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2023 Competition
Licensing School
p. 8

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Above: #19 Nicholas Bowers has the #20 of Adam Rodnitzky ghoising him. Photo by Kevin OConnor

Cover: The class of 2023 (top), novices line up for one of many on track sessions (bottom). Photo by Kevin OConnor and Ray Linkous

FEATURES

- 7** Super Tour Thrills (Western Shootout)
- 8** 2023 Competition Licensing School
- 20** Confessions of a Cone Slayer
- 21** Red Candle for Al Olinger
- 22** Red Candle for Nick Becker
- 23** Thunderhill Report

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4** Calendar
- 24** Race Car Rentals
- 25** The Garage: Classified Ads

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CALENDAR

FRESNO AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Event 4 & 5 - **March 25-26**

Event 6 & 7 - **May 20-21**

Event 8 - **June 10**

Event 9 - **July 15**

Event 10 & 11 - **September 2-3**

Event 12 & 13 - **November 11-12**

Note dates are tentative and subject to change. We are expecting to return to Famoso Dragstrip in the 2023. Dates are yet to be confirmed and may affect our Fairgrounds schedule.

Visit www.FresnoSCCA.com for an up-to-date calendar.

Most Events held at Fresno Fairgrounds .

SAN FRANCISCO REGION'S AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Rounds 3&4 - **March 4-5**

National Tour - **April 21-23**

National Pro Solo - **April 28-30**

Rounds 5 & 6 - **May 20-21**

Rounds 7 & 8 - **June 17-18**

Rounds 9 & 10 - **July 22-23**

Rounds 11 & 12 - **October 7-8**

Rounds 13 & 14 - **November 4-5**

Most events held at Crows Landing, unless noted.

SCCA SACRAMENTO AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Round 1 & 2 - **March 11-12**

Round 3 & 4 - **April 1-2**

Round 5 & 6 - **May 6-7**

Round 7 & 8 - **June 10-11**

Round 9 & 10 - **July 29-30**

Round 11 & 12 - **August 26-27**

Round 13 & 14 - **September 30-October 1**

Enduro Practice & Enduro - **October 14-15**

Events held at Thunderhill Raceway Park

RENO REGION SCCA SCHEDULE

All events are at Thunderhill Raceway Park
2 Mile West Course, Saturday
*3 Mile East Course, Friday

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2023 SFR/SCCA RACE SCHEDULE AND PRO SUPPORT SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 25-26

REGIONAL 1 & 2 - SONOMA RACEWAY

MARCH 17

TEST DAY (THILL) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MARCH 18-19

RESTRICTED REGIONAL (group 1 and 2 combined)
3 & 4 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

APRIL 14

TEST DAY (THILL) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

APRIL 15-16

RESTRICTED REGIONAL (No Group 4 FC to run in
Group 2) 5 & 6 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MAY 4

TEST DAY (THILL) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MAY 5-7

WESTERN SHOOTOUT - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MAY 12-14

IMSA - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

JUNE 2

TEST DAY (THILL) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

JUNE 3-4

REGIONAL 7&8 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

JUNE 30

(SFR) - 1/2 DAY TEST WEATHERTECH RACEWAY
LAGUNA SECA

JUNE 30- JULY 1-2

9&10 - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

JULY 28

TEST DAY (SFR) - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY
LAGUNA SECA

JULY 29-30

RESTRICTED REGIONAL (GROUP 1 AND 2
COMBINED) 11&12 - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY
LAGUNA SECA

AUGUST 12-13

PRE REUNION - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY
LAGUNA SECA

AUGUST 16-19

REUNION - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA
SECA

SEPTEMBER 1

TEST DAY TEST DAY (RUN BY HOD) - SONOMA
RACEWAY

SEPTEMBER 2-3

REGIONAL 13&14 - SONOMA RACEWAY

SEPTEMBER 8-10

INDY CAR - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA
SECA

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 1

RENNSPORT - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY
LAGUNA SECA

OCTOBER 26

TEST DAY (THILL) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

OCTOBER 27-29

REGIONAL 15,16,17 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY



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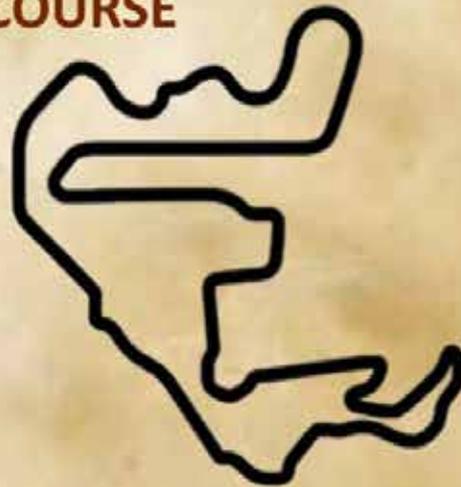
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1 CHAMPION



