

A man in a light blue polo shirt, dark trousers, and sunglasses stands next to a black Porsche Carrera GT. He is leaning his right hand on the roof of the car. The car is parked on a paved surface in front of a white stone wall with a balustrade. Lush green bushes and trees are visible in the background.

# *Coastal*aire

Summer 2025

California Central Coast Region • Porsche Club of America



## Cover Story



***Robert Kitamura***

Hearst Castle  
2013

Photograph  
by  
Chuck Jennings

## California Central Coast Region of the **Porsche Club of America**

### **Editor**

Chuck Jennings  
concourschuck@gmail.com

### **Contributors**

Jeff Bartell  
Bob Bruington  
Donna Fraser  
Fred Herr  
Joe Kuntze  
Jon Milledge  
Hamp Miller

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Alfred Abken  
Tony Brizzolara  
Donna Fraser  
Chuck Jennings

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California Central Coast Region of  
Porsche Club of America (CCCR/PCA)  
1259 Ironbark Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

[joseph.shubitowski@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.shubitowski@gmail.com).

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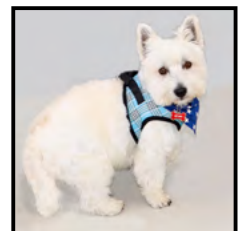
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## *The Prez's Corner*

*Joseph Shubitowski • President*

**R**obert “Kit” Kitamura – great friend, CCCR Board member, Coastalaire Newsletter Editor, Porsche guy, car guy, architect, philanthropist, guitar and ukelele player extraordinaire, and all-around good guy passed away very recently after a long battle with cancer. Our thoughts are with Janice, Chris, and extended family and friends at this time. If you were fortunate enough to drive your Porsche up the mountain to Hearst Castle – thank Kit! If you have watched the Coastalaire expand and thrive into an award winning newsletter over many years – thank Kit. His loss is felt deeply across our community from Blackhorse Coffee to Cal Poly to the conference room at Porsche San Luis Obispo.

Godspeed Kit.....we all miss you.

Summer has not slowed down at all with driving events and track events happening almost weekly! There should be no reason why your Porsche stays in the garage very much this July and into August! Our Hi Mountain Road adventure is almost upon us. Dr. Joe and I need to recon the route one final time to make sure there are no impassable boulders or the like. Watch your email for registration information.

Our DE+ day at Laguna Seca started out foggy, but then the fog lifted as if it were vacuumed up! The weather was spectacular for the DE sessions throughout the day. There were a couple of on-track incidents, but the drivers were OK and everything was handled quickly and professionally thanks to our DE Chair Bob Bruington. The Parade Lap sessions featured about 30 vehicles in five separate groups! I am sure it was the first time down the Corkscrew for almost all of these drivers and passengers. Even at 30 mph it is still an experience!

The 2025 Porsche Parade in Oklahoma City just completed this past weekend. The 2026 Parade is in Lake Placid NY, and it was announced that the 2027 Parade will be hosted in Boise, Idaho!! That is a beautiful part of The West, so maybe think about driving up!!! Hopefully one of you has won the 992 GT3 as the grand prize in the PCA Spring Raffle. No one has come knocking at my door yet, so I assume it wasn't me!!!

Looking forward to seeing many of you at an event soon!

Let's Drive!

*Joe*

**<https://ccc.pca.org>**



## The Editor's Wind

Chuck Jennings

You may already know that even though we publish monthly digital issues of Coastalaire, we print only the months of January, April, July, and October. And, of course, this is one of the printed issues. I try to make the printed issues the most representative of CCCR with a balance of our activities and interests in the Porsche marque. Last month's issue was dedicated to our altruistic and long time Porsche enthusiast, Ed Swain. This issue is dedicated to nonethelesser friend and most dedicated Porsche proponent, Robert "Kit" Kitamura. It's been a soboring two months. Ed and Kit represented the best of us. We will miss them both enormously.

Our club offers a healthy balance of social, touring and technical/track events. And I try to reflect that balance in the Coastalaire. But sometimes, like this issue, track events may be the main ingredient in the recipe. That's not by choice. I need more contributors from those of you who read this newsletter. If you attend a CCCR event and have the slightest ability to scribble some notes together, I would be very pleased to have your observations with no pressure to obligate you to more. Porsche people are smart and articulate by nature. So, no excuses.

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# PCA-CCCR New Members • May

## Welcome New Members

Lawrence Allen Los Osos	2025 718 Cayman
Jonathon Bachellier Paso Robles	2001 911 Turbo
Yarely Corona Santa Maria	2021 Taycan 4S
Gene Garcia Arroyo Grande	1997 Boxster
Houtan Hosseini Pismo Beach	2022 911 Turbo S
Gary Kramer Templeton	2024 Cayenne
Laura Losee San Luis Obispo	2023 Cayenne S
Michael Morain Atascadero	2024 911 Carrera S
Spencer Rhode Pismo Beach	2000 Boxster S



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face  
and  
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a new  
friend!



