

March 2010

the ***Snarling Exhaust***

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NEDiv National Schedule: Letter from Tom Campbell

Richard H. Posenauer Member of the Year Award

NYSRRC Preferred Numbers Policy

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Track Time Available at Monticello Motor Club

Jim Garry – “Lessons Learned” Season Review



Membership Meeting:
Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 PM
American Legion, Liverpool

A publication of the Central New York Region of the Sports Car Club of America

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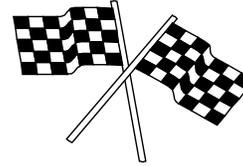
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the
Snarling Exhaust

March 2010

The Central New York Region of the
Sports Car Club of America

CNY Region website: www.cny-scca.com

SCCA National office: 1.800.770.2055

The Snarling Exhaust is published 11 or 12 times per year as a service to the membership of the Central New York Region of the Sports Car Club of America, Inc.

The deadline for submissions is the 25th of the month. This deadline still applies to everyone, honest.

All editorial opinions expressed in this publication are solely the opinions of the author, and are not necessarily representative of the policies of the Central New York Region or of SCCA.

The subscription rate is \$15/year. Commercial advertising rates per year are \$250/full page, \$165/half page, \$110/quarter page, and \$75/business card size. Monthly ad rates are annual divided by five.

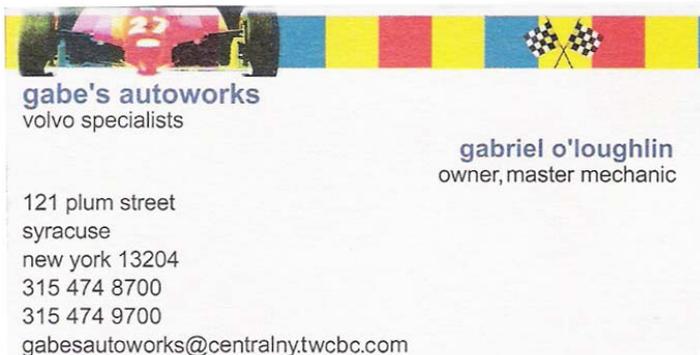
Classified advertising rates are free for region members, \$5/month for others, and must be paid in advance.

Graphics assistance courtesy of Alex Fairbank.

Cover photo: Lee Hidy takes a siesta at the National Tour (Rob Sgarlata photo)

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From the Editor:

It's taken a little while to get this issue put together. I've been busy. In theory, for most people at least, winter is the "off season" for motorsports.

Well.

I set myself two goals for this "off season". First, to return to the world of TSD rallies by participating in the Finger Lakes/COCR Winter Rally Series. Second, to prepare a "new" ice racing car, and compete in some ice races with the Central New York Ice Racing Association.

For rallies, the plan was to use the BMW 325iX which I had ice raced last season. All-wheel drive, BMW handling – should be a good platform for trying to maintain "B" speeds (40 mph) on snowy backwoods roads. The BMW needed a little mechanical attention first, though. I knew I had broken front springs, and the strut inserts needed to be replaced. I got in to it and discovered a few other issues which needed tending to. Two front springs, two Bilstein strut inserts, two sway bar links, one strut housing, two wheel bearings, one hub and one front half-shaft later, the car was back together. Then I needed to mount the sensor for the Terratrip "B" box, wire and mount the Terratrip, install a map light and upgrade the headlights. The new 100 watt high-beams required a relay and dedicated fuse, because the stock 7.5 amp high beam fuses weren't quite up to the job. Whew.

For ice racing, this year's car of choice was a '95 Neon. I found a good runner cheap, "some assembly required." The previous owner had taken the car to a shop for new brake lines. They got as far as removing all the old brake lines before the owner decided it was too expensive, and sold the car. It went to someone who needed some clean doors, so all four original doors were removed, and four others installed. A classic lavender car, with red doors. Perfect. I replaced all the brake lines and hoses, wheel cylinders and rear brake shoes, front rotors and pads. The alternator had seized because the car sat for a year, so a used one was installed. New belts were installed at the same time, as were wiper blades (a key accessory for an ice racing car, trust me.) The gas tank filler neck had come adrift, so that was repaired too. New tires would be needed, so I



Gary Sadlik/Focus Photography photo

mounted up a brandy-new set of Blizzaks on factory Neon alloys

So far, so good.

Then came the events. Heard a clunk from somewhere in the drivetrain of the BMW, and the AWD appeared to go away. Turned out the replaced front half-shaft had popped out of the differential. My fault, I was the one who installed it. Luckily it was relatively undamaged, so I was able to reinstall it, and AWD was restored.

The Neon ran beautifully on the ice until the exhaust snapped off just aft of the catalytic converter. An inexpensive sleeve fixed it, but the root problem was a bad front motor mount, which still needs attention as I write this. It also developed a miss, which required cleaning of the fuel rail. Oh, and the oil all over the bottom of the engine turned out to be the oil pan, which was rusty and seeping.

So, things have been a little hectic. Soon the snow and ice will start melting, and I can start in on the summer projects. Let's see, I do this for fun, right?

Be seeing you,

-Karl



News from NYSRRC: NYSRRC Preferred Numbers Policy

In the past the NYSRRC reserved numbers system has not been maintained. Once you reserved a number it was yours for life. This has resulted in people having numbers reserved for them after they have changed classes or stopped racing.

So, to alleviate the problems we are going to institute a process for updating the reserved number information yearly. You will have from the last NYSRRC race in the fall until the first of March to resubmit your information to the NYSRRC administrator. After March 1, all numbers that have not been renewed will be deleted and they can be reserved on a first come first served basis by any driver.

If there are no changes to your information, please e-mail Marsha Toombs at metoombs@netacc.net stating that. If you want to keep your Number and are staying in the same class but there are changes to the Make, Model or Year of your race car, please also e-mail Marsha with the changes.

