

December, 2001

ELECTIONS RESULTS

No pregnant chad here; this fall's elections saw a good solid ballot return and very clear decisions. The entire Board of Directors from last year (**Ed Austin**, **Jerry Rukavina**, **Paul Heppner**, and **Namen Paul**) was re-elected unanimously (they apparently even voted for themselves!). And all of the proposed rule changes were soundly passed as well. So for next year, the following will apply (yeah, all of the necessary changes will be incorporated into the rules and tech sheets):

- Pylon penalties will be 2 seconds per.
- Noise regulations are the Event Chair's call, but 30 days notice is required so entrants are not looking for mufflers at 10:00 on Sundays.
- The Event Chair and Safety Steward will decide (an unappealable decision!) whether to allow riders on an event-by-event basis, and the rider rules will be announced at the driver's meeting. Riders will have to be over the age of 12, however (SCCA insurance regulations).
- The competition points system will reflect a greater points spread for first place finishers as compared to the points separation between other finishing orders and will limit the number of points attainable in one and two car classes. FTD gets a single point per event.
- GT-O class is gone, replaced with just an engine package for blowers and turbos.

Thanks to all you Americans who voted (remember – no voting means no griping). These changes will be in effect for the entire 2002 season.

EVENT SITES AND DATES

Event sites continue to be a problem. In short, there aren't many! The 7 days a week schedules of most businesses and the new national defense and airport posture have reduced our options, but we are always looking for new pavement. And we are continually going back to previous sites to see when and if the doors may open again. Please, if you get any brilliant ideas, let a board member know ASAP. Keep in mind that there are all sorts of considerations necessary for event sites such as security, safety, pit area, noise restrictions, accessibility, and so on; but the first need is plenty of drivable pavement or concrete. Think hard; maybe going out of town to a 30 or 50 (or even 100) mile radius around Great Falls will help.

We will be announcing the 2002 event schedule and site locations as soon as possible, but remember that we will be working with the local Corvette club on Sunday, Memorial weekend, May 26 to repay them for their assistance with Top Gun last summer. And we will work the Demo Derby at ExpoPark again in August to get some free ExpoPark event dates.

WEBSITE

Our club website has been shut down for the time being, and will reappear as soon as it is restructured into something useful and accessible. Thanks for your patience (God, I hope patience is a virtue!) as we all wait. Watch this newsletter for more information as it becomes available.

HISTORY

Sure, it was current events when you were younger, but it's history now. Recently, Tom Masterson (you know Tom, the only club member equally at home in a Porsche or a forklift) was asked by the SCCA national for a quick thumbnail history of the local region. So here it is:

”Montana's region history goes back to the late 1950s, when Montana Sports Car Clubs were formed throughout the state of Montana. Three divisions were designated at that time. The Western Division was based in Butte, Southern in Billings and the Northern here in Great Falls. Out of all that alliance, three popular events emerged and became part of the scoring for Montana State Championship. Butte was the home of Pipestem Hill Climb. Billings hosted the Black Otter Hill Climb, and Great Falls was the host of Town & Country. Of the three events, Black Otter is still being run under the alliance of Northwest Hill Climb Association. The two Hill Climbs would be Solo I events today. Town & Country was a two-day Solo II event, using the perimeter road of the fairgrounds. The fairgrounds encompasses 116 acres. The second part of the event was a T & D Rally of approximately 75 to 100 miles ran on Saturday night. To win the weekend, you had to compete and do well in both events. In the mid 70s, rising insurance costs and other factors pretty well dictated that the independent clubs needed a national alliance. SCCA was the choice, and movement was set afoot to make it so.

Since becoming a region, Montana has done itself proud. In the early years, the Commander's Cup Solo II event was established. This two-day Solo II event was used as a fund-raiser for the State MS Chapter, and Malmstrom Air Force Base was the host site. Our best fundraising year netted about \$1,800.00 for MS.

Another event we take pride in is one continuous involvement in the NWRB Montana Double National Races. This Memorial weekend will be Number 21(?). In 1986, we were recipients of the SCCA Chairman's Award for Membership Growth and the Formation of Yellowstone Region-Rocky Mountain Division and Big Sky Region-Norpac Division. We co-shared the award with NWR.

