

# The Checkers

Official Publication of the  
Central Florida Region  
Sports Car Club of America  
Volume 58, Issue 3  
April 2016



## Moerwald Breaks In New Motor At Daytona Driver School



## Performance Driving eXperience



# Which way?



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PIM Portfolio Manager  
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4242 Tamiami Trail South  
Venice, FL 34293  
941-492-3332 / 855-878-4360





# Contact Information

## Board of Governors

BOG Chair - Michael Wingo  
386-748-4149 • [mb\\_wng@yahoo.com](mailto:mb_wng@yahoo.com)  
Vice-Chair – Paul Troup  
404-229-8435 • [trouper@mindspring.com](mailto:trouper@mindspring.com)  
District 1 - Sammi Marlis Ronshausen  
1317 11th Ave N • St. Petersburg, FL 33705 -1125  
727-821-4407 • [sammi@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:sammi@tampabay.rr.com)  
District 1 - Lt. Gov. John Switzer  
727-224-3480  
District 2- Jerry Hicks  
12821 Birmingham St. • Tampa, FL 33625  
813-361-2728 • [helmetworks@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:helmetworks@tampabay.rr.com)  
District 2 - Lt. Gov. John Schimenti  
District 3 - Robin Ragaglia  
5984 Ed Harris Ct., Saint Cloud, 34771  
407-310-4299 • [cpapita@aol.com](mailto:cpapita@aol.com)  
District 3 - Lt. Gov. Dave Langston  
321-437-6733  
District 4 - Dave Welsh  
13550 SW 73rd St., Ocala, FL 34481  
352-286-7756 • [dwelsh56@hotmail.com](mailto:dwelsh56@hotmail.com)  
District 5 - Angela Carlascio  
Cell: 813-787-7838 • [angela.carlascio@gmail.com](mailto:angela.carlascio@gmail.com)  
District 5 - Lt. Gov. Jerry Larson  
[sunnyday@infionline.net](mailto:sunnyday@infionline.net)  
District 6 - Terry Taylor  
863-381-0721 • [gt224oz@aol.com](mailto:gt224oz@aol.com)  
District 6 - Lt. Gov. Jim Morris  
[Jim.Morris1940@gmail.com](mailto:Jim.Morris1940@gmail.com)  
District 7 - Larry Joseph Morgan  
386-334-8966 • [dist7gov@hotmail.com](mailto:dist7gov@hotmail.com)  
District 7 - Lt. Gov. Byron Kauffman  
386-677-5854 • [brk.scca@hotmail.com](mailto:brk.scca@hotmail.com)  
District 8 - Mike Schiffer  
239-549-3909 • [mbsite@juno.com](mailto:mbsite@juno.com)  
District 8 - Lt. Gov. Mary Newman  
District 9 - Charlie Leonard  
PO Box 865, Palmetto, FL 34220  
941-729-1537 • [charlieleonard@aol.com](mailto:charlieleonard@aol.com)  
District 9 - Lt. Gov. Stephen Mullen  
941-739-9983 • [SteveMullen@theMullenFamily.org](mailto:SteveMullen@theMullenFamily.org)

## Club Officers & Administration

Regional Executive - Chuck Dawson  
5505 US 27 S. Sebring, FL 33870  
863-314-9200 (Bus) • [dmotor63@gmail.com](mailto:dmotor63@gmail.com)  
Assistant R.E. - Leland Miller  
941-928-3521 • [lelandscca@gmail.com](mailto:lelandscca@gmail.com)  
Secretary - Fran Martin  
2504 Overlake Ave, Orlando, FL 32806  
407-851-7157 • [fgmartin@att.net](mailto:fgmartin@att.net)  
Treasurer - Walt Williams  
5903 Soaring Ave, Temple Terrace, FL 33617-1399  
813-857-2593 • [treasurer@cfrrscca.org](mailto:treasurer@cfrrscca.org)

## Club Admin. & Advisory

Recording Secretary - Charlene Free  
386-717-1868 • [charlainefree@gmail.com](mailto:charlainefree@gmail.com)  
Co-Competition Coord. - Dennis Joyce  
[djscca@earthlink.net](mailto:djscca@earthlink.net)  
Co-Competition Coord. - Leland Miller  
Checker Editor - Kevin Crain  
2775 Old Dixie Hwy. Unit C, Kissimmee, FL 34744  
407-933-1820 • [checker@osceolapress.com](mailto:checker@osceolapress.com)  
Financial Advisor - James Magero  
941-492-3332 • Toll-free: 855-878-4360  
[james.magero@wfadvisors.com](mailto:james.magero@wfadvisors.com)  
Social Director/Beverage Coordinator -  
Pamella MacGregor  
1252 Clays Trail, Oldsmar FL 34677  
813-765-3061 • [PDMac06@gmail.com](mailto:PDMac06@gmail.com)  
Membership Chair - Darren Gunn  
300 Timbercove Circle, Longwood, FL 32779  
407-252-1384 • Fax 407-244-0022  
[SCCA@ExcelDisplays.com](mailto:SCCA@ExcelDisplays.com)  
Merchandise - Fran Martin (see Secretary)  
Race Worker Recog. - David MacGregor  
813-781-0100 • [davidmacfla@verizon.net](mailto:davidmacfla@verizon.net)  
Webmaster - Lee Hill  
[cfrrwebmaster@earthlink.net](mailto:cfrrwebmaster@earthlink.net) • [www.CFRSCCA.org](http://www.CFRSCCA.org)  
St. Pete GP Coordinator - Gary Steffen  
727-480-2118 • [Stef143@msn.com](mailto:Stef143@msn.com)