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Only a few months to go before our Western Shootout Super Tour event at Thunderhill. The National Hoosier Super Tour is the premier racing series for SCCA competitors. Racers come from all parts of the country to race on 10 different tracks scheduled from January to June each year. Our Western Shootout on May 4-7 is the seventh race event on the Super Tour calendar and is highlighted as the newest and most unique of all others in the series. With the nation's focus drawn to the inaugural event, and a bonus third race to crown the first Western Shootout victor on one of the longest tracks in the country, we are set for an action-packed weekend.

As a reminder, the weekend will start off with a test day on Thursday that will give racers practice time on each layout. The Friday and Saturday races will be run on the renowned 3-mile track with Saturday's race using the bypass. Finally, the Shootout Feature Race will happen on the 5-mile track on Sunday to crown the overall Champions based on the highest point totals for all three races combined!

National events are limited by SCCA to those classifications which qualify for the Runoffs title chase. Points and qualification criteria are set by SCCA, to the limitation of many regional classes. Hoosier Super Tour's traditionally host 27 classifications - AS, B-Sec, EP, F6, FA, FC, FE2, FF, FP, FV, GT1, GT2, GT3, GTX, GTL, HP, P1, P2, SM, SRF3, STL, STU, T1, T2, T3, T4. Regional classifications defer greatly from the National Tour's criteria but many of the local racers can participate by slightly modifying their car set up to align with those regulations. However, another option might be to rent-a-racer from an arrive-and-drive prep shop.

Expand your racing experience and push the limits by trying something new. If you find yourself at this crossroad and have any hesitation on attending our first annual Western Shootout, now is the time to reconsider. A pathway to participation is within your grasp and one which is set to provide a new personal test. It may be that you have never raced a Super Tour event or that your car does not qualify under the strict rules set by National SCCA. The solution to both is available at your fingertips and within your personal determination to accomplish more from racing than ever before. RENT A THRILL!!!

Arrive-and-drive rental options are numerous and available locally through regional support networks. Many teams rent vehicles that can be run within Super Tour classifications. Keep it local and support our community while broadening your own goals. From Spec Miata to the pinnacle classification of Prototype and Formula cars, options are available to compete for Western Shootout glory. Find your Super Tour dream ride listed below. Contact them now!

Follow the action at our regional website dedicated to the Western Shootout Championship.

westernshootout.com

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2023 COMPETITION LICENSING SCHOOL

Jon Becker (Coordinator of San Francisco Region Competition Licensing School) was standing at the podium in front of the gathered masses in the spacious Thunderhill Club House. His first words were about the hat he had recently removed that had Instructor printed on the front. He removed the hat and proclaimed he was no longer an instructor; he was a driver just like the 56 new members to the race driver's community that had gathered to receive their rite of passage. That rite of passage was in the form of a SCCA Novice Permit, fully equipped with all the proper signatures and stamps to allow this year's class to fully explore the world of SCCA racing.

Shortly after proclaiming to be a race driver with the group of novices, he welcomed every one of them to the SCCA family.

Becker went on to explain once you are part of the family, there is an entire village of people willing to help you out and look after you. He said that any time you need help, whether it be mechanical, technique, or moral support, anyone in the family is more than willing to lend a hand. He cited examples of the generations of families that have participated in SCCA and proudly proclaimed that all the new licensees were now part of that family.

The 2023 Competition Licensing School went off without a hitch. Weather was clear and sunny with three groups of cars - two for fendered race cars and one for Sports Racers and Formula cars.

With an instructor ratio of three students (or less) to every instructor, they all received individualized attention. The backgrounds of the students varied. Most had some racing experience whether it was from track days, karts, or solo. But some like my son, Connor Tatum, had absolutely no experience at all. The beauty of this school is that the assembled staff can take all of these different backgrounds and



Alexander Peysakhovich
Photo by Randy Jones



Richard Trueb
Photo by Randy Jones



Matt Randell
Photo by Randy Jones



Karthik Rao
Photo by Randy Jones



Maxwell Trueb
Photo by Randy Jones



Brian Randall
Photo by
Randy Jones



Louis Frizzell
Photo by
Randy Jones



David McCoy
Photo by
Randy Jones



Michael Litchfield
and John George
Photo by
Randy Jones



Jeffrey Pike
Photo by
Randy Jones

get them to the point where they are comfortable racing against them.

