

---

---

# RATTLE

February Edition

---

---

## **Good News Our next event is in Austin !!!!**

That's right our March 9<sup>th</sup> event will be at Tech Ridge (techridge.org). This is our very first time at this lot. So we will be doing a couple of things different from our normal. This new site is different from any thing we have raced on lately. As you can see by the map (<http://www.ccsi.com/~tholt/tech-ridge-map.pdf>), it will be a challenge to set up a fun and challenging course. Because of this we need to limit the number of people who will get to play. The fairest way we have found to do this is by making it a members only event. That means if your all ready a member come out and play. If your not a member you will be able to join the morning of the event. Our normal times for registration are still in effect. Meaning that registration will open at 7:30 am. And close promptly at 9:00 am. Since we are racing in our own back yard, getting to the site in time should not be a problem for any one. Even you sleepy heads.

Once you arrive, the first thing different that you will notice is that you will be told where to park. Unfortunatly this site has little room for pits. We will be trying to optimize this space as best we can. People who tow their cars, may be asked to unload their car and park their rig off of the tarmac. This way we will have more room for race cars. We hope that we can count on everyone's help with this matter.

Directions to Tech Ridge are: IH 35. Get off on Parmer lane or Howard lane, head east. To the first light. That's McAllen Pass, turn there. About halfway between. Parmer Lane and Howard there is a street on the west side of the road called Center Ridge. Turn here also. The lot and the runway are on your left.

Hope to see everyone there.

## A quick note from our acting president

Hi all,

This is a very serious business and I hope that some of you will put some thoughts into this and step up to help us out.

As you know, we have been without a president for a week now. But we have exciting things going with Spokes, such as just announced new venue, continued effort in acquiring new sites, and continue to build Austin based family of autocrossers.

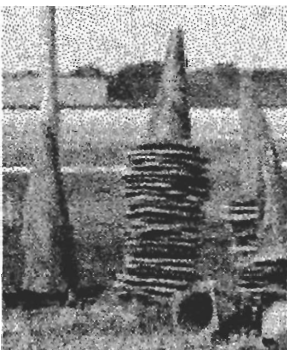
To continue our efforts and carry the long tradition of Spokes that many has worked hard to build, we are in need of new leadership, a president. It is by no means an easy task, but with certain amount of dedication and effort, you will be rewarded with great people surrounding you and working together to make Spokes a better place to autox. If you are feeling the urge to work with us and help Spokes, please come talk to us, email us, or call us with your interest!

The official duties are listed here  
<http://www.ccsi.com/~tholt/rulebook/00RULES.htm#president>

Any of the BOD members will be happy to talk to you about this, so please feel free to contact any of us if you are interested, or have nomination(s). Current BOD member contacts can be found here

<http://www.ccsi.com/~vitek/spokes/clubinfo.htm#positions>

Thanks!  
Tak  
Acting Pres.



## Lot clean up day

Yes our new lot does need some work in order for us to play on it. We will be having a clean up party one week before our next event. That would be March 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will be starting around 9:00 am and going thru till we are done. We do have a lot of work ahead of us, but in the long run it will be well worth it. Tommy Regan is heading up the clean up party. You may contact him at [tommy\\_regan@yahoo.com](mailto:tommy_regan@yahoo.com) or you may call him at 512-259-5566. I know Tommy is looking for people with leaf blowers, and push brooms. And just general help.

## Thunder Hill Raceway

It's that time of year again, THR is starting thier season. They are having several test and tune days beginning on March 9<sup>th</sup>, and also happening on March 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Their racing season begins on Saturday March 23. And every Saturday night thru the summer. They will not be racing April 6<sup>th</sup>. Something about a race in Fort Worth. Some little racing league NASCAR I think... ;)

## Loaner Helmets

As everyone knows we all must wear helmets when we are racing. SPOKES has allways offered loaner helmets to people who have yet to purchase them. We are in need of some better ones then what we have now. Luckily SPOKES rules on helmets is that they must be DOT approved. We are looking for your old helmet. If it's in decent shape and DOT approved we sure could use it. Thanks in advance for your donation.

## Next General meeting

Our next meeting will be on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The meeting this month will be at the Mr. Gatti's on Far West and Hard road. There is a map on the spokes.org website. Meetings start around 8:00, with some people showing up around 7:00 for food and a beer or two.

