Well, here we go again. It’s doesn’t seem like it’s been a year since the last Winterfest. Last February it was twenty degrees on the day we washed the car and drove to Chattanooga. Had snow fall on Signal Mountain as we drove the rally. This year was different. The weather was great. However, being one not to take chances I washed the car and cleaned the wheels a week earlier and scheduled it in to have Century’s detail man put a coat of wax on it. I didn’t put in near as many hours as Cambron but probably a few more than Baum. But we don’t compete in the Concours so it don’t matter.

I never know if I’m going to write a trip report or not. Depends on whether or not the mood strikes me. A few weeks ago at the Saturday Pit Stop Breakfast Paul Webb said he had a friend named Chris Farrell who was a member of the Tennessee Region and would I tell him hello. Now I’m a bono fide member of AARP and have been getting senior citizen’s discounts for many years. Memory is something that went by the wayside a while back. Actually, I never was good with names. I can be introduced to someone and forget their name before finishing the handshake. So I promised to try and do what he asked. As he was walking away I called to him and said, “What was that name again?” That’s how easily I forget. Then I asked Suzanne, “Who was that who asked me to talk to somebody named Farrell?” “Paul Webb”, she replied. “But you called him Ray when he walked in”. “I was wrong”, she says. So much for having a back-up memory system! I lost a lot of sleep over the next two weeks trying to remember Chris Farrell’s name.

Then Paul says, “Are you going to write an article about the Winterfest again?” Oh man! Now the pressure is on. The last article was published in Pano and he expects me to write another one. I told him I would wait to see if an article wanted to get out of the dark reaches of my mind. Still don’t know. Will have to wait until this thing is finished.

But talk about pressure. Suzanne and I don’t Concours the car because it’s never been something we’ve been interested in. We don’t run DE’s because we did those years ago and don’t want to get back into that. Ditto autocrossing. We also ran rallies years ago and we decided to do that again just because it’s fun and easy. Well it’s usually fun and easy. We go to these regional events because we want a fun, relaxing weekend. And they usually are. Unfortunately, we both have this deep-seated competitive nature that requires constant suppression. At last year’s Winterfest and Spring Thing we did better than the Baums in the rally. Truth be known, I’m not so sure that we ran the rally better so much as we didn’t run it as bad as they did. Subtle difference I have to admit. Anyway, so I go up to Chattanooga knowing deep down that I really want to make sure we do better than Steve and Liz. The score is 2-0 and I want to keep the winning streak going. But we’re not competing against each other.
We got to the hotel about 3:00pm Eastern Time and checked into our room. Then we pulled the car into Grand Central Station. This is the old skating rink that is now used for indoor activities. It’s great because all the events except the rally are held indoors. Cambron’s car was already there so I parked next to it. Then we set about talking to a bunch of our Porsche friends. These are people who were strangers when we first attended Winterfest last year. We see basically the same people at Spring Thing and Rennfest with some new faces each time. We’re no longer strangers and have added a whole gaggle of people to our list of friends, and we hope vice versa.

Friday evening we all gathered in Penn Station, which is a lounge type area. It was reserved just for Winterfest participants. Here we wined, dined, beered, and socialized until about midnight. (Note to Jim – I know that ‘beered’ is not a word but it fits in with the other three. Call it poetic license.)

Saturday morning Steve goes over to Grand Central Station at the 6:00am opening time to continuing prepping his car for the Concourts. Jim was probably there also. Not us. We slept in while those die-hards removed every little speck of dust from the remotest locations of their cars. Two cars down from ours was Steve Blaylock’s Silver 2006 Carrera. Steve is from Peachstate Region and taught a Concourts preparation class in Huntsville back in January 2007. He only has 78 miles on the car. The same number of miles he had on it when we saw him at Spring Thing last year. And one more mile that at last year’s Winterfest.