As stated above if you have not notified Marsha of your intention to keep your reserved number by March 1st, all your information will be deleted.



<http://www.nysrrc.org/>



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Region Events Calendar

Verify the event, in case this calendar is not up to date!



- Mar. 6 **TSD Winter Rally #5, FLR/COCR**
- Mar. 10 **Membership meeting**
- Mar. 12-14 **NEDiv Roundtable**
- Mar. 19-21 **Driver's School, Summit Point (WDC)**
- Mar. 27-28 **Driver's School, NJMP (JRB)**
- April 10-11 **National Race, New Hampshire (NER)**
- April 14 **Membership meeting**
- April 25 **Solo, NYS Fairgrounds**
- May 9 **Rallycross, Rolling Wheels Raceway Park, Elbridge**
- May 12 **Membership meeting**
- May 14-15 **National Race, Lime Rock (MoHud-NNJR)**
- May 16 **Solo, Cherry Valley kart track, Lafayette**
- May 28-30 **NEDiv Solo Championship, FedEx Field, Landover, MD**
- June 9 **Membership meeting**
- June 13 **Solo, NYS Fairgrounds**
- June 19-20 **ProSolo, Washington DC**
- June 26 **Rallycross, Rolling Wheels Raceway Park, Elbridge**
- July 10-11 **Solo National Tour, Seneca Army Depot**
- July 14 **Membership meeting**
- July 18 **Rallycross, Walczyk Farm**
- July 24/25 **Two-Day Solo, Seneca Army Depot**
- Aug. 15 **Enduro, Cherry Valley kart track, Lafayette**
- Aug. 22 **Rallycross, Walczyk Farm**
- Sept. 7-10 **Solo National Championship, Lincoln, NE**
- Sept. 12 **Rallycross, Rolling Wheels Raceway Park, Elbridge**
- Sept. 18 **Night Solo, Cherry Valley kart track, Lafayette**
- Oct. 3 **Solo, NYS Fairgrounds**

http://www.nescca.com/nescca_main/calendar.html

<http://www.nedivsolo.org/schedule.shtml>

Membership meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at the Liverpool American Legion Post 188 205 Cypress St. in the village of Liverpool

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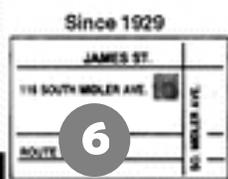
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Exhaust Pipe Dreams

From the Assistant R.E., Jon Coffin

This is an in between time, not still freezing all the time, but not really warm enough (for me) for asphalt racing yet. So it's a good time for telling stories, and I got a laugh-out-loud email from a friend the other day.

Now many of you I'm sure, like me, are carnuts, not walnuts or filberts, but carnuts. And this guy, he's a carnut, and he tells me of going off recently to another guy's place and picking up some wheels. Then going to another friend's and helping move cars around to hide them from the prying eyes of town authorities who've received complaints of (too many) unregistered vehicles outside. And finally swinging by a shop to pick another (I figure his seventh) particular model of a fine vintage automobile (probably at least 20 years old) that was pretty well stripped, but, Hey, it's a rust-free shell! Ya know! And it's free!

So, he's hauling it home on his trailer, (it happens to be on backwards because it has no engine and will tow better that way) when he stops along the Thruway for a quick break at a rest area. And he notices that most of the snow and ice that had piled up on the car is gone, not that he'd towed it away as a hazard because he had swiped off the big chunks before he got on the highway. And he also notices there's no windshield in the car. And there had been one when he'd left. And no one had told him they'd pulled it, thinking to save it, and had "rested" it back in place before the snows came.

Every now and then, there's things you're involved with that take a turn you've never



Jane Quinn photo

imagined, and you can't do anything about it once it's done, and, really it's better not to ask too many questions, and whoop! Just a little? Don't you wonder where that windshield ended up?

That's it for now, autocrossing is coming up next!

-Jon Coffin



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February 2010 Issue - <http://www.scca.com/documents/Fastrack/10/10-fastrack-march.pdf>

Club Racing - <http://www.scca.com/documents/Fastrack/10/10-fastrack-march-club.pdf>

Solo/SEB - <http://www.scca.com/documents/Fastrack/10/10-fastrack-march-solo.pdf>

Rally - <http://www.scca.com/documents/Fastrack/10/10-fastrack-march-rally.pdf>

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Links - <http://www.scca.com/documents/Fastrack/10/10-fastrack-march-links.pdf>

Looking for a previous copy? Click the link below to be taken there.

<http://www.scca.com/contentpage.aspx?content=78>

Membership Meeting Minutes

Courtesy of Bob Holcomb

CNYR General Membership Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2010 at American Legion in Liverpool, NY

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by R.E. Mike Donofrio at 7:22 p.m.

R.E. REPORT:

Mike Donofrio welcomed everyone to the first official meeting of CNYR for 2010. Our annual awards banquet held at Nestico's Restaurant in North Syracuse, NY in January was deemed a success, with good food and good times had by all. Mike covered some points relating to the new for 2010 membership incentives. Details are included in the Membership report.

It was pointed out that the current March, 2010 issue of SportsCar magazine has a well deserved mention of the web-site available version of our newsletter, SNARLING EXHAUST. Although absent from the meeting, Snarling editor Karl Hughes deserved a big round of applause for making this possible through his hard work and dedication to quality.

ASST. R.E. REPORT:

Jon Coffin said he had nothing new to report.

SECRETARY REPORT:

Bob Holcomb made a motion that the minutes for our last business meeting held in December, 2009 be approved as they appeared in Snarling Exhaust. After some discussion on the availability of a printed version of Snarling Exhaust, Ed Heffron seconded, motion carried.

TREASURER REPORT:

No report, Jay Cartini was absent.

ACTIVITIES REPORT:

Rob Sgarlata had nothing new to report since the awards banquet.
The 50-50 prize was won by Rich Morose for \$14.....

