



The Panic Slip



Top Gun 2013 in the Books!!!

We had another fabulous Top Gun this year with over 100 participants on each day of the two-day extravaganza. Competition was hotter than ever with our Big Sky Region #38 taking home the honors. Professional-grade prints and merchandise (posters, magnets, etc) are available through a vendor at their web site: <http://www.superstarmoments.com/f171734407>



Calm before the storm; daybreak Saturday on the Top Gun course

Top Gun results are available on the "Results" tab of our web page (www.greatfallsracing.com)

Upcoming events include our first Cone Heads race followed by our last three races of the year...that's right folks, only four races left for the season! Refer to the schedule on our web site for details and registration!

2013 Race Schedule

Date	Event
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
9/7-8	Cone Heads in Helena, MT
9/15	Expo Park
10/6	Expo Park
10/13	Expo Park

August Meeting Minutes

Our complete August meeting minutes will be reviewed and finalized at our next monthly meeting on September 26th. The main topics of our August meeting were:

- Special thanks and recognition to all the volunteers that made our four-region Top Gun race a success again this year!
- Position openings for next year; officer elections coming soon
 - o Malmstrom racing package in final coordination. We are hoping to host an event there this year.
 - o Many of our current officers and staff find themselves needing to

step aside for a well-deserved break after the close of this race season.

Positions we'll need to fill include:

- Regional Executive
- Asst. Regional Executive
- Secretary
- Panic Slip editor

SCCA Regional Officers and Club Racing

Fellow Region 105 members,

With nomination and election time for our regional SCCA officers rapidly approaching, I'd like to pass on a brief reminder of the role our officers play in our organization and solicit your help in setting our leadership for the 2014 season.

You may have heard someone comment in passing that we are a membership club; by that, they mean that our events are scheduled, planned, and hosted entirely by unpaid volunteers from our club membership. In order to make the events happen, there are tasks that require advance coordination and planning (paperwork with the national office, coordinating with venues, managing membership, advertising, etc.). In order to get this done, each year we have four to five of our members elected to fill specific positions we've defined for our regional chapter to handle these tasks.

At our September meeting, we will begin accepting nominations for our various offices for the 2014 race season. We need our members to nominate persons they think are capable and willing from within our membership to help organize and guide our collective activities. One person may be nominated for multiple offices; however, they may only hold one office at any given time and

cannot serve more than 2 years back-to-back in any office. We have already had a few names nominated from our members but we (as in "all of us planning to race next year") have to have more nominations to take a turn at handling the behind-the-scenes work for the club next year. Vast experience is not needed - 3 of our current 5 officers have less than 5 years with the club. Basic requirements are that the person have a passion for racing, a willingness to help ensure we continue racing in our region, and are a current member of Region 105 in good standing.

Do you or someone you know want to help but are worried about not having experience? Our previous officers have addressed this – one of our appointed officer positions is our "Member at Large", an officer from the previous year who acts as an advisor to the current race year's officers. We also have our officer roles defined in our bylaws, continuity folders/books prepared as needed for the positions, and multiple members who have previously served in all officer positions who are willing to help out when needed. Until I served as an officer myself, I never appreciated just how much assistance we get from our fellow members.

Nominations can be forwarded to me up to the point in our November meeting at which we conduct the elections. Offices being elected are Regional Executive, Assistant Regional Executive, Competition Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. We are also emplacing a new Panic Slip Editor, a position appointed by our officers. If you would like to participate in any of these positions OR if you know someone you feel has the aptitude and ability to serve as an officer, please contact me directly concerning nominations.

We all enjoy racing and collectively have developed a truly outstanding organization. We can only maintain this level of racing if we all contribute to making it happen.

David Sherman, Secretary, SCCA Region 105

Tips from the Grid (with special thanks to James Rowen for his assistance with this month's article)

You've had another great day of racing, helped pick up the course (remembering that we as members host our own events), and returned home to regale your family, friends, and pets with tales of your day's triumphs. Although you'd think your day is done until the next race, you still need to take care of your car to ensure it's ready for the next race or, for many of us, for work on Monday! After pushing your car to edge of its capabilities, post-race maintenance is a necessity to ensure its continued safety and reliability.