What is also unique about the school is that drivers from all aspects of the club volunteer their time and pass on their wisdom, so the next generation of racers will be safe, and so they will enjoy the sport of auto racing as much as they have.

If you have never been to our Competition Licensing School, it is definitely a life-changing experience. At first, it is intimidating because all students are told that they are not attending Driver's School. They are enrolled in Competition Licensing School. The Instructors are not there to teach you how to drive, they are there for the students how to race. If you happen to not have any racing experience, that is a nerve-racking thought with which to start. But the cadre of instructors have a well-oiled lesson plan that breaks down the process to manageable bites.

The first step in the process is to load the student up in street cars and drive them around the 1.9-mile Thunderhill track. The instructor concentrates on showing the students the racing line. All the instructors have years of experience and can explain to the students the difference between the racing line and the qualifying line. They can also point out the preferred passing areas, as opposed to the area's most people do not expect a pass. As the weekend progresses, the drive-arounds are used repeatedly to correct bad habits and to clear up any confusion.

After the drive-arounds, the students are strapped into their race cars and spend the next 20 minutes following the instructors around. The instructor leads and the students follow. The biggest takeaway from this is that they are no longer driving around in a streetcar. The students are sitting in their own race cars and

Competition Licensing School continues

get to experience the limited line of sight with their racing gear on. As the Instructor leads the way around, he/she points the students on by, so they can demonstrate to the instructor their understanding of the racing line.

After the session all the students in the group gather and discuss the session with the instructors.

In addition to the one-on-one instructors there are instructors stationed around the track to make sure the students drive the line. As the weekend builds up, the instructors talk to the students about their speed. The entire process is broken down into manageable pieces.

After a couple of lead-follow sessions, the students are left on their own. They are instructed to work their way around the track, but no passing. After they demonstrate competence at driving on their own, passing is introduced. Passing and being passed takes awareness on both the passer and the passee.

By the time the second day starts, you can see the level of confidence grow in every student. The thought of learning to become a race car driver is still in the back of their mind, but it is not as scary of a thought as it was 24 hours prior.

The second day is all about learning about the pace car, the red flag, and the various caution situations that can come up during a race weekend.

The school is not all about the on-track performance. The student must demonstrate their knowledge of the General Competition Rules and the meaning of the flags used in SCCA. One of the recent additions is the introduction of appendix P, from the general competition rules. Appendix P address the Rules of the Road. It explains in detail who has the right to the turn and who must yield. It explains that drivers need to allow for

Caitlyn Singler
Photo by
Randy Jones



Christopher Linkous
Photo by
Randy Jones

Alex Mancano
Photo by
Randy Jones



Will Lowery
Photo by
Randy Jones

Enzo Marino
Photo by
Randy Jones



Arvind Govindaraj
Photo by
Randy Jones



racing room and each situation is accompanied by a detailed illustration.

The last day of the school was all about cleaning up any issues that are not crystal clear and about learning how to race. Each group was treated to three 15-minute races. In the races the instructors make sure all the drivers are applying everything that has been taught to them up to this point.



Matthew Singler
Photo by
Randy Jones

The winner of the race was not important. What was more important was the conduct of all of the drivers. When the final checkered flag waved, each and every driver got to exhale and reflect on the weekend. The cool-down lap was a combination of relief and gratification. The feeling of anxiety that everybody had on Friday morning was replaced with a sense of accomplishment, an accomplishment not many people achieve. But the best part of getting your racing license is how it changes your life.

Armin Ghorbani
Photo by
Randy Jones



The thrill of driving a race car is an addiction that can only be treated with seat time. The more you get, the more you want. The addiction is insatiable. So to the 56 drivers who are now part of the addiction, welcome to the family!



Nolan Stinger
Photo by
Randy Jones

The 2023 competition licensing school was extra special for me. My oldest son Connor was one of the students. Connor is 25 years old and until 'Drive to Survive' aired on Netflix, his interest in auto racing was minimal. He was the kid who played video games in our trailer while I was on the track. Connor would barely look up at me when I came off the track. Getting him to look at me and ask how the race went was not in the cards.

Nate Randall
Photo by
Randy Jones



So, with no racing experience plus no concept of how to drive a car with a manual transmission, we entered Competition Licensing School. Naturally his car would be my Formula Vee.

The adventure started with me trying to explain how a manual transmission works and how the clutch works. Not being the best

Competition Licensing School continues

at instructing, my ability to explain slipping the clutch and applying the throttle tested our resolve to continue with this endeavor. I should have known that starting out in third gear was only reserved for the highest expertise level. What most people do not realize that is in a Formula Vee first and second gears barely get used. As a result, the shift linkage is not really designed to access those two gears easily. This only compounded the difficulty level when learning how to drive a race car.