## Up coming events:

TAMSCC AutoX March 24<sup>th</sup>  
SASCA AutoX March 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Houston Region AutoX March 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Summary Results, #1 - Denny Friggin Fast -  
02/10/2002**

**Total Entries: 102, with Times: 79**

**Class: 'ss'**

1m ss 27 Robert Marsa 99 Corvette 60.513  
2m ss 74 Scott Taylor Corvette 61.913

**Class: 'bs'**

1m bs 47 John Gamby BMW M3 61.513

**Class: 'cs'**

1m 38 Jon Etkins Miata 10AE 53.215  
2m 23 Adrian Iley MR2 Spyder 59.001  
3m 33 David Dillon Miata 61.875

**Class: 'ds'**

1 25 Travis Rouse Subaru WRX 56.835  
2m 71 Ramsey Foster Scooby WRX 57.109  
3m 45 David p. Murphy 58.352  
4 6 Douglas Aleong WRX 63.089

**Class: 'es'**

1 34 Ray Gahan Mazda 56.936

**Class: 'fs'**

1 99 Denny Feigenspan Camaro 54.154

**Class 'gs'**

1m 15 Mike Mallo 99 Acura Integ 62.672  
2 28 Robert Hankins VW Scirocco 66.678

**Class: 'bsp'**

1m 27 Zac Myler BMW M3 59.266

**Class: 'csp'**

1 77 Greg Ward Miata 62.263

**Class: 'esp'**

1m 32 Tom Ramey Camaro SS 56.178

**Class: 'fsp'**

1m 911 William Lindbergh 72 Opel GT 68.626

**Class: 'cp'**

1m 46 Vitek Boruvka Nanar 56.981  
2m 1 Brian Siminski Pontiac 62.449

**Class: 'ep'**

1m 41 Gary Alexander VW Scir 56.328  
2m 142 Michael Wells Volvo 142 57.859

**Class: 'sm'**

1m 26 Brian Duty Impreza 59.274  
2m 34 Troy Dudley Supra TT 61.537  
3m 68 Charles Tarket 68 Mustang 66.593  
4m 19 Laurie Hyman '93 Supra 69.453

**Class: 'sm2'**

1m 98 Dani Wheeler Miata 63.002  
2 14 Bill Maroon MR2 64.021

**Class: 'sts'**

1m 72 Stephen Froehlich Civic EX 61.105

**Class: 'stx'**

1m 18 Allen Wilson Subaru WRX 58.439  
2 37 Steven Tellman 02 WRX 61.082  
3 79 Marty Bowers 02 WRX 65.569

**Class: 'f125'**

1m 17 John Long tony kart 57.319

**Class: 'n'**

1 99 Jeremy R. Gibson WRX 46.432  
2 78 Cesarillontes de Oca Galant 47.785  
3 199 Nathan W. Denney WRX 49.181  
4 3 Kevin Hartman Impresa R5 50.675  
5 8 Ryan English Audi TT 51.429  
6 9 Shane Nicholson 70 240z 52.318  
7 66 David Korn 90 Miata 52.368  
8 10 Logan Friedrich Toyota/MR2 52.837  
9 25 Trace Skma Camaro SS 53.089  
10 36 Iven Setiawan WRX Scoobies 53.398  
11 14 Benjamin Ertle Audi TT 53.512  
12 22 Scott McCaskin Integra-R 53.955  
13 44 Rudy Rouhana 2002 Gti 54.439  
14 111 Shane Sheperd TA 54.835  
15 569 Everett Lee Honda S2000 55.057  
16 34 Chad Matino Eclipse 2001 55.073  
17 18 Drane Pilat Pontiac TA 55.124  
18 Ken Tran Integra GSR 55.733  
19 1 Jeff Meininger Audi TT 56.215  
20 2 Delesley Hutchins 94 Miata 56.926  
21 42 Matthew Poplawski Honda Civic 57.846

**Class 't'**

1	13 Martin Truemper	Integra GS-R	44.911
2	10 Sorin Becheanu	Impreza	45.360
3	95 Tommy Regan	Ford Mustang	45.971
4	55 Chris Williams	Acura Integra	46.648
5	4 Justin Linder	Impreza RS	46.688
6	17 Brian Beachy	300ZX	47.589
7	7 Russell Long	91 300ZX TT	50.201
8	31 Walker Clark	Mazda Miata	50.363
9	52 Craig Rouse	Camaro Z-2	50.469
10	86 Bo Rivers	911 T	50.949
11	98 Dan Pedroza	Fraud Mustang	51.445
12	186 Eric Beverding	911T	51.651
13	65 Christopher McChesney	MR2	52.098
14	67 Wasn't registered	Rustang	53.161
15	88 Joi Chevalier	'02 Miata	53.541
16	1 Camaron Rivers	99 RS	54.994
17	5 Dacici Rivers	VW Jetta	55.945
18	50 Ken Korn	89 MR2 blown	56.938