## Club Racing Board

Board Chair - Dana Deshong  
2937 Chelsea Wood Dr. Valrico, FL 33596  
813-689-7662 • [ddeshong1@verizon.net](mailto:ddeshong1@verizon.net)  
Vice-Chair -  
Chaplain - Steve Kearney  
863-602-7069 • [RaceRev@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:RaceRev@tampabay.rr.com)  
Course Marshal - Kevin Crain  
407-970-9540 • [checker@osceolapress.com](mailto:checker@osceolapress.com)  
Daytona Event Chair - Bill Cannons  
386-322-3663  
Chief Driver Instructor - Andy Fox  
407-416-5411 • [afox@tmcentral.net](mailto:afox@tmcentral.net)  
Driver's Rep - Beau Gabel  
407-365-7219 • [beau.gabel@gmail.com](mailto:beau.gabel@gmail.com)  
Driver's Rep SARRC - Robin Langlotz  
407-851-2232 • [rlan107@aol.com](mailto:rlan107@aol.com)  
Driver's Rep Vintage - Bill Newman  
239-229-5766 • [mnewman@embarqmail.com](mailto:mnewman@embarqmail.com)  
Equipment/Flagging - Jim Hooker  
[cfrrflagchief@gmail.com](mailto:cfrrflagchief@gmail.com)  
Grid Chief - Sammi Ronshausen  
727-821-4407 • [sammi@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:sammi@tampabay.rr.com)  
Novice Permits - Robin Ragaglia  
5984 Ed Harris Ct., Saint Cloud, 34771  
407-310-4299 • [cpapita@aol.com](mailto:cpapita@aol.com)  
Pace Car - Jack Ragaglia  
407-568-6902 • [Pace1cfr@aol.com](mailto:Pace1cfr@aol.com)  
Paddock Marshal - Charlie Leonard  
941-729-1537 • [charlieleonard@aol.com](mailto:charlieleonard@aol.com)

PDX Chief - Tim Reardon  
1550 Silk Oaks Ave., Titusville 32796  
321-268-2940 • [reardo\\_t@bellsouth.net](mailto:reardo_t@bellsouth.net)  
PDX Chief Driver Instructor - Chris Wells  
[cwells13@gmail.com](mailto:cwells13@gmail.com)  
Photo ID - Patti Socher  
321-258-7348 • [rvladys@aol.com](mailto:rvladys@aol.com)  
Pits Chief - Jim Kosco  
941-228-5108 • [jk0001@msn.com](mailto:jk0001@msn.com)  
Region Points Keeper - Lyn Hodges Watts  
352-286-7756 • [LynARW@cfl.rr.com](mailto:LynARW@cfl.rr.com)  
Registrar - Robin Ragaglia (see Dist 3 Gov)  
Starter - David MacGregor (see Race Worker Rec.)  
Steward Rep. - Leland Miller  
Sound Control - Hollye Laplante  
727-344-0354 • [laplante@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:laplante@tampabay.rr.com)  
Tech - Rick Henschel  
407-671-6017 Home • 407-314-8230 Cell  
[rhenschel@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rhenschel@cfl.rr.com)  
Timing & Scoring - Janet Harhay  
[jharhay@aol.com](mailto:jharhay@aol.com)  
Trophies - Tucker and Amy Alford  
941-473-0708 • [sales@venwoodawards.com](mailto:sales@venwoodawards.com)

## SOLO Board

Board Chair - Terry Tabor  
407-920-9950 • [tabor.cfr.scca@gmail.com](mailto:tabor.cfr.scca@gmail.com)  
Registrar - Chuck Lutz  
Safety Steward - Art Trier  
386-562-0004 • [qreshadow@bellsouth.net](mailto:qreshadow@bellsouth.net)  
Trophy - Peter Gagne  
[pgagne@cfl.rr.com](mailto:pgagne@cfl.rr.com) • 386-316-8023  
Timing and Scoring - Chuck Lutz  
West Coast Coordinator - Dave Welsh  
[dwelsh56@hotmail.com](mailto:dwelsh56@hotmail.com)  
West Coast Registrar - vacant  
West Cost Event Chair - vacant  
Tire Rack Street Survival (TRSS)  
Coordinator - Art Trier  
3010 Butler Ridge Rd., Deltona, FL 32738  
Home: 407-324-1874 • Cell: 386-562-0004  
[qreshadow@bellsouth.net](mailto:qreshadow@bellsouth.net)

## RallyCross Board

Liaison - Paul Troup  
404-229-8435 • [trouper@mindspring.com](mailto:trouper@mindspring.com)

## Area 3/SEDiv Officials

Area 3 Director - Lee Hill  
4607 Ridgecliff Dr., Brandon, FL 33511  
813-245-9332 • [cfrrwebmaster@earthlink.net](mailto:cfrrwebmaster@earthlink.net)  
Driver Licensing Admin. - Pete Magnuson  
561-309-3916 • [loosmoos1@cfl.rr.com](mailto:loosmoos1@cfl.rr.com)

See the SEDIV website for other  
SEDIV contact information.



# When & Where

## District Meeting Times and Places

**District 1** – 2nd Tuesday of each month except December – 7:00 pm at **Perkins Restaurant** 2626 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Clearwater- NE corner of US 19

**District 2** – 4th Wednesday of each month except December – 7:00 pm at **Beef O’Brady’s**, 9311 N. 56th St., Temple Terrace

**District 3** – 2nd Tuesday of each month except December – 7:30 pm at **Logan’s Roadhouse** 3060 W Sandlake Rd Orlando, FL 32819

**District 4** – Contact Governor for details.

**District 5** - 2nd Monday of each month except December – dinner at 6:30 pm and meeting at 7:30 pm at **Charlie & Jakes Brewery & Grill** 6300 Wickham Rd in Melbourne, FL

**District 6** - 3rd Tuesday of each month except December, dinner at 7:00pm and meeting at 7:45pm at **Palm Diner** 2710 Kenilworth Blvd., Sebring (behind Kenilworth Lodge).

**District 7** - 2nd Tuesday of each month except December – dinner at 6:30 pm and meeting at 7:30 pm at **Louie’s Pizza House** – 1347 Beville Rd - Daytona Beach FL 32119

**District 8** - 2nd Wednesday of each month except December at 6pm at **Jerseys Sports Café** - 13971 North Cleveland Avenue, N. Fort Myers, FL 33903.

**District 9** – Call Governor for details

### New to the club?

For general information on the membership or meetings please call your district governor. Or, if you want to know about a specific “specialty” call the “chief” listed on the inside cover. Use this list and map to find your District:

**District 1:** Pinellas and Pasco County to Port Richey.

**District 2:** Hillsborough and Pasco County except Port Richey.

**District 3:** Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties.

**District 4:** Alacua, Bradford, Citrus, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Marion, Sumter, Suwanee, Taylor and Union Counties.

