

Steve Harris  
Director – Area 4  
Great Lakes Division  
937 438 3005 (O); 937 681 4484 (C)  
sharris@rixan.com



## Information for Area 4 Members

April 24, 2012

Dear Area 4 Members,

This is the fourth Newsletter I have issued. If you are reading it for the first time, then we have a problem. The thought was to publish these communications via your Region's website and newsletter. However, many of the Regions no longer put out a regional publication or even have a website. So, I may try a general email distribution in the future.

### Bluegrass Motorsports Park

I had lunch recently with Brad Poppell, owner of BGMP. It appears that while the bank problems are behind him, Brad's enthusiasm for the project has been diminished. Who can blame him? When you start a project like this it is very difficult to envision all the pitfalls that await you. The experience has cost Brad personally, emotionally and financially. The SCCA is interested in acquiring a full or partial interest in this track; Brad welcomes our participation. Here is the initial plan:

1. Form the SCCA Bluegrass Motorsports Park Acquisition Committee (Steve Harris)
2. Inspect property (May, 2012)
3. Make Value Assessment and Cost Projections
4. Evaluate our acquisition resources, public and private; determine if we should continue our efforts

As I mentioned previously, we have been offered help from other SCCA sources including the groups that bought and operate Thunderhill Raceway and High Plains Raceway. We will have their expertise on the acquisition committee. Also, I confirmed with Brad that the BGMP site-plan includes a large paved area for Solo competitions. There is also enough land for a RallyX course. So, this project is not just for road racers. All of our speed programs will benefit.

### Road Racing - Class Realignment

The BOD has charged the CRB with realigning our National classes such that we reduce the number of classes by 2013 from 29 to 24. You will be seeing their suggestions on the May FasTrack. Remember, these are suggestions only at this stage. If you have a comment, write to the CRB and copy me. We are trying to ensure that all current cars have a place to race and can remain competitive. We will be successful in some classes and unsuccessful in others. But it must be done for the health of the club. We cannot afford to have 2 or 3 cars in a class at a National Race and only get 5 or 6 cars in the class at the Runoffs. If we want a National Championship to mean something, it must be won, not given.

### Road Racing – The Majors - Zones

So, if National racing is about beating the best competition, then the Majors should be about clustering the best competition and providing our members with more track time and a semi-pro experience. Yes, it can be argued that the pie is the same size no matter how many slices you make. But, by giving our racers a better experience, we should grow this program over time. At least, that is the theory.

As an engineer, I like data. As a business owner, I make decisions based on data. So far, I don't have enough data to embrace or discard the Majors program. One of the committees I am serving on has been charged with deciding the Zones of the Majors program (i.e. which Divisions race with which Divisions). I have urged my colleagues to proceed slowly due to lack of data and lack of resource at the home office. And that is the current plan. Details matter and we have considerable work to do. More information will be forthcoming.

### SOLO

There is nothing much to report for Solo this month. The season has started in many of our Regions. I am soliciting your feedback about ways to improve our Solo programs. I have heard from many of you, but new ideas are always welcome. Also, we are continuing our efforts to post Solo info on the GLD website. If you would like to be trained to be the Solo Webmaster, please let me know.

### **SPORTSCAR Magazine**

I have been receiving some comments from members about the May digital issue of *Sportscar* Magazine. Like you, I find it very hard to read the digital copy while seated on the porcelain throne. Balancing a computer on your lap is not easy! However, the deal the SCCA made with Haymarket to publish *Sportscar* some years ago was very costly for the SCCA. "Printing" a digital copy saved us quite a bit of money, although if it is not read, it is hard to justify. It seems to me, printing costs should be offset by advertising revenue if the magazine is properly promoted and marketed. With Pfanner becoming the publisher of *Sportscar* this year, the product should get better. A better product should generate more advertising revenue; i.e. lower cost to our members. Let me know your thoughts about *Sportscar*; how important is it to you?

### **Convention – Final Thoughts**

In my recap of the National Convention last month, I neglected to mention the key participation of another of GLD's members. Raleigh Boreen did a fantastic job hosting multiple award ceremonies. Besides looking great in a tux, Raleigh kept the ceremonies on schedule and interesting. Thanks Raleigh – you did us proud!

### **General Philosophy**

I receive a lot of letters from GLD members and I read them all and answer most of them. Helping members is part of my job. But, some things are simply not BOD issues. For example, taking weight off your IT car is not something the BOD would do. We have Ad Hoc Committees of the CRB to consider such issues, and I can certainly help you reach them. I believe strongly in a management process where the BOD determines the strategy and direction for the club, and provides oversight and due diligence of its committees. I do not believe that the BOD should be second guessing the various Program Boards or making exceptions for any individual.

I am also committed to a rules season and to safe, fair competition. The CRB recently proposed changes to the Runoffs qualifying process for several of our larger entry classes. I voted against this since it was outside the rules season (there had already been 5 National races held across the country and changing the rules midstream is just not fair).

So, when you see the votes in *FasTrack*, realize that the Area 4 vote is consistent with a philosophy of management as well as the issue being considered.

Yours for a better SCCA,

*Steve*