**Class: 'x'**

1	xcs 8 Kyung Wootton	99 Miata	44.290
2	xcs 88 Jon Etkins	Miata	45.406
3	xss 197 Erik Strelnieks	01' Z06 Vette	45.567
4	xss 97 Beth McClure-Strelnieks	'01 vette	45.655
5	xcs 68 Michael Wootton	Miata	46.216
6	xgs 15 Peter Schami	GSR	46.543
7	xdsp17 Tak Inoue	Nissan 240 sx	47.492
8	xf125 29 Dan Pedroza	Interkart	49.616
9	xf125 129 Tommy Regan	Fisher Price Ka	50.444
10	xcs 38 Joe Chevah	Miata	50.859
11	xsm 91 Eric Hyman	'93 Supra	50.896
12	xf125 117 Vitek Boruvka	kart	52.441
13	xf125 7 Brian Beachy	Emmick 1	52.815
14	xep 42 Eric Larsen	Brick O' Doom	52.831

**Top Time of Day: cs 38 Jon Etkins 53.215**  
**Top Pax of Day: cs 38 Jon Etkins 43.211**

Congratulations to Jon for being able to score both TTOD and TPOD. Something not seen very often.

Hopefully he can do it again :)

**Feburary's income statement**

**Cash Flow for SPOKES**

Category Description	1/1/02-2/13/02
Balance on 12/31/01	2,948
<b>INFLOWS</b>	
Dues & Entries	3,892
<b>TOTAL INFLOWS</b>	<b>3,892</b>
<b>OUTFLOWS</b>	
Banquet	1,533
Equipment	155
Internet	120
Postage	83
Refreshments	125
Site Rental	500
Trophies	859
<b>TOTAL OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>3,375</b>
Balance on 2/13/02	3,465

As you can see we are off to a great year so far. Thanks Steve for getting this ready for us.

## The Shock Rule

Recently posted on the Evolution Discussion list and later in print at the North American Pylon, here is a commentary by Byron Short, a National-caliber driver and President of Extreme Geez. His article is intriguing and addresses an issue which I agree with wholeheartedly. I believe it should be printed in every regional club's newsletter to get the word out and gather the support of the majority. The topic is The Shock Rule.

Personally, I agree with Byron for the reasons he states in his article, but also for another reason having to do with driver confidence. Many drivers feel inferior to the national level drivers because they often finish well behind the top in their respective class. Like Byron used to do, they believe it is driver error. The thought process is always, "seat time seat time seat time will eventually get me to the top of the class." In fact, it's not always seat time, but rather how deep your pockets may be and this is disturbing to me.

The bottom line is that the average driver is actually not as "average" as they think. The idea that autocross is 90% driver and 10% car has been instilled in us for many years. This was probably the case ten years or so ago. But because of the current shock rule and the technological advances in shock technology, I believe that autocross is now about 70% driver and 30% car setup and that is heavily dependent on budget. The more money you have, the higher the technology you can apply to your vehicle and get into the elite quicker. "Stock" car with \$4000+ shocks? That's not stock. For the rest of us, you are not as bad a driver that you may think you are. The problem may be that you just don't have the same budget. Be proud of your driver skill especially if you are a stock class driver on budget shocks or even OEM shocks. Nowadays you are not just going up against another driver in a similar car, you are going up against a similar driver but in a better setup car.

In my opinion the current stock shock rule also stifles potential membership. Nobody likes to come out and get hammered by a local hot shoe on extra groovy <tm> shocks. The national competitions attracts those that do well initially at the local level and move on up. If stock class were on OEM shocks, in my opinion, the national events would attract more because more of the local folks would be in closer competition and realize that they are, in fact, better than the results currently show. It would help the driver feel better about themselves overall and want to participate more with their local club.

Enough of my rambling. I don't have the same experience and skill as Byron. Here are his thoughts reprinted with his permission:  
Dan Pedroza

"I feel the current stock shock rule is no longer working as intended, and have had several discussions with SEB members about the topic. It's not an easy one to solve, but I'll pass along my 2 cents worth. First, the problem currently is that folks can and are spending \$3K-5K and even more on shocks in stock, and that these shocks are a must have item in the more competitive stock classes, especially the spec classes. Now, I'll be the first to admit that both parts of the equation (high cost and "must have" status) have to be true for there to be a problem. I have always felt that the value of these shocks was overrated. I've driven on Konis (single and double adjustable), GAB's, and am currently on Shocktek-warmed-over Bilsteins. I'm an admitted shock dummy who likes to set my shocks and leave them alone. But this past year I learned the value of these new ultra-groovy shocks at nationals.