Post-race maintenance on your car is essentially a bumper-to-bumper check of all components and fluids after your vehicle has cooled from your drive home with maintenance scheduled or accomplished "on the spot" where needed.

You'll start with a 360 degree walk-around of your vehicle (including the underside) looking for any damage to the bodywork or evidence of leaking fluids. Although cone damage is rare, you may tear a wheel well liner or have an air shield underneath knocked loose. Catching it now and putting in back in place prevents potentially expensive total replacement of the components when they've been dragged along to work and back on Monday.



Wheel well liner inspection?

After your quick look over, you'll move on to your engine bay. You'll first do a visual inspection for leaks or other things amiss (loose belts/brackets, dislodged sound padding, etc.). Then check the levels and conditions of all your engine fluids (oil, coolant, brake, power steering, clutch) taking particular note of any evidence of contamination. A milky appearance in your oil can indicate coolant has leaked into it. A dark or dirty appearance to your coolant (assuming it was relatively fresh before you raced) can indicate an oil leak into your cooling system.



An extreme example of oil contaminating coolant!

Also make sure you check the condition on the seals on your reservoirs – some fluids, such as

brake fluid, will rapidly absorb moisture and are quickly degraded if this happens. We'll come back to the engine bay for maintenance shortly, so leave your hood up and we'll move on to your tires.

At each tire, you'll be visually inspecting the tire for excess wear as aggressive cornering during autocrossing can lead to uneven wear. Pay particular attention to the edges of the tire where the tread meets the sidewalls – this is normally where you'll find unusual wear. While you're there, you'll also want to inspect your wheels to ensure they haven't been damaged by contact with the tarmac and, if you've had an off-track experience, that you don't have any debris caught between the tire and the wheel. Before you move on, check and set your tire pressures to the factory recommended pressures for driving on the street as the repeated heating and cooling of the tires during autocrossing tends to change your cold tire temperatures.



A quick post-race pressure check. Notice the brake rotor and pads visible through the wheel.

While you're at the wheel, look behind or through it to check the condition of your brake pads and rotors. Your brakes will wear out faster than any other component on your car –

you'll have to keep a sharp eye on them to ensure they're kept in prime condition.



On most cars, you'll go through a set of rotors for every two to four sets of brake pads so be sure to check their thickness (or have it checked) to ensure they're safe every time you change your brake pads. Lastly, while you're down looking at your brakes carefully look at your suspension to ensure everything is tight and you don't have any leaks in your shocks or struts. Wiping things down while you're in there is a good idea; it helps ensure you look and touch everything you need to check as well as making finding any problems later a little easier. Aftermarket suspensions require special attention; specifically, check also for loose bolts or coil-over nuts that have rotated. A helpful hint – use a paint marker to place alignment marks on nuts and bolt heads and the corresponding suspension points to help make your after-race checks faster and easier.

The last thing you'll need to do is plan or complete your recurring maintenance based on the results of your inspection. You'll need to change your fluids more frequently than recommended by the manufacturer's maintenance schedule especially your engine oil. As a good rule of thumb, if you've looked at

a particular fluid and thought “Hmmm... should I change that?” you should probably change it! When planning your maintenance, make sure to pick up quality components. There’s no need to be wasteful by overpaying for exotic fluids or components but quality pays for itself in the long run. Synthetic oil is highly recommended for engines with more than 10,000 miles on them. DOT 4 brake fluid is highly recommended as well if it’s suitable for use in your brake system; normally you will not overheat your brake fluid autocrossing but you may need it for other high-performance applications (track days, high performance driver education, etc.). Ensure you don’t mix different DOT brake fluid types when you change it and always, always check the factory recommendations. Some high performance braking systems use special brake fluid such as DOT 5 fluid – using the wrong fluid (i.e. DOT 4 in a DOT 5 system or vice versa) will ruin the seals in the system.



Always use jack stands!

Just to give you an idea of a maintenance schedule on vehicle fluids, here are some ideas:

Engine oil – every 2-3 race weekends or 1,000 miles (during race season)

Coolant – Once per year, normally at the end of race season. If you’re running straight water, **DON’T FORGET TO CHANGE IT BEFORE FREEZING WEATHER!**

Transmission/differential fluids – reduce the manufacture’s recommendation by 75% (if they say every 4 years, do it every year)

Brake fluid – once per race season (normally at the start of the season).

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