After a new approach and access to Stockton 99 Speedway, we were at least able to take off without stalling, even learning how to downshift. We loaded up, knowing that at least we would be able to pull out of the paddock without harming anyone.

The first in-car session went well from a Dad's point of view. He did not crash, and the car did not break down. We just had two and 3/4 days to go! I never said anything to Connor, but I think I was a nervous as he was. I was nervous for completely different reasons than Connor. I was worried that he wouldn't have fun. I was worried that he wouldn't do well. I was worried that the car would break down, and he would not get enough track time. I was worried because I was his Father. He was worried about being able to accomplish the task. The idea that this was Competition Licensing School added a level of anxiety that you could feel, but you could not touch. With no words being spoken about our nervousness, we worked through each session. As each successful session passed, both of us gained some confidence. I could see the anxiety slowly fading away, just by how talkative he was. Each time he stepped over the bodywork into the seat I could see the transformation from nervous and unsure to excited and confident. Slipping the clutch and smooth takeoffs were still difficult; but I no longer worried about him running



Ken Harvey
Photo by
Randy Jones



Ulrika Haug
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Michael Cheney
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Aaron Eardley
Photo by
Randy Jones

over anyone when he realized the clutch was his friend. Being the only Formula Vee in the formula car group meant he was destined to be the slowest car in the group; but I was not worried about lap times. I was more worried about what he was going to do when he had to counter steer. I actually cheered when he put all four tires off in Turn 1. I cheered when he started to go flat through Turn 15. I got excited when he came upon a slower SRF and he had someone to chase. By the end of the last session, I could not be prouder of him. He went from the kid who would rather play Spiderman on his PlayStation to the kid that can't wait to get his Novice Permit signed off!

All of this would not have been possible if it were not for the volunteer instructors. Jim Lepitich was assigned to Connor and did a fantastic job of coaching him. His patience and expertise were instrumental in transforming him from Driver to Racer.

Mike Smith was there the entire weekend, reaffirming the process and giving the encouragement that every student needs. Joe Briggs, Scott Vreeland, and Jeff Lederman all played a significant role in not only my son's development; but in the development in all of the students in our group.

Competition Licensing School continues

Knowing how much fun my son had I thought I would share with you some of comments I received from the drivers:

Hello Blake,

Thanks for reaching out regarding our experience at the recent SFRSCCA driver's school.

Before the weekend started, I was sure someone was going to tell me that I was in the wrong place, that I didn't have the experience to be driving on track with other people. How wrong was I?

From the very first classroom session we were told "This is a race school not a track day." We were expected to push and make mistakes. Each time a session ended my coach, Peter Phung and other coaches would talk about how to go faster and push harder.

I started the weekend lapping in the 1:34s and ended in the 1:24s. A full ten seconds quicker from beginning to end! I'm still several seconds off the pace, but now have a much better feel for the limits of the car. In the beginning, everything the car did was a surprise. By the last day I knew what the car was going to do before it did it. I was in control, and it felt incredible.

My on-track battles with Steve Melson in his Spec Mustang will be remembered forever. I appreciated having someone in a similar-paced car to fight with.

Thank you to the entire team of SCCA volunteers. The coaching team, Tech people and on-track workers were incredibly welcoming and helpful throughout the entire weekend.

Adam Eardley



Kris Nagel
Photo by
Randy Jones



Vitek Harvey
Photo by
Randy Jones



Adam Rodnitzky
Photo by
Randy Jones



Keith Korth
Photo by
Randy Jones



Antonio Scarpace
Photo by
Randy Jones

Bill Hansen
Photo by
Randy Jones



Hi Blake,

Thanks for reaching out. I had an absolute blast at Competition Licensing School. That was the first time I'd ever driven a race car and been on a track. I was pretty nervous at the beginning, but I had a great instructor who boosted my confidence and helped me get around the track in one piece. I even came in third in one of the races!

Aside from driving fast and passing Miatas (I'll admit... sometimes getting passed by Miatas haha,) my favorite part of the weekend was meeting people - all the fantastic drivers, coaches and volunteers. Everyone was supportive -- willing to provide guidance and instruction when needed. It's always been a dream of mine to become a race car driver, but I've never had the resources to do so. I was one of the lucky recipients of the SCCA volunteer/worker scholarships, so I'd like to thank everyone at SCCA SFR for taking a chance on me and helping my dreams come true (shoutout to Trish and Courtney in T&S.) I look forward to volunteering more with the region - oh and racing :)

Will Lowery

Brian Randell
Photo by
Randy Jones



Nicolas Bowers
Photo by
Randy Jones



Thomas Blackmom
Photo by
Randy Jones



Craig McDonald
Photo by
Randy Jones



Competition Licensing School continues

Dear SCCA team,

I've finally found time to express my heartfelt gratitude for making my dream of attending racing school come true. Your generosity and commitment to promoting motorsports have made a tremendous impact on me.