For those that don't know me, I don't think I'm just whining without foundation. I've pretty much always been a top contender at Nationals, with top five finishes from 1993 thru 2000 except 1999 (dumb tire choice in the wet) when I was 6th. So I'm reasonably confident in my driving. When I was considerably off the pace in 2001 I blamed it on my lack of practice. I was no longer competing at the same every-weekend pace I always had been in previous years, so that must be it. Tom Berry kept on insisting that his car was almost like cheating because it was set up so well, and kept singing the praises of his shocks, but again, I've always felt that it must just be me, so I chalked it up to bad driving, and kept working harder. Finally, when I got to nationals, the unfortunate turn of events led to a unique opportunity to co-drive Peter Raymonds car, one of the other Miatas on extra-groovy (tm) shocks. The results were a surprise to everyone, but nobody more than me. While at the Pro finale I was 9th, (and I drove well, I might add), in my own car, I found Peter's car just plain worked much better than mine. The shocks were clearly the biggest reason why. Heck, we ran on my tires which I had used in the Pro, so that couldn't have been it. Anyway, jumping in Peters car which I had never driven before, I took the lead in BS and held it until the last driver of the class...Peter himself. And I can tell you I wasn't thinking that my run was all there was, at all. I was still on a steep learning curve. I can say with great certainty that I drove better at the Pro, and was 9th, with mere \$800 shocks. I also used GEEZ to check the hp of Peter's car versus my car, and I definitely have nothing to whine about there. My car seems to be more powerful than Peter's from what GEEZ showed. So with a little bit of research, and admittedly, only one event to go on, I'm convinced the shocks were the difference, and a very large difference at that.

So say what you will, but I believe the new ultra-groovy shocks are a requirement, at least in BS, and probably the other "spec" classes too. Given another year, I predict they'll be "required" in most every stock class. And if you still aren't convinced that they are a "must have" item at the top national level, at least agree that as more and more of the top national drivers come to this conclusion and make the purchase, the perception will automatically become reality.

So do we want stock class to have this kind of ante? Shocks that run from \$3000 on the really low side to \$8000 on the high side are not part of the cost-effective equation, IMHO. Not everyone believes this is a problem, but give it more time. I am positive that it is, and that the problem

is only going to get worse. The really bad part, though, is trying to figure out a solution. I don't believe we can try to legislate shock technology, or put in place "numbers of adjustment rules", or things like that and truly fix the problem. In fact, many of these will only make the problem worse. For instance, let's be extreme and say "no aftermarket adjustable shocks at all". The new "must have" shock becomes one that has all of the same features that, say, Peter's shocks had that day at Nationals. Only not adjustable. So how do we get those? Easy but expensive. We have great folks like Guy Ankeny determine the new exotic settings, and put them into a non adjustable shocks. The trouble is, for Guy to learn this he has to experiment a LOT, and that experimentation is what he gets paid for. That's why his shocks right now are both a) wonderful and b) expensive. Eliminating the adjustability of shocks while allowing any aftermarket shock only makes them more wonderful and more expensive. So I don't believe that trying to legislate the construction of the shock has any merit at all, and rather, that any further legislation will likely add to the cost of "stock" shocks.

I see only two paths for shock rules if we are to get this under control. 1) Claimer rule, and 2) OEM shocks. There are some dangers with each. First I HATE (all caps double underline) the idea of a claimer rule on shocks. I think claimer rules are mostly unworkable, and I would NOT (ACDU) recommend we adopt one here. The only good thing I can say about it, though, is it hits directly on the problem. If we adopted, say, a \$1000 claimer rule for shocks, this might resolve the problem. But one of the big dangers would be the OEM shocks that cost more than \$1000 to replace. And what about the guy who worked hard to perfect his shocks, only to have them "force-sold" to his competitor? Obviously we don't want the rule to create a new means of shopping for parts. And basically that's how a claimer rule feels to me. Either it's mis-used in this way, or dis-used, and therefore has very limited effect. Again, this is not the idea I think we should follow, but I've heard it expressed, and hey, it might bear more discussion. As much as I dislike the idea of a claimer rule, I would support it over what we have now. As you might deduce then, I'm really in favor of requiring OEM shocks in stock classes. I have to tell you that when I was on the SEB I was firmly on the side of allowances in stock to equalize the playing field for more cars, and to keep costs down. Done properly, allowances beyond stock have both of these effects. I have always been, and still largely am, not in favor of making stock more stock, just for the sake of semantics. Mostly our allowances to stock work, and work well.

