



The wheel®

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Peter Phung testing his new BMW at the SCCA free test day. Aaron Brink photo

Cover: David Vodden

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The views expressed in The Wheel are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of San Francisco Region or the SCCA.

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CALENDAR

FRESNO AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Driving School, **January 27**

Event 1, **January 28**

Event 2 & 3, **February 10-11**

Event 4 & 5, **March 23-24**

Event 6 & 7, **May 25-26**

Event 8, **June 8**

Event 9, **July 13**

Event 10 & 11, **September 7-8**

Event 12 & 13 Enduro, **November 9-10**

All Events held at Fresno Fairgrounds.

SAN FRANCISCO REGION'S AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Round 1 & 2, **February 17-18**

Round 3 & 4, **March 16-17**

SCCA ProSolo, **April 19-21**

SCCA National Tour, **April 26-28**

Round 5 & 6, **May 18-19**

Round 7 & 8, **June 15-16**

Round 9 & 10, **July 20-21**

Round 11 & 12, **August 24-25**

Round 13 & 14, **October 5-6**

Round 15 & 16, **November 2-3**

All Events are at Crows Landing.

SCCA SACRAMENTO SOLO II AUTOCROSS CHAPTER SCHEDULE

Round 1 & 2, **March 23-24**

Round 3 & 4, **April 27-28**

Round 5 & 6, **May 18-19**

Round 7 & 8, **June 29-30**

Round 9 & 10, **July 27-28**

Round 11 & 12, **August 24-25**

Round 13 & 14, **September 28-29**

Enduro Practice & Enduro, **October 19-20**

Events held at Thunderhill Raceway Park

RENO REGION SCCA SCHEDULE

Test & Tune 1 & 2, **March 30-31**

Solo Round 1 & 2, **April 6-7**

Track Event #1 & 2, **April 27-28**

Solo Round 3 & 4, **May 4-5**

Track Event #3 **June 22**

Track Event #4, **August 10***

Track Event #5 & 6, **September 7-8**

Track Event #7, **October 19**

All Track Events: Thunderhill Raceway Park

2 Mile West Course, Saturday

*3 Mile East Course, Friday

All Solo & Test & Tune Events: Regional Public Safety Training Center

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2023 SFR/SCCA RACE SCHEDULE AND PRO SUPPORT SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 2-3-4

DRIVING SCHOOL - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

FEBRUARY 16

TEST DAY (HOD/HPDE) - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

FEBRUARY 17-18

REGIONAL 1 & 2 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MARCH 23-24

REGIONAL 3 & 4 - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

APRIL 20-21

MAJORS/RESTRICTED REGIONAL - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

MAY 10-11-12

*IMSA - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

JUNE 7-8-9

REGIONAL 7&8 - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

JULY 5-6-7

REGIONAL 9&10 - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

JULY 20-23

*INDYCAR - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

AUGUST 10-11

*PRE REUNION - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

AUGUST 14-15-16-17

*REUNION - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

AUGUST 30

TEST DAY TEST DAY - SONOMA RACEWAY

AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 1

WESTERN SHOOTOUT - SONOMA RACEWAY

SEPTEMBER 13-15

REGIONAL 11&12 - WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

OCTOBER 26-27-28

SEASON FINAL/ENDURO - THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

* = Pro Support

Regional Races 1 & 2

17-18 February 2024

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David Vodden; The Right Man at the Right Time



Life is funny yet unpredictable. You never know what's around the corner. In the case of the San Francisco Region of the SCCA, a series of events reshaped who we are and influenced our ability to survive as a club. Back in 1988 the region was at the precipice of failure. Our main source of income was

not paying the bills, and our ability to get race dates to pay the bills was on shaky ground. Two things happened that changed the tide. First off, the leadership at the time was comprised of some very smart men that made some key decisions that might not have been too popular, but were sound financially. Secondly, these men hired the right guy at the right time. This hire changed the course of the club and insured we would be in existence for years to come. Who was this person?

David Vodden.

David Vodden is from Billings, Montana. This is the last place you would think of to find a motorsports legend. Because of shows like Yellowstone, most of us associate Montana with cold weather and cattle drives. Many of us had no idea that Billings Montana would even have a community of people that loved auto racing.

David grew up in a large family. There were seven brothers and sisters. He was the middle child. With that many kids to tend to, David's mother enlisted the help of older brother Lee to watch after him. Billings, Montana was an all-in-one town. Everything you needed was there, because the next closest town, Bozeman, was 144 miles away. Lee, being the older brother, dictated where he and David would go each day. Lee's interest superseded David's, so it was never really a discussion point as to what their activities were going to be. Lee's interest was car racing ... specifically, Jalopies.

Jalopies were home-built cars that utilized parts out of the junkyard. They featured bodies of, or partial bodies of, cars that were made in the '30s. The tires did not have fenders and the rules were very loose. The Jalopies eventually morphed into super modifieds and then merged with the modern-day sprint car. What made them popular was they crashed a lot, it didn't cost much to build the cars, and you did not have to be an aerospace engineer to do it. What also made them popular was the close rough and tumble racing.

Even though it was not a particularly large city, Billings had two racetracks - Wonderland Speedway and Flying Saucer Raceway. These tracks were the fuel for brother Lee's racing bug.

About the time David turned eight, his family moved to Southern California. Fortunately, Jalopies were big in Southern California. They were so popular that the local television station, KTLA, covered the events on Sunday afternoon. Tracks like Gardena, Ascot, Huntington Beach, Saugus, and the Orange Show littered the scenery and provided a healthy dose of Jalopy racing. Living in Southern California was the perfect environment for a young David Vodden and what turned out to be his fascination with auto racing.

When David graduated from high school, he knew a higher education was the ticket to a better standard of living. He got

his AA at Fullerton Junior College and then got his BA at Cal State University - Fullerton. He went on to get his MBA through CSU Fullerton. As David sat and listened to his professors and teachers, he thought of how to apply his new trove of knowledge to the racing world. The most striking revelation was that David realized all racetracks at the time were mom and pop operations. They basically flew by the seat of their pants. They had no long-term business plan or any global idea of how they were going to grow and survive. He saw them struggle, get sold, fall into disrepair, get sold again, and then be paved over for a shopping mall or a housing development.

He also realized that most race car drivers at the time were poor. The stereotypical race car drivers had a car sitting on his front lawn, parts strewn all over the place, and they cleaned their engines in the kitchen sink. It was obvious to him that most racing drivers would do anything to get on the racetrack.

These two realities would play an important role in how he would manage racetracks in the future.

Naturally David was not immune to the racing bug. He needed to try his hand at driving. David's first racing experience was driving his brother's Super Modified. While his brother Lee was away serving in the military, David convinced him to allow him to use the race car. David did not know much about prepping or setting up a race car. He just hoped it would start and he could make the first lap. With his knees shaking, he toured the Ascot half-mile oval on a Sunday afternoon. When the main event was over, he had been lapped by the leader and he survived.