As to the present, we are proud of the development of our three-region challenge Solo II event, Top Gun. This past year was our 14th running of this two-day Solo II event. We are also very much involved in the community with our development and manning of the Demo Derby in connection with Montana State Fair week. No, it is not an SCCA sanctioned event.

Montana region continues to look for ways to improve the quality of our events and our continued community involvement.”

If you're a long-timer, take pride in what you have contributed to this club's growth and longevity. Thanks! And if this is all so much ancient history to you new-timers, please appreciate those pioneers who have facilitated your automotive participation today. All of us participating now are the history of the future, but on a day-to-day basis we often don't fully appreciate the hard work and dedication of our predecessors. We should.

But don't get too reverent in your retrospect, however, because all history is a little (a lot?) tainted by imperfect human memories. As you listen to the myths and mystiques and just plain crap that comprise our collective story, keep in mind that some of the best and coolest things that ever happened maybe never happened in just the exact way the story now goes. And if it's your story, you have the unalienable right to tell it your way, I guess.

RUN GROUPS AND COURSE WATCHERS

After successful trials this season using the concept of run groups, the same type of system will be used next year. The idea is to divide competitors into two or three “run groups” so drivers will have a better idea of when they need to be ready to run, all buckled into the car and ready to go. This will continue to be announced at the driver's meeting in the morning and will also be posted on the timing trailer. We will add to that concept by dividing all competitors into course watcher groups, and assigning each group to a particular course watch station. It will then be up to the “team” of assigned watchers to decide how to make sure the watch station is responsibly manned at all times. Particularly at the ExpoPark site, this ought to work pretty well (we have sort of evolved to this, anyway). At other sites where some watch stations will be fairly remote, we will still probably have to shut down occasionally to exchange course watcher personnel. Again, it will all be posted at the timing trailer at every event.

FROM SCCA NATIONAL

*From a recent memo from **John Martinsen**, our Area 13 Director, explaining the structure of SCCA and our regional role in that structure. It does make the mud clearer.*

“The SCCA as an organization can be confusing. It is made up of so many entities at different levels it is sometimes hard to visualize the organizational structure. So, in an attempt to provide some perspective, here is a simplified view of SCCA as organization.

SCCA, Inc., is the parent, national organization. As the name implies, SCCA is incorporated as a 501 C4 corporation. As such it is a non-profit but not a charitable corporation. Like any corporation it is governed by a Board of Directors who are elected by the stockholders. The stockholders in this case are members of SCCA. Each SCCA member can vote for a Director every three years as members of the Board serve three-year terms. The terms of Directors are staggered so that roughly one-third of the Board is elected each year. For the purpose of electing Directors the SCCA is divided into Areas, thirteen Areas to be exact. Thus the Board of Directors contains thirteen directors. These Areas are geographical but not of equal area, but all have about the same number of SCCA members. The “one man, one vote” concept. Area boundaries follow Divisional or Regional boundaries. More about Divisions and Regions later.

SCCA, Inc., owns some other corporations. You might be familiar with SCCA Pro Racing, Ltd. SCCA Pro Racing, Ltd., is a wholly owned subsidiary of SCCA, Inc., and is governed by a separate Board of Directors elected by the shareholder, SCCA, Inc. The Pro Board is selected by the SCCA, Inc., Board, or Inc Board. Pro Racing is a for-profit corporation.

But have you heard of the SCCA Foundation? It too is owned by SCCA, Inc. But the SCCA Foundation is a non-profit, charitable corporation so that contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. (See your tax preparer.) The Foundation engages in preserving the history of SCCA and other worthy endeavors.

At the local level the SCCA is made up of Regions. Regions are defined geographically on a much smaller scale than Areas. Regions are corporations, usually 501 C4, and elect their own officers and control their own affairs within the guidelines set down by SCCA, Inc. It is the Regions that conduct rallies, races, solo events, and hold social and business meetings. SCCA members are each a member of one of the SCCA Regions and vote for officers in that Region. Each Region has a Board of Directors. Regions form the SCCA government at the local level and conduct the competition events.

In order to conduct competitions and championships on a basis larger than a single Region, the Regions are gathered into Divisions. It is within Regions and Divisions that the majority of competitions with championships are held. Divisions are created only for the organization of competitions, not for the governing of SCCA. In some of our National Championship Competitions the entries invited are those who scored well in the Divisional Championship which in turn may be made up of the events conducted by Regions.