Here’s a picture of Steve and Liz Baum’s gorgeous 911. I’ve been wondering for a couple of years what their license tag means. Somebody at our recent tech session figured it out and told Suzanne. Anybody want to venture a guess as to what it stands for or am I the only dunce in the crowd? It reads “MT NSTR”.

We didn’t do the tricycle autocross or tech quiz and I’m not sure about the Steve/Liz or Jim/Suki teams. The reigning two-time women’s champ, Marbeth Owen of Tennessee region was dethroned. She took her defeat well. As long as you don’t count her mumbling all Saturday afternoon something about, “Grrrr, I didn’t lift a wheel off the floor”, and “I’m sure I didn’t hit that pylon hard enough to knock it over”. Marbeth was enthralled with our Space and Rocket Center license plate and asked me to find her a discarded plate to add to her collection. Don’t have the slightest idea where to look for one but if anyone else knows where I can get one please let me know.
During the Concours Joe Greco takes pictures of all of the participants standing next to their cars. Now, Joe is not one to hold a grudge but he did bring up the problem of the picture of me and Suzanne in Pano that accompanied our article back in last year’s June (I think) issue. You see, I sent Betty Jo Turner, Pano editor, several hundred photos that I shot during Winterfest last year. Joe had e-mailed me an electronic copy of our photo that he took and it was stored in the same folder as my pictures. Betty Jo selected that picture along with a few others to be published with the article. She added the caption, “Photography by Lee Fowler”. Not wanting to take credit for someone else’s photography I sent Joe Greco an apology. So the first thing he said Saturday was not, ”Hello Lee”, it was “I’m not upset that you took credit for my photography but you can expect your picture today to be out of focus.” I knew Joe was kidding. He’s a super nice guy and a great photographer. The picture he takes of each participant is framed and given out during the banquet Saturday night. To prove that Joe doesn’t hold a grudge I’ve included the picture that Joe had framed for us. Notice that it is perfectly in focus.

Jim Cambron is really a serious competitor. I’m glad he wasn’t around when we were autocrossing. Here is a picture of Jim’s car being judged in the Concours. I’m sure he wasn’t trying to influence the judge.
Did I say that Jim was serious about this stuff? The roving camera man (me, not Joe Greco) caught him sitting at the wheel of his car. I’ll bet you think he’s checking his tire pressure. Sure looks that way. Nope! Jim has an extra set of lug nuts that are clear coated. He puts them on for the Concours and changes back to street nuts after the judging. I’ll refrain from saying something about the “nut behind the wheel”.
Here is a picture of Grand Central Station with most of the participating cars, obviously the joining of two photos. Suzanne and Liz can be seen in the foreground. That’s not our Cayman. In all the events we’ve attended we’ve never seen another Carmon Red Cayman, even at Rennsport III where there were many, many Porsches including Caymans. Then one shows up here. Just like ours except for the interior color and one other small feature which I will discuss later. Thankfully, the factory has discontinued offering that color as an option.

