

Volunteers and Businessmen  
September 2005

Workers at SCCA races (and at most other Road Racing in the U.S., since SCCA staffs most of them) are volunteers. Our volunteer workers are accorded the well-earned reputation of being "the best in the business" by just about everyone involved in making road races happen. Praise for our volunteers can never be enough, in my opinion.

But there are other categories of individuals who contribute tirelessly to SCCA, without whom racing just wouldn't be what it is today. Often, we tend not to recognize the contribution of these "others" because they operate businesses which are vital to our sport. Do we fail to mention these stalwarts of our industry because they earn a living at it? Is that less praiseworthy than volunteering; I think not. America was built on independent, entrepreneurial business and racing is no exception.

I have many good friends and acquaintances in the racing business and I don't know one who is less enthusiastic or dedicated than our workers. Do you know how much hard work and dedication it takes to build an organization like Star Mazda, for example? Sure, Gary Rodrigues makes a living for his family by building race cars and running both pro and amateur racing series with SCCA, but all of us are better off for Gary's involvement in the sport. Synergy is the name of the game; everyone in the Sport benefits.

And the track operators are another category. Some time, get David Vodden, CEO of ThunderHill Raceway since its inception, talking about what it takes to build a track from idea to success. Even better, ask his wife, Terry! And what about Les Phillips of Buttonwillow, and George Bruggenthies of Road America, and Ray Irwin of Heartland Park and Blackhawk Farms, and Ted Goddard of New Hampshire International (I knew it back when it was "Bryar"), and Jim Haynes who managed Lime Rock and other tracks, and Steve Page of Infineon (Sears Point to most of us), and Michelle Trueman of Mid-Ohio, and Scott Atherton who ran Laguna Seca and other tracks, and these are just the few I know. Folks, these people work from dawn to dusk, often 7 days a week, to make that little strip of asphalt a fun place for us to play, and their jobs don't stop at trackside. Do you know all the community relations work these hardy souls do just to keep their neighbors from throwing us all out on our (noisy) tailpipes!

My point, dear members, is that we're all in this together. Volunteer and businessman alike.

See you at the track.

Gary