## CCCR PCA Membership

Primary Members 534

Affiliate Members 322

Total Regional 856



National Primary 108,910

National Total 165,141

**<https://ccc.pca.org>**



# PCA-CCCR Anniversaries

## 1 Year

Kevin Walker  
Joee Plascencia  
Dan Hile

## 2 Years

James Rodenbaugh  
Dan Kolodziejski  
Aurelius Ransom  
Joe Bowling  
Micah Smith  
Ken Lua

## 3 Years

Tony Torres  
Vikram Basappa  
Barry Holdgrafer  
Michael Miller  
David Mellish

## 4 Years

Sonja Polk  
Sam Schmitt  
Terry Robinson  
Robert Sandeers

## 5 Years

Thomas Burhenn  
James Voysey

## 6 Years

Daniel Thompson

## 7 Years

Antonio Varia

## 9 Years

richard Polinski

## 10 Years

Mitcjell Nichter

## 12 Years

Roger Katz

## 13 Years

Gavin Payne  
Christopher Edwards

## 15 Years

Ken Shinpo

## 16 Years

Ken Finney

## 19 Years

Gerald Hoodenpyl

## 20 Years

Sam Gardali  
Ronald Ayers

## 22 Years

Jason Len

## 24 Years

Martin Etchevery

## 26 Years

Andrew Winterbottom

## 27 Years

Frank Mazzone

30 Years  
**Mel  
Stahlman**

40 Years  
**Robert  
Mayberry**

Right: On the Pacific Surfliner Train from San Luis Obispo to Paso Robles for a coach ride to Pomar Junction Winery September 2014 Andrew and Susan Winterbottom standing in the rear

Happy 26th Anniversary!



# CCCR Events Calendar

Gil Igleheart and Joe Kuntze, Activities Directors  
Fred Herr, Autocross Director - Bob Bruington, Drivers' Education Director

<https://ccc.pca.org>

**July 12** Chintose • Drive 'N Dine • Meet at PorscheSLO at 9:30 AM • Depart 10:00 AM  
We have visited Germany, Italy, and China on our culinary world tour.  
Time to visit the Land of the Rising Sun.

**July 19** Primal House • Drive 'N Dine • Meet at PorscheSLO at 9:00 AM • Depart 9:30 AM  
We will explore a new concept eatery in beautiful Templeton. Primal House is a combination craft brewery, butcher shop and fine dining just opening in Tin City.

**July 26** Teststrecke #72 • Autocross at Santa Maria Airport

**August 2** Pozo • Drive 'N Picnic Meet at Biddle Park at 9:00 AM • Depart 9:30 AM



**This is a picnic.** Pack a lunch, bring a chair or blanket.  
This is your chance to prove Dr. Kuntze wrong and embarrass him about his statement that Cayenne and Macan owners are like those over made up aging socialites that drive Range Rovers with no intention of ever going off-road.  
In any case, bring a Cayenne, a Macan, a Jeep, a Samari, a Bronco, a Subaru, a Powerwagon, a dirt bike, or a mule. We are gonna take a drive on High Mountain Road. If you don't have a fourwheel drive vehicle and want a ride, contact Dr. Kuntze at k708388@aol.com. Those who prefer not to drive off road, we will have an on-road route to Pozo for you.

**August 9** Dinner at LeVigne • A Three-course meal by Chef Walter Filippini

**August 23** Teststrecke #73 • Autocross at Santa Maria Airport

**September 6** Drive 'N Dine • Eros Plateroti Shop Tour • Chef Gregory's BBQ Emporium

## Please Take Notice!

**Changes to this calendar may occur anytime between this publication and the event.  
Updates are made via email! Be sure to read your emails from CCCR.**





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# *It's About the People*

*Photos by Tony Brizzolara*









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# Robert “Kit” Kitamura

by Chuck Jennings

**I** was Chair of the Department of Art and Design at Cal Poly for fourteen years before I retired in 2003. During that time, I had the pleasure of coordinating our facilities needs with Bob “Kit” Kitamura, University Architect and Executive Director of Facilities Planning. Competition among programs for facilities on campus was always fierce and the Executive Director responsible for development and allocations was usually in an adversarial position, somewhat like a divorce lawyer, making no one happy. Kit’s predecessors had typically left the position with less than stellar appreciation. Hence, the person in that position should have had a well developed affable bedside manner just to survive. Not many did. But Kit was one of the most diplomatic, well-respected and liked of any of the “suits” in the administration.

After I retired, I took up photography as a practicing professional with an emphasis on show cars, from vintage to modern exotics. *A Gathering of Friends* was one of my regular local shoots, and that’s where Kit and I discovered we had a common interest in cars and photography. Kit asked if I would be interested in photographing Porsche events for inclusion in the *Coastalair*, and just like that, I had my first appointment as a photojournalist. In exchange, I got some “free” advertising. Kit and I began to have more frequent contact, and I learned more and more about Porsche and Porsche people. It wasn’t long before I bought my first, a Boxster S.

As my involvement and commitment with the Porsche culture grew, it would be an understatement to say that Bob Kitamura had an impact on my years in CCCR to this point. He was monumental in many ways, and we became alternating partners in the editorship of *Coastalair*. We also became appreciative friends,



Kit takes a photo of me taking a photo of him at *A Gathering of Friends* in 2013.

Anyone who has served on the CCCR Board of Directors or who has been active in CCCR events since Kit joined PCA in 1990 is well aware of his contributions and his consistent involvement. When I joined in 2010, Kit and Milt Worthy were editing, printing, and mailing the *Coastalair* twelve times a year – an immense undertaking on a very limited budget. Kit attended and photographed most all club events, including autocross and track events. He was also diligent about attending the Board of Directors meetings.



Kit was an experienced designer with a demonstrated history of working in the architecture, planning, construction and property development industry. He was highly skilled in Feasibility Studies, Mixed-use, Renovation, and Energy Efficiency. He was a strong entrepreneurial professional with a Master of Science degree focused in Architecture from California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo.