Pretty soon David bought his first race car, which was a three-quarter midget powered by a Triumph twin 650cc motor. The seller told David that it did not run because it did not have any gasoline. Turns out it didn't run because the seller did not want David to know how bad the engine vibrated. Once David got it running, the motor vibrated so badly that literally parts fell off. The car vibrated so much his eyes could not focus. He eventually blew up the motor, and found an engine builder who could put together a motor that did not vibrate the car and him apart. Once the new motor was in the car, David went out and promptly flipped the car, receiving his first of many concussions. David eventually bought a new TQ midget. Unfortunately, he was not done with the Triumph motor; and that ended up being the power plant of the new midget. Remember that second lesson David learned about race car drivers? He was experiencing it himself. David used the Triumph motor because that's what he could afford. He knew a Honda 811 cc four banger was the hot set up. When he got his first ride in another car, it was Honda powered. The Triumph experience just reinforced the idea that race car drivers are poor.

David eventually graduated up to sprint cars, which turned out to be his favorite form of auto racing. Shortly after buying the sprint car, David got on the Board of Directors of the California Racing Association (CRA) which was the sprint car racing organization of the time. Think NASCAR for sprint cars. He had just started announcing at Ascot Park for J. C. Agajanian. His commitment to announcing and being President of the CRA board hampered his ability to campaign the sprint car.

The first lesson David learned while attending Fullerton was the global plan. He knew that operating by the seat of your

pants, hoping the revenue would come was not sustainable. So, David got busy creating the sizzle to the steak. He began writing for tabloids of the era, including National Speed Sport News, working with famed publisher Chris Economaki. David lived and breathed auto racing. His passion for the sport drew him to the promotions side of auto racing. David knew from his education that auto racing was going to survive through constant promotion. He became the track publicist for several tracks and sanctioning bodies. He wrote race reports. He wrote columns in newspapers. He printed promotional materials. He designed yearbooks. He worked on advertising. He did television interviews. He did radio spots. If there was a form of media, aka promotion, David did it.

By now David was building quite the reputation in the motorsport world. This reputation was the catalyst for getting the job of Track Manager at Baylands Raceway in Fremont California. So long Sunny Southern California and watch out Northern California: David Vodden was coming to town!

David applied all the tricks, promotional ploys, and wild ideas that he learned while working alongside the biggest racing promoter of all time J.C. Agajanian. He had the track humming. Baylands Raceway went from being an obscure racing facility built in the wetlands of the San Francisco Bay to the hub of Northern California Racing. David ran the Baylands track from 1982 to the time it closed in 1988. During that time there was not a form of motorsports that David would turn away from the Baylands complex. Baylands featured an outstanding drag strip, which at sea level featured very dense air and superior traction. Needless to say, numerous NHRA world records were set on the drag strip. Baylands also had a 3/8th mile dirt oval. Sprint cars, both winged and non-winged, along with midgets and modifieds, kicked up dirt at the track for years. At one-point Baylands featured off-road racing. Vehicles such as four-wheel-drive trucks, Broncos, VW powered buggies and off-road versions of the VW bug competed.

Growing up in Northern California with your radio turned to the popular pop stations on AM radio, you could not miss the high energy advertisements regarding the activities at Baylands Raceway Park. David had the Baylands Motorsports Park hitting on all cylinders. But after eight short years, the lease on the land was not renewed. Hence the reinforcement of Lesson Number One.

With the closure of the racetrack, David turned to consulting. Among his clients were Sears Point Raceway, Petaluma Raceway and the USA sprint car group that was attempting to overthrow the World of Outlaws. While still at Baylands, he turned down an opportunity to work as the NHRA publicist - just before the track closed. But for every door that closes, another door opens. Pretty soon David was contacted by SCCA.

Tom McCarthy was the Regional Executive for Sports Car Club of America, San Francisco Region. McCarthy and his fellow board members had a problem brewing. It was becoming difficult to secure race dates from the local racetracks, Sears Point and Laguna Seca. McCarthy and the other board members could see the writing on the wall. The big racetracks wanted to grow their spectator events at the expense of the local amateur racer. This meant race dates were hard to come by, and track rental fees were becoming unsustainable. McCarthy and fellow board

members felt that the only way to control the San Francisco Region's destiny was to own its own racetrack. So, prior to hiring David, the San Francisco Region formed the New Track Committee. This committee drove all around Northern California looking for a site to build a racetrack.

McCarthy caught wind of David's availability and asked Roger Eandi and Jon Norman to interview him for a job. Shortly after that interview, they hired him to run a racetrack that had not yet been built. David accepted the job and soon found himself trying to build a racetrack for him to promote. So, in essence, the SCCA put the cart before the horse, and hired a track manager before they ever had a track.

David then spent his time looking at potential sites for a road-racing course that the San Francisco Region of the SCCA could call home. The problem was that every time they found a somewhat suitable location, a huge, impenetrable roadblock was thrown up. Their first try at establishing a racetrack was in Stanislaus County. One of the first steps in building any kind of project is getting permission from the local government. When the SCCA New Track Committee partners attended the first public hearing for the track in Stanislaus County, they soon found that the only people in the audience were those who opposed the idea. Local opposition to anything other than an agricultural-based use was going to be impossible to overcome. They learned that the local farmers did not want any additional traffic, noise, or activity near their idyllic (at least to them) lifestyle. They also learned that the local farmers had a lot more influence than the San Francisco out-of-towners.



David made his reputation behind the microphone

Their next attempt at establishing a racetrack was in Fresno County. The terrain offered suitable geography for a road racing circuit, but the access to the property was less than ideal. First off, you had to go several miles past the freeway exit. Then you had to wind back on a dirt road that paralleled the freeway. Next you had to drive through a one-lane culvert under the freeway going west to reach the property. The Stanislaus site also had access problems. Even with the less-

than-ideal access at this site, the Track Committee and the Board were getting desperate, so they applied for a use permit on the selected property. As it turns out, the endangered Kit Fox called that area home. To build a racetrack in the home of a Kit Fox, the Club would have had to purchase an equal amount of land to mitigate the loss of the Kit Fox's.

The next attempt looked to be a lot more promising, David, along with Mike Benson found a piece of property in Yuba County. At that time, Yuba County was going through financial difficulties, and surely would have welcomed any new form of commerce. As David and his fellow SCCA officials were meeting with the Yuba County Board of Supervisors, a fellow by the name of Dick Mudd was sitting in. Mudd was not part of the Yuba City



Shirley "Cha Cha" Muldowney and David Vodden discussing pre-event promotion of the match race between her and Don Garlits

Board of Supervisors, but he was on the Glenn County Board of Supervisors.

Glenn County is north-west of Yuba County. At one time Glenn County was part of Colusa County. In 1891 they separated, and it was named for Dr. Hugh J. Glenn, who owned an 8,000-acre wheat farm. The County's main revenue source was agriculture and had a population density of 20 people per square mile. Compare this to San Francisco County which has a population density of 17,179 (2010 numbers) per square mile. Even though Glenn County was further from the club's population base, the rural setting and sparse population fit the racetrack business model.

Dick Mudd was the Glenn County District Three Supervisor. His family had lived in the area since 1850. He was a race fan and somehow became aware that the SCCA wanted to find a place to build a racetrack. He was very interested in bringing a new revenue source to Glenn County. David and Dick Mudd got to know each other. It might be said that the rest was history, but it was not the simple.