SOLO REPORT:

Mark Bizzozero presented the CNYR SOLO schedule for 2010.

Sunday April 25 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Sunday May 16 at the Cherry Valley Kart track.

Sunday June 13 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Saturday & Sunday July 24th & 25th at the Seneca Army Depot.

Sunday August 15 the annual enduro at Cherry Valley.

Saturday September 18, a night event at Cherry Valley.

Sunday October 3 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Our web-master, Evan Haas will post the schedule on the region web-site. Rob Sgarlata will get the schedule out to the CNY Subaru group, which have been very active in our SOLO events.

F&C REPORT:

Mick Levy was absent, no report.

COMPETITION REPORT:

Dave Kicak was absent, no report.

RALLY CROSS:

James Quattro reported on the establishment of a Rally Cross program for CNYR for 2010. Rolling Wheels Raceway Park in Elbridge, NY and the Walczyk farm located near Weedsport, NY will be our initial locations.

James has booked the following dates, weather permitting.

Sunday May 9 at Rolling Wheels
Saturday evening June 26 at Rolling Wheels
Sunday July 18 at the Walczyk farm
Sunday August 22 at the Walczyk farm
Sunday September 12 at Rolling Wheels.

There are currently eight classes of vehicles for the Rally Cross program:

Stock, front wheel drive, rear wheel drive and all wheel drive.
Prepared, front wheel drive, rear wheel drive and all wheel drive.
Modified, two wheel drive and all wheel drive.

A points program, including a "drop" program is still being worked out at this time.

There was much discussion and interest in the Rally Cross program and James is hopeful that we will benefit from some cross over attendees from the very successful Finger Lakes Region program.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

Andrew Beyer reported that we currently have 157 members, including four new members, David Costello from the Bronx, NY, Brian Gurak from Liverpool, NY, John Shannon from Oswego, NY and James Shomar from Manlius, NY. Welcome all!

R.E. Mike Donofrio mentioned the membership drive contest, newly revised by SCCA national for 2010. If a new member has been referred by an existing member, the existing member gets a ten dollar (\$10) discount towards either their dues, or SCCA merchandise, or National Office conducted events. This is an increase from the former \$5 discount. There will also be a grand prize drawing with the following rewards:

1st Place, Skip Barber Racing School
2nd Place, a \$1,500 Tire Rack Gift Certificate
3rd Place, a \$500 SCCA merchandise Gift Certificate

Secretary Bob Holcomb also mentioned that effective April 1, 2010 spouse dues will be combined into a family membership with the price reduced to \$85 from the 2009 cost of \$101. Members changing to this family membership will retain the same membership numbers. Bob said that was a cruel joke by national as he & his wife Nancy have memberships that expire just prior to April 1st.

Further information on both programs may be obtained at:

membership@scca.com

OLD BUSINESS:

The annual banquet was reviewed as to both quality and quantity of food and door prizes. It was agreed that each were more than satisfactory and to keep the same format for next year.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

Lee Hidy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rex Franklin seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

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\$30.00 - Saturday Lunch Only - NARRC Banquet (12 & under - \$20 / 5 & under - free)

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Start the day with a full hot or cold breakfast served buffet style in the restaurant.. Morning and afternoon refreshments will be served continuously all day. Lunch will be a buffet with hot and cold choices in the restaurant. Saturday dinner celebrating NNJR's 60th anniversary will be in the Ballroom. Join us for our Beach Party - dance to a DJ - win an award for best Island Attire. Start your meal with a couple of appetizers or maybe some soup or salad. Then dig into the hot entrees available. Still hungry? Go back for more. You can eat all you want. But make sure you save room for desert. Cash bar

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**Northern New Jersey Region
2010 NEDiv Round Table / NNJR celebrates 60 years as a region**

Schedule		www.NeSCCA.com
Friday 3/12	Noon 6:00 PM– 10:00PM	Check in (noon for early arrivals) Welcome Party
Saturday 3/13	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Specialty Meetings, Training, Series Planning Meetings: featuring Timing & Scoring, Registration, Sound Control, Drivers Schools, Tech and more Lunch at 12:00PM, featuring NARRC Awards Banquet at 1:00
	6:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Cocktails & Dinner NNJR celebrates 60 years (www.SCCA-NNJR.org)
Sunday 3/14	9:00 AM – noon	NEDIV Council Meeting

Mail Registration and Payment to:

Terry Roberts, NEDIV SCCA
326 Old Mountain Road
Farmington, CT 06032

Registration info: (860) 678-8356 or

terryroberts@comcast.net

Checks made out to SCCA NNJR

For event Info and Questions: Linda Santangelo-Mosley@ (973) 697-2041

Registration and payment must be received by March 10



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	Price	Number	Total
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Meals Only (not attending meetings)	\$90 12 & under - \$40 5 & under – free		\$
Saturday Lunch - NARRC Banquet	\$30 12 & under - \$20 5 & under – free		\$
Saturday Night - NNJR 60th Anniversary Beach Party (a \$50 value, subsidized by NNJR)	\$25 12 & under - free		\$
Total Enclosed			\$