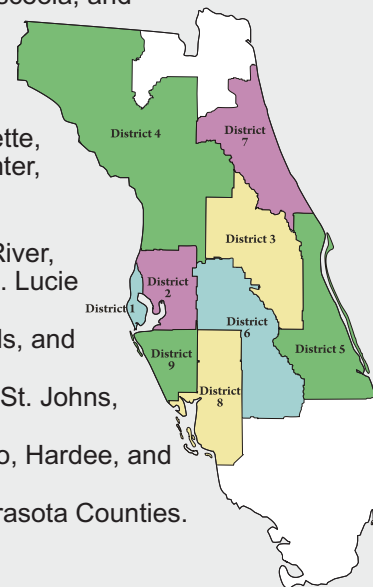
**District 5:** Brevard, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie Counties.

**District 6:** Glades, Highlands, and Polk Counties.

**District 7:** Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Volusia Counties.

**District 8:** Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, and Lee Counties.

**District 9:** Manatee and Sarasota Counties.



# The Checker

PO Box 450245, Kissimmee, FL 34745  
Checker Editor - Osceola Press  
407-933-1820

[www.CFRSCCA.org](http://www.CFRSCCA.org)  
[checker@osceolapress.com](mailto:checker@osceolapress.com)

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Quarter Page - \$85/month

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**CFR Business Exchange** - \$50/year  
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**Deadline and Other Information:**  
**ADS AND ARTICLES MUST ARRIVE AT THE CHECKER ON OR BEFORE THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO THE DESIRED PUBLICATION DATE.**

Send ads, articles and photographs to:

[Checker@OsceolaPress.com](mailto:Checker@OsceolaPress.com)

Articles may also be mailed to:  
2775 Old Dixie Hwy., Unit C  
Kissimmee, FL 34744

### Address Changes:

Make your changes online at: [www.scca.com](http://www.scca.com). You will need your member number (and password if you have already created one) to log on. Be sure to add or update your email address so that you can get your meeting notices! Or, call the Topeka office **800-770-2055** to notify them of your change. Any call to Topeka with a request will require that you provide your membership number.

**DO NOT SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE CHECKER.**

Cover Photos: Kevin Crain



# Event Schedule

## For CFR and Surrounding Regions

### April 2016

2	<b>Chump Car 14 Hours of Daytona</b> <i>Conducted by DIS</i>	DIS
2-3	<b>SOLO</b> <i>Orange County Convention Center, Orlando</i>	
9	<b>RallyCross</b> <i>St. Lucie Fairgrounds</i>	
9-10	<b>Driver School &amp; PDX</b> <i>Daytona School Course</i>	DIS
14-15	<b>Flat-Out Motorsports DECF Charity Track Days</b> <i>Daytona Road Course, Conducted by DIS</i>	DIS
15-17	<b>Southeastern Conference Majors</b> <i>Virginia International Raceway, Alton, VA</i>	VIR
17	<b>SOLO</b> <i>Brooksville</i>	

### May 2016

6	<b>Test Day/PDX</b> <i>CFR Test Day, Daytona Road Course</i>	DIS
7-8	<b>Regional/SECS/TES Enduro/SOLO</b> <i>Daytona Road Course, SOLO on Kart Track</i>	DIS
7	<b>RallyCross</b> <i>St. Lucie Fairgrounds</i>	
22	<b>SOLO</b> <i>Brooksville</i>	

### June 2016

5	<b>SOLO</b> <i>Brooksville</i>	
10	<b>Test Day</b> <i>Sebring Short Course, Conducted by SIR</i>	SIR
11-12	<b>Florida Cup/Double SARRC/Vintage/PDX</b> <i>Sebring Short Course, Green Park Paddock</i>	SIR
18	<b>BOG Meeting</b>	
18	<b>RallyCross</b> <i>St. Lucie Fairgrounds</i>	

### July 2016

23-24	<b>Driver School/Vintage/TES Enduro/PDX</b> <i>Sebring Short Course, Green Park Paddock</i>	SIR
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### August 2016

5	<b>Test Day/PDX</b> <i>CFR Test Day, Daytona Road Course</i>	DIS
6-7	<b>Florida Cup/Double SARRC</b> <i>Daytona Road Course</i>	DIS
21	<b>SOLO</b> <i>Deland</i>	
27	<b>RallyCross</b> <i>St. Lucie Fairgrounds</i>	

### September 2016

2	<b>Test Day</b> <i>Sebring Long Course, Conducted by SIR</i>	SIR
3-4	<b>Regional/TES&amp;ECR Enduro/Vintage/PDX</b> <i>Sebring Long Course, 12 Hour Paddock</i>	SIR
16	<b>CFR Test Day/PDX</b> <i>Daytona Road Course</i>	DIS
17-18	<b>Regional/TES&amp;ECR Enduro</b> <i>Daytona Road Course</i>	DIS

## 2016 Publication Deadlines

In an effort to keep the content in **The Checker** as fresh and relevant as possible, a floating deadline will be used typically following Club Racing events. With a set deadline of the 15th of the month (the former system), an event which occurs on the 17th of the month would not be included in the following month's issue, but two months following said event, which would make the coverage a bit dated; hence the reason for a "floating deadline."

The deadlines for submission to **The Checker** for 2016 are as follows:

- May 10, 2016
- June 20, 2016
- July 26, 2016



# District Meetings

## District 3

Gov. Robin Ragaglia and Lt. Gov. Dave Langston were both unable to attend so sub-sub-temp Fran Martin presided over District 3's April meeting. Most of our attendees were fresh from the previous weekend Drivers' School/PDX at Daytona.

Speaking of which, there were around 20 students and a full contingent of PDX cars - 40 each day for the event. And, since there was a waiting list for PDX, as one dropped out, we were able to bring another car in. There was quite an eclectic collection of vehicles from Miata to Corvette to Cobra to Panoz to Ferrari to Lamborghini - oh and an AMC Gremlin bodied participant, too. Sure do wish we could bottle the weekend's weather for July and August - it was just perfect!

The month of March was super busy for our volunteers - St. Pete Gran Prix and the 12 Hours of Sebring used up the better part of two weeks. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Our September dates at Daytona WILL NOT CHANGE; however, there will be no test day due to other activities on track at the Speedway. Keep your calendars marked for our Sept. 16-18 Regional.

From Christopher Pinkert, Interim Chairman, CFR's RallyX program is getting a lot of attention via Social

Media and word of mouth. At the latest event, there were 35 drivers, 12 who were first time competitors and many of the class winners were separated by only a few seconds.