The rally began with a drivers/navigators meeting at 1:00pm Saturday. We had selected 1:30pm as our start time. I think the first car off was at 1:15 then each car leaves one minute apart. It’s been so many years since Suzanne and I have run rallies on a regular basis so we did some studying of rally terms and rules before we went up there. We wanted to be prepared. On the last rally we ran we used a regular stopwatch and our Heuer split-action stopwatch, along with my wristwatch for time of day. Suzanne wanted a digital watch, which would be easier to read while she’s reading instructions and looking for clues. I waited until the last minute, as usual, and ordered an Ultrak LCD clock/stopwatch. It has two readouts – a clock and a timer. Or it can be used as two count-down timers. The clock cost about $24 and I paid about $20 to have it sent overnight air. Stupid yes, but that’s what I get for waiting to the last minute. So it showed up Wednesday. I put the battery in and the readout lit up just as it was supposed to do. The clock and timers worked as expected. Thursday evening when I picked it up to mount it on the clipboard I noticed it was dead as a doorknob. Okay, this rally planning is not going well and I was counting on this digital clock to help us finish ahead of the Baums. Think Lee, think! Ahah! Suzanne has a Westclock digital clock/timer for the kitchen. I’ll bet that will work. Sure enough, it had just what I needed plus it had a magnet on the back which would let me easily attach it to the metal clip on the clipboard. Also, I got on the Internet where the Federal Government has a website which shows the official government time. I’m thinking that the Rallymaster will set his clock using this website. If so, our clock will be right on the money. Sure enough, just before the start of the rally I checked our cheapo kitchen clock with the Rallymaster’s and we were totally in sync. Look
out, Baums! We weren’t too concerned about Jim and Suki. They didn’t run the rally last year. But they have run Parade rallies. Certainly don’t want this competitiveness to escalate to include all HOD participants. But then it wouldn’t look good for a DE/Concours specialist to beat us out on a rally. The reason I wasn’t concerned is because Suki gets car sick if she reads in a moving vehicle. I can certainly sympathize with that. I do too! I even get sick on a Merry-Go-Round. Tried flying an airplane once and got nauseous looking down at the ground while flying a rectangular course around four points. Jim indicated that he loses precious time stopping two or three times during a rally for Suki to take care of her nausea. On the way home I thought of the perfect solution. Jim should swap places with Suki. She drive and he navigate. After all, from what I understand Suki is the queen of the traffic light drag strip in her BMW. I can understand that. I’ve got my own Lead-Foot Suz.

For you non-rally types, the Rallymaster lays out a course over a certain distance to be driven within a specific time. Timing is to the second and each second over or under the official time at a checkpoint is one penalty point. The team with the fewest points wins. Prior to the official start of the rally each team runs an Odometer (Odo) leg. The main purpose of the Odo leg is to let the teams calibrate their Odo with that of the Rallymaster’s car. A tenth of a mile off can spell disaster so once you find the difference between yours and his you can factor in the variance in your speed. Since calculators aren’t allowed this has to be a rough mental calculation. See, that’s what worried me. Liz is a graduate engineer and currently teaches math. Suzanne and I are just old ex-computer programmers, slightly fossilized. The other purpose of the Odo leg, especially for starting at a downtown location is to get the rally teams out of the traffic and congestion prior to the “official” start. The Odo leg isn’t timed.

We haven’t trophied at any of the rallies we’ve run since going to these weekend events the past year. However, we have a number of rally trophies from our past life as members of PCA. Our worst rally ever was a Corvette club rally staged mostly in rural Maryland. The Rallymaster had us crossing Maryland route 355, Rockville Pike, a number of times. Well, I think he had us crossing it. We got hopelessly lost and I honestly don’t know if we crossed that road because we were following the instructions or because we were trying to find our way back on course. In any case, we gave up and headed home. Stopped at a restaurant to eat because we both had migraines. We vowed to never go to that part of Maryland again and definitely not ever drive on Rockville Pike again.

We never, ever did that poorly on a rally again. Up there, rallying was a serious thing and was very, very competitive. Thankfully, these weekend rallies are not like that and can be more fun. We got off-course a couple of times last year but were able to recover and finish the rally. We’re determined to never again perform like we did on the Corvette Club rally.
Back to the Winterfest rally. We got lost on the Odo leg.…twice!!! Started out fine. Left at the light out of the hotel. Left at the next light. Find a few easy signs. Next right. Where in the hell are we? Backtracked, made a few turns and found ourselves back on the road just before the “next right” mentioned above. Ok, we’re back on the Odo leg! We can adjust for the Odo reading and this time we’ll make the correct turns. The “next right” was a correct turn and we did that just as before. Then we got lost again! Drat! The Baums are going to beat us on this one. So Suzanne says, “What are we going to do now?” I contemplate that question for about a split second and answer, “We’re going to drive around and do some sightseeing in Chattanooga”. We happened upon (what’s a hayseed, country boy like me doing using a sentence that starts with “We happened upon”?). Must be the Cambron influence from him editing my previous articles. Let’s try that again. “We’uns saw this here graveyard right in the middle of Chattanooga.” Seriously, we were just driving around and happened to see the National Cemetery. Way too many headstones – freedom comes at an awful price. It is quite a sight – beautifully maintained. We drove around until we found the entrance and took a leisurely tour around the property. There were headstones from the Civil War, WWI, and WWII. Probably were some from the Korean War and Vietnam too but we didn’t see them.

