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December 2, 2014

Via email

Mr. Ray Snowdon

Competition Director

SVRA

Dear Ray,

I write this letter to you because Roger has not returned my call. I left a message asking to understand his thinking in the following technical bulletin.

http://www.svra.com/tech-bulletins/svra-technical-bulletin-tb2015-001/

I would like to hear the other side before I complain. It’s been a week so I guess he isn’t going to call. He didn’t return three calls when I wanted to understand the Spitfire move either. So I just have to assume. I assume he was hoping to equalize competition and save competitors money. I don’t think either will happen. Learning from the past, I just think the stock cars will go elsewhere...and since you have said publicly that you hate the stock cars possibly that is the desired result. I’m hoping all my logical assumptions are wrong and there is unseen method to this madness.

This is the first attempt I’ve seen under Tony’s watch to turn period correct race cars into spec racers.

The attempt to turn period correct NASCAR cars into spec racers has been done before and it failed miserably. With prompting from Carl and an eye towards a budget, Gene Felton tried to get his HSCRG (Historic Stock Car Racing Group) members to move to a spec crate motor with 500 HP (about what the 390cfm carb would provide without building a new engine for that carb). Carl then tried to require it in SVRA. At one time before the spec motor attempt there were enough stock cars to have their own race group and that’s what Carl and Gene were aiming for at select races. As a result of requiring the spec motor, the stock cars basically went away from SVRA for several years and HSR welcomed them in any condition, they now have their own race group there at some races. For many reasons I choose not to race with HSR...until now. The expense of buying new motors (for less horsepower) and the realization that it would never be fully enforced chased everyone to HSR until SVRA started accepting them in Group 10 again with year model period correct engines. The numbers seem to be growing slightly now. I don’t know of anyone who bought a spec motor back then.

I don’t think many now will buy a multi-thousand dollar carb and invest in the new motor design it will require. We are quoted $7,000 to $10,000 to convert an existing Ford motor. Sure you can buy a stock 390cfm carb for $750, bolt it on, have no drivability, and get beat by every early NASCAR out there. You have to build a motor for that carb or wind up with something that won’t run. See Jack Finch’s email for Dodge costs.

 I see only two logical outcomes to the new rule. Either it won’t be enforced or those cars will go away. You can buy used Cup motors for a lot less than you can build a competitive motor for the 390cf carb. Used motors cost less than any built up racing motor for that matter. Major reasons why the stock cars come out: they are fast, fun, safe and inexpensive. Inexpensive mainly because of the inexpensive used motor alternative. The new rule is taking that away. So much for cheaper.

You are basically asking 10 year old NASCAR Cup cars to run Busch spec motors. I have just spent tens of thousands of dollars putting my Camaro back just the way it came off the track in 1968 for HTA and your medallion program and now you are asking me to spend thousands of dollars to take a car that is currently just as it came off the track in 2006 and make it into something it never was. Old Indy cars have value, especially winners. Indy car spec racers are depreciating junk. Taking *vintage* cars and changing their inherent characteristics in an attempt to equalize competition is a move in the wrong direction. Just the opposite of a medallion program. The 70-72 Group 6 cars are inherently faster than the 67-69 cars. Do you intend to slow them down too? No matter how you mix the groups there will always be cars that are the fastest by their nature (usually newer) and the best drivers will gravitate to those cars. Trying to equalize competition by constantly rebalancing groups was a policy that ultimately led to the financial failure of HSR. I hate to see SVRA doing just that. The new owners of HSR seem to have gotten that message, they seem to be trying to be more like SVRA. One huge SVRA advantage was the fact that if you prepared your car to period specs those rules would not be expected to change...and you knew what group you would race with. Let’s not lose sight of SVRA and vintage racing’s two big advantages. Cars that are investments that appreciate and rules that are unchanging. When we revamped the Group 6 rules in 1991 using owner surveys and ballots the net result was a promise to the owners that SVRA would not change the rules for the next 10 years without another ballot. This resulted in over 400 applications for medallions and each and every car brought into legal SVRA specifications based on year of manufacture. There were no changes to those rules for almost 15 years until Jack and Carl yielded to economic pressures, which ultimately cut Group 6 entries to half their previous levels and chased away almost all of the history cars. Instead of honoring those cars like HTA and Monterey, they allowed a few of them to bend rules and ultimately that chased away all but the fast guys with big money and required SVRA to fill the fields with non-history cars.

Please be so kind as to give me a call to explain the intended purpose of the stock car carb rule.

Your Friend,

Pat

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Cc: Roger Linton, Tony Parella