

DRIVERS MEETING

Official Publication of the Racing Drivers Club, Inc.

Dedicated to the safety, quality, and enhancement of the SF Region racing experience.

"Your advocate for safe & sane racing in legal cars"

VOLUME 47, NUMBER 2, March 2007

Your RDC membership has expired! All RDC memberships expire on December 31. Yes, even if you just joined before the Enduro. So, join early and save. Membership is only \$30 if you join at the beginning of the season. Joining now lets you enjoy ALL of the benefits of RDC membership. Check your mailing label. If it doesn't say "2007", we need to hear from you!

Ott's Thoughts Ramblings from the Racing Drivers Club President

It's our 50th anniversary!

No, you and I haven't been together for that long, but the Racing Drivers Club has been. In addition, one person has been a member for that entire time. Larry Albedi was part of the club in 1957 and still is today. He no longer drives a race car, but he is at virtually every track event in our region all year. This year we plan to do something special for him and for other long term members of the club, most likely at the track. Watch this newsletter for time and place. By the way, our membership records are not absolutely complete, so we're not sure about the length of membership of some of our long term members. If you have been a member for 15 years or more, we invite you to call our Membership Chair, Lois Leijdecker-Ott at 916-447-3698, or e-mail her at

LLORACER@pacbell.net and help us get our history straight.

While the club continues past the half century mark, the one thing you can be sure of is that there will be changes. The first change is an addition. At the February Board meeting, we welcomed Fred Peterson as our newest Board member. He drives a Miata and works Pit Fire. Wel-

come him aboard when you see him. Another change this year is RDC's No-Contact Challenge. The Board of Directors felt that this program was just not achieving its intended purpose. It was not helping our members and others to be aware of safe racing and to make every effort to avoid contact between cars on the track. As I mentioned in my December column, we need something new to keep race drivers thinking about the advantages of safe, clean, non-contact racing. We have gotten a good many suggestions, but have not yet decided to implement any one of them. We are considering doing something that will tie in with the SCCA-SFR's new "feature groups" program. Keep your eyes and ears open for announcements of details of the new program.

Speaking of new, there were 78 drivers attending this year's SCCA-SFR Drivers' School. Joe Gaffney and William Kirkwood, winners of the 2007 RDC Will Pool Memorial Scholarships, both graduated. However, in the process they did provide John Schmale, (Board Member and provider of the RDC race cars) with plenty of work during the weekend, using up fuel, tires, transmissions, body panels and other fun things during their 3 days on the track. (See Joe Gaff-

ney's report elsewhere in this newsletter.) Neither has announced future plans for certain, but we hope that they both continue to be valuable members of their worker crews and that they find the time and money to get in a few races also. Welcome to them and all the other new drivers this year. Of the new drivers, 12 joined RDC at the track as soon as they learned they had graduated. I encourage you to encourage the rest to join also.

Another thing for you to do is to look at your mailing label for this newsletter. If it says 2006, it means that you haven't yet sent us that check for 2007. Since all memberships expire on December 31, you are not a member. We are sending this newsletter as a courtesy and as a reminder to join for this year, but it is the last you will receive without rejoining. Remember also that you don't start earning RDC Season Championship points until you are a member. The season is about to start. The end of this month is the regional opener at Infineon. Don't let the competition get a jump on you.

Another opener that is almost upon us is the Double National at Thunderhill on March 16-18. For those of you who are not going to be running in this event, it's a good chance to do

like Lois and I do and get out on a corner as a worker. There is no better way to learn racing lines and techniques than by observing others from a corner. Plus, as a worker you help provide some of the huge amount of staffing that is needed every weekend so that we can get out there and race. Without those folks being on the corners and in Timing & Tech & Grid &&&, we would be watching racing on TV instead of doing it. We especially need workers on the corners. Over the last few years Flaggers, Communicators, & Driver Observers have become scarce commodities. In fact this situation has even increased the unnecessary danger to the drivers. Many times we are out there racing with only one person on some of the corners. One person can't watch all of the track area that they need to and then get the warning flags up soon enough to

give us those few seconds which can make the difference between avoiding a situation and disaster. They also can't watch both ways, so they miss a lot of bad driving and you have no witness to support your protest if necessary. In fact last year, there was at least one instance where, if it hadn't been for some Stewards manning some of the corners, we wouldn't have had enough corner workers to meet GCR regulations and would have had to postpone or cancel the races. Give it a shot.

Another way you can help your fellow drivers is by volunteering to help with the RDC Driver Development Program. This program provides track familiarization and driver coaching to those who need it, especially at the first of the year as new drivers drive each of the 3 race courses for the first time. Contact Dave Allen at 408-996-1356 or

davidallen14@comcast.net if you are able to help in this effort. Also look elsewhere in this newsletter for his article on the Driver Development Program.