He was Vice-President of RRM Design Group from May, 1979 to May, 1993 (14 years) in the San Luis Obispo Area. RRM Design Group is an architecture, planning, landscape architecture and civil engineering firm. Bob was a principal and owner with responsibilities in the areas of residential, commercial and government projects. He also served on the Board of Directors of the company.

Kit also served as University Architect / Executive Director from May, 1993 to October, 2011 (18 years and six months) at Cal Poly. His responsibilities included serving as the head of the Facilities Planning and Capital Projects Department under the Vice-President for Administration and Finance. It included the development and oversight of the campus master plan for Cal Poly. The master plan included the development of \$1 billion worth of classroom, housing and support buildings for the university over a 15-20 year period. The plan was approved by the California State University Board of Trustees in 2001. During the time he was Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Capital Projects, he was responsible for the design and construction of over \$800 million worth of buildings on the campus.

At Cal Poly he served as a Board Member of the Executive Committee for the Foundation for the Cal Poly Performing Arts Center Board Member Jan 2017 until he retired.

He was on the Dean's Advisory Council for the Robert E. Kennedy Library at Cal Poly. He was Co-Chair, 2020-21 and Chair, 2021-22.

Kit served on the California State Board of Architectural Examiners as a Master Examiner: Jan 1980 - Dec 2016.

Kit received the Octavius Morgan Distinguished Service Award in 2018.

He served on COAA - Construction Owners Association of America: Jan 2000 - Jan 2012

He was a member of the Society of College and University Planners: Jan 1993 - Jan 2011

He was a Member, President, and Vice-President, of the Board of Directors, Kiwanis Club of San Luis Obispo: Jan 1979 - Jan 1998

He was on the Board of Directors and President of Obispo Beautiful Association: 1997-2001

And he was Emeritus Member of the American Institute of Architects: Jan 1978 - Present



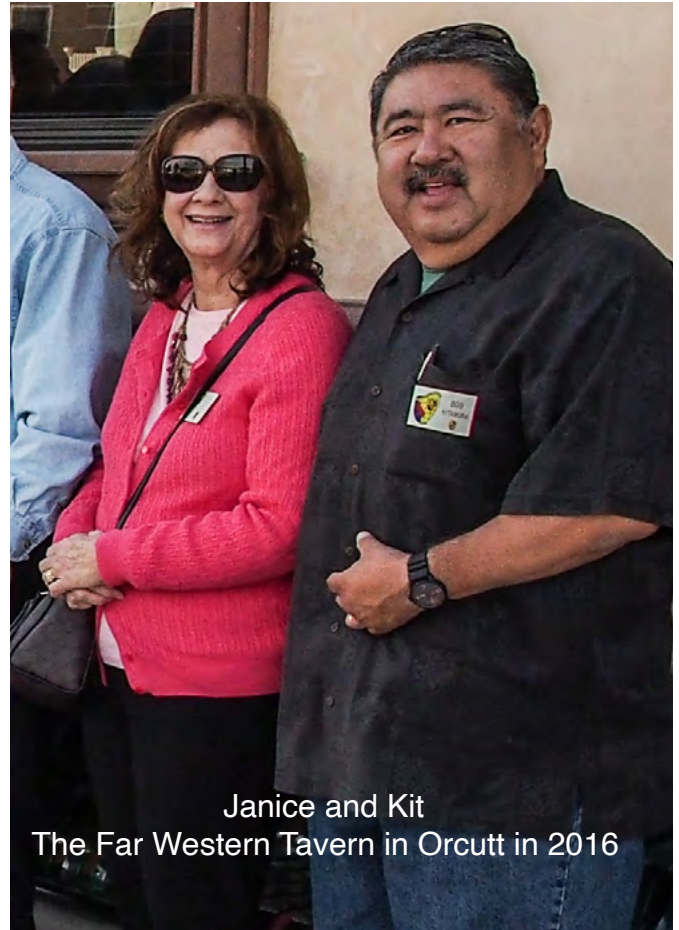
# Robert “Kit” Kitamura

Kit served on the Foundation at Hearst Castle (formerly Friends of Hearst Castle). He served on the Board of Directors (2008-2013 and 2016-2020), He served as Vice-President (2010), President (2011 and 2012) · Jan 2008 - Dec 2020



Kit arranged a unique tour of Hearst Castle for CCCR in 2013,

Established in 1985, Foundation at Hearst Castle (formerly Friends of Hearst Castle) (FHC) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit cooperating association affiliated with Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument®, and the San Luis Obispo Coast District of California State Parks. Through membership and fundraising, FHC provides funds for educational, interpretive, and artifact conservation programs and supports the District's ongoing efforts to improve visitor services. FHC's support helps to increase public access to, and appreciation of, this unique historical and cultural resource.



Janice and Kit  
The Far Western Tavern in Orcutt in 2016

In all the years I knew Kit, and in all the years I watched him with other people, I saw a man who was always positive, always with a smile. He was everyone's friend.

Kit had a collection of and played the guitar.

Kit loved Disneyland and Mickey Mouse.

He was an avid Dodgers fan and regularly had season tickets.

He was a pretty talented cartoonist.

He restored his uncle's Buick Riviera.



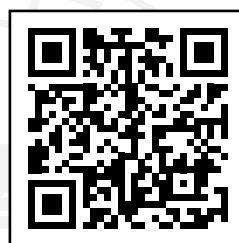




# New Porsche 911 Club Coupe celebrates 70 Years of PCA — 70 cars for 70 members

The Porsche Club of America is proud to announce the third 911 Club Coupe, a collaboration with Porsche AG to celebrate our club's 70th anniversary. As with the 50th and 60th anniversary Club Coupes, this Club Coupe contains many unique features that one cannot not find on other Porsches. 70 units will be produced and exclusively offered for sale to PCA members through a raffle system.