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Session	Date	Start	End	Function	Contact	Location	Comments
1	3/12/2010	12:00PM	-	Hotel Check-In		Front Desk	http://www.hamiltonparkhotel.com
2	3/12/2010	6:00 PM	10:00PM	Event Registration		Reception	Registration for attendees
3	3/12/2010	6:00 PM	11:00 PM	Welcome Reception		Stir Restaurant	Cash Bar / hor d'oeuvres
4	3/12/2010	8:00 PM	10:00 PM	NEDIV Council Meeting	Tom Campbell	Madison	Council Members only
5	3/12/2010	10:00 PM	1:00 AM	After Hours		Vanderbilt's	Cash Bar
6							
7	3/13/2010	7:00 AM	8:15 AM	Event Registration		Reception	Registration for attendees
8	3/13/2010	7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Breakfast		Arrive Restaurant	
9	3/13/2010	8:00 AM	8:15 AM	Organize		Hamilton	Gather together and settle into chairs
10	3/13/2010	8:15 AM	8:30 AM	Opening Remarks	Chris Mosley/Tom Campbell	Hamilton	
11	3/13/2010	8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Directors Town Hall	Tom Campbell	Hamilton	Immediately following the opening
12	3/13/2011			Open		Madison	
13	3/13/2012			Open		Chatham	
14	3/13/2013			Open		Chester	
15	3/13/2014			Open		Dickinson	
16	3/13/2010	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	Break		4th Floor Refreshment	
17	3/13/2010	10:15 AM	5:00PM	Emergency Services	Peter Villaume	Outside - Upper Lot	(tentative)
18	3/13/2010	10:15 AM	11:30 AM	Open		Hamilton	
19	3/13/2010			National Racing Committee	Tom Campbell	Madison	
20	3/13/2010			Tech	Bill Etherington	Chatham	
21	3/13/2010			Sound Control	Peter Perrault	Chester	
22	3/13/2010			Registration+Timing&Scoring	Terry Roberts/Denise Patten	Dickinson	
23	3/13/2010	11:00 AM	1:00 PM	NARRC Lunch / Awards Registration		Arrive Restaurant	Registration for NARRC Awards / Lunch
24	3/13/2010	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	Lunch		Arrive Restaurant	Cash Bar
25	3/13/2010	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	NARRC Awards		Arrive Restaurant	Cash Bar
26	3/13/2010	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	Open Discussions		4th Floor Refreshment	
27	3/13/2010	2:00 PM	3:15 PM	Division Meeting Improvement	Jack Hanifan	Hamilton	
28	3/13/2010			NARRC Meeting	NARRC Committee	Madison	
29	3/13/2010			Race Documents	Earl Hurlbut	Chatham	
30	3/13/2010			Chief Driving Instructor Curriculum	Edward A. Zebrowski	Chester	
31	3/13/2010			Timing&Scoring (continued)	Denise Patten	Dickinson	
32	3/13/2010	3:15 PM	3:30 PM	Break		4th Floor Refreshment	
33	3/13/2010	3:30 PM	5:00 PM	National Race Scheduling	Tom Campbell	Hamilton	-
34	3/13/2010			Pit and Grid	Bill Stewart	Madison	
35	3/13/2010			Flagger & Steward Communication	Dave Panas/Bruce Kolker	Chatham	
36	3/13/2010			Open		Chester	
37	3/13/2010			Timing&Scoring (continued)	Denise Patten	Dickinson	
38	3/13/2010	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Break			
39	3/13/2010	4:00 PM	7:00 PM	NNJR Party Registration		Ambassador Ballroom	registration for Region Party
40	3/13/2010	6:00 PM	10:00 PM	Dinner / 60th Anniversary Region Party		Ambassador Ballroom	REGION PARTY / Cash Bar
41	3/13/2010	10:00 PM	1:00 AM	After Hours		Vanderbilt's	Cash Bar (opens at noon)
42							
43	3/14/2010	7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Breakfast		Arrive Restaurant	
44	3/14/2010	8:30 AM	9:00 AM	Organize		Hamilton	Gather together and settle into chairs
41	3/14/2010	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Division Meeting	Tom Campbell	Hamilton	Will include program reports from Executive Steward, Division Administrators, Solo, Rally and Rally Cross programs and formal reports from any active working groups. The Council Chairman will issue the agenda for this meeting.
42	3/14/2010	12:00 PM		Adjourn			



Tom Campbell, Chairman
NEDIV Council

Open Letter to the NEDIV National Drivers

The NEDIV Race schedule for 2010 was recently published. Since then there has been concern expressed by some of the National drivers that there are no double National race events on the calendar.

This issue was discussed at the NE Division meeting in November prior to finalizing the schedule. Although there were a number of double Nationals requested, in the end the regions, as represented by the Regional Executives, decided that there should be none on the schedule for 2010.

The issue of having 3-day double race Nationals has been debated within the division for many years. The arguments are primarily driver preference and regional finances. It has long been stated that many drivers don't want to extend the weekend by the extra day (at least not on non-holiday weekends) and that they don't want to be disadvantaged if they can't attend the double event and have to travel to two separate single events. More recently a strong viewpoint is emerging that the double race weekends are less expensive for the drivers than two separate, single events and that the economics are changing some of the driver's preferences. Undoubtedly both sides of that issue exist, as well as several positions between the extremes.

The other stake-holders in this issue are the racing regions – those that host the National races. Total participation in National racing has been declining by about 10 – 12 % per year for the past 4 years. Combined with increasing costs (track rental, insurance, etc.) it has become more difficult for the regions, especially those hosting the smaller events, to break even financially. The same trends exist in Regional racing but consistently greater numbers of entries per event make it more economical to host a Regional race. The regions believe that large double race National events will draw entries away from the smaller single race events to the extent that the single events may no longer be financially viable. The recent feedback from the drivers who are lobbying for the doubles as being more economical are validating this concern.

Many of the National participants are "local" drivers who enter the one or two Nationals at the tracks closest to them but don't travel to the majority of the National races. If their local track loses its National these drivers won't fill the void with another National event at a more distant track. On the other hand are the drivers who only enter enough Nationals to qualify for the Runoffs. These days that can be accomplished by only entering two double race events. However, of the 450 drivers participating in the 2009 Nationals in the North East, only 75 actually attended the Runoffs. Does it make sense to design the National racing program for that limited population.

For the 2010 season two of our historical National race events, Summit Point and Mosport, were dropped by the host regions for financial reasons. There remain 7 National races, all single race events, nicely distributed geographically and on the schedule.

So, that is the dilemma – more doubles to provide economy to some of the drivers at the cost of having fewer National races by forcing more regions/tracks out of the National racing schedule.