After a while we drove back to the hotel where we spent a restful afternoon while all the rest of the participants were driving helter-skelter around the Tennessee countryside trying to keep on course and on time. I say it was restful. I kept thinking, “How in the world could we possibly get lost on an Odo leg?” Then, in an inspired moment the answer flashed before my eyes. The driver is responsible for keeping the speed such that you will stay on time. The driver also looks for clues. It’s the navigator’s responsibility to stay on course. This was all Suzanne’s fault! If she had done a better job navigating we would never have gotten lost. I felt a lot better after that.

We go down to Penn Station at 6 o’clock for a little socializing before the banquet. Steve and Liz aren’t there which has me kind of curious. If they did well on the rally Steve would surely want to get there and rub it in. Okay, Steve would never do that. He’s way too nice a person. But he would have a smug look on his face. Then I thought, maybe they didn’t do too good and they don’t want me rubbing it in. Not that I would ever do that. This is creating a lot of stress.

Just before seven o’clock Marbeth starts herding us over to the banquet room. We wind up sitting with four of the same people we sat with at last year’s Winterfest banquet plus the Cambron’s. Steve and Liz showed up later and sat two tables away. Steve and Jim both took 2nd in class in the Concours. So Heart O’ Dixie brought home trophies once again. After the banquet we met up with Steve and Liz. No way was I going to ask how they did on the rally. Then Liz volunteered, “We DNF’ed”. DNF stands for “Did Not Finish”. “Oh really!” says I
with a concerned look on my face. “Yeah”, Liz said, “We got so turned around we had to use our car navigation system to find our way back to the hotel. But we saw some great scenery. Beautiful homes with large pastures.”

OK, now I’m thinking. We DNF’ed on the Odo leg and they DNF’ed later in the rally. Does that make it a tie? Or did they beat us ‘cause they got farther in the rally? My twisted mind is now working in overdrive mode. How do I snatch victory from defeat? Then this annoying little voice in the darkest recesses of my brain pipes up, “There’s nothing wrong with defeat. Losing builds character.” Oh how I’d like to throttle that guy but he just won’t go away.

I’m thinking in hyperspeed now. How do I spin this situation so it don’t look like I lost to Steve. Whoa! This isn’t personal. I meant to say, so it don’t look like the Fowler team lost to the Baum team. Then the lightning bolt strikes. I mean to say this is pure genius. Remember, the Odo leg isn’t timed. On this particular rally we had forty minutes to finish the Odo leg. Our Odo leg start time was 1:30pm. So our “official” start time would be 2:10pm. Since we got lost on the Odo leg we never “officially” started the rally. We didn’t DNF like the Baums. We didn’t even start. Hurray!

The next rally encounter will be at Smokey Mountain Region’s Spring Thing April 25-27th. The Cambrons have a conflict but the Fowlers and Baums will be there. It’s a great weekend getaway. We all encourage our HOD members to put this on the calendar and join us in a fun Porsche oriented event.

Earlier I mentioned that there was another Cormon Red Cayman with a slight difference. Here it is. Notice the corner things. One has the optional Aluminum look. The other is painted the same color as the car. I want to take a poll because I’m thinking of changing mine. They are easily removable and can be repainted. Give me your opinion of which you like best by sending me an e-mail at leefowler@knology.net.