Back to changes. With the help of Ed Koop, RDC is getting their web site back up to speed. We even hope to have it totally current and useful in the very near future. Check it out at racer.net/rdc. I don't know if suggestions can be posted there yet, so if you can't, call me at 916-441-6356. We are also looking at some changes for the Enduro this year in order to make it more "user friendly". We'll let you know about them during the year.

Well, I guess I've ranted enough for this month. Send that check. Work a corner. See you at the Double National. George.

Driver's School

By Joe Gaffney

I had a great time at Driver's School. Bill Kirkwood and I, the recipients of the RDC scholarships, got to drive John Schmale's 2 RX7s, and we drove John nuts, keeping the cars running. But, we both graduated.

I was in John's red #88 RX7 and Bill was in John's new #94 RX7. We ran the front course, turning left at 8 to connect with Turn 9 (15) and onto the front straight.

Friday morning, our first session out, I was third on the pre-grid, with an instructor's SRF and a student's Miata in front of me. I thought, "Great, I'll have someone to follow." Well, driving

down the pit lane, the SRF and Miata pulled over and waved me around. I ended up being first one on the track with a 911 and an ITA Civic right behind me. We went around for about 3-4 laps before we caught the back of the pack. I slowed down, and they finally went by me.

Saturday, I had electrical problems with the starter, but John got that straightened out. I did pretty good Saturday afternoon. I managed to stay in front of the Miatas, but there were a couple of other cars in my group that would just blow by me. There was a 2003 World Challenge BMW that was clearly the class of the field. There were a pair of Honda S2000's, a pair of

GT4 510's, a GT1 Corvette, a GT3 Alfa ... I got mixed up in the Big Bore field. It was incredible how fast those cars would go by me going into Turn 2.

Sunday, we had a pair of 20-minute warm-ups first thing. In the first session, I lost 4th gear, got it back, then a lap later, I lost 2nd. When I came in, John ran down to his friend's shop and got another transmission. It is possible to change an RX7 trans in under an hour. I missed the second warm-up, but we got the car down off the stands and I did a couple of laps around the paddock. The new trans had no 3rd gear.

Back up on the stands, and we decided that I would drive #94 for

the first race. Bill is about six inches shorter than me, so the cockpit was tight. Also, #94 had quite a bit more oversteer, and it was a real handful.

The instructors had set the grid, so I was the last IT car, with the 510s, the Corvette, the Alfa and the Beemer gridded behind me. On the start, they were by me by the time we got out of 2, and I ended up all by myself at the back of the pack. I was learning the oversteer when I went off between 6 and 7, then, a lap later, I went off at 8-8A and hit the tire wall. I pulled into Black Flag because I wanted someone to eyeball the right side for damage. They had me shut it off, and OKed the car, but then I couldn't get it started. By that time, John got there, and he determined that the car was out of gas. We pushed it up into Impound, and John dumped in another 10 gallons. I got the car restarted and went back out for the last 2 laps.

During lunch, John put an-

other transmission into #88, and it was working great. I went out for the second race, gridded just like before. This time, I kept up with the crowd until we got to 6 and 7. Going down the straight, I was at the back again, but I was closing on a pair of Miatas.

I ended up having a good race with the Miatas, although we got lapped by the faster cars.

Poor John had a hell of a weekend. I put his brand new car into the tires, he replaced the transmission in #88 twice, he replaced the front rotors on #94 because Bill was complaining of vibrations, then, on the checkered lap of Bill's race, he blew the motor right at the line. Bill came in 9th, though.

So, I learned how to get passed, how to set up a slower car for a pass, how to run back and forth between Race Administration, Timing and Tech to do a car swap, and how to dive into Turn 1 with a prayer. I got Turns 3-4-5 hooked up pretty good, and I

could make it through 8-8A-9 pretty good. The entrance to 3 is still a little scary, and I was inconsistent on hitting the berm at Apex 6. In the second race Sunday, I don't think I was as fast through 1 or into 8 because I was still a little gunshy after hitting the tires.

Overall, it was a pretty exciting weekend. At the Driver's Meeting I thanked RDC for the scholarship, and made a pitch for the new guys to come out and flag once in a while – give them a whole new perspective on racing. I don't know yet if I'll be able to finish the 3 regionals to get my comp license – maybe a bale of money will fall out of the sky. But, I graduated, with the memory of a lifetime.

Joe Gaffney
Effin' Cee



Pictured at the awards presentation: Frank Lattuca, Randy Greuning, Fred Peterson, Lois Leijdecker-Ott, Dave Jalen, and Bruce John.

Congratulations to all!

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RDC address is: 2900 Carolyn Way, Sacramento CA 95818 for membership renewals and changes of address. Allow 4 weeks for change of address and include your old address label, if possible. Subscription is free to all members, included in the annual dues, or \$15.00 per year to nonmembers.

Send articles, letters, ads, etc. to: 2900 Carolyn Way, Sacramento CA 95818

The Racing Drivers Club's Graduate School of Racing

Part of the Racing Drivers Club's "Dedication to the safety, quality and enhancement of the SF Region racing experience" is to operate a series of programs that together is known as the "RDC Graduate School of Racing." Some of the elements of our Graduate School include: The Mentor Program, The First Morning Drive Around Program, The Coach for a Day Program and the Driver Development Program. I want to describe two of these programs in some detail here.

