

Area 12 Directors Report – Philip Creighton

After being elected in November, I hardly had time to think before I was in Topeka at the Club Office for my first meeting of the SCCA Inc. Board of Directors. All the new Directors go through an orientation process at the Club Office, seeing what the various people in each department do every day. There we were briefed by each of the department heads for Club Racing, Rally, Solo, Pro Racing and Risk Management so that we could get up to speed on their activities. Then it was into the December ‘face to face’ BOD meeting with a fairly full agenda that was completed with a lot of hard work by all concerned – BOD members and the SCCA staff. The minutes and details will be published in Fastrack shortly.

The first order of business was a presentation of the Insurance Report from Pete Lyons. The bad news is that there will be a significant increase in premiums next year due to losses in Rally or Solo events. After years of no significant claims we had a couple of serious accidents at solo events with out of control cars, particularly in the finish areas. Safety Stewards will need all the participants help in ensuring safe events and compliance with the SCCA’s safety requirements, particularly in the finish line areas and with spectator control.

A report on the Street Survival program was given by Larry Dent and it was very positive. The Street Survival prototype events run this year (8 in all) proved that the events are practical and positive, with favorable impact on both regions and the community at large. The national program will be kicked off at the convention and I urge you all to attend if possible. Larry has been directly involved in two of these events, is Chairman of the SCCA Foundation and will be writing “Street Survival For Dummies” sort of paper in the coming weeks. It’s an exciting program and I urge every region to try to run one next year.

Next came the budget report and it came as a pleasant surprise – the Club (SCCA Inc.) will probably end up with a surplus in excess of \$200,000 for 2007. Pro Racing will probably end the year about even and Enterprises will be solidly in the black and repay more of their loan than planned. From the bleak picture a couple of years ago it appears that financial picture is reasonably good at the moment. We are down a bit on membership since the demise of the Subaru ‘free’ memberships and the Pro Rally department. There were some fee increases to cover increased costs, most notably the Appeal Fee went up to \$175 from \$125 and \$100 retained by SCCA. This was to cover the extra costs of appeals expenses, especially duplicating video evidence to a usable format. We also didn’t make as much money off the Runoffs as the entry was down. – from less entry fees and from HPT’s payment to the Club.

We spent a fair bit of time discussing and approving the \$10 compliance fee for Spec Miata. I think that there were concerns that the fees would go into the general fund with little competitor benefit as it did in some of the SRF years. However the Technical Staff is gearing up to produce compliance kits of checking tools and a part of the budget will be spent on training Tech Inspectors at the Club Office and in the field in addition to field trips. We really need the competitors to feel comfortable that cars are compliant at both Regional and National level and the only way to achieve it is with the local Tech Inspectors being better able to do their job.

There was some fairly heavy discussion on the current MazdaSpeed controversy at the end of the day. We know how important Mazda’s support is at Club level, so we had a meeting between all the parties at the PRI show and resolved the issues. We all decided to move on and nor rehash the detail of who said what. Mazda seemed pretty happy with the result and the procedural changes so that should prevent something like the MXR Classification issue

happening again. Mazda and SCCA Pro announced that Playboy will sponsor the MX5 Cup so that a positive step.

The Runoffs was the main topic of discussion on Saturday. The Staff gave us the results of various surveys that were undertaken to find out why the event had lost both competitors and workers this year. Although all the surveys were not yet tabulated it certainly seems to come down to the fact that Topeka and Kansas is not seen as the best place to hold our Championship Event and even though the track has been improved since last year, it is not Runoffs quality. It's a pity because we have a great track owner in Ray Irwin that has really tried to accommodate the Runoffs by improving the facilities and has spent a lot of time and money on it. We are committed to 2008, by contract, to Heartland Park but 2009 and beyond was discussed at great length. Most of the operational problems this year can be fixed for next year and hopefully the safety aspects of the place upgraded – I had to repair two heavy hits on our own FC from contact with unprotected concrete walls, I'm not sure why they don't like tire walls there.

Beyond 2009, I don't know. We asked Jim Julow and his staff to look at all the possible sites for the Runoffs with perhaps a change in the business model to make it more attractive. We have the option of staying at Heartland Park on a similar deal as today – but it's in Kansas and our members are voting with their feet and not going. One theme that came through loud and clear is that we intend to make the Runoffs the Premier Road Racing event in this country.

Other than that, our Chairman, Bob Introne, has decided to step down and we elected our 2008 officers under the new Chairman RJ Gordy. Even though he's from the wrong coast he seems knowledgeable and fair, he competed in Spec Racer for many years and as an ex-police officer will hopefully keep us all in line! I will be on the Budget and Finance committee as well as the Compensation Committee as part of the new appointments – after 10 years of CRB work I avoided the rules making liaison duties.

We finally finished up with a Conference Call on the 10th of December to tidy up some issues and deal with the GT3 Runoffs situation – they will now be allowed to compete at the Runoffs in 08 as the 25th class. GP will largely be assimilated into FP and HP as they did not even make the participation numbers. We have a contradiction in that the Runoffs schedules are having an adverse effect on the class structure – we may have too many classes but it's not a problem at the National events, only when we have to fit 24-25 classes into 3 days at the Runoffs.

On a more serious note, I am going to try keep you all informed and justify your votes in the recent election. I want to put a buzz back into National Club Racing as that seems to be where our membership feels we have problems.

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