Stay tuned to [PCA.org](https://pca.org) for more information and updates on this incredible opportunity for PCA members. Consider expressing your interest to become a PCA70 911 Club Coupe owner when the raffle opens July 11.



► More about the Club Coupe at [pca.org/news/pca70-club-coupe](https://pca.org/news/pca70-club-coupe)



## PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA



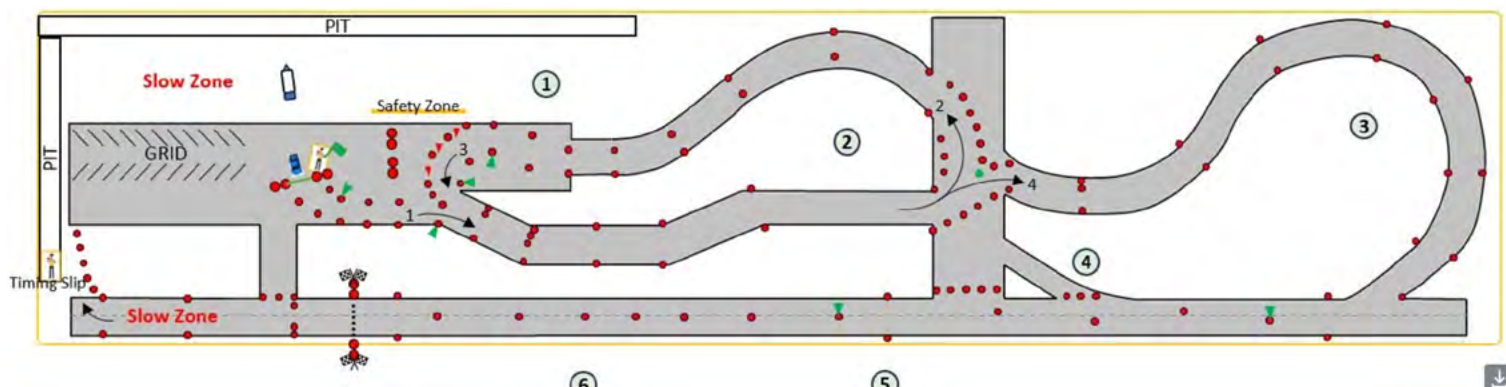
# Autocross2025



Autocross #72  
Autocross #73  
Autocross #74

July 26  
Aug 23  
Oct 25

Below is the Track Layout at Santa Maria Airport for Teststrecke #71



Details and Registration at  
[MotorsportReg.com](https://MotorsportReg.com)  
or contact Fred Herr  
Autocross Director @ 805-720-2070

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# CCCR Teststrecke #70 May 17

**T**here was no fog or drizzle at this event. We swapped that out for 30+ mph winds in the afternoon. We are learning in drive in all weather conditions this year. Our June AX was a huge success, great track layout, a sold out event with no issues or incidents and great competition. There was great sportsmanship and eight FAST laps completed. Four more new drivers attended. It's great to see new faces continually showing up. Please, reach out if there's anything I can help you with.

I have to take a second to thank all the participants for being so great. Prepare to pat yourselves on the back. It was about 8:24 AM, just a few minutes before the driver's meeting, Bruce (our Chief) and I just finished setting up the timing slip station, and we had to take a pause and observe how awesome you all were. We're always so busy in the hustle to set everything up, and this would have been easy to miss.

It's six minutes before driver's meeting, not a single announcement had been made yet over the PA system, and yet Red group drivers already had their cars parked in the grid, everyone had been through tech and had finished walking the course, and there you all were, already at the trailer conversing with each other waiting for the drivers' meeting five minutes early. Kudos to you all.

As always, we have a team of dedicated volunteers which these events would not happen without. Thank you to all those who helped setup the course and equipment on Friday and Saturday, helped instruct, worked registration and helped with cleanup at the end of the day. We are always looking to train people on the timing system to build up our available timing team. I want to thank Candice Arlow, Jerry Hsu and Tracy Simonsen for stepping up and learning timing this event. You did an amazing, flawless job! After a fourth successful event using the new faster grid/run format, this will be our standard format for the foreseeable future.

The track layout was another new design. The previous two layouts were tighter and very technical, so I wanted to open things up and let drivers stretch their legs a bit with this one. They still had to not overdrive and manage car control and weight transfer at higher speeds to get the best time. Did anyone get caught out by the shortening distance between the final slalom cones? I know I did and on my best lap too! I hope everyone found it a fun course.

## Some fun facts from this event:

- **59 Drivers Participated**
- **8 Laps Completed**
- **Top Time of Day was 55.611s**
- **Just 2.3s difference from 2nd to 10th**
- **Intense three way Mustang battle with just 0.132s between the 3 of them!**
- **154 Cones Hit**



Final results for AX 71 have been verified and are posted on the MotorsportsReg AX71 Events Results page. Results are grouped by Class, by Best Time and for Porsche cars in CC01 - CC18 there is the just for fun Overall Indexed Results. All results are posted in PDF format.

Please let us know if you have any feedback or areas for improvement. This season will continue with a variety of new track layouts, if anyone has an idea for a layout, please submit. If you're interested in volunteering to support one of our AX teams (track setup, timing, etc.) please reach out, we can always use extra help.