While David was promoting the idea of building a racetrack, Mudd was listening. He liked the idea of new business coming into his county. David and Dick, along with John Benoit met in Willows at the best restaurant of that time, which is now Casa Ramos. Benoit was the Director of Planning for Glenn County. Benoit brought 10 books to the luncheon. As David tells it, nine of the books were placed on the floor and never opened. The one book that was opened was the "Yes" book. Benoit saw from the initial conversation that Dick Mudd was serious about building the racetrack in Glenn County. He knew Dick did not want to hear why the idea would not work. He only wanted to hear how Benoit was going to make it happen.

In addition to building a racetrack, David found himself running the San Francisco Region of SCCA. At that time Don Wixcel was in charge of running the club. Don lived and breathed SCCA. He spent the majority of his adult life in the SFR office on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco, and was completely immersed in the running of region. Back then, preparing for a race event was very labor-intensive. All the entries were mailed, in with a check attached. The entries had to be verified and assigned to a run group. Then every entry had to be hand typed into a run group entry list. Then an acceptance letter had to be typed. The entry list, the acceptance letter, and the schedule, along with five paddock passes were then mailed back to the driver. With over 250 entries per event, the printing of schedules, typing of

the race acceptance letters, the entry lists, and addressing the envelopes by hand was a monumental job. The preparation for a race weekend was worse than doing a term paper the night before it was due. Wixcel eventually worked himself to exhaustion, and, one day he just was not there. In Wixcel's void, David was asked to take over. David was living in Sutter Creek and was commuting to San Francisco. As a compromise to the region, he got the Board of Directors to change the region's office location to Livermore.

At the new location, David found himself running the region's racing program. The office staff consisted of Vince Burgess and Ali Arsham. David did this in addition to looking for a place to build a racetrack. To further complicate things, the region at that time was going broke. David's first order of business was to point out some of the lessons he learned about the racing business. The Board of Directors realized that tough decisions needed to be made. With input from David, a plan was devised to turn the ship around and get the club on solid footing. In addition to making sure the club did not go broke, he had to figure out a way to raise money for the new track project.

David was still in the honeymoon stage of his new job and had two 10-ton elephants hovering over him. First off, was his paycheck going to clear the bank. Secondly, he had to raise money to build the racetrack he was hired to manage. Remember that education? Remember the two revelations? David knew he had to establish a solid foundation for the club to exist and knew the track played into the overall global vision of establishing that solid foundation. He just needed to survive the speed bumps. He put his management experience to work.

To fund the racetrack the club instituted a \$50 per entry fee track surcharge. For every entry the track fund got \$50. Back in 1988, the entry fees were \$175, so a \$50 surcharge was not very popular. I was one of those poor race car drivers that was not very happy about the surcharge. But David knew that race car driver's desire to race far outweighs fiscal discipline (he was right!) Even at \$50 per entry, David and the Board knew they were going to need outside money to get the project done. Their first infusion of money came from the SCCA national office in the form of a \$300,000 loan.

With the club, starting to get on a firm financial footing, and with the seed money from the SCCA National Office, the track project was starting to take shape.

The track project now had two things going for it. They had some money to work with, and the support of Glenn County. The



David kicking up some dirt on the Rallycross track

next order of business was to find a suitable piece of property. That's where having a local rancher, Dick Mudd, was a huge asset. Dick knew about a piece of property that Thor Oden purchased just outside of Willows. Knowing that Oden bought the property in foreclosure, and knowing that Oden really did not need the land, a knock was placed on Oden's door.

David and Clint DeWhit asked Oden if he would sell 530 acres of his property. Oden eventually agreed to sell at a price of \$600 per acre. With the purchase price being \$318,000, all of the SCCA National Office money was spent, and they only had the surcharge money to build the racetrack. Next David needed to get a use permit. The use permit was needed to begin construction of the track.

In December of 1992, the Glenn County Board of Supervisors approved a negative declaration use permit to build a racetrack at 5250 Highway 162 in Glenn County. Because of the relationship David had formed with Dick Mudd, the approval was by unanimous vote. Dick Mudd and David Vodden would go on to become close friends. David lived with the Mudd family during the initial construction of the racetrack. Armed with \$300,000 in entry fee surcharge money, the construction began on the Steve Crawford-designed racetrack. Even in 1993, \$300,000 did not go very far. The key to the track being built was the unselfish desire of many key people to get the job done. People like Art Siri, Richard Siri, Steve Crawford, Gary Pitts, Steve Archer, Woody Yerxa, and many others donated labor and professional services to ensure the project would be completed. No one worked on the clock, no one went home after eight hours, no one gave up. It was like a Marine battalion overcoming insurmountable odds, where the only option was to get the job done. For example, when Turn Five was built, the track only had enough money to make an abrupt left turn at the bottom of Turn Five and join the front straightaway. This meant that the track would barely be over one mile long, which would not have been ideal for the very skeptical membership of the SCCA. So, a plea went out to racing clubs, members, and racing organizations for donations. The Shelby Club, Golden Gate Porsche Club, CSRG and the NCK kart group had all donated money and material in the past. Now it was individuals who came to the rescue. One SCCA member, Kevin Jenkins, donated \$100,000 towards finishing the project. Without these generous contributions, the track would have been less than 1.9 miles long and would have had a dirt entry road and an all-dirt paddock. Could you imagine what the skeptics would have said? (There were a lot of skeptics!!)

Halloween weekend in October 1993, saw the first event held at Thunderhill Raceway Park. There were no buildings, no power, and no running water. David and his staff handled ticket sales at the gate. Linda Rogaski did registration outside that same gate. A rented generator was used for power, and David convinced local service clubs to sell food. Over 200 entries attended the event with celebrity driver, Craig T Nelson and SCCA President Nick Craw headlining the field. Residents, curious about the new attraction just outside of town, produced the largest spectator crowd ever in attendance at the track. Except for the recent "Light Festivals," this still remains the largest crowd ever at the track for a racing event.

Once the first event was on the books, David turned his attention to making sure there was a noticeable improvement

to the facility every time the membership had an event. Soon Registration was being held in a donated classroom. There were three wells on the property, that would eventually fill the large water tank at the highest point of the property. David negotiated with PG&E, getting them to run electrical power to the property. As the track was under constant evolution, the \$50 surcharge continued for five years, totaling ten years at the time it was ended. The surcharge, although unpopular, was important in establishing the stable source of money the track would need to keep the lights on. The surcharge money was used for growing the track. Fortunately, other racing organizations were experiencing the same track access problems the San Francisco Region was experiencing. They were having troubles getting dates to hold events. Track rentals soon became the major source of income. Even though the track lacked some of the creature comforts of Sears Point and Laguna Seca, the availability of dates and the ability to rent during the week without restrictions proved to be in high demand. Because of the track rental income, the surcharge was discontinued; but the \$50 fee was kept by the Club as part of the entries so the club could continue on its own solid financial footing.

Part of the success of Thunderhill was based on the number of days that the track was rented. Early on, David knew that the track would have to charge its own members for track rental for the place to survive. Many people thought that since the club owned the track, they should be able to race for free. David insisted the track and the club run separately. It was the law. He knew that everyone using the track had to pay to make sure the track would survive. David had seen too many mom-and-pop operations go broke. He drew upon his vast racing experience and his education to insist that every minute of track time had value. Without that value, the track would cease to exist. He



Left to right, Dick Mudd, Tom McCarthy, Richard Siri, Steven Crawford, Art Siri

knew this was not the popular position to take; but he also knew making feel-good decisions would lead to the road of failure.

