

October 2005

When Steve Johnson came to SCCA five years ago, he came to a club that was in shambles, with little or no savings, and a membership that in large part, was disenfranchised. Today he leaves with the club stabilized, and moved to Topeka (which is a far better location business wise). It is a club operating on sound business principles, with strategic planning in place, and over two million in savings investments. The staff Steve assembled in Topeka is excellent, and is well prepared to take care of "our" interests in the interim. For this and more, Steve Johnson has a well-earned tip-of-the-helmet coming. I like his style and I like the man; he will be missed. Steve, good luck in Champcar, and remember not only do you have many believers here in SCCA, but also the door will always be open to you.

Five years ago, Steve Johnson came to this club after he was identified and screened through an executive search company. With that previous success in mind, the BOD has decided to once again utilize an executive search firm to find Steve's replacement. It will not be easy, but I am confident the BOD will find someone of Steve's caliber to fill the vacancy he is leaving.

At the last BOD meeting, I sponsored a successful motion to remove Fastrack News from SportsCar, and put it online. I did this not only for the forty thousand dollars a year it will save the club, but also to reduce the rules implementation window from the previous forty-five to ninety days to a more reasonable thirty to forty-five days. It has been a long-standing criticism that the CRB or BOD take too long to change or implement new rules. With this change, this situation will be improved. Two years ago, a study showed that 85% of all SCCA members had online access, and that number has only risen in the mean time. If you are in the 10% or so of members without internet access, SportsCar will have an ad (for a long period of time) advising how you can receive a hard copy by mail.

At the end of July, we had 54,333 members; this is 250 less than the same time last year. It is anticipated that the losses from the performance rally departure (should total 3,627) will continue for another two months. Otherwise, the downward trend in membership numbers seems to have ended. The Dodge membership program is still with the lawyers. It is anticipated that it will be implemented once the Dodge "employee pricing" sales promotion ends. With this program in place, it is projected that membership will be 57,933 by July 2006. We gained 930 new members in July 38% of whom joined SCCA on the web.

The BOD looked at many options for membership pricing, such as a reduced rate for members over 65 years of age with 25 years of membership. There was a long discussion concerning the concept of lifetime memberships. The last time lifetime memberships were offered, in 1995, only 121 were sold, which shows it was not a good deal at the time. We also discussed the first-year member retention rate of 75%, and what can be done to improve it. Breakdowns in membership are Club racing 55%, Solo 29%, ProRacing 9% and Rally 7%, with ten percent of the members not showing an area of interest. If you are in this ten percent, I encourage you to check a box, because it influences how the department budgets are based.

A tip-of-the-helmet goes out to Pego Mack (RRB member) on being hired as national staff Rally Manager. Rallycross events are up 14% over last year. Sanction fees are 35% ahead of budget projections, and the number of Road Rally events is up 21% over a year ago.

Howard Duncan reports that the Pro Solo tour WILL happen in 2006. By the time you read this the "Forbes Field Final Fling" AKA the Solo Nationals will be history. Ron Bauer was one of four people singled out in the BOD briefing book for his "hard work" in planning this event. The Heartland Park sites for the 2006 nationals will be 22 & 16 acres in size. There was much discussion at the board level about "competition" in this area, and everyone agreed that the size and scope of SCCA is a great selling point. The newly created site acquisition committee gives us a huge advantage over the competition. Also noted was that the SFR business model (using chapters), could be the wave of the future.

Solo event sanctions are running a little behind last year, but the average number of participants is up 10% per event, which translates to being ahead of the projected budget for the year. The National Tour events averaged 252 entrants, which is down 7% from last year. They are expecting 230 people to enter the ProSolo Finale, which would be up from the 186 of 2004. With a condensed ProSolo schedule, they expect to average 200 entrants in 2006.

SCCA University can now provide a CD of the 2005 convention session "Protecting Us From Ourselves" by Tacoma's Steve McCurley. The University acquired the software that allowed us to marry the power point presentation with the taped audio from the convention. This is free to members via CD or e-mail.

The Regional Development Department will have a presence at the Run-Offs. The RRD is managing the traditional membership area with some new enhancements. The tent is now forty by forty to help house the SCCA Galleria (an area show-casing SCCA member artisans). Membership recruitment will take place along with a display of vehicles representing the full range of SCCA activities. There will be Drivers meet & greet autograph sessions, as well as a book signing with author Bill Milliken (Race Car Vehicle Dynamics: Chassis Design-Principles and Analysis). HOF member Milliken is a founding racer in the Glen Region and author of the club's first GCR.

745 drivers received invitations to the National Run Offs at Mid-Ohio, where Richland County / Mid-Ohio will have a recognition party during the week. Be sure if you are there to stop-by the tent and tell everyone their THANK-YOU for all the GOOD time and memories. 508 workers were signed-up to work which is down slightly (gas prices?). Last year the tow fund (which is about \$200K total) paid-out to 296 drivers, of which 48 were NORPAC drivers. To date, there are 51 NORPAC drivers signed up for this year. The tow fund is looking for a massive overhaul, and to that end the BOD passed a motion to increase the fund to \$15. This is an increase from the \$10 it was, which dates back to the mid-seventies.

Enterprises is still in the black for the month, with ProRacing projecting a loss of \$50K for the year due to the cancellation of the Japanese Touring Car event in California.

Until next month when I return with Solo Nations and Run-Offs stories from the road, Duck-Out.