I want to convey how grateful I am to have been given this opportunity to attend the school. The experience has been invaluable, and I have learned so much from my instructor Joe Montana. He helped me shave more than 4.5 seconds off my lap time!

I appreciate the efforts that you put in to make the weekend a success, from the planning and organization to the execution. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and I want to express my sincere gratitude for your dedication.

I made a short video to capture this experience from my perspective. Hope you enjoy it: <https://youtu.be/Q7v4QuCWbOU>

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to attend the racing school. It has been a life-changing experience, and I will always be grateful to you all for making it possible.

See you soon at Sonoma!

Cheers,

Karthik Rao



Pankaj Chowdhry
Photo by
Randy Jones



Francis Genet
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Randy Jones



Brian Graver
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EJ Abed
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Edward Rorer
Photo by
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John Hern
Photo by
Randy Jones

Hi Blake

My Name Is Enzo Marino. I am 19

I brought my stock car/NASCAR to the 2023 SCCA driving school. My instructor was Charlie Laster. The first thing I noticed about the driving school was how nice everybody was with people offering advice and any help they could give. We ended up finding out my rear-end gear ratio was wrong; and by the end of the day another instructor named Joe Montana had another set of gears for us. I can't even begin to explain how helpful this was and how nice everyone else was. We ended up needing to charge our car after each run since there is no alternator on the car; and someone was quick to offer up their shop so we could have a place to plug in. Racing on track in a big powerful car was a lot of fun and keeping it under control was the hardest part. My instructor, Charlie, gave me a lot of good advice about using the entire track. When you're racing a big stock car like mine you want to make the track as wide as possible. Of course, the on-track part was the most fun. I found myself driving door-to-door a lot of the time with a buddy of mine named Nolan. I hope that this is just the beginning of my racing career I want to one day race NASCAR or trans Am and do it for a long time.

Thank You

Enzo Marino

Competition Licensing School continues

I did a thing this weekend. What an amazing experience that was, I can't wait to do it again soon. Thanks to all of the volunteers this weekend that helped put on the San Francisco Region's annual drivers school. Thanks to the instructors, group leaders, office staff, emergency, timing and scoring, tech, grid, registration, sound, start, stewards and f&c crews for all of their support in making this an amazing weekend. Thanks to my fellow board members for allowing me the opportunity to do this, as well as Jaime Gonzalez. @sfrscca @sccaofficial #scca #sportscarclubofamerica #novicepermit #driversschool #racing #roadracing #musclecar

Christopher Linkous

Hello Blake

My name is Nolan Stinger and Mike Thompson was my instructor for the driving school. I had a really great time at the school and enjoyed meeting and racing against lots of people. I started the first day of school in my own spec e30 #2 but on the last session of the first day I destroyed my clutch. Luckily Mike referred me to Jeremy over at Dig Motorsports who was able to provide me with his #99 spec mustang for the remainder of the school (though 99 was taken so we ran it as number 199). At first I missed my e30 and I didn't think I would get used to the weight and size of the spec mustang. My first session in the spec mustang I didn't even get the tires hot or use the brakes to their full capacity and I believe i did somewhere in the mid 1:35s for my best lap. As I became used to the car, I consistently reduced my lap times by about two seconds every time I went out. By the last day my laps became more consistent during the second race I ran my best lap which was a 1:24.8 coming in second place and posting the fastest lap of the race. In the end my I really enjoyed drivers school despite my car breaking down.

Stewart Wells
Photo by
Randy Jones



Ben Booker
Photo by
Randy Jones



Photo by Kevin OConnor



Photo by Kevin OConnor



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Photo by Kevin OConnor

My favorite part was the driving but there are also so many great people to meet in racing and the culture and attitude that the San Francisco Region SCCA brought to the track was amazing.

Nolan Stinger

We all drive cars in our everyday life, but the car takes on a new significance once you are on a racetrack racing with other people. To some it looks easy. They drive 80 to 90 mph on the freeway all the time. But once you have to turn going that fast everything changes.

Your body does not know what to do with itself as the car fights for grip around the turn. Your body wants to keep going straight. The belts strain to hold you in the seat while your hands grip the steering wheel tighter and tighter. Your shoulder tense up because the forces on the steering wheel are testing the strength of our forearms. Then the next thing you know is you made it through the turn and you realize you have been holding your breath. You exhale, check your mirrors and get ready for the next turn. So much fun!