While going through the purchase and permit process of building a racetrack, one lesson was driven home to David. He realized that being part of the local landscape was the key to a harmonious relationship. Shortly after moving to Willows, David joined the local Rotary Club. Being part of Rotary brought him to the table with the local business people. There was a face to the name and working on common goals engrained him in the local community.



Tim Sullivan receives a dividend check from Thunderhill Track President Michael Smith and from track CEO David Vodden

He also contacted the local newspapers, which were the Valley Mirror and the Willows Journal. David, having vast experience writing articles for newspapers, soon became an ally to these publications. Knowing how they operate and knowing what they need played an important role in making sure that the local press appreciated what he was doing at the racetrack. His column was called, "David's Weekly Racing Update."

In addition to becoming involved in local activities, David realized that hiring local people would be very important to the success of the racetrack. Soon he hired a local woman, Terry Taylor. During her tenure at Thunderhill, she would serve as a Willows City Council person, and Mayor of Willows. Additional local talent included Ray Mudd (Dick Mudd's son,) Bob Maybell, and Colleen Worthington. Hiring local people was important to the success of running the track. Every local person hired had personal pride in the success of the racetrack.

With the track running only two years, a plan for a 1.2-mile extension was on the drawing board. The problem was David had to convince the high horsepower drivers that the design was suitable. In one of the rare instances, David was overruled. The new track had to be reconfigured. The reconfiguration involved longer straights with higher top speeds. David now had to convince the hired contractor, Richard Siri, to make the changes. Siri told David it was not going to be a problem, and worked hand-in-hand to make sure the project was going to be a success. After only two years of operation, the track was now the longest racing circuit on the San Francisco Region calendar.

As Track Manager, David had a long list of improvements that he wanted to see done at the racetrack. Being an opportunistic person and a keen observer of the industry, David saw that Sears Point Raceway was replacing the bridges at their racetrack. David made a call to Sears and asked them what they were going to do with the bridges. They told David they were going to be scrapped and they were his if he wanted them. Transporting the bridges to Thunderhill and installing one of them cost \$35,000. With two bridges remaining he cut them up and sold the metal for scrap. The proceeds from the scrap metal paid for the transportation and the installation. Another keen observation by David was after the San Jose Grand Prix went bankrupt and involved purchasing several hundred sections of flat wall for which the city of San Jose had no place. David bought all the crash-wall for pennies on the dollar. He has used it extensively on the Thunderhill property and sold off the excess and made a profit.

Adhering to his vision of a marked improvement every time the parent club attended an event, David soon began working on permanent buildings to replace the donated classroom and portable trailers in which everyone worked. Ten short years after the grand opening, a new clubhouse was built which added a bathroom, snack bar, large meeting room, storage room, timing deck, and an observation deck. At the same time, David raised the money to build 10 garages that would be rented on a monthly or daily basis, depending on demand.

David knew from his experience that creating sustainable revenue streams, was the secret to success at Thunderhill Raceway Park. He had 530 acres of dirt that needed to be transformed into revenue producing assets, so the track would always be able to pay its bills. In his past experience, he saw too many times where a track would hit a home run on one weekend, only to lose the money on the following weekend. The revenue streams at these mom-and-pop racetracks were too unpredictable to ensure long-term survivability and to plan for growth.

After the garages were proven to be a steady stream of income, David went to work on other projects that he saw the racing industry sought. Paying attention to current and future trends, David realized that a skid pad and an autocross pad would allow for a different customer base to use the track. Soon drifters and autocross people had a place to hone their skills. These are people that most members did not think of when the track was built. With the addition of these two features, he added over 200 bookable events to the Thunderhill calendar.

Always paying attention to the customer needs, David realized that the 2-mile West Course had potential of creating a significant revenue stream. Before the West track was built, Thunderhill Properties was renting the main race track 305 days a year. This meant the track was silent only 60 days of the year. It was nearly impossible to rent the track every day during the year because holidays and weather make some of the days unrentable. By building the West Course in essence, the



David Vodden (left) interviewing LeRoy Van Connett at the Baylands award banquet. Van Connett is a member of the West Coast/NASCAR Hall of Fame

track had 305 more days available to rent to customers. Back when there was only one track, Thunderhill had to turn people away. With the second track, Thunderhill was able to offer an alternative. The West Course was an instant success. Clubs, track day groups, automotive manufacturers all saw the West Course as an ideal venue to have their events. Having a standalone

facility meant the 3-mile and the 2-mile West Course could hold events at the same time.

Naturally building the West Course required Glenn County approval. Because of the relationship David had built with the County Board of Supervisors, approaching them about the idea of extending the existing track did not meet any opposition. Once the West Track was completed, bookings rose to 600 event days a year just on the two racetracks. When you include rentals of the autocross and skid pad, there are over 900 events happening at Thunderhill Raceway per year.

David has taken a 530-acre parcel of dirt and transformed it into a motorsport-mecca. His vision of creating multiple reliable revenue streams coupled with his experience in the racing industry has produced the poster child of how a racetrack should operate. Thunderhill Properties is wholly owned by the San Francisco Region of the SCCA. This \$30 million asset has cemented the legacy of the club for generations to come. David made sure that every improvement was paid for without debt. To this day, the land, the buildings, the tracks surfaces, and all the other improvements are free and clear of any debt.

Without David's vision, the club most likely would be teetering on the brink of extinction. After 35 years of association with the San Francisco Region of the Sports Car Club of America, David has decided to turn the page. He is turning the reins over to Matthew Busby. David is now willing to sit back and let Matthew guide the ship. Even though David will be taking a backseat to the day-to-day operations at Thunderhill, Raceway Park, he has been retained in a consulting role.

As David finally looks back at all his SCCA experience, he recalls that the biggest shock to him when he first came on board was the sports car racing community. He grew up in a racing

environment made up of racers that were dirt in your beer, settle your differences behind the shed kind of guys. He found the sports car racing crowd more of a group that would hash out any disagreement over a fine bottle of Cabernet. That was not to say they were not equally passionate about their racing, they just had a different style. He also saw that sports car racing was much more formalized with rules and protocols.

At age 75, David shows no signs of slowing down. He is currently on the Willows City Council, the SCCA National Board of Directors representing us all in Area Nine, the West Coast NASCAR Hall of Fame Executive Committee, and President of the Friends of Thunderhill Charitable Foundation.



The multi function club house. The hub of every weekend.



Aerial view of both race tracks

David feels that his involvement in the community enlightens his understanding of how things work. Becoming a council person has opened his eyes to the bureaucracy and the roadblocks associated with getting community projects done. These roadblocks are not a deterrent, just an obstacle. As you know, David has already dealt with similar roadblocks in his pursuit of building the racetrack.

David's goal for his tenure on the Willows City Council is like his goal when he started Thunderhill Raceway. He wants to make sure the City of Willows is on solid financial ground. He wants to ensure the citizens of Willows have a town that they can be proud of. Sound familiar? These are exactly the same goals he had for Thunderhill Raceway Park.