Rick Henschel, Chief Scrutineer, shared information on the expiration of the current FIA seats. Those of you affected by the expiration may want to share your thoughts with the National office. There was considerable discussion regarding the new Bracket Enduro program. CFR will host the first event in 2016 of this type at our Sebring Drivers School July 23-24. For more information, visit the SCCA Bracket Enduro webpage at <https://www.scca.com/pages/bracket-enduro>.

## Upcoming Events:

April 14-15 Mini Pro at Daytona for Flatout Motorsports CECF Charity Track Days

April 17 Brooksville Autocross

May 6-8 Daytona - Test Day/SECS/Single SARRC

May 8 RallyX

As always - check the web, DLB or with your Chiefs for the most up to date information.

See you at the races!

# Did You Know?

## We have a volunteer incentive Program!

Do your friends a favor by inviting them along to participate as a volunteer at any CFR club meeting for **FREE** and, if they enjoy themselves which of course they will, they can become full members for just \$30 for the first year. Even better news - by being their referring member they will get an additional \$15 off! So their first year is just \$15.

SCCA Volunteer Incentive Program reduced membership rates are renewable for second and third years by working at least four (4) days each prior year.

**Wait! There is more!** YOU can claim a referral discount from national on your renewal for every member you introduce. When inviting a guest it is always a good idea to use the Guest Passes issued in The Checker as this will ease the registration process; please make sure your guest hooks up with the specialty chief at the event or with Darren Gunn, CFR-SCCA Membership, beforehand so we can make their first time as pain free and enjoyable as possible.

For more information please feel free to contact me at any time, contact info on back page. Be safe out there!

# Technical Update

by Rick Henschel

Hi Gang,

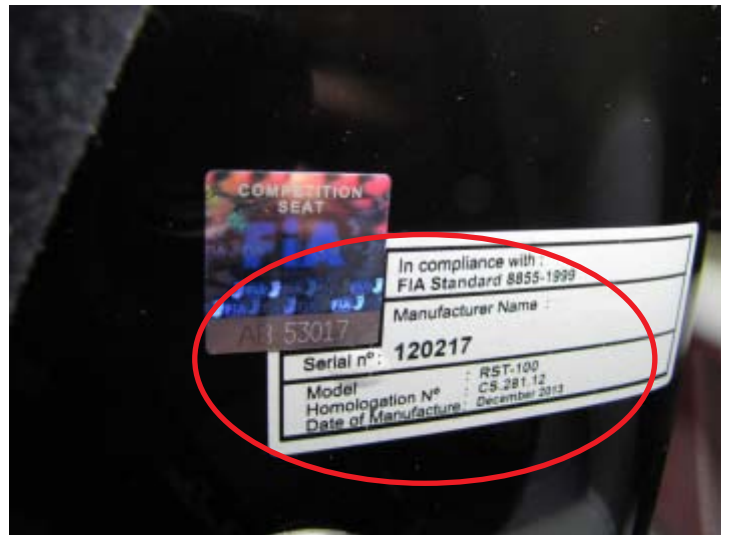
Your tech chief here. I've gotten several phone calls lately about some rule changes. I'm going to try to clarify some of the issues here;

**First is your belts.** When do they expire? The rule now is that, whether they are SFI or FIA, they're good for five years. The difference is that the SFI labeled belts are marked with the date of manufacture, where as the FIA belts are marked with the date of expiration. For the SFI belts, look at the date (ignore the month, all belts are good through 12/31) and add five years. Belts marked 11 are good through 16.

**Your helmets.** Typically they are good for ten years. However, the new (2015) certification came out so late, October, that the club felt that it was unfair to require people to rush out and get a new helmet, so they extended it one year. But think, if your helmet is torn up inside or stinks so badly you hate to put it on, you may want to replace it anyway. After all, it's your head in there. 2005 helmets are good through 12/31/16.



**FIA seats.** This is a new rule change (really more of a clarification) that has caused a lot of confusion. Seats that are approved by the FIA are subject to the FIA's rules. Their rule states that the certification is only good for five years. SCCA has said that the seats can continue to be used beyond five years but that they must have a back brace like any other seat. Currently SCCA is giving everyone until 1/1/17 to comply with this new rule. I expect some changes before then and encourage anyone affected to let SCCA know your concerns. If you want to know if your seat is affected just look at the label. It will either say manufactured on... or it will say not valid after...



**There is a tire rule now in FF.** Several people have called and asked if they need to have the new tires just for Regionals. The Southeast Division website calls for all cars to be on the new tires by 7/1/16 for SARRCs. Since all our races now are SARRCs...

If you have any other questions that you think I can help with, call me.

Your tech chief

Rick Henschel

407-314-8230

# SOLO - Orange County Convention Center

by Angela Carlascio

Photos by  
Turtlexhark Shooter

## I'm Dancing in the Rain: The Wet and Rainy Practice Day

SCCA OCCC East Coast Practice Event • April 2, 2016: There is something about an auto sport that allows you to run in the rain. It ups the challenge of the event, makes you find your nerve to push to find the limit of the car, and if you're a group of college students from Embry-Riddle University running an FSAE build, you're like, what rain?

The first East Coast event I wrote about showed a picture of the radar that had the entire state of Florida under water. This time, there was this lovely line of storms doing the conga line across the state up in Jacksonville. The Weather In Motion® showed that it would probably move north ... Fail. At 7:50am the first rain drop hit my windshield. There was no power in the "dry" thoughts, it was going to rain and it was going to storm. And it did.

The OCCC Saturday Practice Day was a wet one. By Run 4 of Heat 1 of 2 the fun Hoosier fun was over, the standing water had come. Those on street tires continued on. During Heat 2 the lightning appeared and the event was put on hold as we took shelter. About an hour later, we were up and running to finish. Thank you to all the participants that day. If you went home wet but smiling then you know how fun it is to run in the rain and more importantly, you learned the value of being smooth.



## Good Day Sunshine: The Perfect Event Day

SCCA OCCC East Coast Points Event #3 • April 3, 2016: See here's the deal. That wet and rainy day brought through this beautiful front that was dry and sunny and well ... just perfect. Finally, a great day to get out and run.

The event held 113 drivers in 33 classes with the largest class being CS with 8 competitors. Welcome to our 16 Novices and congrats to # 6 NS Robert Gundy on his Novice class win in his '91 Miata over #11 Michael Robertson in his '99



Corvette by .3. Pending your mods Robert, several classes await you.