# ***Drivers' Education 2025***

Bob Bruington • Drivers' Education Director

## A Hot and Fun Day at "The Circuit"

***T***he new racetrack, "The Circuit" at Buttonwillow, is hot! Literally! The air temperature at the Drivers Education, hosted by CCCR on May 30th was around 95 degrees, add around 6 acres of sun beaten asphalt, it had to be well over 100 degrees. Even with the heat, the day and the new track were a success.

CCCR had eighty four drivers register for the day, many for the first time on the track. Thursday afternoon started with early registration, then a dinner at the track for sixty people. As usual the crew at the track Café, cooked up a wonderful meal of barbecued chicken, ribs with corn on the cob, corn bread, salad, roasted potatoes, and dessert. Everyone left full and happy.

Friday started early with further registrations and tech, followed by the Drivers Meeting and Student/Instructor pairings. We had seventeen students register for the DE, the most ever at Buttonwillow. Many of the drivers, novice and experienced, had not driven the new track. To give drivers feel of the new track, we ran a lead follow for two laps. After the lead follow had completed, we started the day with the first session. We set the schedule to have three run sessions in the morning to take advantage of the cooler temperatures, but many drivers stayed for the afternoon sessions as well.

While the drivers had lunch, we held a Parade Lap on the track for a 25 minute lead follow session. All of drivers survived the new track and the heat, with huge smiles when the session concluded. We also held a Track Experience after lunch. Two lucky participants sat in the passenger's seat of an instructor's car for a full run session at track speeds. A fun time for all!

Most of the drivers ran four out of five sessions, about typical for a DE. There were some real diehards that ran all five sessions, including dedicated students with instructors. The instructors were fantastic, giving their time and expertise to students on a very hot day. I'm sure some of the instructors would have liked to call it quits with the heat and the demands of instructing and driving their own run sessions, but they kept on going to give their students the full benefits of their instruction. Bravo!!



***Next CCCR DE  
November 1st  
Buttonwillow***



The Grid!



# *The Circuit at Buttonwillow*

## *May 30*



Guy Ober leads the Red Group



Alfred Abken:  
Black Flag Man

As you can see, it takes many dedicated people to run the DE Program. Most of these people do double duty instructing students, driving their own cars, along with the registration, grid and tech duties. If you would like to help at the DE events, please let me know, we can use extra volunteers to take some of the burden off these people. It is not all work, there is plenty of down time to walk the track and meet some great and friendly people, and of course checking out some beautiful cars. Anyone who helps, is allowed to participate in the Parade Lap at no cost.

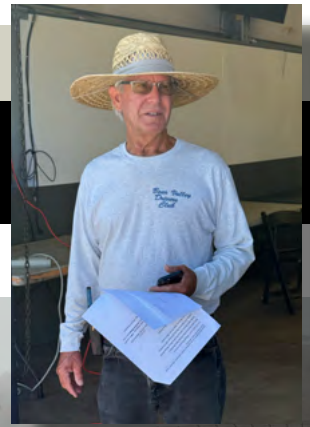
We have one more DE event this year at Buttonwillow, The Classic Track this time, on Nov. 1st. A notice will be sent when Buttonwillow is open for registration. For the first time, CCCR will host a PCA Instructor School while running the DE at Buttonwillow. If you have HDPE track experience and would like to become an instructor, or would like to be a mentor, please let me know at [Aircooled911sc@gmail.com](mailto:Aircooled911sc@gmail.com). The school will be run by the PCA National Drivers Education Department. Upon completion of the school, you will be a PCA National qualified Instructor.

See you on the track! *Bob*

This was one of the smoothest DEs we have run, even with a new track layout. That is due to the controlled and safe driving by our drivers, we had very few off tracks and black flag violations. As is typical, we had a great crew helping with registration, tech, grid and Black Flag. Thank you all for your contributions to a fantastic day! In no particular order, Alfred Abken, Mark Torcaso, Randy Simonson, Bruce Morgenthaler, Jeff Bartel, Mark Schilling, Joe Shubitowski, Mark Englert, Chuck Jennings, Guy Ober, Bill Chadwick, Bill Deviny, Fred Herr, Gil Igelheart, Thom Meyer, Ken Finney, Emile Waked, and Jamie Irons. Thank you all for a fantastic effort!

# CCCR DE at Laguna Seca • June 30

by Bob Bruington



**I**t's been a busy few weeks here at Drivers Education Central. We had our first DE May 30th at Buttonwillow's The Circuit, then just 30 days later, on to Laguna Seca June 30th. For our last DE of the year, on Nov. 1, we will be back at Buttonwillow again but on the original track this time.

Laguna Seca is always a favorite for the DE drivers. With the steep costs of the track, we need to raise the prices for registration, up to \$500.00 this year. CCCR does not make any profit at Laguna Seca, but the CCCR Board believes it is a huge benefit to offer our club the opportunity to drive on this world-famous track. There will be only one other PCA Region group renting the track this year besides CCCR. This is not an easy track to reserve, many groups are turned away, we are extremely lucky to be able to rent this iconic track!

The night before our DE, a group of us have stayed at the same hotel for many years. Alice and Guy Ober bring snacks, we may have an adult beverage, then on to dinner. Twenty of us met at a Korean restaurant hosted by one of our major sponsors, The Stable in San Luis Obispo. The dinner has become a nice tradition with the Laguna Seca DE drivers. It is always a blast to be with your fellow drivers. We talk, we laugh, it is truly a fun time. The DE is not just one day on the track, it is a fantastic social event for all of us.

