



REmarks

Chicago Region RE, Rick Bentson

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New Year's Eve – as I write this the year 2015 has about 7 hours remaining. Time for the three Rs: Relax, Reflect and Recharge. The relaxing is easy; a long weekend with no commitments except the daughter and granddaughters coming to visit on Saturday. No worries about where to go on New Year's Eve, we haven't gone out in decades. We prefer to stay in with a glass of wine and a quiet evening. Whatever you're doing tonight, if you're venturing out, have fun, be safe.

This is also a good time to Recharge the batteries. As much fun as it is attending one club-related event or another almost every weekend from March thru October, plus managing the Region's business and attending 4-5 club meetings per month, all while working a full-time job (got to pay for all that fun somehow), it can wear on a guy by the end of the season. It's 100 days until the first of our 2016 events and while I'm already anxious to get going again, this old body is grateful for a bit of rest.

Reflecting on 2015 I'd have to say it's been a pretty good year. Not without its challenges, but good nonetheless. We celebrated the 60th consecutive Chicago Region June Sprints in a big way, our PDX track day program was hugely successful, and the Solo committee pulled off miracle after miracle in putting together a full schedule under challenging conditions. We crowned champions and celebrated victories, even if those victories were personal goals achieved and not necessarily the top-of-the-podium variety. We spent time with old friends and made new ones. We held our first backroads Tour event in a long time and had a great time. We learned that Indycar is coming back to Road America and that Chicago Region will provide staffing. Most importantly though, we got to spend time with good friends doing what we love to do, and doing it with people who feel the same way about racing and cars as ourselves. On the personal side, the whole family is healthy and provided for. I'm blessed with 2 great children and 4 wonderful grandchildren. If the incoming year ends up anything like the outgoing one I'll be a truly fortunate guy.

Solo – We've got Big News for the Solo community. Today we are announcing the full 2016 Solo season. See details elsewhere in this month's Piston Patter email. After the travails of last season this is a huge relief to the Solo committee and competitors. Best of all, we'll be back at RT 66 Raceway in 2016.

Checkered Flag banquet – Mark your calendar for Saturday, Feb. 6 and be sure to register for the 2015 Chicago Region Checkered Flag banquet. Registration is open on Motorsportsreg.com. Once again the banquet will be held at Lake Forest Motorcars. Join us in celebrating the 2015 season and dine among the Ferraris, Aston Martins and other exotics at Lake Forest Motorcars. And don't forget to purchase your Randy Owen art raffle ticket. Special pricing is available when you purchase a raffle ticket with your banquet registration. Additional raffle tickets are available for \$25 each. Register at: <http://msreg.com/2015CheckeredFlag>

This month's featured board member - is Tracy Ramsey. Tracy has been a member of SCCA since 2001. He started racing karts in 1996, and in 1998 finished 3rd nationally in his class in the World Karting Association (WKA) championships.

Tracy moved from Karting to Autocross in 2000 (the same year he married wife Marci). He was Soloist of the Year in 2006 and that same year won the ProSolo Prepared class.

In 2009 Tracy moved from Solo to Club Racing in the ultra-competitive Spec Miata class, and was named Rookie of the Year in that inaugural season.

Tracy continues to race Spec Miata in SCCA and also races in Chumpcar, where he's claimed 3 event victories. In 2015 he ran the One Lap of America event and finished first in his class.

Professionally, Tracy works keeping the skies safe for air travelers as an Air Traffic Controller, working out of the Aurora Center. In his spare time Tracy's been known to brew up some righteous home-brew beer, and has been known to break out his gas-powered blender at the end of an event and whip up a batch of margaritas. Team Blenderblaster is as appropriate a name for a race team as there ever was.

I hope you all had a happy and healthy Christmastime, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all in February at the Checkered Flag banquet.

See you at the races!

Rick Bentson
Regional Executive