The course layout was basically left, left, left, left, sweeper right, right, slalom and then a pivot left turn thru the finish line. The great part of OCCC is that it gives us more than a runway course style to run. And who would know non-runway course styles better than anyone else? Our karters. Happily this event hosted 4 Junior Karters. Cassidy and Catilyn Allen had to share a kart after one broke down so that both could complete their runs. The lesson of Community starts at a very young age.

SS had the competing Porsche GT3's with #60 Ken Marion's 2004 trumping #17 Gary Merideth's 2007 by .233.

The ever popular ES had 100% Miata entries with #4 Kevin Bonitz taking home the win over #7 Scott Swartz by .418. Over in FS #98 Steve Marcum came out strong on his first run then opened his lead over #8 FSL Tanya Kort to .589.

In SP the battle was on as tenths and thousandths separated the first three places with #1 Owen Brock taking home the trophy over #4 Justin Hall by .049 and close behind him #43 Denny Kort by .127.

STF #17 Ken Lilley was working hard to keep #161 Soraya







Juarbe-Diaz in his rearview with a win of .313. STR #9 Chris Larson was able to clean up his runs and find the win over #35 Bruce Fortier by .355.

STX had a strong battle as the 2016 STX Dixie Tour Champion #16 Ian Stewart came out strong on his first run with a 33.934 which had #175 Greg Shumaker looking to make it out of the 34's and into the 33's. From there it was a fight for top PAX, Ian who fought hard for his win against the 2016 National STX Champion David Marcus at Dixie took top spot over #175 Greg Shumaker with a difference of .181. Speaking of STX – home of The Twins – that class held 4 of the Top 10 PAX positions at this event. Impressive.

It speaks well to the level of talent that is in the class.

Moving over to Top Time of the Day we see a repeat by #191 FM Ken Trier back to take that spot again this time over #56 BM Dave Welsh by 1.843 seconds. Remember last month Dave was working on the transmission seals in his '75 Lola T342. Nice to know that it is back up and running and running well Dave.

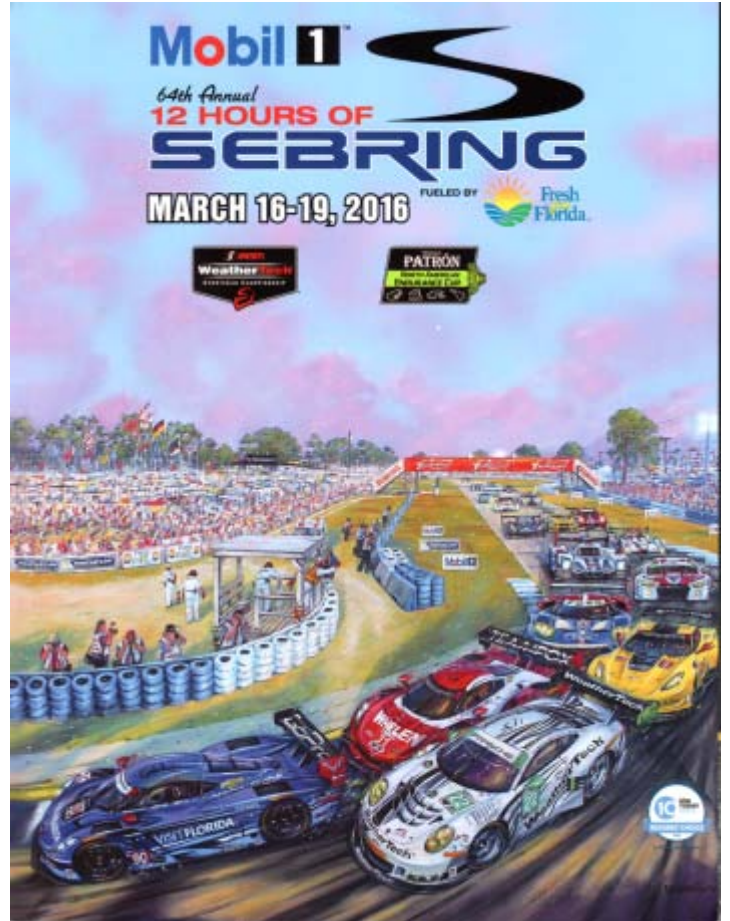
With three run heats, 5 runs, and no incidents this day couldn't have been any more perfect. Check us out at [www.cfrsolo2.com](http://www.cfrsolo2.com) and follow us on Facebook by Liking our Central Florida Region SCCA Solo (CFR Autocross) page.





# 2016 12 Hours of Sebring

Photos by Louis Galanos









# St Pete Gran Prix

Through the Lens of Dave Green







Photo by Dave Green

## St. Pete Gran Prix Feedback

Dear Friends –

Hello and I hope this finds everyone well. I apologize that this message is tardy, but as many know, I was hit very hard with a viral infection sometime during the St. Pete weekend, and am only now getting my sea legs back. It has been an unexpected and lengthy challenge, and I missed working with you at Sebring the following week.

Eyes on St. Pete – 13 races that weekend and a bunch of full course yellows – with some serious carnage and surprises – combined with a long and challenging schedule – and yet, you all made it seem like a cake walk. Your performance was very strong and while it is never good to wish ill on anyone else, I am again pleased to say that any event issues could not be put in our column.

The Central Florida Region is blessed with a very strong race organization and caring leadership, who are careful in their planning and execution. These are outstanding traits and they make your, and IndyCar's, lives much easier. Many thanks to Jim Hooker, Dennis Joyce, and the whole crew.

It is what continues to attract so many of you to these and other early season events. We know that you travel on your own resources, and we really cherish the gift of your time, budget, and expertise. We rely on you and treasure your being at our events.

Brian Barnhart, IndyCar Race Director; Tony Cotman, IndyLights Race Director; and Scot Elkins, USF2000

and Pro Mazda Race Director all wanted me to be sure to specifically thank you for your wonderful performances – and for soldiering through the long days.

On a personal note – there continues to be an evolution of the yellow flag protocol for cars in a Runoff – we know that what is being asked is difficult and there are ongoing discussions to try to find a sensible way to achieve the goal of both notifying drivers and limiting penalty opportunities. It is a matter of finding the sweet spot on the continuum; your patience as IndyCar finds that spot is greatly appreciated.