This issue will be discussed further at the Division's annual Round Table meeting in New Jersey on March 13 – 14. This is a rather straight forward issue but with no easy solution. It is very important that the decision makers, the RE's in the division, hear from more of the National drivers, hopefully from the full spectrum of viewpoints, so that they can make well informed decisions. Better yet, the drivers are invited to attend the Round Table to present their views and participate in what will be a lively debate.



↑ NESCCA™

NORTHEAST DIVISION NATIONAL RACING

http://www.nescca.com/nescca_main/calendar.html



Photo by Pete Hirschev

2009 Solo Championship

Last season's Top Ten drivers in the CNYR Solo Championship:



10	Charlie Elve	136
9	Wes Davis	138
8	Scott Newton	158
7	James Quattro	172
6	Mark Bizzozero	175
5	Pete Hirschey	177
4	Mike Donofrio	191
3	Dustin Ehrlich	192
2	Evan Haas	196
1	Karl Hughes	256

Photos by Jane Quinn and "toneloc1958"





Date: January 26, 2010
 From: Doug Gill, SCCA Solo Competition Manager
 To: All Solo Participants and Safety Inspectors (Tech)
 Subject: Acceptable helmet standards (*Solo Rules* 4.3.1)



SA2005, SA2000, SA95
 M2010, M2005, M2000, M95*
 K2005, K98

www.smf.org

CMS2007, CMR2007



31.1, 31.1A, 31.2A
 41.1, 41.1A, 41.2A
 24.1

www.sffoundation.com



BS6658-85 type A/FR

www.bsi-global.com

Snell and SFI labels with serial numbers are located inside the helmet.
 BS labels with serial numbers are usually on the outside of the helmet.



*M95 helmets will be eligible through 12/31/2010.

Lessons Learned, Lincoln Nebraska

Size matters! (But so does quality.)

For nearly 3 decades the SCCA Solo National Championship event had been held in either Salina or Topeka, Kansas with one year in Chicago (1982, my first ever Nationals!). In Salina there were actually two sites; both were Air Force style concrete, large and grippy. The earlier site was a 150' wide runway. Then from 1986 through 1994 the site was a very large apron on the newer airport across town. But by the mid-90's, the south end of that site was breaking up due to tractor trailer traffic as the site became industrialized. In addition, the city was selling off pieces of the site bit by bit and so SCCA deemed it necessary to find a more stable site.

Moving to Forbes Field in Topeka for the 1995 Nationals (with the National office soon to follow), the site was about the same vastness as the later Salina location and about as grippy. But at the north end of this site was the lowest elevation in the area and when the water table would rise, groundwater would push upward on the concrete, heaving huge slabs and also breaking up much of the concrete slowly. By the mid-2000s it was time to move again.

The 2006 through 2008 National Championships were held on a huge parking lot at Heartland Park Topeka (HPT) racetrack, about a mile from Forbes Field. Well, huge is a relative term. For any regional autocross event, the site would have been nirvana. But for the Solo National Championship, it had many shortcomings.

Originally promised as two large separate lots, it ended up being just one that was only slightly larger than one national course at Forbes Field or Salina. So the courses had to be shorter. To maximize course space, the grid had to be off the main parking lot. This meant competitors could not see what was going on and simply waited in grid until told to go. The drive from grid to the start line could take up to 3 minutes. Huge legions of safety workers were employed to direct traffic and pedestrians. To top it all off, the contractor added large quantities of sand to the asphalt mix. Sand would come up out of the asphalt all day long for the entire week of



competition. Anyone straying off the line by more than a foot or so was doomed to a lost run. Some competitors lost control and slid a lot farther than they had ever experienced.

After the 2008 Nationals, Nebraska Region proposed a new site, yet another former Air Force

base. It has a huge paddock area off the main runways which are still in use as a municipal airport. Without being given the entire available area, we were still gifted with at least 35 acres of course area, 6 acres of grid space, and 17 acres of paddock space. Wow! And the concrete is in mostly good shape.

Road Trip & Arrival at Lincoln

Ken and I embarked on our trip to Lincoln on a Thursday morning. After years of traveling the NYS Thruway to I71 to I70 we had a new route to adventure forward upon. We stayed on I90 and then to I80, skirting the southern edge of Chicago and on through Illinois, Iowa, and into Nebraska. Speed limits were relaxed out west with 70 mph being the standard in Iowa and 75 mph in Nebraska. Interestingly, as we drove through that part of the country, the flat to hilly open landscape was dotted by large numbers of wind turbines. They were nearly everywhere we looked.



By Friday around noon we arrived at the event site. As we drove to the registration tent we were floored by the vastness of the place. Over the decades we've been to some large event sites but this was awe inspiring. The course area is huge. The grid area is huge. The paddock is huge. And at the end of paddock there's a 40 to 50 second permanent practice course. Beyond the practice course the concrete extends so far that we couldn't see to the end of the site.



We were assigned our paddock spot and as we were making ourselves at home I wondered how in the world would I find the fellow who had brought a go-kart from California for me to pick up. This place is enormous! That's when I overheard the fellow in the next spot over tell one of his friends, "I don't know how I'm going to find this guy Jim Garry." I walked the 8 feet to where he was standing and introduced myself. We both laughed and shook our heads. What a great coincidence.

At both Forbes Field and HPT, the practice course shared space with the Pro Solo finale. The courses were set up for the weekend and down they'd come to make way for the Nationals

courses. At Lincoln, the Pro courses were set up and taken down for the Nationals courses but the practice course was left open all week long. Accordingly, Ken and I took our share of practice runs.

Pro Solo Finale

Not entered for the Pro Solo, it was still a fun event to watch when we weren't on the practice course or socializing. Saturday proved to be interesting when dense fog delayed the start of the event by an hour or so. At one point we were standing near the start lights when New England Region's Chang Ho Kim emerged out of the mist like a ghost. As he passed by, I offered "the courses won't look the same when the sun comes out". Chang flashed his famous smile and replied, "that's OK, I don't look ahead when I'm driving anyway!"



