

March 2008

As always the North West represented well at the national convention. NW Region came home with third in regional communications - out of 113 regions. Yes I did say 113 regions; Puerto Rico got a provisional charter.

Gary Meeker, NORPAC Executive Steward, received the David Morrell award given to the top steward in the club. Also announced was the Johnson 'Spirit of the Sport' award that Kevin Dietz and Ron Bauer won during the Solo nationals.

A former chairman noted that all four hundred attendees seemed to be more at peace with the club this year. Attendance was down slightly this year, but more rooms were booked.

Although the announcement is not yet formalized, the 2008 national convention will be in a popular Nevada location. The dates will be February 19-21, which is the week after the Daytona 500. The room rates will be the same as they were in San Antonio.

iRacing.com announced a very cool program and contest for SCCA licensed racers. Check on the SCCA national web site for details (or <http://www.iracing.com/news.htm>). iRacing is a racing simulation company and the competition sounds very interesting. Prizes will include more than \$20,000 in cash and merchandise, including \$3,000 and a professional-grade racing simulator to the winner.

The search for the next Run-Offs venue has ramped up and staff is in discussions with many tracks. The board is hoping to have a decision by the May meeting. Speaking of staff, the national driver instructors program is about to start. The roll-out should come within the next few months; stay tuned. Selection for a new Spec Miata tire has begun, with on track comparisons to be done this summer. This time the decision making process will give more weight to track side support.

The Board passed a policy granting each Region a one event waiver of fees for "charity" events. Regions holding charity events should contact staff for the details. The Board also approved further support for drifting.

Colan Arnold reported that the membership slide has stopped, and membership numbers have stayed level for the second half of 2007. New members for January this year increased twenty per cent over January of 2007. Retention rates grew again an additional two percent on top of last year's two percent gain. Seventy-seven percent of first year members are now renewing for a second year.

As of the end of 2007, Arctic Alaska has 112 members up three for the year. Montana has 98 up from 83, Northwest has 1006 down 23, Oregon has 1169 down 70, Snake River has 140 down seven members, SW Montana stayed the same with 66 and Big Sky has 76 members down from 81.

A tip-of-the-helmet goes out to Northwest region for staging the first Street Survival class in Area 13. Hopefully all regions in this area will take advantage of this wonderful program before the year is out. Thanks go out to Dave Deborde for correcting my mistake last month when I used the former name. Once again the presentation on this program played to overflow crowds and generated the most interest of anything at the convention. Again all the regions that put on the pilot events last year marveled at how this event brings all branches of the club together.

President Jim Julow reported the following to the board: Financials came in stronger than expected. Pro and Enterprises turned a profit. Pro repaid a \$10K advance from the club and Enterprises is repaying its loan at twice the schedule. Club racing had mixed results. Licenses issued were up and sanctions stayed consistent but National and Run-Offs participants were down. Time trials on the other hand grew dramatically (100 events vs. 79 in 07).

NORPAC worker totals were: 473 in Emergency services, 771 in F & C, 127 course marshals, 313 grid marshals, 68 paddock marshals, 167 pit marshals, 50 medical, 183 registration, 75 in sound control, 143 starters, 221 in tech, 276 in T & S all for a total of 18 event weekends.

Solo had a solid year with 84,000 participants and capped with an outstanding national event. Pro Solo tested and accomplished a redesign. Rally had significant growth (171 events in '06 with 190 in '07, competitors 4402 up from 4070 in '06), but RallyCross had a breakout year capped with its first national championship.

2007 saw the launch of the new volunteer incentives and recruitment programs along with the weekend membership program and the launch of a new web site. Feedback on the new web site has been very positive and more features are promised to come in the following months. The successful pilot programs for Street Survival were also one of the highest points for the club in 2007.

As always it was a delight to travel North to Tacoma for the NW banquet and see Mike Evans win the Mary Pang "Unsung Hero" award and to be there when Bob Grass won the Joe Henderson Memorial award. Jerry Lamb won the Frank and Joan Manley Enthusiast award. Maybe the highlight of the night was to sit next to Frank and Joan to get even more of the historical picture of Northwest club racing. They are indeed a resource to be treasured and get a well earned tip-of-the-helmet for this month.

John, thanks for dinner.

Until next month,

Duck-Out.