Competition Licensing School is probably the best event the region puts on every year. No other event changes so many lives as the School. By the end of the day on Sunday, Cloud Nine is the biggest cloud in the sky because so many people are riding on it. The euphoria can not be replicated by any drug. It is just that cool of a feeling.

Sound like fun? Start making plans for next year's school, you will not be sorry.

Confessions of a Cone Slayer

By Rob Krider



The Distance

Growing up, my Dad and I fixed a lot of vehicles in our little two car garage. We kept neighborhood cars running, restored old vehicles to car-show status, and of course, we built some race cars. A common scene at our house was the garage door open, music playing

and us wrenching on a car until whatever o'clock in the morning. Like a Las Vegas casino, our garage did not have a clock in it. The neighbors never said a word.

Music was always a part of our routine in the garage. My dad and I loved Primus and their song, "Jerry was a Racecar Driver." That song probably played a thousand times in that garage. Over the years we started to collect our favorite car themed garage songs. My dad had his oldies, like The Beach Boy's "Little Deuce Coupe" and Johnny Cash's "One Piece at a Time," and I brought some modern songs into the mix, like Ministry's "Jesus Build My Hot Rod" and The Dead Milkmen's "Bitchin' Camaro." The style of these songs were different; but they all shared a sense of humor and car culture, which fit perfectly in our garage.

I was constantly in the garage listening to tunes helping my dad because I loved it, but also out of necessity. My dad was in a wheelchair. He had been in a bad racing accident in Turn 11 at Sears Point which left him paralyzed from the waist down. Because of his disability, it was difficult for him to do certain things in the garage so those tasks were left to me. I remember being fourteen-years-old underneath an El Camino installing a B&M shift kit into a Turbo 350 transmission, while my dad read the instructions from his wheelchair. I had no idea what I was doing, but as a team, him guiding me, and myself as the laborer, we got it done. I remember when we finally finished, it was late at night and "Rapid Roy (The Stock Car Boy)" from Jim Croce was playing on the stereo.

Decades later, after many different car projects and new favorite songs came in and out of my dad's garage, we found ourselves at Buttonwillow Raceway. It was the last race of the season and I desperately needed a good finish to earn championship points. I was racing a 1990 Acura Integra which I hand built using all of the skills I'd learned in my dad's garage. It was a nail-biter race, one of those races where your adrenaline is spiked the entire time. I remember feeling my spine was super stiff, as I was running ten-tenths the entire race and having to fight for every inch of every curve around the course. I passed and repassed for the lead multiple times. I was running the car on the edge, often up on two wheels while bouncing on the curbing at Buttonwillow. I had sweated through three layers of Nomex. The race was going to come down to the last lap.

I had my dad on my radio, once again guiding me, keeping me calm, just as he had when I was fourteen underneath the El Camino. I desperately wanted to win the race in front of my dad and I was pushing myself and the Acura to the limit. The white flag was out and I was in second place, rubbing the paint off of the back bumper of the lead car. I decided to make an outside pass going clockwise into Phil Hill, not the most geometrically advantageous pass, but one that would be unexpected. Under heavy braking I got the pass done clean, which meant all I needed to do was stay out front for a few more turns. I sent the car

through Sunset corner so hard I ran four wheels into the dirt as I headed for the checkered flag. The driver behind me did the same thing and we drag raced in the dirt to the flag stand. Seeing the black and white checkered flag fly above my windshield symbolizing I had won was absolutely the greatest feeling in the world.

In the paddock I was so exhausted I could barely climb out of the car. I got the tightest bear hug of my life from my dad after that victory. We did it together, just like in his garage back in the day. And just like back in the day music was playing in our pits. We had a block rocker and an MP3 player kicking out the jams. It was "The Distance" by the band Cake. After the podium celebration my dad and I were enjoying some 10.9% ABV Double Nickel Nine DIPA from Tactical Ops Brewing and staring at our newest first place trophy. With the sun setting and the music playing, Dad and I were a few beers in when we started to do a little trackside karaoke to "The Distance."

He's going the distance

He's going for speed

She's all alone (all alone)

All alone in her time of need

Because he's racing and pacing and plotting the course

He's fighting and biting and riding on his horse

He's going the distance!

The euphoria of the win, the fact that my dad was there for it, the amount of alcohol in my veins, the sound and meaning of that song, and the absolute indifference to who was walking by in the pits seeing us belt out the tune as loud as we could, it honestly may be one of the best moments of my life. One I will never forget.