These were the longest Pro Solo courses I've ever seen both in time and length. And they didn't come close to utilizing the available space. It was a fine event.

Walking, and more

As usual, Monday was the day to walk the courses. I hadn't really appreciated the fact that at HPT you could get a lot of walks accomplished on each course because they were on the small



side (for a Nationals course). At Lincoln, the courses were once again long, not to mention fun and challenging. It took quite a while to complete a walk through. And in the 90+ degree heat, it was good to bring a water bottle along and then stop for more water between walks.

With the practice course still open (and to remain open until Wednesday afternoon) we mixed in a few more runs with the walking. This is when we broke in our Nationals tires. Nice to do so on the same surface we'd be running in a few days.

On Monday evening, the entire club was invited to attend a rare open session at The Museum of American Speed, <http://www.museumofamericanspeed.com/Collections/Collections.shtml>. What an amazing place! We toured their working machine shop, had dinner, and saw several floors of automotive memorabilia and cars, lots of cars, old cars, modern cars, classic cars, and race cars. There were all types of engines, lots of history and more. Wow! They'll do it again next year and the trip to Lincoln is almost worth this evening alone.

The '09 Season, Lessons Learned, Forgotten, Re-learned

Let's take a look back on the regular season now. Getting my Formula Ford to the physical point where it could be driven quickly had been the culmination of years of blood, sweat, and many tears. Although I'd won the C Modified National Championship titles in 2007 and 2008, I was aware of some areas of my driving that could be upgraded. So for 2009 I dedicated myself to making further improvements as a driver.

And that folks, ironically enough, is how my chance to do well at this year's Nationals was ruined! Here's how ...



Genius at work? Or just two old dumb guys?

Despite the plan to work primarily on my driving skills, Ken and I did make some shock absorber adjustments at the first two test and tunes of the season. We tried a range of stiffer adjustments, made the car feel better, and got faster times. But keep in mind that a huge problem with autocross test and tunes is that despite the large number of runs offered, most people still are learning to drive the course by the end of the day. So picking up a few tenths of a second might be due to a change made in suspension adjustment, or it may be due to unconsciously

learning something about the course that you might not have grasped earlier in the day. In contrast, if you do a test day at a race track on which you've driven hundreds, if not thousands of laps, you can be pretty sure that a three tenth of a second pick up is significant.

At any rate, due to my philosophy for 2009 to not make many changes to the car, except for known pavement needs, those stiffer shock settings were not altered for the rest of the season except to go up or down one click to customize transitional handling for a particular site. The "be a better driver" mode unconsciously blocked some thinking about the car, but more on this later.

Regardless of all this, the season was a lot of fun. We ran some SCCA regional level events at Seneca, and SCCA, BMW, and PCA events at Devens. Did the National Tour at Seneca Army Depot and the Divisional at Devens. Ken and I had initially thought we would run the Pro Solo

events in DC and Toledo in order to qualify for the Pro Solo Finale prior to the National Championship in Lincoln, Nebraska, but scrapped the idea.

On a personal note, as the first event approached I had some misgivings about the coming season. Was it the long drives to Devens and Seneca? Nope, I realized I've come to enjoy the long drives because they give me the opportunity to think with no outside distractions (except for keeping civilians from running me off the road).



So then I wondered if perhaps I wasn't enjoying autocrossing anymore. To check this, I made an effort to really keep track of how I was feeling at my first two events and realized that I was having a great time! So what was it, I wondered? Turns out that I came to understand I was not happy about the idea of being away from my family for so many full weekends. The moment I made the decision to skip the two Pro Solo events and alter plans for 2 day regional events into one day events, my negative feelings disappeared and so did my negative feelings about the season.

Everything seemed to be on course to not only enjoying myself, but having a reasonably good shot at a "three-peat" at the Nationals, although my competition philosophy is centered only on being "in the hunt". So how did things go? Even though the car was balanced, there were signs all season that something wasn't quite right.

* At a May test and tune at Seneca, I did something I'd never done before in all my years of autocrossing: I hit the timing lights at the finish. And Finger Lake Region goes out of their way to protect their timing lights, encasing them in steel. I bent a trailing arm but had an old one I keep as a spare in my trailer and was able to continue the day without losing more than a couple of runs. The damage to the fresh paint job was something else.



* In late June I wrote in my autocross journal that I was sensing something wrong with the car, that although the balance was very good, something wasn't quite right. Thinking back, it was the good balance that helped to distract me from the real problem.

* This year we added a throttle potentiometer to our DL1 data acquisition system. What an eye opener! There were times I would have sworn on the threat of water-boarding that I had not

lifted in a particular section of a course but was proven wrong when we looked at the data. You cannot hide from the DL1. In thinking about this issue I concluded that the discomfort that was forcing the lifting was driving-related only and not due to a suspension problem because, after all, the car was so nicely balanced.

* At the Tour and Divisionals I took first place (a first for me at a Divisional!) but my factored times versus all other cars were not as good as they were the year before. And the car just felt ... off. I could not put my finger on the reason why, and those doubts stayed with me all the way to Lincoln and even through the test course runs there.

Meanwhile, back in Lincoln

At Lincoln, Ken and I took practice runs on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. With the new all-week test course, no longer can the Nationals be known as “2000 miles for 6 runs”. The car continued to feel perfectly balanced, which should have fostered confidence. But it didn't. I experimented with lines and driving styles. I could get the car to rotate beautifully in any corner. I noticed that a few key competitors in my class were a tick slower than me, but I had many more runs and felt my times should have been better based on my many runs on the test course. I tried to push away those thoughts as unneeded pessimistic thinking but they persisted.



After our last practice runs on Monday, I felt that the car had been a bit off on power that day. We decided to adjust the valves and when the plug wires were pulled, we discovered a broken spark plug! It was replaced, with relief, and the valves adjusted as Bill Gendron offered help and his wry sense of humor.