Monday morning, we started in a deep fog, weather wise not mental. By the time we were ready to hit the track, the sun was out and shining bright, a beautiful Monterey day. We had 13 students out of the 59 participants in the DE with another 29 Parade Lap drivers, with passengers. As always, the morning before the first group is on track is extremely busy. If people would read the information sent to them prior to coming to the track and be prepared, the day would be much smoother. Somehow, we always find a way to get everyone on the track on time.



Above: Bob (upper right) conducts the mandatory drivers' meeting before sending everyone out to the track. During these meetings, an official track worker reviews the meanings of the various safety flags used to communicate to the drivers while running on the track.





One of my favorites parts of the day is greeting the Parade Lappers after their 25 minute session around the track. After they have driven over and through the famous corners of Laguna Seca, the pure enjoyment and excitement in these people is fantastic to see and be around. If you have not had the experience of driving your car on this famous track, you should.

Along with the Parade Lappers, we had five Track Experience passengers. The passenger sits in the passenger seat of an instructor's car for a session at track speed. We allow this to introduce people to the track. We hope to entice them to join us as a driver in the next DE, growing the sport of tracking your car. It must have worked, several of the drivers were going home to start looking for cars.



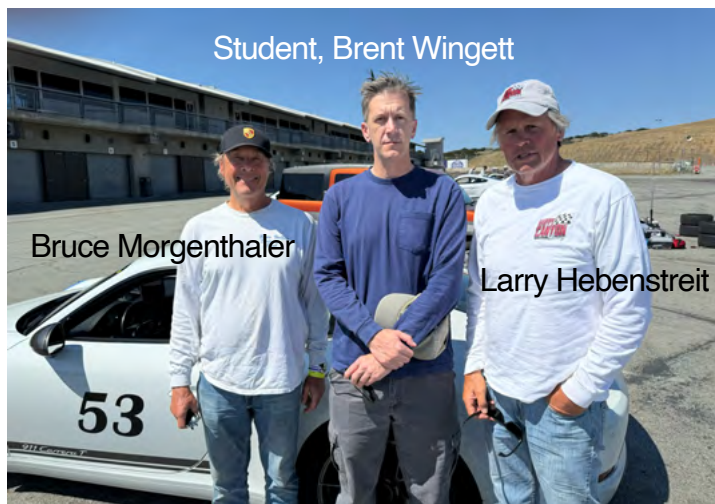
Guy Ober comes into the paddock after one of his sessions in his Cayman.

We don't call this "*racing*". It is not. The rules are built around safety for everyone on the track. That does not mean driving your car around the track at speed is not hazardous. Things do happen on a rare occasion. We had two damaged cars at Laguna Seca, a rare event at a PCA Drivers Education event. In the 20 DE events I have directed, we have had a total of four damaged cars. Each DE has an average of 70 drivers, that is 1,400 cars with only four damaged. That is only .03%, the national average on the road is around 6%. Seems like you have a much bigger chance of an accident just driving to the grocery store. Other than pride and maybe an upset spouse, there were no injuries to be reported. I have tracked my car in over sixty driving events, many with for profit clubs. In all the track days I have participated in, PCA runs the safest most organized program by far.

# CCCR DE at Laguna • Seca May 30

by Bob Bruington

Photos by Chuck Jennings and Alfred Abken



Student, Brent Wingett

Bruce Morgenthaler

Larry Hebenstreit



Peter Deragon

Mark Schilling

Bob Bruington

Mark Torcaso

The DE events require many people to run a smooth and efficient program. Besides the all important Instructors, we need people to run the grid, tech inspection, registration, release forms, t-shirts, parade laps and announcing. In no particular order, we are indebted to “The Team” for their dedication helping at the Drivers Education events:

Alfred Abken  
John Beccera  
Alice and Guy Ober  
Scot and Bijou Burns  
Paula and Fred Herr  
Chuck Jennings  
Kevin Sullivan  
Sonny Brown  
Jeff Bartel  
Randy Simonson  
Mark Torcaso  
Mark Schilling  
Bruce Morgenthaler  
Marc Englert,  
Joe Shubitowski  
Brian Davis  
Bill Chadwick



Jon Milledge

Guy Ober

Without their help, we could not possibly to run these events at such a high level! If you would like to join “The Team,” please contact me. It a fun and rewarding day, please give it a try, we could use your help.

See you on the track!