The First Morning Drive Around Program is offered the first morning of our regional racing's first stop at Laguna Seca and Infineon. At about 7:15 of the first day (Sat 3/31 at Infineon and Sat 5/5 at Laguna), RDC coaches will offer low speed laps in their street cars to racers who need more familiarity at these challenging tracks. We will review turn-in points, apexes and track outs, as well as danger points, escape routes and alternate lines. If you've not driven Laguna or Infineon at speed, the information provided can help you get up to speed more quickly AND, make you safer!

The Driver Development Pro-

gram is a collaboration of the RDC and Thunderhill Raceway that provides for intensive one-on-one training at our region's magnificent race facility on race car test days. In addition to lead and follow sessions with focused downloads and goal setting, the student is allowed to do ride alongs with the coach and the coach can ride along with the student. (Naturally, ride alongs are only permitted in cars with safety equipment for the passenger.) The student needs only to send an email to davidallen14@comcast.net requesting a specific DDP date and pay the standard fee to Thunderhill. There is no charge for the day of instruction from the RDC coach.

If you are a recent graduate of the SF Region's racing school or if you have reached a plateau and want to learn something new, the DDP is in place to enhance your racing experience! If you are a veteran racer who is willing to spend some serious time at Thunderhill sharing your knowledge of racing craft with a student who is determined to get better, I guarantee you will find coaching within the Driver Development Program to be very rewarding. Contact me at davidallen14 @comcast.net so we can match you with someone who appreciates your contribution.

FREE DECALS

RDC is now offering to send you two free car decals (one for each side). Just contact a Board member at the track or at the numbers listed .

2007 Board of Directors

George Ott, President

H: 916-441-6356

Email: lloracer@pacbell.net

Bruce John, Vice-President

H: 510-530-0614

Email: Bjohn@bart.gov

Lois Leijdecker-Ott, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor/

Membership

W/Fax: 916-447-3698

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Dave Allen, Driver Rep Fendered/

Region Board Liaison

Home: 408-996-1356

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Fred Peterson, Member-at-Large

H: 925-280-0730

Email: peterson@astound.net

John Schmale, Member-at-Large

H: 510-205-5724

Email: john.schmale@comcast.net

RDC website: www.racer.net/rdc

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The membership fees for 2007:

Driver	\$30 before May 15
	\$40 after May 15
	\$50 after Sept 15
Spouse Driver	\$10 before May 15
	\$20 after May 15
Associate	\$20

RACING DRIVERS CLUB - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Full (Driver or Spouse-Driver) membership is open to licensed competition drivers, past or present including novices. Associate membership is open to anyone. All member households receive the newsletter. Only Full members are eligible to compete in RDC events (Illgen Enduro) or to earn RDC Championship Series points. No points will be awarded retroactively. **All memberships expire on December 31st each year.** Note that dues increase depending upon the date of renewal.

Check appropriate box (es) and circle Renewal or New Member.

- ☐ Driver (\$30 before May 15, \$40 May 15 to Sept. 15, \$50 after Sept. 15) Renewal New Member (circle one)
☐ Spouse-Driver (\$10 before May 15, \$20 after May 15) Renewal New Member (circle one)
☐ Current Year Drivers School Graduate (Free before May 15, \$40 May 15 to Sept. 15, \$50 after Sept. 15)
☐ Associate (\$20 anytime) Renewal New Member (circle one)

Please complete appropriate section(s) below. Renewing members need to include only name, changed information, and dues. **Driver** (includes School Graduate) or **Associate** Member:

Name: _____ Race Class(es): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone #s to be published in directory:

Home: (____) _____ Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

Alternate phone #s (won't be published)

Home: (____) _____ Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Spouse-Driver Member:

Name: _____ Race Class(es): _____

Address: Same as above.

Phone #s to be published in directory:

Home: (____) _____ Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

Alternate phone #s (won't be published)

Home: (____) _____ Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

E-mail Address: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Make check payable to Racing Drivers Club. Mail to: Lois Leijdecker-Ott, 2900 Carolyn Way, Sacramento, CA, 95818-3308

Earn free test time at Thunderhill

And, at the same time, help your fellow drivers have a safe & sane race weekend. How? Become a Driver Observer! Help out at a corner for a session or two, 1/2 a day, a whole day, or the entire weekend.

Help your fellow drivers and the stewards by observing at a corner and giving a driver's perspective on incidents, passes, drivers' behavior and reactions.

Interested? Please call me:

Lois Leijdecker-Ott

Chief Driver Observer

Phone/Fax: 916-447-3698

Email:

lloracer@pacbell.net

OR See me at the track – Look for a Silver/White Honda #39 ITB.

**Racing Drivers Club
2900 Carolyn Way
Sacramento CA 95818**

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FIRST CLASS MAIL