

Stock Car Race Series Race Review for 2009 Coronado Speed Festival

September 25th -27th offered the Stock Car Race Series it's first opportunity to participate in the prestigious 2009 Coronado Fleet Week Speed Festival sanctioned by HMSA. In 2008, due in great part to the efforts of member Jim Phillion, the stock cars were part of a demonstration program that was so popular with the Navy and the spectators that a race group was formed for the organization and the former NASCAR race cars for 2009.

Answering the call was a huge field comprised of 35 famous cup cars. In addition, Bill Rhine of Rhine Enterprises brought 4 beautiful and significant cars from North Carolina for display. They included Tom Stolarz' #10 Purolator Lumina and a unique Rahmoc racing "Vintage" stock car.

Bill Rhine and Rhine Enterprises also committed a substantial amount of financial support to the social activities during the weekend including a hospitality area in the stock car paddock for the stock car participants, but more importantly to the military personnel on site to relax, have a cold drink and be part of the stock car effort. Rhine Enterprises has been a consistent and valued supporter of the stock car race series since its inception and we cannot express enough appreciation to Bill Rhine.

The social environment at this event is second to none. On Friday a party for all racers hosted by Admiral and Mrs. Kilcline at their home with an Ocktober fest theme.

Saturday night the stock car group was entertained and well fed at the home of Jim and Beth Phillion with support and help with the food and drinks from Rhine Enterprises, Steve Thomas and Tom Klauer. Thanks to Beth Phillion for making and sharing her family's outstanding lasagna recipe. Many thanks to Beth's kitchen crew -" Da Busy Bee's" including Carol Herron, Kathy Barber, Michelle Klauer, Sandy Magruder, Kay Young, Arlene Oji

and Ann Kilpatrick. Other busy bee's included Linda, Caroline, Carol and Meesuk.

Sue Prescott surprised all the stock car drivers at the Friday driver's meeting with key chains including their name and car #.

A special and unique experience was the Thursday night racecar parade through the streets of Coronado with Jim Phillion, Steve Barber, Ardie Oji, Gary Sousa, Dan Verstuyft, Steve Schoellhorn and Ralph Borelli all participating. Getting there and being there was fun for all as well as the crowd of Coronado residents and spectators, but the challenge of the fog and no headlights made the return to the race track one to remember.

On the base and at the race track on Friday, many of the stock cars with passenger seats participated in media and Navy personnel track rides for much of the morning. Captain Lindsey, Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station North Island was so impressed by his ride with Ralph Borelli that at the Sunday night award's Ralph was presented with the Captain's Award.

A diverse group of stock cars with tremendous pedigrees ranging in years from 1980 to 2006 began the weekend on the challenging 1.68 mile Coronado race track located on the North Island Naval Air Base on beautiful Coronado Island. It was obvious from the beginning of practice that all the participants came to race and put on the best possible show, and the huge crowds that came each day waited patiently for each stock car session and filled the grandstands and the paddock to cheer on their favorite car and driver.

Steve Schoellhorn in his 1993 #24 Jeff Gordon DuPont Chevrolet Lumina was the class of the field in qualifying on Saturday and with his flawless and smooth driving style took the pole for Sunday's main event. With such a large field of cars, the small track created some crowded corners, but the racing overall was exciting and great for the spectators and the qualifying race created expectations for an even better show for Sunday.

Sunday's final race once again played to a packed house in the grandstands and along the fences and the roar of all that horsepower rivaled some of the jet planes at the base. After a lot of passing and competitive racing throughout the field, Tom Klauer in his #48 Jimmy Johnson Lowe's Chevrolet prevailed with Steve Schoellhorn's #24 a close second and Joe Catron completing the podium in his 1993 #98 Bojangles Thunderbird. Also showing strong performances on Sunday were Bill Daffron in his Hooter's Thunderbird, Brian Ferrin in his #4 Kodak Monte Carlo, Garland Self in the #15 Qualify Care Thunderbird, John Scherer's #26 Quaker State Thunderbird, Gary Sousa's #3 Dale Earnhardt Goodwrench Monte Carlo, and Russ Romer's 1999 #18 Interstate Battery Pontiac.

Winners of the Rhine Enterprises class trophies given to Stock Car Race Series members were:

Historic:

1st Place Steve Schoellhorn

2nd Place Bill Daffron

3rd Place Garland Self

Contemporary:

1st Place Tom Klauer

2nd Place Gary Sousa

3rd Place Russ Romer

At the Sunday night awards ceremony aboard the brand new air craft carrier, the special award given by HMSA to a participant in the group 9 stock cars was given to SCRS member Steve Beck for a well deserved performance.

A special thanks to Cris Vandagriff and all at HMSA for such a great event. A particular thanks to the U.S. Navy and all of our military personnel and the Coronado Speed Festival organizers for allowing the Stock Car Race Series to be part of this special effort. The military displays, car show and final awards ceremony on board an aircraft carrier made the entire weekend one to be remembered and we look forward with great anticipation to the 2010 Coronado Speed Festival.