

February 2007

You should have been there! Numbers at Reno may have been a little low, but the information was there. In spite of bad weather and a cancelled flight, Jim Julow made it in time for a Saturday night meeting with the five R.E.s who attended. They had a one hour and forty-five minute closed meeting in which our President briefed them on many of the new programs that will be rolled out at the national convention and other issues of divisional importance.

Among those programs is the Teen Safe Driving program the Foundation is introducing. This program is a fine first step into Solo and time trials for young members. The Teen Safe Driving program is also just what the doctor ordered for the smaller regions.

Other programs to be announced at San Antonio include a newly restyled First Gear program, a volunteer incentive program, and (with luck) the new national rallycross program.

Rumor has it the new solo site acquisition DVD may also debut at the convention. Club racing will have a presentation on driver licensing, schools and how our schools relate to the professional schools.

The NORPAC board is looking at ways to reformulate or reconstitute the mini-convention with an eye to attracting new attendees and drivers. If you have any ideas on improving this event, please contact the board or me.

The Directors Award for Regional Achievement went to SW Montana this year in recognition of their accomplishment in placing second in the country in the 'members per 10k of population' demographic. The inaugural Driver of the Year for NORPAC went to Andrew Caddell, the Spec Miata Run-Offs winner. Currently, drivers in Solo, Rally, Rallycross, Time Trials and Club Racing are eligible for the Driver of the Year trophy. The plan for the future is to eventually expand trophies to more of the areas.

A tip-of-the-helmet goes out this month to the current Woolf Barnato award winner John "the gentleman" Martinsen, who just completed a term as head of the CRB. Another a tip-of-the-helmet goes out to Carol Wilhelm for breezing through hip replacement surgery.

If you ever get a chance to sit in on a Leslie Berry seminar, please do. It is an uplifting experience, as I can personally attest. Her dynamic energy is unmatched. Tom (the younger) Masterson presented a draft of the NORPAC website policy for discussion. This is very good work; do not be surprised if the NORPAC policy becomes the model for the entire club.

Bruce Schlaebitz checked in to say that Big Sky Region will break one hundred members in this its twenty-fifth year. If there was a Reno Rookie award, Zan Brady most likely would have received it. He represented Montana Region for Tom Masterson the "Elder," who was unable to attend. Zan won everybody over with his energy and enthusiasm. His fresh blood is good news for NORPAC and I hope to see him again at Top Gun.

Of course I have gone far too long into this column without giving Margie and her staff a HUGE tip-of-the-helmet for the silent auction. I had to leave before the numbers were finally totaled, but I am told that it raised more than thirty-four hundred dollars this year. Before I go any farther I can hear Margie in my ear telling me to THANK all who donated items to the auction.

One idea I will have for the NORPAC board to consider is to adopt a smaller region in our division to mentor for a year. This would mean that the other eight regions could examine the practices of this region with the goal of assisting them in recruitment, improving their business model, expanding programs and networking within the division. Another question before the NORPAC board could be whether the division should buy GCRs for the Divisional Administrators?

Will 2007 be the year that Rallycross expands to more regions within NORPAC? I sure do hope so! Rallycross is another great entry level, low investment way to attract fresh young faces to our club.

The national club is on track to see a net income of around \$350k for the past year. The loan to Pro Racing has not been used entirely and probably will not be entirely advanced. Rob Wildberger the new recently hired President of Pro comes to us from Dodge (surprise?). With thirty years in the business, Rob has all the contacts that are needed to pull Pro up from the grave and make it mainstream. Rob used to run the black & gold Eagle Talon team in what was then known as the Escort series. Rob has the drive and energy to make it happen and I am sure he is the missing piece to make Pro a success.

Stay tuned next month for the San Antonio report.

Duck-Out