Tuesday and Wednesday were days to watch other classes (I had volunteered to write an article about A Modified for North American Pylon), walk the courses, socialize, take photos, and try to keep from getting exhausted (we ARE older now!). Socializing is always big in autocross, but at Nationals it's even more special simply because of the huge numbers of people available to socialize with. You can't go more than a few hundred feet without running into someone you know. That person may be someone you see dozens of times a year at local events or he may be someone you see only once a year. Deciding whom to have dinner with is sometimes a difficult choice! And this year old timers Davie and Joyce Looman came back to Nationals after a decade away, but only to visit and sell Dave's [books](#).

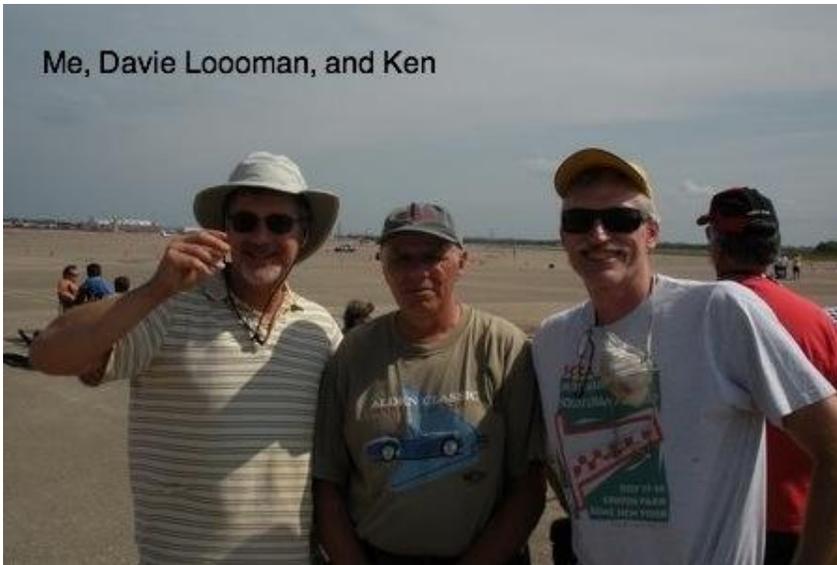
Help is always on hand at Nationals.



Dave told me an old story about how he and Chuck Sample (another old timer) once took time out from a two day CENDiv event to participate in a voluntary anti-drunk driving demonstration put on by the State. Volunteers were given a car to drive through an autocross course and

establish base times. Then they'd take a drink, wait for it to settle in, and drive again. Then more drinks and more timed runs. As expected, drivers would get slower and slower and hit more cones as they got drunker. But not Davie and Chuck! Nope. Those two were hard drinkers AND national champions. They just kept getting faster and faster until the administrator of the program asked them to please leave because they were messing up his results!

Me, Davie Looman, and Ken



Thursday finally arrived and I felt excited as we moved the car to grid. This excitement is something that had eluded me during the years I didn't have my car handling right. The Nationals during those years was essentially a test and tune because most years I knew going in that the car wasn't ready. Knowing you have a chance to do well, adds another layer to the experience of Nationals.

C Modified hit the east course in heat 2. The weather was great. Ken took a run and said the car felt fine. I buckled in, Ken double checked tire pressures, and I moved to the start line. About 1/3 the way into my run, the car felt horrible. It was pulling hard and the chassis was scraping on the ground in many places. For the first time ever during an autocross run, I actually took my eyes off the course to look for broken suspension bits. My time was about a second behind Ken and I was dumbfounded. Then I looked at the left front tire. It was flat!

Nationals grid gets very busy!



We fetched a spare tire/wheel from the trailer and slapped it on. Ken went out and improved his time a little. I went out and expected a huge reduction in time. After the finish line it is not possible to see the timing display so workers are assigned to hand out time slips. I was handed my time and looked at it. I looked at it again. I stared very hard at it. I could not believe the time that was written. Despite having a flat tire on my first run, my second run was less than 0.2 of an improvement! I was dumbfounded for the second time in 15 minutes.

I pulled back into our grid spot, checked the tires, checked the time on the posting board, and just couldn't believe it. I was now 0.9 off of Ken and another second off of first. Huh?

Third run. Chance to get close. Ken's 3rd run was no better for him. I had concentrated on the



Searching for grip at Lincoln.

course very hard and knew exactly what I needed to do. I hit the course and drove my game. The car was not great but I felt I had improved significantly. The finish line worker handed me my timing slip and ...

Have you ever heard a dog howling at night when its owner locks it out of the house on a cold winter night? That's about the sound that came out of my throat. I looked at the slip and it

showed an improvement of only a little over two tenths of a second. How could this be? Over the course of my runs I had improved only 0.4 over a flat tire time. The pain! The indignity! The confusion!

Later that day, a New England region member told me, "I saw your third run ... or rather, I heard your response to it." Yup.

The day was over and there was no chance for me to finish well at this National Championship. I was in 9th place, about 0.7 behind Ken who was clinging to 6th place, the last trophy in class.

After impound, we put the car to bed in the trailer and walked the west course. All we could hope for was to move up a bit. After a few walk-throughs we cooked dinner at our paddock spot to save time, and some money. Corn, burgers, potato salad, some veggies. Ken's a good paddock cook. As we ate, we talked about the car. We brainstormed for quite awhile until it dawned on us that even though grip was higher than at Heartland Park, our shocks were just too damn stiff and probably had been all season.

You gotta wonder how the human brain works. Well, mine anyway. All season long there was a nagging feeling that something about the car wasn't right. The fact that it was balanced certainly threw me off. And given my overriding goal for the season of concentrating on my driving, I had closed myself off to deep thinking about the car. What a dope! When I finally sat down with Ken over our dinner it seemed so clear that the shocks were wrong. And this explained all those niggling doubts during the season and why I was confidence lifting everywhere. Stiff shocks often make the car feel good but can rob tons of grip and this suddenly explained our entire season.