David's message to the club is that he wants to thank all the people who believed in him. He wants everyone to know that even though he may have ruffled some feathers, his goal has always been to ensure the club and the track lasted way beyond his tenure. Looking back at his body of work, there is no denying that David's heart and loyalty has always been to the club. His intentions have always been pure, and he has placed the club's interest ahead of his own.

As David rides off into the sunset, we can all stand up on the third floor of the clubhouse and look out over the Thunderhill Property. While looking out and seeing the motorsports mecca David created, we need to hold our glasses of Cabernet up and toast the man that saved the club.



Skid pad and additional shop space.



Aerial view after West Course was completed.



This view shows both tracks, the skid pad, and the Autocross pad



Opening day, notice the strip of asphalt in the paddock. It ends at race re-entry.

2023 Driver Awards

By Blake Tatum



Rookie of the year Matthew Singlar

Every year the San Francisco Region recognizes drivers who had a significant impression on the local racing community. The staff at The WHEEL (me) has the opportunity to select the recipients. The two awards are the Rookie Driver of the Year and the Driver of the Year.



Rookie of the Year Matthew Singlar with his sister Caitlyn. Lynne Hunting photo

The Rookie of the Year criteria includes the driver's performance, the driver's competition, and how the driver has progressed in the racing environment.

The Driver of the Year criteria includes the driver's performance, the level of competition, and the driver's sportsmanship.

The Rookie of the Year was Matthew Singlar. Matthew attended licensing school in 2019 and afterwards did track days. His schedule did not allow him to enter any SCCA races. After spending two years on other commitments, Matthew enrolled in the 2023 SCCA Competition Licensing School again. Matthew hit the ground running at Competition Licensing School. He and his sister Caitlyn Matthew shined in every aspect of the school. From the first lap on, Matthew demonstrated a command for the race car. He graduated from the school with ease and had his first race on March 18, 2023 - Regional 3 and 4. He entered in SSM and ITX. Both classes are loaded with top talent. In his first weekend he took two wins in SSM and two second-place finishes in ITX. His next race was June 3, 2023. Again he entered SSM and ITX. This weekend he won both SSM events and won one of the ITX races, and finished second in the other ITX race. Unfortunately

Matthew's college commitments kept him from running more events. Matthew said racing wheel-to-wheel was so much fun, he loved every minute of it. He has since won a NASA regional Championship in Spec Z, competing at the Utah Motorsports Campus. He was also invited to drive for Team Doteki Auto Solutions at the 25 Hours of Thunderhill. His plan for 2024 is to compete in the NASA Nationals at Utah Motorsports Campus. He and Caitlyn will be instructors at this year's Licensing School. Matthew would like to thank everybody in the SCCA program. He said they have made it easy for him and have been so welcoming.

The driver of the year was Jonathan Greco. I first met Jonathan in 2021 after he waxed the Group 3 field at Laguna Seca in his BMW M3. His dad, Gustavo, was normally driving the car, but that weekend he let Jonathan try his hand. In 2023 Jonathan got to campaign the car the entire season, with the eye on the Regional Championship.

Jonathan won his class in every race this year. At the end of the season, the second place finisher broke, and Jonathan passed the helmet over to his dad for the final two races Jonathan also won overall in Group 3 (large bore production cars) nine times out of 15 opportunities. He even won in a borrowed car. Jonathan's car suffered a differential problem during the June Regional at Laguna Seca. He was going to have to abandon his winning streak, but Skip Rebozzi lent Jonathan his car and Jonathan went on the win the event.

Jonathan was a true sportsman. Together with his team, Jonathan did what ever they could to help his fellow competitor out. He was often times seen helping out his fellow Group 3 racers.

Congratulation to Jonathan Greco and Matthew Singlar for being selected Driver of the Year and Rookie of the Year.



Driver of the year Jonathan Greco

Get Ready the 2024 Season is Just Around the Corner

By Blake Tatum

The holidays are over and it is time to start clearing the cobwebs of the holiday celebrations. The 2024 San Francisco Region of the SCCA Regional Road Racing program gets underway February 17 and 18th at Thunderhill Raceway Park. The day before the race, San Francisco Region will host a test day/High Performance Driving Experience (HPDE) day. Regional 1 and 2 represents an excellent opportunity to get some early points towards the 2024 Regional Championship.

Thirty-one racers from last season are currently defending champions. Everyone knows defending the championship can be just as hard and just as prestigious as winning it for the first time. I hate to admit it, but walking through the paddock wearing the regional champion jacket is worthy of a second glance.

The 2024 schedule features a Majors/Restricted Regional April 20 and 21st at Thunderhill Raceway Park. This race will be a must-attend event for anyone with thoughts of competing at the National Runoffs at Road America. The San Francisco Region drivers can enter and test their mettle against racers who aspire to win the ultimate prize in American amateur road racing, which is a SCCA National Class Championship, AKA "the best in the Country".

Unfortunately Regional 11 and 12 at Laguna Seca July 26 through the 28th had to be rescheduled. The new date is September 13th through the 15th. Because of a scheduling conflict we had to move to the September date. The good news is the weather at Laguna Seca is phenomenal in September.

A lot of us remember the days of the Pacific Coast Regional Road Racing Championship. This event was always held at Sonoma Raceway in the

fall. This year, the Western Shootout will be the modern version of the Pacific Coast Regional Road Racing Championship, and of course will be held at Sonoma Raceway. The race will be held in early September and hopefully the weather will cooperate and bring that magic blend of ideal track temperatures and ideal air temperatures to produce some record lap times.

The season finale will be a Double Regional with double points. Instead of earning 25 points for a race win this weekend, a victory will be worth 50 points. Anyone within 100 points of the class leader will need to attend as we have seen the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat dished out in large helpings at this event. The Saturday night of the season finale all the regional champions will be crowned. In attendance will not only be your competitors, but also your racing peers in other classes. This is a great time and gives everyone a chance to recognize those that have made the season a success. The following day-Sunday, will see a return to the San Francisco Regions Classic Enduro. By this tweak in the weekend format, we can officially establish and crown all our regional championships at the Saturday night Banquet.

The last day of the season will be October 27, which will allow everyone with young kids four days to prepare for Halloween activities. By ending in late October all San Francisco Region racers will have an opportunity to give their race cars a rest and prepare for the upcoming holidays.

We look forward to seeing everyone this racing season. We ask your help make this the best season ever. We would like to see great safe racing and great weather during all of our race weekends!

Ultimate TrackCar Challenge

Inspired by events such as the Ultimate Track Car Challenge, Gatebil, and the Pikes Peak International Hillclimb, Sasquatch Speed Trials will pit the fastest vehicles and drivers against the clock in three solo trials over three days. SST will take place in Spokane, Washington, with a time trial Friday, an autocross Saturday, and a hillclimb Sunday. SST is by application only, but no matter the type of vehicle, we'd love to hear from you. Registration for autos is \$600, \$400 for powersports vehicles, and applications must be submitted by June 30th via Motorsportreg.

All proceeds will be donated to Cancer Can't, a regional charity dedicated to improving the daily lives of patients and their families. We are looking for fast vehicles, excited fans, and enthusiastic volunteers, so you can participate at any speed! Cash prizes will be given, and lodging arrangements are pending. Come race with us August 16th-18th, 2024! Check out the website at www.sasquatchspeedtrials.com for more information, as well as our social media for updates. For any questions, please contact Daniel at racewarden@sasquatchspeedtrials.com. For sponsorship or partnership inquiries, please contact Nellie at sponsorship@sasquatchspeedtrials.com.