Please do not forget our invitation to be a part of our road race / street races across the board – please let me know if you can fit one or more events into your already busy race programs.

As always, I am interested in your thoughts about the event and how we can improve – my contact information is below. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Congratulations to everyone – each and all did well. It was great fun. See you down the road at a track near or far.

Take care, and Godspeed.

*JoAnne*

JoAnne Jensen  
IndyCar Chief Observer  
joannejensen@cox.net

# To Our Twelve Hours of Sebring Marshals

On behalf of Race Control, our officials, the teams and the entire IMSA family, THANK YOU ALL for an outstanding effort this year at another beautiful (and this time soggy) Sebring weekend. The perseverance and flexibility you showed throughout the four long days and the conditions on race day were as usual, superb.

We appreciated the sympathy, communications, good decisions, patience, appropriately held calls, (and comments!) judgement and the thinking-on-your feet, and the overall "rising to the occasion" which we have come to expect from CFR. Thanks also to those who came from elsewhere in the US and other points on the globe to be part of this historic race.

Another shout out to Jim Hooker and his lieutenants for making things run smoothly, both personally and electronically, adapting to the changing requirements and conditions. They all look after you well and were ready and on top of the situation when we needed to evacuate.

Another "Florida Swing" has finished. You have proven once again as a group that you are up to the task, from Daytona through Sebring, providing dependable and skillful service to IMSA, whatever the conditions. Looking forward to another good one in 2017, and hope to see many of you again elsewhere later in the year.

**Jim Swintal**  
**JoAnne Jensen**

## Thank You CFR (with ramblings & rants)

by Stan Hallock

First of all, Thank you to all who make the CFR as great as it indeed is. If you know me, then you know this applies to you.

Thanks for the inclusion of an open wheel grid at the last Driver's School in 2015. My Student wasn't exactly a newbie, rather a Driver who, following an injury worse than mine 5 years ago, was able to get back into an open wheel car for the first time in 10 years. He has run at least two Regional events since, including the recent Cabin Fever Cure. While I know it can be argued that the open wheel grid in a Driver's School is not all that profitable an idea, it was absolutely instrumental in his return to racing. All I ask is that maybe once every two years CFR include an open wheel grid in one Driver's School. The difference of entry fees of a few open wheel drivers or PDX drivers is something CFR can easily afford from rare time to rare time.

Thanks to all the Corner/Pit Lane/Grid Workers that make it possible. I shall continue to try and come flag from time to time. I wish more Drivers would do the same so as to have a greater understanding of a race's mechanics.

The recent changes to the SARRC Championship rules may or may not prove reasonable. I get the impression car count may be the yardstick to show the worthiness of these moves. Counts for total series entries could easily drop as a byproduct from an

effort to get car count up at SIC.

While the SARRC rules (found at [SEDivracing.org](http://SEDivracing.org)) allow for the Officials alone to have instituted these changes, my learning well after the fact about a discussion of the rule changes at SARRC year-end meetings irked me. The very definition of SARRC Champion was changed. In essence the new SARRC Champion will have simply won one race [the SIC] while participating in maybe as few as three SARRC races rather than dominating a season long Series and finishing well at the SIC. The battle for points will only make a difference for second or third from now on.

Through the SARRC website and a simple thing, like attaching a Survey-Monkey or the like, all SARRC Driver's could have not only been informed of the possible changes but they could have also been given a chance to vote in the matter which the Officials would have then respected. Impacting only about 15 drivers years ago when something more elementary came up [the CF tire rule], a formal paper & mailed vote was taken among CF drivers. It was not unanimous but all opinions were sought. It would have been respectful to over 750 drivers for the same in this case. I am not saying here if I'm in favor or opposed to the various SARRC changes, I'm saying the members could have and should have been consulted better than they were.



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Elizabeth Fields

February 9, 2016

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Dear Sirs,

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Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fields  
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Proceeds from the Silent Auction from the Annual Meeting were donated to Rotary's Camp Florida, a very worthy cause...

# 1961 Sebring 12-Hour Race

Part 3 of 3  
by Louis Galanos

Part 3...

Phil Hill was in his pit getting wiped down with cold towels his face beet-red from the heat of the day and the lack of ventilation in his Ferrari. When asked about it he said, "It is a furnace in that thing!" When asked why, he responded, "Don't make me go into the gory detail, please." Later he would disclose that the large wraparound Plexiglas windscreen trapped the heat in the cockpit and for some unknown reason the Ferrari engineers took away two ventilating tubes.

Also suffering in the heat was driver David Cunningham who pushed his disabled #69 red Osca S1000 over 2 miles to his pit. It was wasted effort and the car was withdrawn because of gearbox problems. Later the FIA would outlaw pushing on the course for obvious safety reasons. However, that didn't prevent Dan Gurney, at Sebring in 1966, from pushing his leading but disabled GT40 Mk II over the finish line and to his pit. For his efforts he was disqualified by the stewards. If he had left the car where it had stopped he would have finished second.

On the course Don Yenke's Corvette had thrown a wheel in Turn 7. At the same time Masten Gregory came down pit road at a very high rate of speed despite some grid marshals signaling him to slow down. After he stopped in front of his pit a steward had a talk with him and the car was assessed a one minute penalty.



The Ginther – von Trips Ferrari Dino 246 that failed to finish due to a broken steering arm. Photo: [www.barcboys.com](http://www.barcboys.com)

At 1:20PM, while still in the lead, von Trips was going into a very fast LH turn and felt something break in the steering. This caused loss of control and he began to do several 360's going off the racing surface and thru a great expanse of concrete that used to be a parking area for the big B-17

bombers that were flown out of the old Hendrick's Field training base during WW II. The only damage caused by the spin was several rubber pylons being mowed down. Examination of the car would later show that the lower RH wishbone was bent and the tie rod was broken clean off at the end.

Von Trips toyed with the idea of walking back to his pit but that was miles away and he decided to drive the car back despite not having any control of the right front wheel. After being examined by the team mechanics the car was retired thus handing over the lead to the Rodriguez brothers' Ferrari.