As usual I can’t finish without a big thank you to the members of the Tennessee Region. Several years ago, after attending Smokey Mountain Region’s Spring Thing, Joe Wilson and a number of others started wondering if they could put on a similar event, but during the part of the year when nothing else was going on. And so the February Winterfest was born. The first
year (we didn’t attend) it snowed so bad they had to cancel the rally. Last year we ran into snow flurries on Signal Mountain during the rally. This year the weather was “practically perfect in every way”. Peter Burman chaired this year’s event and was everywhere all weekend. He even opened Grand Central Station at 8:00am Sunday so we could get our cars out. The CFO was Dick Scales and I have no earthly idea what CFO stands for. In last year’s article, one the pictures that “I” took and was included in Pano was of someone competing in the tricycle autocross. Turns out it was Dick Scales. The Concours D’Elegance was managed by Bruce Gilmore and Jeff Gordon and they had the usual team of very knowledgeable judges. Although I think Steve Blaylock would argue with that statement since he “only” received 399.9 points out of a possible 400. The Rally was put on by Peter Burman, Deems Riddle, and Tom Owen. I thanked Peter for designing a rally that caused us to get lost on the Odo leg for the first time in our rallying career. Deems spoke up and claimed that it was he who laid out the Odo leg. I’ve got one thing to say to Deems. “&^$^*#&@^". Chris Farrell put on the RC Autocross and tricycle autocross. Had a lot of participants trying to negotiate around pylons on a tricycle. Peter Burman acquired the trophies. Quite frankly, I’ve never before seen a trophy with blinking red LEDs. I won’t make any comments about the gaudy trophies since Deems took care of that chore during the banquet. Courtney Robbins and Aline Maclin did a great job on the Banquet/Table decorations. At least that’s what Suzanne said. I never notice stuff like that. Courtney was obviously the most indispensible person of the event. She was also the registrar and created the event Program. She, along with Marbeth Owen and Kathy Bacon were responsible for the Welcome Party and Registration. And what a job they did on that. Beer, wine, and food galore! Tennessee region prepared the food, both hot and cold, themselves and had quite a spread for us to partake on Friday night and Saturday both before and after the banquet. Steve Hunt, one of the Tennessee region members and owner of Ocoee Winery in Cleveland, provided all the excellent wine. Steve’s mom and dad, Joe and Chloe Hunt live in Huntsville down in our next of the woods. They are in between Porsches and had come up to join the weekend activities. They are looking at Cayman’s, which, of course puts them in a higher echelon than most. We had fun finding out all our common interests and hope to see them at future HOD events. Joe is retired and spends a lot of time with his hobby. He is a champion model airplane builder and flyer. It’s going to be interesting to see how he gets that 40 inch wingspan airplane in a Cayman.

The T-Shirts were acquired by Joe Wilson and Peter Burman. Thanks guys for getting short sleeve shirts this year. I almost never wear long sleeves, even in the middle of winter. Sponsorship was handled by Joe ‘Bulldog’ Wilson. Events like this cannot be put on without sponsorships and Joe did a great job of pulling in sponsors. They had some great door prizes. Both Jim/Suki and Steve/Liz won prizes early on. Jim’s name was called while he was at the Zone Presidents’ meeting. You had to be present to win. I tried to convince them that if the
person wasn’t there, then the prize ought to go to the next highest car number. Jim and Suki had car number ‘01’ while Suzanne and I had car number ‘02’. They didn’t accept my argument and made an exception for Jim. The Baums were car number ‘03’ which gives you an indication of how early we registered for this event. Here’s a challenge! Next year let’s have HOD members getting car numbers one through ten. All you have to do is register as soon as the event announcement hits their Web site. Now who did I leave off? Let me check the Program. Oh, Joe Greco and Bill Maclin were the photographers. Can’t leave Joe’s name out or I’ll never hear the end of it. They did a great job as usual. Spent a lot of time getting everyone’s picture with their cars and a lot more time printing and framing each one. They also provided each of us a framed picture of all the cars in Grand Central station. Thanks to all ya’ll in Tennessee Region. I wonder if I can register early enough to beat out Cambron for car number “01” next year!