The next morning we softened the shocks a bit. And sure enough, my first try got me the top time in my class for the first set of runs. The car felt better for sure. I moved ahead of Ken but was still a bit back of 5th place. But on my second run I improved just a bit. Ken turned a time much closer to me and pulled back ahead of me overall for 6th (last trophy in class) and the rest of the class figured out how to drive the course. I no longer had my fast time in class.

Thinking hard with 3rd runs approaching I wasn't going to blame my driving this time and therefore softened the car some more. During my last run the car felt very good and as I drove from corner to corner it slowly dawned on me that with that last shock softening I was under-driving the course. It took me until the last two corners to figure this out. By that time, the run was over and my time, although better, was still off by a bit compared to the leaders.

Ken had taken last trophy and I was a tick behind him. After impound, we loaded the car, watched some more runs, and then drove the rig back to the motel to get ready for the banquet.

As I went to take my shower, I reminded Ken that last year I took away first place from him at Nationals and this year he took last trophy in class away from me, so I suggested we were even. Chuckling as I closed the door behind me, I could hear him arguing from the other side of the door that, "it's not the same thing Jim; it's not the same!"



MoHud's John Sheridan (and SCCA Director) offering advice in Lincoln



Former MoHudder Jim Fossum at the Nationals banquet

The banquet was nice, we talked with friends from all over the country, said our goodbyes, and headed back to the motel for a good sleep to prepare for the long day and a half ride home.

The return trip is a great time to think and debrief each other. Ken's thoughts were that during the season we had been content, matching each other's times, winning the Tour and Divisionals and not doing so badly on the RTP factors. The car had felt balanced and compared to the horrible push or oversteer of the pre-2007

years, everything seemed fine. But there were no other cars to serve as a yardstick because our only NEDiv C Mod competition in '09 was a relative newcomer to C Mod who is currently working on his setup. We let our guard down, said Ken.

But why was I so slow compared to Ken on that first day? Ken suggested that he is still somewhat of a stock category driver who takes what he can get from the car the way it is. Having come from the stock category myself, I remember those days. Ken is driving more adaptively

whereas I am driving almost in test mode, expecting to get a certain amount even if it is not there. Thus, when the car isn't right, I don't drive the car as well as it could be driven. The plus to this is that I'm able to determine push/loose more quickly but not, apparently, lack of grip.

The trip home was OK. I've gotta say, it's not so bad getting creamed at Nationals after you've just won a few times.

The postscript to the season is that after coming home I attended the last MoHud autocross of the season, followed by an NER event at Devens. Setting the shocks even softer than at the end of Nationals, I took top RTP factor on only 3 runs at MoHud (retiring after the first heat due to the bumps scraping my rub blocks off), and second in PAX at the 127 car NER event at Devens. The car felt absolutely wonderful. It had a ton more grip. At the long, fast Devens course, the car kept telling us that it wasn't at its limits so we kept pushing harder and harder and the car just hung in there. On my last two runs I made big errors and was still able to improve my times with each run. What fun to be able to turn good times without having to be mistake free!



So you know what? Despite the negative aspects of screwing up the car back in May for the season, it was a positive experience overall. I re-learned a lesson about shocks that I will never forget again, having it hammered home in such a strong way. And lacking grip this season forced me to drive well out of my comfort zone in order to get reasonably quick times. I got scared on a good many occasions and that's what you need to go really fast. Ken and I are looking forward to having even more fun next year.





Membership Application

Dear Prospective SCCA Member:

To apply for a membership in the Sports Car Club of America, the world's largest motorsports enthusiast organization, please complete the form below and return, with payment, to SCCA Membership Department, P.O. Box 299, Topeka, KS 66601-0299.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Spouse Name _____ Birthdate _____

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Primary Interest:

Please indicate the area of SCCA in which you plan to participate, or interests you the most.
(please check only one box)

- Club Racing
- Time Trials/PDX
- Rally
- RallyCross
- Solo
- Vintage
- Pro Racing

Membership Dues

(Includes region dues)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$80.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$121.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | \$28.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> First Gear
(24 yrs & under) | \$45.00 |

Amount Due

Membership Amount \$ _____

Weekend Membership #1 _____ -\$15.00

Weekend Membership #2 _____ -\$15.00

Referred by SCCA Member _____ # _____ -\$15.00

First / Last Name & Member Number REQUIRED

TOTAL DUE \$ _____

*I will become a member in the region I reside in or place me in _____ region.
By accepting membership in the SCCA and any SCCA Region I agree to conduct myself according to the highest standards of behavior and sportsmanship in a manner that shall not be prejudicial to the reputation of the Club or fellow members.*

Applicant's Name (Signature Required)

Date (Required)

Payment Method: Check Credit Card Money Order

Visa/MasterCard (only) Acct# _____ Exp. _____

Applications submitted by fax must be accompanied by a Visa or MasterCard account number for payment.

What is the SCCA?

The Sports Car Club of America is the world's largest automotive motorsports organization and has set the target for motorsports competition and motorsports event management in North America for over 60 years. The SCCA has remained the benchmark and is recognized as the gold standard in the industry.

The SCCA hosts a myriad of motorsports activities to satisfy any interest you may have as a sports car competition enthusiast.

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- Full privileges of an Individual member.
- Spouse and children do not receive reduced fees.
- Must include a statement from your unit commander or a copy of your military ID card each year.

SCCA's Weekend Membership Program: A \$15 discount can be used towards your first year's dues by using your weekend membership number. The maximum amount that may be applied is \$30 and expires in 60 days (date on receipt).

SCCA's Membership Referral Program is an incentive for SCCA members to refer new members. By providing the name of the SCCA member who sparked your interest, you are granted a \$15 discount and your SCCA friend will receive a credit on their membership renewal.

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