Rule Changes/Updates for 2024

By Thomas Jackson

The 2024 race season is just around the corner. Nothing would be worse than showing up only to find your car out of compliance. If you have not already done so, make sure your seatbelts are current. Race Helmets get a new Snell rating every five years. For SCCA road racing the oldest rating that will be allowed this year is a helmet with a SA 2015 certificate. If you ran last year, chances are you have a compliant helmet; but if it has been a few years, check the sticker inside the helmet. Here are the rules covering helmets.

Crash helmets approved by the Snell Foundation with Snell sticker 2015 or later Special Application SA2015/SAH2015, or by the SFI with a SFI Sticker SFI 31.1/2015 or newer, or by the FIA standard 8859-2015 or FIA 8860-2010 or newer. SFI labeled helmets must have a year printed on the label to be valid. Each driver's helmet shall be labeled with a minimum of the driver's name.

The use of a head and neck restraint system that has been certified in accordance with SFI 38.1 or FIA 8858-2002 or 8858-2010 is required; an SFI 38.1 or FIA 8858-2002 or 8858-2010 label must be properly affixed to the device.

Additional changes for 2024 include:

Rain lights:

A red taillight meeting FIA Standard 8874-2019, Technical List No. 76, is required on all Formula (open wheel) and Sports Racing cars. This light shall be mounted approximately on the centerline of the car. Light assemblies are considered one light for the purposes of this rule, irrespective of the number of individual lamps the assembly may contain.

At the Scrutineer's Tech Town Hall, there was some discussion about checking the operation of these lights on the Pre Grid on rain days before each track session. The Scrutineers are to report any failure

to the Stewards, and let them make the decision to potentially ruin someone's race or let a potentially unsafe car onto the track.

Cockpit Safety Barriers (CSBs)

Any cage or device shaped as a wishbone or otherwise that is affixed to the Main Hoop and a low Front Hoop must comply with FIA Standard 8869-2018 (Technical List n62) and must be affixed only to chassis/tubs that have been certified by the FIA for installation of such devices. CSBs that are not FIA-approved may be considered by SCCA's Technical Department on a case-by-case basis following development and adoption of crashworthiness standards.

ITR and T1-T4, especially: Many minimum weight changes: Check the GCR for your car.

A number of T1-T4 cars were removed from the GCR as was documented in earlier GCRs.

B-Spec can use the Hankook or Goodyear tire until 6/30/24 and only the Goodyear tire after that.

Flagtronics:

At the Scrutineer's Tech Town Hall session of the National Convention, there was much discussion about the Flagtronics system that will be required in each competitor's car at the 2024 Runoffs at Road America. The FT-200 unit (\$250) in the race car will be used to inform the driver of the track situation ahead. For the Stewards, they can get a view of where every car is on the track in almost real-time. Since the system requires a capital investment by each track, full implementation across the country will be on a track-by-track basis.

These are the major issues that affect many cars. I strongly encourage all competitors to go online and check the latest version of the GCR and Fastrack news for changes that affect their car on a monthly basis.



As I Recollect

By Frank Schultheis

There are two items from some of my first articles that I'd like to add some additional information to

The first one involves crash helmets. I was once the owner of a book named, *Auto Racing and Safety*. I loaned it out and never got it back. This book of 250+ pages was written, and published in England. Its cover, showing an airborne Lotus Seven with the driver lying on the pavement, is rather eye-catching. It seems the English had not quite figured out the use of seatbelts.

There was a chapter on helmets which made quite interesting points regarding the color of the helmet. And in the late '60s, with very crude measuring equipment, the safety officials measured the temperature inside of helmets on a hot day. They found the temperature inside a white helmet never reached close to 50 degrees Celsius. However, when they measured the temperature of a helmet any color other than white, the temperature inside the helmet was over 50°C.

Medical findings from the time shows 50°C as a critical temperature at which the human brain functions begin to deteriorate. Because of these findings I have always recommended white helmets.

In the past, I have presented this fact to Racing Driver School students. It seems some of the students did not heed my advice, and in many impound/holding areas I have observed many drivers who have what medics consider near heat strokes. And you may have noticed tech officials in the impound area offer a water-soaked towel to drivers as they get out of their race cars. The purpose of this is for the drivers to put the cold water-soaked towel over their head to cool off. You might think that only the formula car drivers would be susceptible to this; but my experience has shown that drivers of sedans/coupes are not immune. So consider saving some money on that car, matching helmet paint and maybe put it towards some tires.

The same book also talks about driver suits. Dark patches on white colored outer suits have attracted heat from fires. That heat has transferred through the suit and left impressions of patches or stripes on the body. Fires are not very frequent, but do occur. Note to self: dark racing driver suits are not cool.

As I Recollect

By Frank Schultheis

For the newbies to SFR/SCCA (and some older members who are not privy to such matters)

Roger Penske, a.k.a., The Captain, has generated some interesting stories, which the San Francisco Region Scrutineers were part of. The stories should become part of the book "Unfair Advantage."

At a Trans Am race in the 70s on the nine-turn Laguna Seca track, the tech inspections were overseen by SCA National Tech Administrator, Mr. John Timanus. John was my friend and mentor, and he directed our Tech Crew to do most of the inspecting of the Trans Am cars. After they were inspected, they replaced the approval for competition text stickers on the main roll cage just behind the drivers left ear. Many of the Trans Am cars were run across the scales and their weights were recorded on the tech form, as well as the tech sticker. Remember this important point.

Friday's practice went well, but just before the Saturday's qualifying, a Grid Marshall came to me and said he saw a second Penske transporter, which was parked out on the east side of the lake. They were off loading a Camaro Trans Am race car and loading the Number Six Camaro back

up into the transporter. I told John about this and after qualifying was completed, 10 of the Trans Am cars were impounded. We checked the weight on the Number 6 Penske Camaro. We examined the tech sticker and it was apparent that it was tampered with. I asked the car chief if this was indeed the Camaro that they had planned to compete with? He responded with a puzzled look and said, 'well, of course.'

We then proceeded to wrap clear Scotch Tape around both of the Penske Camaros tech stickers. We placed a dab of sealing paint on the stickers edge, and initialed the edge of the Scotch Tape, making it difficult to tamper with. Several of our tech crew were watching the conversation between the car's chief mechanic, and Mr. Penske. They describe the body language as very worried and concerned.

We shall never know what that second transporter car weighed or what was special about it; but you can bet it had an unfair advantage.

I know this must sound like a tall tale, but you could ask several of the old timers and they will certainly recall this incident.

This is As I Recollect by Frank Schultheis



In Memory Frank Schultheis

By Thomas Jackson



Frank Schultheis (left) with Wally Dallenbach

Frank Schultheis born June 17, 1935 deceased January 16, 2024.

Frank W. Schultheis received his final Checkered Flag on January 16, 2023 at the CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Louis and Peaches Heart Hospital in Tyler, Texas. He joined his wife, Shirley, in that great racetrack in the sky. Frank and Shirley originally were from Sacramento, but moved to San Jose where they lived for many years. Later, Frank, Shirley, and their son, Ken, moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico and finally retired to Lindale, Texas. Unfortunately, they have been away from the San Francisco Region long enough that only the older members knew them. However, Frank and Shirley made great contributions to the San Francisco Region and the SCCA, in general.