Ferrari's Chief Engineer Carlo Chiti, driver Richie Ginther and team manager Romulo Tavoni in the pits at Sebring.  
Photo: Sebring International Raceway

Ferrari team manager Tavoni decided to put the Ginther/Trips driving team in the #15 Ferrari 250 TR/61 of Giancarlo Baghetti and Willy Mairesse. When Mairesse brought the car in for what would be his last turn at the wheel, the pit stop took a little longer because all four tires were badly worn and the right front fender was badly dented. As Ginther prepared to step into the cockpit another team car came in for service and, since they had only one group of mechanics doing pit work, it caused an unnecessary delay and a loss of time for both cars. The same thing happened at 3:50PM when the Hill/Gendebien car pitted for service. The time lost only increased the lead held by the Rodriguez brothers. After the race several sportswriters would roundly criticize the Ferrari team for their sloppy pit work. Watching all of this was Ferrari engineer Carlo Chiti wearing a gray business suit with a green necktie. He also wore a turquoise-banded straw hat.



Coming out of turn #12 is the Rodriguez brothers Ferrari about to overtake the Gregory/Casner/Moss Maserati as they head down the front straight. Photo: FlaGator

After just over 5 hours (3PM) of racing, Ricardo Rodriguez could be seen relaxing in the pits as brother Pedro kept their blood-red NART Ferrari in the lead. They had already led three of the last five hours losing first place only when they had to pit for tires and gas.

Talk about the brothers and their car had made the rounds in the pits and many had concluded that the private entry with the Mexican brothers at the wheel was there to be the “rabbit” that was supposed to tempt their rivals into overextending their cars and possibly retiring early. At some point in the race the tremendous pace set by the brothers would be their undoing and they too would have to withdraw from the race. It was assumed that all of this was part of the Ferrari racing strategy to have their factory cars come home OA winners at Sebring in 1961.

But instead, the Rodriguez Ferrari was still in the lead and one lap ahead of the Hill/Gendebien factory Ferrari 250 TR/61. It became apparent that Ferrari team manager Tavoni had underestimated the reliability of the older 250 TR/60 and the driving abilities of the Rodriguez brothers. The average speed at this point was a very quick 92.19 mph.

The next two hours were more of the same with the Rodriguez brothers maintaining the lead and the Hill/Gendebien Ferrari solidly in second. For awhile the McLaren/Hansgen Tipo 63 was in third but Hansgen had to pit saying he was choking on exhaust fumes. The Tipo had a great expanse of Plexiglas that limited fresh air into the cockpit to the detriment of the drivers. McLaren also had other issues with the big sloping windshield that made it difficult to see the track. He had to sit on cushions to see properly and only when he braked hard and the nose dipped did he get what he thought was a good view of the track. More than one sports writer made critical

comments about the new Maserati Type 63 with one describing it as “esthetically unattractive” which was an apt description in the minds of many at Sebring in 1961. Before Hansgen and McLaren returned to the race the mechanics broke out some tools to cut holes in the windshield of the car in order to provide better ventilation.

The car was back on the track with McLaren at the wheel when at 3:33PM smoke was noticed coming from the rear of the car, then flames. McLaren stopped the car on the circuit and with the help of corner workers extinguished the flames. A later inspection would show that the gearbox had cracked and fluid began to leak. As the failing gearbox began to heat up the leaking lubricant began to smoke then ignite. McLaren was forced to leave the car where it rested on the back airport straight. This was the fifth of six Maseratis to retire and the race was not half over. One, the Briggs Cunningham – William Kimberly Tipo 60, did manage to finish and in 19<sup>th</sup> position. They also came in second in the Sports 2000 Class.



The Hansgen – McLaren Tipo 63 retired after experiencing a fire on the course. Photo: [www.barcboys.com](http://www.barcboys.com)

At the halfway point (4PM) the pace had not slackened for big and small cars alike. To the amazement of many the small Austin-Healey Sprites were running like trains on tracks and outpacing larger equipment on the straights as well as in the corners. One Arnolt-Bristol driver was asked by his pit why he couldn't stay ahead of the Sprites. He responded, “Keep ahead, hell! I couldn't even keep the damn things in sight!” Remarkable when you consider that the Bristol powered cars had a 1971cc engine compared to the 994cc engine for the Sprites. The top finishing Sprite came in 15<sup>th</sup> overall while the best the Bristol powered cars could do was 21<sup>st</sup>.

At this point in the race several cars were in the pits for lengthy repairs including two Corvettes. One had a blown



piston and mechanics would replace the piston only to have the car retire later with the same problem. Another Corvette was getting the frame welded after hitting the sandbank in the infamous Hairpin turn. As with this race and others to come, mechanics would affect repairs to cars in hours or even minutes that might take a day or a week under normal circumstances.



Cars go thru the “Esses” on the old 5.2 mile circuit.  
Photo: [www.barcboys.com](http://www.barcboys.com)

In the spectator paddock the Sebring party atmosphere was in full swing with one college fraternity blasting out Rock & Roll music on a turntable connected to car batteries. Piles of beer bottles continued to grow along with the piles of trash usually left behind by the crowd. The track had plenty of 55-gallon trash drums in the spectator area but they were seriously underused. The paper cups and other detritus of Sebring would eventually take several days to clean up. Not until the Earth Day movement started in California in 1970 would people at events like Sebring be more accepting of depositing trash, cans, and bottles in proper receptacles. It was speculated by some in those days that a large number of the spectators at Sebring saw little if anything of the race. They were there to party.



The Corvette of George Robertson, Jr., Ben Burroughs and William Warren finished but didn't cover enough laps to be classified.  
Photo: [www.barcboys.com](http://www.barcboys.com)

As the sun dipped lower in the sky driving became more difficult because both the Hairpin turn and the last turn before the Start-Finish line were on the western edges of the circuit and drivers drove directly into the setting sun. More than one driver of an open cockpit car was seen to take a hand off the steering wheel to shield his eyes from the sun's glare. It would be at this point that some drivers were wishing for darkness.



Phil Hill about to take his winning Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa back into the race. Photo: Florida Archives



Sports car racing at Sebring in 1961 was often a family affair. No big sponsors, big trailers or heavy equipment.  
Photo: [www.barcboys.com](http://www.barcboys.com)

After 8 hours of racing (6PM) the official results being sent by messenger to the grid from the timing shack showed the Rodriguez brothers in the lead. However, a later examination of the lap charts, after the race, would lead to several revisions and a reluctant admission of errors by Sebring officials. Today the officially accepted rankings at that hour list the Hill/Gendebien Ferrari first, the Ginther/von Trips Ferrari second and the Rodriguez brothers Ferrari third and that is the way it would stay until the flare signaling the end of the race would be fired into the air at 10 PM.