*Bob Bruington*



Bill Chadwick

Andrew Winterbottom







# Firehawk Series: Chapter 7 Watkins Glen

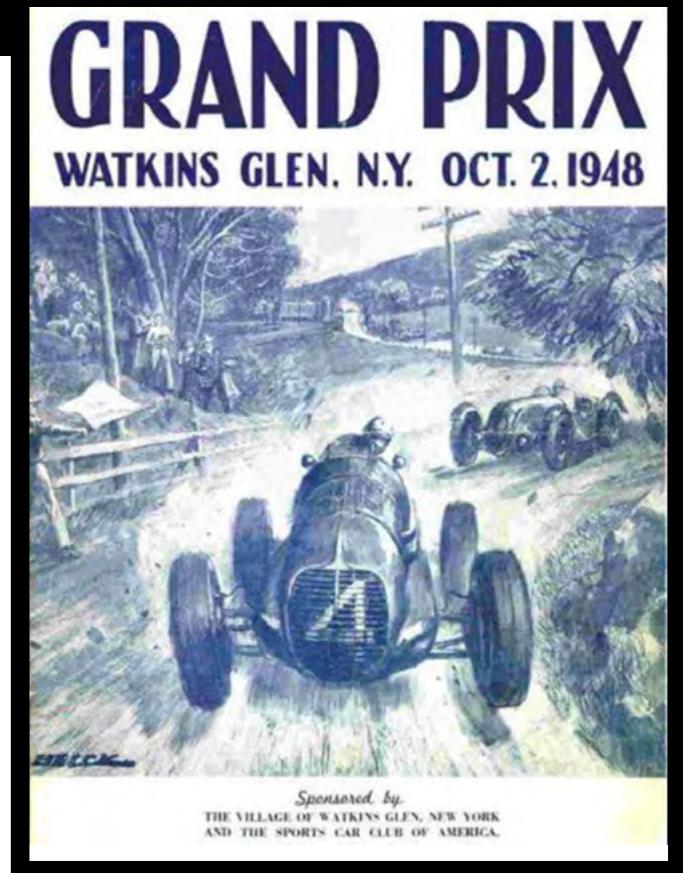
by Jon Milledge

## Prologue

Watkins Glen has a long history with sports car racing. From the Watkins Glen International Website: Road racing came to Watkins Glen in 1948 by way of Cameron Argetsinger, a law student at Cornell University who often stayed at his father's summer home on Seneca Lake, with the family having ties to the area since the early 1800s. Argetsinger, an early member of the SCCA, proposed to the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce an amateur road race to be called the Watkins Glen Grand Prix". Amid an enthusiastic response to the idea, Argetsinger mapped out a 6.6-mile course using mostly paved roads with a short dirt and gravel stretch, and the SCCA sanction was obtained. On October 2nd, 1948, 15 cars started the 8-lap, 52.8-mile Grand Prix, with Wayne, Pennsylvania's Frank Griswold winning in a pre-war Alfa Romeo 8C2900 coupe, closely followed by Briggs Cunningham in his famous Bu-Merc. Other prominent entrants included William "Bill" Milliken, who rolled his Bugatti 35 in qualifying, giving "Milliken's Corner" its name. Charles Addams, the cartoonist who created the Addams family, was also entered, along with Miles and Sam Collier, major figures in the history of American road racing.



Races through the town continued through 1952 at which time the crowd watching the race was about 100,000 persons. After that, the race through the town was thought to be too dangerous and stopped, but a permanent course was constructed in 1955-1956. The first permanent course, known as the Watkins Glen Grand Prix Race Course was constructed on 550 acres (2.2 km<sup>2</sup>), overlapping part of the previous street course. Designed by Bill Milliken and engineering professors from Cornell University, the 2.350-mile (3.782 km) layout was used from 1956 to 1970.



The map at the right is a simple cartoon representation of the original 6.6-mile course first run in 1948. Notice that there were four different types of surfaces: cement, macadam, oiled gravel and dirt. Also note that the course ran under the railroad tracks on the West side on macadam, but *over* the railroad tracks on dirt on the East side. And the dirt crossing, such as it was, was not an overpass but literally ran over the tracks. If you will, try to imagine the drivers navigating this course in race cars with the technologies of wheels, tires, suspension, steering, and chasis of 1948. It surely was a very wild and terrifying ride. No wonder the race was considered too dangerous and was stopped.







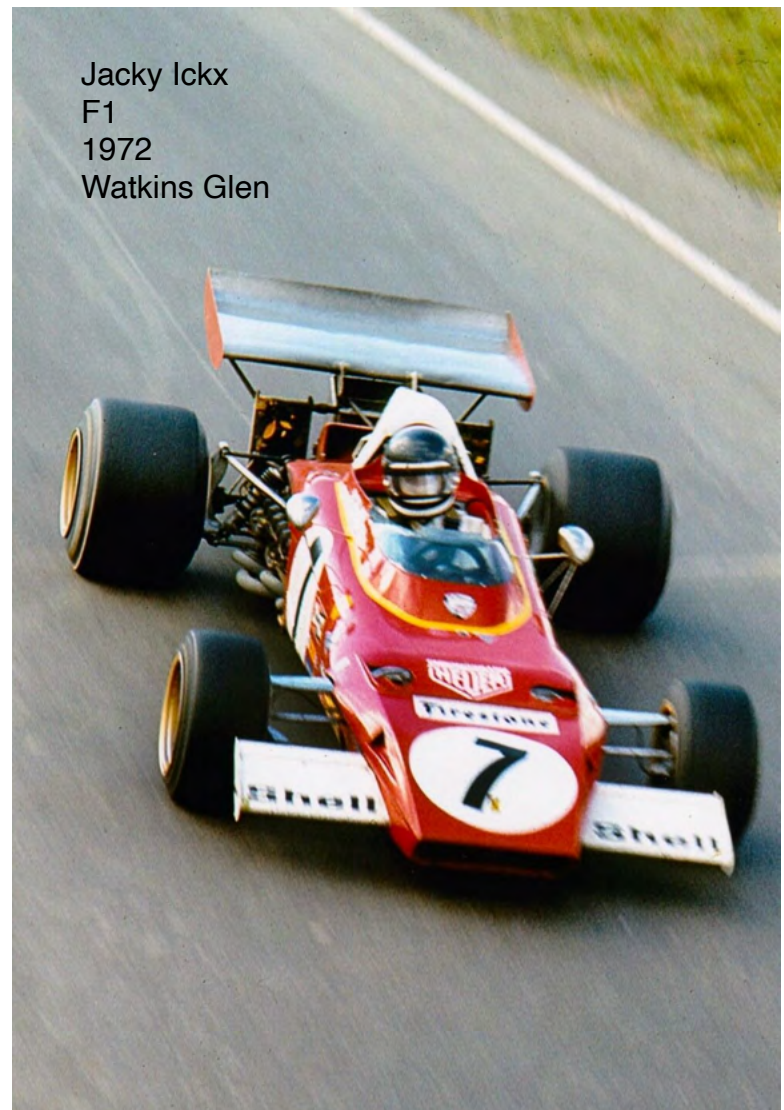
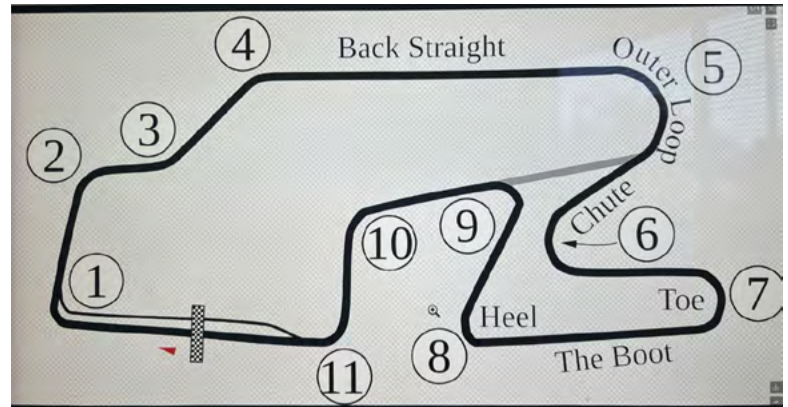
# Firehawk Series: Chapter 7 Watkins Glen