Originally, Frank was a driver. He campaigned an MG TF 1250 at San Francisco Region (SFR) and other SCCA races, including at long-gone race tracks like Cotati and Vacaville. This was back in a time when a race required three groups to come together. The San Francisco Region of the SCCA rented the racetrack, provided the sanction, the stewards, etc. The Race Drivers Club (RDC), not to be confused with the Road Racing Drivers Club (RRDC,) provided the drivers and the United States Association of Race Marshals (USARM) provided the corner workers.

Frank became the SFR Chief Scrutineer when no one else showed up to do that job at a race. Scrutineering is how Frank gained national fame. This was at a time when the scrutineers inspected every car before it went onto the track for the first time at every race weekend. Frank instituted vehicle logbooks first in the San Francisco Region. Their success caused vehicle logbooks to be instituted nationally shortly thereafter.

After Frank quit driving, Shirley became part of the Race Central crew with Lori Eandi, Pauline Laskin, and Claire Kelly. Race Central was the place where everyone went to get qualifying or finish sheets, requested a part, requested a PA announcement, and all the "little" things it takes to make a race weekend run smoothly for everyone. Today, Registration has largely taken over that role.

Frank supported the Snell Memorial Institute work on helmet safety. The San Francisco Region was instrumental in the formation and support of the Snell Memorial Institute. Any helmet that showed any damage after a crash, or any helmet that a driver threw in anger would be confiscated and sent to the Snell Institute along with any accident reports that were relevant. If any of these helmets failed to meet the current Snell standard, it would be returned neatly sawed into four pieces.

Frank wrote The Formula Vee Scrutineer's Handbook, The Formula Super Vee Scrutineer's Handbook, and The Formula Ford Scrutineer's Handbook. This was at a time when each of these classes had enough entries to have their own individual races. His handbooks standardized how these measurements were done at races all across the country. Many of the measurement techniques and values have migrated into The General Competition Rules (GCR).

Frank developed a number of specialized tools to perform specific compliance checks, such as to verify the bore of certain engines without requiring the removal of the cylinder head for example.

Frank was the principal FV, FSV (later incorporated into FC,) and FF national expert. Drivers, engine-builders, etc. in these classes would be in contact with Frank year-round. He did the post-race teardowns of these classes at the Runoffs for several years. Somewhere, there is a picture of Frank holding a valve cover or oilpan from a FF Runoff winner with "Hi Frank" written on the inside.

He was the Technical Administrator for the professional West-Coast Formula Ford series that ran for a few years. He was also the Technical Administrator of the pro-truck series before it was taken over by NASCAR.

After a few formula car and sports racer crashes, Frank instituted a requirement that all Heim-type rod ends have captive washers to prevent complete separation after a rod end failure, unless the rod end was captured by design. This, too, started in San Francisco and was later incorporated into the GCR.

Frank caused the San Francisco Region to require five (or six) point driver restraints to prevent the seat belt from being pulled up off of the pelvic girdle and onto the solar plexus. It also prevented drivers, especially reclining drivers in formula cars or sports racers, from submarining under the dash if the car stopped suddenly, like hitting a wall. He also instituted window nets on closed cars and full roll cages. These, too, later became national requirements.

Finally, another of Frank's achievements is the San Francisco Region Scrutineer crew, some of which were taught by and worked with Frank. His attitudes, methods, insights, etc. are carried on today and taught to new scrutineering trainees.

For all the things that Frank did for the San Francisco Region, he was inducted into the Region's Hall of Fame in 2007.

Unfortunately, Frank's years of crawling around race cars may have contributed to the amputation of Frank's lower legs after he retired.

Frank and Shirley are survived by their son, Ken, Ken's wife, a granddaughter, and a great granddaughter.

Scrutineers Screed

By Thomas Jackson

This article is part of a series of communications from the Scrutineers (Tech crew) to the drivers and entrants on topics of import to both groups.

Impound Etiquette

Since the Scrutineers spend so much of a race event in the Impound area, Parc Ferme[®] in international racing parlance, we are somewhat proprietary about what should and should not happen there.

Reference: GCR 5.9.3 & 2023 SFR Supps 17.

What it is:

- A place where new race cars are issued new logbooks.
- A place where race cars are given annual inspections.
- A place where a driver's safety gear is inspected and approved.
- A place where required stickers and patches are available.
- A place where the official scales of the event are located and made available to competitors. Reference GCR 5.9.4.
- A place where damaged cars are inspected and logbook entries and/or reports written.
- A place where the Stewards can have discussions with selected drivers.
- A place where various GCR conformance checks are performed.
- A place where the top three or more winning cars from one or more classes are held for a while post-race to allow other competitors to file protests.

If you think you are in the top three finishers of your class, go directly to Impound from the racing pit lane. We will dismiss you if you are not needed. Races have been lost by competitors that failed to show up at Impound post-race or took the slow scenic route through the paddock.

A place where cold, bottled water and cold, wet towels are available for overheated drivers during or after a track session. If necessary, medical help can be quickly summoned to Impound.

A place where stories of great driving feats are exchanged after all the selected cars have been parked in the Impound area.

What it is not:

- It is not a shortcut between points A and B at any time. If you don't have business there, please stay out, especially if there are cars on the track.
- It is not a place to take posed photographs, such as for one's home town newspaper or one's sponsor. A quick snapshot from a smartphone may be acceptable.
- It is not a place for non-racing wheeled vehicles. We make exceptions for the Stewards' golfcart and our own vehicles.
- We will enforce the Supplementary Regulations about requiring a valid driver's license to operate any wheeled vehicles in the paddock, especially around Impound; and skateboards, roller blades, and roller skates being prohibited from the paddock.
- We know you want to impress each other with your spiffy paddock transportation, but leave it outside of the Impound area.
- After a practice session, qualifying session, or race, Non-Scrutineer persons should not enter the Impound area until the last car of a session has either parked in the Impound area or has been excused.

- We have noticed that significant others, Crew, etc. develop tunnel vision at the end of a track session and can only see their cars and/or driver and run/walk blindly in front of other cars.
- We know there is a burning desire to collect various bits of information from the driver or the race car, but it can wait until the last car in Impound has stopped moving.
- The Entrant is responsible for the behavior of their Crew and can be penalized for Crew actions.
- After being dismissed, if a cone or delineator is moved to allow one's race car to exit the Impound area, put it back where you found it! We don't come into your living room and move your furniture around.
- If a Driver stops, stalls their car, or looks confused exiting the pit lane, the Scrutineers will always signal that car to go into the Impound area, regardless. We do not want a pileup of cars exiting the racing pit lane!
- Always remember to self-impound if you have any body contact on course, whether we point you into Impound or not. Reference: SFR Supps 21.

Impound Signaling

The Scrutineers have been told by drivers and the Stewards that they want the Scrutineer with the IMPOUND sign to remain motionless until they need to signal a particular car to go into the Impound area and that is what we have been trying to do. On the other hand, some drivers seem to want a definite signal as to whether to enter the Impound area or not. We can't have it both ways. The Scrutineers would like some guidance as what signaling the majority of the drivers prefer. We really want to keep traffic moving as cars exit the racing pit lane into the paddock.