There are also many boards and committees in SCCA. More about them later.”

PARTY INTO 2002

Folks, a dinner party of some sort has traditionally been the event that closes our past competition season and brings us together after the “official” December/January holidays to contemplate next year as well. In the dead of cold and snow (we wish!), we assemble to enjoy each other, revel in our past success (or lack thereof), and to just hassle the heck out of each other. It is great fun! Last year saw a terrific turnout of partiers, and several folks reported sore face muscles and ribs the next day just from all the laughing. We enjoy each other’s company and we show it.

This year’s party ought to be another fantastic occasion, and hopefully you have left the date open. Here’s the deal:

- January 19 at the Silver City Casino in Black Eagle. Drinks at 5:30; dinner at 7:00 PM.; awards and program following dinner.
- Dinner will consist of another delicious Silver City buffet: baked ham, turkey with dressing, salads, soup, potatoes and gravy, rolls, dessert, coffee, tea, or soft drink; the whole nine yards, all for a cost of just \$12.25 per person (gratuity included), payable to the Silver City on the 19th. Bring your appetite.
- You MUST let the club know how many will be attending from your family or group. The party is open to all; members or not, but we need to be able to tell the Silver City how many folks to cook and set up for. This is a big deal; you must call either Ed Austin at 452-1135 or Jerry Rukavina at 761-4357 by midnight (don’t you dare call at 11:59!!), Sunday, January 14, so we have an accurate head count. Actually, we don’t really count heads; it’s a figure of speech. You get the idea, though, we need to know if you’re planning to be there. You may even get a reminder call from one of us, but call us to be sure.
- Any “special” awards or agenda requests? Any “special” people you’d like to recognize? Any paybacks you’d like to share with the rest of us? The program is always pretty flexible, but if you let Ed or Jerry know that you want to be part of the program, you will not be forgotten.
- GIFT EXCHANGE! We will be having a gift exchange. We’ve set a suggestion of \$10.00 as a “cap” on the value of a wrapped gift (a new gift, not some old used piston or something!). The deal is that folks who bring such gifts will get a strip ticket, and from those ticket stubs, we will draw to see who gets to select the gift of his/her choice. We will draw

until all tickets are gone, and then all gifts get unwrapped at the same time. Swapping is, of course, encouraged at that time. Nor your usual “Chinese gift exchange”, but a fun and surprising way to redistribute (shall we say, for lack of a better word?), perhaps, a Christmas gift with which you are not fully satisfied. Hilarity usually ensues.

POINT OF EDITORIAL PRIVILEGE

One of the cool things about writing the Panic Slip (maybe even more cool than getting “press” credentials and getting to go backstage as a reporter at the Victoria’s Secret Lingerie Show) is that I can print what I want to. This month, this is what I want to print:

As I get older, I have found myself getting a little crustier every year. Probably more set in my ways, a little less tolerant of stupidity (my own and other’s), less patient, less appreciative of others, even downright crabby. But generally (my wife knows the real truth) not about sports car club stuff. Why? People, that’s why.

I’ve come to a new appreciation of how a fairly flimsy shared fascination with cars has brought us all together, maybe just on a few Sundays each year, to be friends and share a common vision. To burn both rubber and daylight with a smile on your face is a joy not all humans get to share in, and I simply hope it means something equally important to you and your values, as well.

I see all the years **Bob, Marty, Mort, Jim, Tom, Helen**, and others (my apologies to all of the folks I have not [or may not] mentioned by name) have dedicated to this little slice of the universe and I am reassured that it all matters, in a very human sense. Medical research has affirmed the many health benefits of camaraderie and laughter, and I think my health insurance ought to pay my club membership for all I have received.

I see the hours and hours of hard work that **Ed and Judi and Paul and Anita** all put in (who do you think refurbished and runs the timing trailer?) and I consider myself pretty lucky. I see the efforts that **Larry and Darrell** (not brothers) contribute and even the unrecognized work of some folks who do not even compete put in and I am grateful. I see the enthusiasm of our new members added to what we already had and I am reassured.

My point? Thanks, you are very cool folks. It is good be a part of this club and to be able to do what we do as free human beings. We are all very lucky. May 2002 bring only the best to you and your family. JR