But consider the original reason that shocks were part of what we allow to be altered in stock--price. Originally, it was thought that aftermarket shocks would be cheaper than oem shocks. Heck, a nice set of Sears Roadhandlers still are! But as we all know, the years went by, solo became more affluent, shock technology blossomed, and then we hit a new reason to allow shocks to be altered--tuning. By allowing different levels of tuning to more cars, we keep more cars competitive. And besides, if we look at "performance" cars, such as they were, in the 1980's or so, we find that the factory shocks pretty much sucked. So we made the cars more enjoyable, at a price that was only beginning to slightly outstrip oem shocks, and along the way more cars could be competitive. That was still a neat place to be. But that's not where we are now. What's happened now, is that the shock rule has had the opposite effect of what it's one-time benefits were. It's more expensive. With Miata shocks at \$3K-5K and Corvette shocks at \$4K-8K, this unintended result has gone completely wacko. And consider availability. Lots of cars are rendered uncompetitive (either in fact or in perception) because nobody builds trick shocks for them...yet. (Hey, don't fret...if enough people put together their \$4K and send it in, they'll find a way to cash your checks! ;-)) So the two things we had most to gain have swung around 180 degrees to be the two worst things about the current shock rules.

So what would happen if we went to stock shocks? First, let's talk about the fun factor. Would the cars that are the top contenders in their classes right now become un-fun? I don't believe so. Miatas, Z06's, even Type R's and Neon ACR's all come with shocks that are better from the factory than the trick shocks were from say 10 years ago. And if everyone is on the same shocks, we'll have no trouble accepting the extra wallowy-ness in those cars that didn't have such great shocks.

What about competitiveness? There are two issues here. First, does this re-shuffle the class deck? I don't think so. The cars that are the leaders in their class now, almost without exception, come with really good shocks to begin with. They will continue to be the best in their class on stock shocks, in all likelihood. The second concern regarding competitiveness is, will we see more classes become spec classes because only a few cars have good factory shocks? Again, not likely. And one provision to help this is to allow OEM shocks from equipment package of the same model to be used, as long as they are a direct bolt-in. This means that a Miata can use the R series Bilsteins. And a Camaro can use the double-adjustable ILE's shocks. There's lots of room for debate here of course. Next, what about cost, really? Some of the newer cars do have some rather costly shocks, but then, they are newer cars and really shouldn't be needing shocks any time soon. And if you spent \$50K for a car, and decide you want new shocks, you understand if the shocks cost you more than Roadhandlers for an '86 Rabbit. In most cases, though, factory OEM shocks will cost less than what we used to spend on off-the-shelf performance shocks like Koni yellows, or GABs. So at the very worst, our shock pricing returns to where it was 5 years ago or so.

What about older stock cars that no longer have oem shocks available? Shocks would be handled like any other parts which are no longer available from the manufacturer--there is specific wording in the rule book which allows the next closest thing that can be found in the aftermarket that is as near as possible to a direct replacement and not "high performance" in nature. It works for all sorts of other things right now. But again, I can't think of any cars so old right now as to be in this need. In fact, most of the cars competing these days would still be on their original oem shocks if not for the current rules. So in most cases, availability and cost just won't be factors since the shocks won't be swapped out in the first place.

Finally, what about the sneaky competitor that takes apart his OEM shocks, sets them up to be wayyy tricky, then rewelds them back together to

look like new? Well, without being too glib about it, that's cheating. And I really feel that the vast, vast majority of our members won't cheat. They'll use every inch of the rules that they have to, but they won't cheat. And if they do, hey, the shock is supposed to look like a factory shock, inside and out. If I were going to protest someone I'd provide two new factory shocks for comparison. One they cut in half to compare to his shock which they cut in half. The other, they give to him if his shock is found legal. The incentive for someone to cheat knowing that his work can be cut in half and thrown away if the protestor just hands you a brand new shock is way lower. But mostly, this issue is like the stock engine rules in 1993 or so. When 0.040 overbores and balancing were removed from stock at that time, people predicted rampant cheating. It didn't happen. I have faith in our membership, and don't feel it will happen with shocks either. But with shocks, it's much easier and cheaper to enforce.