SCCA Free Test Day

One of the benefits of being the sole shareholder of Thunderhill Raceway Park is once a year, members of the club get one day to use the track free of charge.

Normally the club limits the track usage to race-prepped cars. This year we changed things up a bit. We found out one of the ways the Oregon Region Rewards their volunteers is by having a year-end party that allows them to drive their cars on the race track. So we stole a page out of the Oregon Region's playbook and opened the day up to our volunteers. The volunteers did not need a racecar and did not need a racing license.

Board Member Peter Phung organized everything from the schedule, to the safety requirements, to the car classes and run groups. Once Peter

had the nuts and bolts of the day organized, he went to Instagram and Facebook to get the word out.

Needless to say the day was a rousing success. Over 90 people showed up to enjoy the clear, sunny weather, and took a turn at the Thunderhill 3-mile race track.

Out of the 90 people quite a few were race volunteers. Even the San Jose State Formula SAE kids who have been part of the staffing for our events took part. Peter had one volunteer make the drive from Southern California.

Going forward, the Board of Directors will use this model every year. Thanks to Peter, the first event was a success and hopefully the pride in ownership of the race track will be shared by all.













Confessions of a Cone Slayer

By Rob Krider



Generational Knowledge

I used up an entire day shining up the ole Porsche 718 Cayman GTS to show it off at Rennsport 7 at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. Little did I know when I spent hours cleaning the wheels that it would rain at Rennsport and I would park my precious

Porsche in the Monterey mud. This is entirely my own fault, I can't blame the weather. I waited too late to register for Rennsport and didn't secure a Porsche Corral pass, which meant I was parking with the rest of the peasants in the muck. Regardless of my dirty wheels and the weather, Rennsport 7 was fantastic. The cars were epic, the tractor races around Laguna were hilarious, and the crowd was great. I ran into a number of SCCA members while cruising around the paddock. It is almost impossible not to run into car friends at the track.

I rolled to the event as a bachelor, since my wife decided she would rather sit in a coastal hotel room and read a book while it rained. This was much more enjoyable to her than the alternative which was standing at the top of the Corkscrew, getting rained on, listening to Porsche turbos crackling their exhausts while I yelled directly into her ear, "That car raced at LeMans!" She simply doesn't care. She is not interested in motorsport heritage or the history of automobile racing. Fair enough. It isn't for everybody. Marriage is all about communication, and the morning of Renn 7, my wife communicated to me, "You have a nice time, Honey. I'll be right here when you get back." Fair enough.

The event was massive, parking alone was insane (an as previously mentioned-muddy.) Once inside the crowds were enormous. In the paddock I saw an extremely long line of people. I assumed people were in line to get an autograph from a driver. Then I found out the two hour line was to get inside the gift shop! That is correct folks, after paying for a ticket to enter the event, people stood in line for two hours to give more money to buy a t-shirt to prove to their non-car friends "I was at Rennsport 7." Crazy. I wasn't there for the t-shirt, I was there for the cars.

At Rennsport there were so many important cars I was overwhelmed by it all. I felt like I was walking by pieces of history and not realizing the significance of many of the machines. Usually when I go to events like this one, or historic races, I have my dad by my side. He is a living encyclopedia of motorsports history. He is the one that will stop in the paddock, point out a car and say, "This Brumos 911 won the 24 Hours of Daytona in 1975." Without my dad by my side I was sort of lost. I was missing the important details that make these cars interesting. Some cars are simply metal, glass and rubber, while others, made of the same material, are rolling history.

So, a few weeks later, when the Velocity Invitational at Sonoma Raceway hit the calendar I didn't make the mistake of taking my wife to a hotel in the Wine Country just to leave her behind to read books. Instead, I left her at home and took my dad to Velocity. I needed his big racing brain to help me comprehend which cars were important and how they moved motorsports along. With two tickets in our hands, the ole Man and I headed to Sonoma to enjoy a few cocktails and the sounds of big block Chevrolet engines. The featured mark for the event was McLaren. Big tires, big horsepower and big noise.

Like Rennsport 7, the Velocity Invitational was fantastic. The cars were unbelievable and they were being driven around Sonoma like they weren't actually priceless pieces of rolling history. Instead, they were driven in anger, and the drivers gave the people the show they came to see. What was truly remarkable about Velocity was they had every iteration of Bruce McLaren's Can-Am cars displayed in chronological

order of their construction. You could see the evolution in his design over the years as he engineered and fabricated the most dominant racecars of his era. With these cars owned by multiple wealthy collectors, this was a rare occasion where all of these cars were lined up together. I never even would have realized this if my 72 year old dad hadn't been right by my side explaining to me the significance.

Even though the cars were displayed brilliantly in the Sonoma garages near Turn 11, I still would not have appreciated them as much if my dad wasn't with me enlightening me with all of the little details that made each car unique and the history of how those cars performed. Walking by each car while my dad narrated the importance of each one was like taking a master class in racecar design. My dad watched these cars run in the sixties and seventies. He was there when they won, when they crashed and when heroes died. He has an understanding of their significance and a passion for what they represented when they were built and what they represent today.



McLarens on display at Velocity. Kevin O'Connor photo

Hearing him talk about the Can-Am McLarens made me understand where my own passion for racing came from. I grew up in paddocks walking alongside my dad listening to him talk about racing. That was my childhood. Then I moved out of the house, started my own family, did some of my own racing, and was just busy living my own life. But at the Velocity Invitational, being back by my dad's side at Sonoma, listening to his knowledge, I remembered how special that moment is for the two of us.

The experience of cruising the paddock with my dad, enjoying a cocktail (or three,) inhaling the smell of race gas, and doing some good old fashioned bench racing, that is something I will cherish forever.



Rob Krider and his father at Velocity.

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

2023 Volunteers

There is no way the SCCA survives without the volunteers. These are the people behind the scenes making our events happen. Our team of photographers do a good job of capturing the action on the track. They also do a good job of capturing the people that make it all happen. As you can see, it takes a lot of different colored shirts to hold an event. Every specialty has a vital role in our success. It is impossible to add

up the number of hours that everyone has contributed to making this thing we call the San Francisco Region of the SCCA run. But it is not impossible to acknowledge and let all the volunteers know how much their efforts are appreciated. Thank you so much, you are truly remarkable!!!





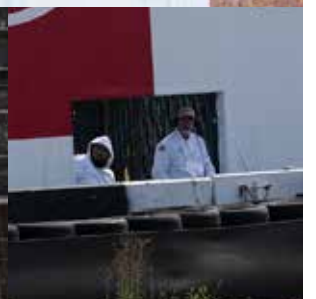












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Friends of Thunderhill Foundation is a 501 C-3 charitable/tax-deductible foundation whose mission is to invest in teen driving safety, improved automotive safety, industry education and community outreach primarily through presenting Teen Car Control Clinics that give students real-world, hands-on experience behind the wheel of their own cars.


As a motorsports enthusiast, if you engage in making charitable donations to non-profit programs that matter to you, what better program to support than Friends of Thunderhill, dedicated to improving young driver safety. The Foundation's only expenditures have been for the Teen Car Control Clinics.

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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