Besides being caught in a sandbank the Charlie Rainville, Jake Kaplan Alfa Romeo Giulietta SS was beset with problems. They had to withdraw when they were disqualified for an illegal refuel.  
Photo: www.barcoys.com

Along the front straight a sign was produced at 6:15 PM by the chief starter with one word on it, "LIGHTS." It was the official signal for drivers to turn on their lights. In anticipation of this practically all of the racers had the protective coverings removed from headlights and driving lights during their previous pit stop. That protective tape as well as screens in front of air intakes protected vital components from track debris. Parts of Sebring were paved with asphalt that sometimes would break up under the pounding of the race cars. Debris thrown up by leading cars could literally sandblast the fronts of cars and even driver's helmets or occasionally puncture a radiator. On an occasion or two a competitor might drop a wheel off the pavement, on purpose, to kick up some rocks and sand to discourage a driver from following too closely.

Right before 7 PM Pedro Rodriguez was called into the pits because when he passed the front straight he had one headlight out and possible tail light problems. After he pitted mechanics found that the car's generator was not working and there were blown fuses to the tail lights. It took a long and agonizing 19 minutes 45 seconds before



As the sun began to set the Chief Starter would hold up a signal sign to turn on your lights. Some drivers worried that their lights might not turn on and they would be black flagged.  
Photo: www.barcoys.com

brother Ricardo was able to rejoin the race and try to regain the lead. By some accounts Ricardo was cutting down the lead of the first and second place cars by as much as six seconds a lap. This would be extraordinary in day light let alone the extreme darkness found on the Sebring race circuit in those days. At one point in this fabulous drive Ricardo actually got on the same lap as the Ginther/von Trips Ferrari.

With two hours to go the top three positions remained the same and following them was the Ferrari 250 TR of Hap Sharp and Ronnie Hissom in fourth, the Jim Hall/George Constantine NART Ferrari Dino in fifth and the Bob Holbert/Roger Penske Porsche 718 RS61 in sixth.

Coming into the pits for the final time at 9:20 PM was Gendebien. Just enough gas to finish the race is put in the car and Phil Hill was given the honor to take the checkered flag. Knowing that there wasn't enough time for his sons to win the race, "Papa" Rodriguez consoled himself at the bar set up in the ARCF hospitality tent.

Phil Hill took the checkered flag from starter Jesse Coleman at 10PM with his car covering a record 1,092 miles and 210 laps at an average speed of 91.3 mph around the 5.2 mile circuit. As he crossed the finish line a round of applause arose from those assembled in the pits to watch the finish. As reporters and photographers headed for Victory Lane the George Robertson – Ben Burroughs Corvette was pushed across the finish line to try and qualify as a finisher.

Finishing second at Sebring and only two laps off the winning pace was the Ginther/von Trips/Baghetti/Mairese Ferrari and one lap behind them was the Rodriguez



brother's Ferrari in third place. The Hissom/Sharp Ferrari was fourth and saving Porsche's honor with a fifth place finish was the RS61 of Roger Penske and Bob Holbert.



Giancarlo Baghetti in the Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa that would finish second overall. Photo: FlaGator

Disappointed Corvette fans had to console themselves with an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish by Delmo Johnson and Dave Morgan while Maserati fans saw another disastrous performance by their cars with only the 2.0L Tipo 61 Birdcage of Briggs Cunningham and Bill Kimberly managing 19<sup>th</sup> overall.

Denise McCluggage and co-driver Allan Eager finished 10<sup>th</sup> overall and first in the GT3000 class in their Ferrari 250 GT SWB. When you consider her very limited budget for the race, an all volunteer crew in the pits, and occasional help from NART mechanics, it was a remarkable finish.



Denise McCluggage in her Ferrari leads the Lola of Charles Kurtz thru the Webster Turns. Photo: John Mahall

The 1961 Sebring 12 Hour Florida International Grand Prix Of Endurance For The Alitalia Cup was one for the record books. It was the most active Sebring 12-Hour race program since its inception in 1951. Lap records and averages were broken in '61 along with a record crowd of

over 43,000 spectators. One record that won't go into the official record books is the number of injuries needing medical attention at Sebring in '61. The track medical personnel treated 144 race fans with everything from bad sunburn, deep cuts and bruises, a broken foot, plus one unlucky race fan who had to be treated for burns associated with the improper use of an accelerant to start a campfire. The race was a crowd-pleasing and hard-fought 12 hours and would go down as the finest and the fastest in the history of the event up to that time.



Race queen Sylvia Belcher [Sebring HS Class of 1960) enjoys the company of winning drivers Phil Hill and Olivier Gendebien. Photo: Sebring International Raceway



Fabrizio Serena di Lapigio of Alitalia Airlines, along with Mary Ulmann present the Alitalia Cup to Hill and Gendebien. Photo: Sebring International Raceway



A Corvette crewman signaling his car as it comes down the front straight. Photo: Florida Archives



The Cunningham/Kimberly/Hansgen/Heuer Maserati was the only one to finish. Photo: www.barcoys.com



Bob Holbert, in his Porsche, gives Ferrari driver Phil Hill a ride thru the paddock. Photo: www.barcoys.com



The Peter Ryan, Francis Bradley, Ludwig Heimrath Porsche 718 that finished 9<sup>th</sup> OA. Photo: www.barcoys.com



The Ginther – von Trips rear-engine Ferrari was very fast and handled well, but an off-course excursion may have doomed their chances for a win. Photo: www.barcoys.com





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Cell 407.252.1384  
Fax 407.244.0022  
email [SCCA@ExcelDisplays.com](mailto:SCCA@ExcelDisplays.com)



PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

First Gear birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name, if joining Club \_\_\_\_\_

Children's names and birth dates if Family membership  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SCCA Region Preference **Central Florida Region (83)**

I am interested in the following SCCA activities:

Pro Racing  Club Racing  Rally  Solo  Official

I hereby apply for membership in the Sports Car Club of America, Inc. and its Central Florida Region and agree to abide by the bylaws.

Enclosed is my check (made payable to SCCA, INC.) or cash for \$ \_\_\_\_\_,  
or:

(check one)  Visa  MasterCard

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Referred By \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)