Thank you Dad, for everything. And thank you Cake, for "The Distance."

Rob Krider is a national champion racer and author of the novel Cadet Blues.

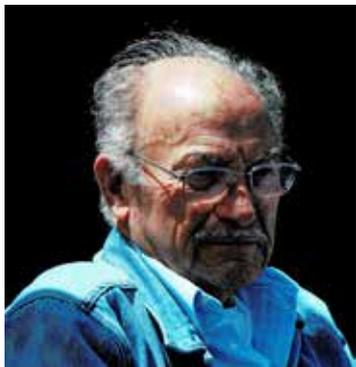


Rob and Jim Krider



Red Candle for AL Olinger

By Jeff Olinger and Don Peperdene



On Saturday morning February 4, 2023, AL Olinger passed away peacefully in his sleep and took the checkered flag for the last time. He would have been 97 on the 19th of February.

From the early 70's AL was heavily involved in Formula Vee Racing within the San Francisco Region SCCA, whether as a driver or crewing for many of his friends. You could always spot him because of his black derby.

He spent many hours traveling from track to track with friends Slim Peperdene, Slim's dad John, Buck Jones and Eugenia, Brent, and Patty Milner along with Ron Wake and Bruce Fugiwaki. Thank you to all of you for taking such good care of him when his family was not there.

If someone had any type of issue with their car, AL was always there to lend a hand. Many times, he could be found in the garage doing repairs to another competitor's body work. If he wasn't doing that, he was building front suspension parts or he was helping his son with his car.

One of the memorable moments was when AL qualified for the Runoffs when he was in his early eighties. Dorsey Schroeder was doing the commentary on the TV broadcast. He made a comment about AL's age. Schroeder stated that he hoped he would be able to drive as well as AL when he was that age. No sooner had the words come out of his mouth, AL looped it going into the corner.

AL and his son Jeff always had a great time racing. The funniest incident for Jeff was when AL lost it on the exit of Turn 5 drivers left at Laguna. While he was sliding sideways through the gravel,

he decided it was good time to wave at people as he went through the corner. Needless to say, Jeff spent the next hour cleaning all the gravel out of his car so he could continue to run.

AL's longtime racing partner Don Peperdene shared one of his favorite memories of AL. A group of 12 or so FV people were gathered around Don's first FV, the Leech. They were at the 35th FV anniversary race at Elkhart Lake. AL made some comment about the car and finished off with some Navy expression which Don could not remember.. Another gent none of them knew, who was a vintage FV driver from Florida said to AL, were you in the Navy? When did you serve? What ship were you on? Turned out AL and this other driver had both been on the USS Lexington in the South Pacific at the same time, they knew some of the same people, and under attack, they worked the same gun emplacement. One as loader on one deck, the other as unloader on the deck below. What are the chances! They stayed in contact the rest of their lives, even visiting the Lexington at anchor in Texas.

AL was a favorite amongst the FV community, we will certainly miss him and hopefully in heaven all the Vees have disc brakes.

AL you are truly missed, but we know you're in a much better place now. A celebration of life will be held in April.



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STANDING

Red Candle for Nick Becker

By Lynne Huntting

Checkered Flag



It is with sadness that it has been reported that long time San Francisco Region member and racer, Nick Becker took his final checkered flag on January 23, 2023. Nick's association with SCCA began in 1961 when he saw a flyer for a sports car race at what would become the Oakland airport. He and a couple of friends attended and he was hooked. While attending a race at the Port of Stockton he met Marty Illgen. Marty

encouraged him to join USARM and he began working as a member of the flag crew in 1962. After graduating from college in 1967, Nick bought a TR4 E production car that had belonged to Steve Froines. In the 80s he raced a Mini before returning to EP in a TR4. During the 80s he was president of Racing Driver's Club. He was active in running the year end 4-hour RDC Enduro as well as a Showroom Stock enduros in the late 80's. As president of the Mini Owners of America San Francisco, he organized a series of first in the area track days. The events were called the Mini Club Driver's School and were featured on TV's Evening Magazine. He provided advice and counsel and was recognized by the original founders of NASA as they built on the theme of a driver's school and then race series. He will be missed by the people he crewed for after his racing days were over. Nick, may your engine always be strong, your tires sticky, and your mirrors filled with friends and competitors.



"I knew that I'd be racing from the get-go ... I was born with skid marks."

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THUNDERHILL REPORT

By CEO Dave Vodden



David Vodden

Thunderhill Raceway Park Awards Parent Company SCCA a Quarter of a Million Dollars

San Francisco Region Properties Inc., doing business as Thunderhill Raceway Park, presented a check to its parent company - San Francisco Region- Sports Car Club of America - in the amount of \$250,000 as a dividend from operations in 2022.