*by Jon Milledge*

When this writer attended the F1 races in 1961 and 1962, this was the course used. In 1968, the sports car race was extended to six hours. The track was updated and revised in 1971 but was not completed in time for the six-hour sports car race. A temporary “short course” was completed in time for the 1971 race, similar to the current NASCAR configuration but without the “Bus Stop Chicane”. For a time after this the 1971 layout was known as the “1971 Six Hours Course”. By 1972, the rest of the current course, less the Bus Stop Chicane, was completed. This was the 3.377 mile track layout we would race on in 1985.

## Practice and Qualifying

In the first practice, Walt went out and didn't make a lap before having an engine failure. The car was towed back to the paddock where a hole in the camshaft housing was observed. Everyone makes mistakes and this time the assembling mechanic had left an extra camshaft housing bolt free inside the housing. This bolt caused the camshaft to stop, breaking the camshaft drive bolt, bending valves and punching a hole in the camshaft housing. The head, camshaft, camshaft housing, valves, valve lifters, etc. were toast. There was momentary panic, but someone thought to call Al Holbert who, besides being the head of Porsche Racing, USA, owned a Porsche dealership in Warrington, PA, not very far from Watkins Glen. His dealership had a re-furbished cylinder head of an earlier design with a used camshaft, cam housing and lifters. Someone was dispatched to drive to Warrington, PA, pick up the parts and return. Fortunately for us, IMSA had already announced the race would start with the cars in current points standing order so we would start first. The Hendricks 944 would start second and a Camaro would start 3rd. There was no sign of the Nissan 300ZX Turbo of Max Jones and Tommy Kendall. I would start the race and Walt would finish. There would be only one pit stop for partial fuel and many of the faster cars also would only make one pit stop, albeit for more fuel than us.



Jackie Sticks  
F1  
1972  
Watkins Glen



## The Race

As I was starting the race (and crashes often occur at the start), I decided to talk to the other starting drivers to perhaps ensure a clean start for TV. I walked around the paddock and talked to the other drivers of the first six cars. This casual talk was not received with open arms. I tried to reason with them that it would be senseless to wreck on the first corner of a three-hour race. All agreed that we shouldn't do something stupid, but I got the feeling that there wasn't complete consensus for my plan.

These races always had rolling starts. We rolled up to the start finish line, the flag dropped and the Camaro behind me jumped the start slightly and positioned his car partially along side me. The straight from start/finish line to turn one is downhill, and as we progressed toward turn one, he pulled alongside. So, here it was, he was going to win the race in Turn One. I knew where I could brake and still properly make the corner, and I didn't think he could brake that late but...he waited until I applied my brakes to apply his. He couldn't make the corner. I turned behind him and exited in first place. The Camaro driver lost several places. We didn't have a speed advantage and actually of all the 944s, we had the slowest speed in the speed trap at the end of the back straight. Nonetheless, we managed to hold a slim lead over the Hendricks 944 through our only pit stop.

From a Martin Raffauf article: Towards the end we were leading with the Hendricks car right behind us. Walt came up to lap our 2nd car, which at the time was driven quite quickly by Bruce MacInnes. He of course let the #1 car by immediately, but the Hendricks car struggled to pass him as they were doing the same lap time. We ended up winning by a few seconds.

Or did we? After the race, word filtered down that IMSA was checking camshafts of the top three cars. This was at first re-assuring because we knew we had been legal all year and at this race ran a used camshaft from Holbert Porsche. We also knew our trap speed on the long back straight was the slowest of all the 944s. I moseyed over to the tech shed to watch the camshaft checking. It was immediately obvious the tech inspectors didn't understand how to check a camshaft properly.



Jerry Woods, Martin Raffauf and I went to see John Bishop, founder of IMSA. Jerry and Martin had been on winning crews in IMSA for many years. John Bishop listened to what they had to say. I tried not to mess up the meeting. After we left, the camshafts were re-checked and found to be identical to factory specifications. This correction was really difficult for IMSA to admit, because besides admitting a tech problem, Walt and I had won the series even if we scored no points in the following 24 hour race.



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