never got a lot of the bad habits that you develop from yourself or from watching your parents drive."

Nilson has another, slightly ironic advantage over the other competitors: His lack of experience. While other competitors are used to driving competitively on racetracks and might

may be put off by the difference in racing on public roads, Nilson will be starting with a clean slate.

"Most of my experience comes from speeding on public roads," Nilson joked. "The only difference now is that there aren't any speeding tickets involved."

Ready to try and stand in Castle's and Nilson's way is another Ridgefielder, Tim Klvana. Involved in amateur racing since 1995, Klvana will be hitting the track with ample experience. Klvana has won a wide array of racing championships, and has finished in the top three in the Sports Car Club of America series since 2000.

In contrast to Castle's speedy, nimble Porsche, Klvana will be racing in an Acura Integra.

"I'm calling it Slingshot, in reference to David and Goliath," said Klvana. "I'm going to be riding against guys in Vipers and Corvettes, but I still think the Slingshot can pull it out."

On the surface, comparing Klvana's 140-horsepower Acura to cars with 500-plus-horsepower engines might seem a stretch. But there is a catch, or rather a formula. The Robin Hood Rally attempts to level the playing field by penalizing cars for unfair horsepower-to-weight ratios.

"This is the first time that a cross-class of cars are able to be competitive with one another in a race," said Condemetraky.

The formula is not rigid and adapts on a course-by-course basis, adjusting itself based on each course's curves and straight-aways. This is done to ensure that The Robin Hood Rally is a show that highlights pure driving skill.

The formula, however, is not completely foolproof.

"It doesn't take every factor of the race into account," said Nilson. "If it rains and the track is slick, my [Toyota] will have a huge disadvantage."

Another aspect of the race that the contestants must be prepared for is the added danger of speeding on public roads.

"It's a completely new terrain, and it scares me a little bit," admitted Klvana. "Crashes on a racetrack are much safer. Public roads have trees and telephone poles that you have to avoid while navigating at speed. It's very different."

Castle was similarly concerned about the new racing environment, saying how it was impossible to be fully prepared for potholes and "the occasional deer."

The rally is scheduled to air this fall on a cable-sports channel.

"Everything is set up, but they want to hold off on mentioning which channel until it's finalized," said Klvana. "I hope it's a show that people will find interesting, not just for the actual racing but also the relationships and competition between the drivers."