The presentation was made during the Saturday night social activities at the SCCA Driving School held on the 1.9-mile road course.

Chairman of the Track Board, Michael Smith did the honors along with long time Chief Executive Officer, David Vodden. On hand to receive the bounty was SFR/SCCA Regional Executive Tim Sullivan, and SFR board member Blake Tatum and Properties Board member, Joe Briggs.

The dividend is the largest in the thirty-year history of the California road course facility that opened in 1993.

"We are very pleased and fortunate to be able to present this dividend to the San Francisco Region SCCA," noted CEO Vodden. Smith added, "The performance of the track has resulted in no debt and is in excellent financial shape. We have the ability to repave when needed and add new track services to make our members experience here better each time they come to Thunderhill."

Regional Executive Sullivan thanked the team at Thunderhill for the dividend and all the hard work that has made the track facility one of the best in the nation in performance and reputation.

Thunderhill hosted close to one thousand events in 2022 on its four surfaces with 502 of those on the racetracks and the balance on the skid pads. The SCCA is scheduled to race at Thunderhill five times, plus School in 2023.

Thunderhill opened in Willows California in October 1993 with a SCCA Regional race. The track is celebrating its 30th anniversary, while the SFR/SCCA is 75 years young this same year. Vodden is scheduled to retire from his CEO position at the end of the year. He was hired in 1988 to build and operate the Club-owned track.

Information about the track is available at www.thunderhill.com, while the SCCA Club can be reached on www.SFRSCCA.org. Call 530-934-5588 to speak to the track staff.

The year 2023 is significant in many ways. Since Thunderhill opened thirty years ago on Halloween weekend, with a 1.9-mile single racecourse, it has grown to have two tracks: one three-miles long and the other two-miles long. It has a big skid pad that can be divided into two smaller pads for side-by-side use and a dirt area that can be configured for all kinds of uses.

Thunderhill has a good book of business. This year will see a complete change over in the management team that started the project with the retirement of CEO David Vodden and the introduction of Matt Busby from Kentucky Raceway Park.

Matt will be taking over the helm as the new CEO.

The San Francisco Region of the SCCA will run a majority of its race program at Thunderhill, as Laguna Seca remains closed longer than expected due to construction setbacks at the legendary facility. The fate of the pro events there remains undetermined.

In 2023, Sonoma Raceway will continue as a property of the Smith Family, aka Speedway Motorsports. Upgrades and repaving are in the offing at the wine-country race venue. No dates for paving are known. The NASCAR Xfinity cars will be part of its June NASCAR CUP Series weekend for the first time. Corporate rentals and higher prices will continue to push the recreational renters toward Thunderhill and Buttonwillow.

Buttonwillow will open its new racecourse on the property and experience a considerable increase in business, just as Thunderhill did when its second track was opened.

Fontana will host its last two-mile NASCAR Cup race in 2023 and then begin the process of downsizing to a smaller paved oval. The LA market has not been kind to small paved ovals of a half-mile or so, which makes me feel that the end result will be a mistake.



Thunderhill Chairman Mike Smith, Thunderhill CEO David Vodden, SFR Board Member Blake Tatum, SFR RE Tim Sullivan, and Thunderhill Board Member Joe Briggs pose with the \$250,000 Thunderhill Dividend.

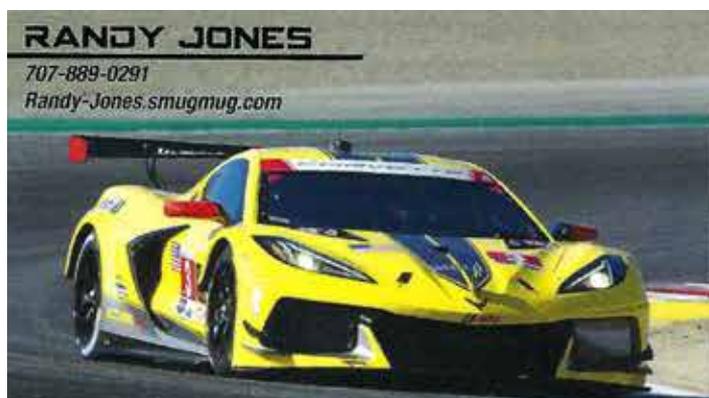


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You can easily make a donation to Thunderhill Properties Foundation by mailing a check to PO Box 966, Willows, CA. 95988; or going to the donation website: <https://www.friendsofthunderhill.org/take-action> Donations can be in any amount; \$129 funds one scholarship.

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