BTW, also like the stock engine allowances in the early 90's, this rule would need to be implemented on a two year sunset. In other words, the rule would be debated this year, and ideally passed this year. So 2002 goes by while the rule is debated by the SEB, floated for member comment, etc. At the end of 2002 the rule is passed, following the "rule season" concept that the SEB tends to follow. But the SEB would put a two year sunset provision in place, meaning that for the next two seasons, 2003 and 2004 the new rule wouldn't go into effect...yet. This gives the folks that have already spent the big \$\$ on shocks a couple of years to use them. It also decreases the incentive to escalate the shock wars any further. Then in 2005, we all drive on OEMs in stock. (SP would keep the current rules of course.)

I feel strongly that we have a problem with "stock" category shocks that must be addressed. And unfortunately, the genie can't be put half-way back into the bottle. But we can smash the bottle and banish him from driving up the cost of solo in stock any further by reverting to OEM shocks on a 2 year sunset, with implementation starting in January 2005.

Another autocrosser, who I have asked to step forward and take blame/credit, passed an interesting idea by me that addresses a lot of this. His idea is to require new stock category cars, say, 4 years old or less, to run OEM shocks. Older stock category cars get the current two-adjustment shock rule. I like this because the local competitor that runs an older car with Midas shocks on it is still in stock. The guy with a new Corvette who shows up to his first autocross with aftermarket shocks most likely has different springs or swaybars or something too. In the real world (outside of SCCA autocross) people who are going to pull brand new shocks off of their brand new car for replacement aren't likely to stop there.

It also addresses a bit of the safety concern. Newer cars are getting better about roll-overs; older cars still have the same means they have now to prevent them. Perhaps most interesting is the wrinkle that this might make it a little less tempting to buy a new car each year. (Hey I've done it, and I don't mind it. I tend to lose less depreciation on a car at one or two years, than the cost of a set of Penske remote reservoirs...) In some classes, the 98 model with the trick shocks might be more competitive than the 2002 model with the OEM shocks. In other classes, maybe not. If we implement this on a sunset as I proposed before, everyone who has a 2001 or older car with trick shocks would never have to replace them. By the time the sunset expires and the new rule hits the books in 2005, their cars are old enough to keep the trick shocks. Only those who make new purchases would be in the position of having to make that choice. Nobody's existing investment is endangered.

Paul Brown, one of the guys who actually gets to vote on this (rather than just whine like the rest of us) told us that he feels that the OEM concept is flawed to the point of being the worst of the alternatives, because it is completely unenforceable. But I take issue with his assertions. Paul says that OEM shocks have already been tried in showroom stock, and they failed there because the protest shed couldn't enforce the rule. Okay, I remember the days that they had to go to 5th at the Runoffs to find a legal car to stand on the podium. But those cars that were illegal, weren't found illegal for shocks—they were illegal for engine modifications. Showroom stock racers were finding lots of ways to built illegal engines that they were convinced were undetectable. The protest shed found them to be quite detectable, and the cars were ejected. As far as I can remember, and someone please set me straight if I'm missing something, but I don't remember a single disqualification at the runoffs in Showroom Stock for tweaked shocks.

Do we believe that this is because shock tweaking is undetectable? I don't. A shock is a mechanical thing, way less complicated than, say, an engine. It has orifices, valves, borings, springs, rods. Mechanical stuff. If we cut one open we can see and measure these things. Anyone who thinks that if they make the external case of the shock look stock they are home free is mistaken. If you send your shocks to Koni for revalving, how do they know to make them stiffer? They look at the current parts inside the shock, and alter them. If they were somehow unmeasureable this would be impossible. C'mon folks, it's mechanical stuff. It's measurable. Okay, so what is there REALLY to learn from Showroom Stock for us in Solo Stock? Let's look at where they had all of their enforceability problems...motor work. I joined the SEB in 1994, just as the sunset period for engine balancing, blue-printing, and over-boring was expiring. This was going to take our engine rules to the point that Showroom Stock was, completely OEM. No more overbores, balancing, or other blueprinting, which had up to that time been permitted. It had become acceptable practice to buy a new car, pull the motor apart, over-bore, balance, and blueprint it. A competitor might spend thousands, all to get what was typically just a few small percentage points of hp gain. Does this sound familiar? The naysayers at that time put in one last ditch effort to try to block the rule, to eliminate the OEM engine specs, and continue to allow balancing, blue-printing, and overboring. They said it would be unenforceable, that only the cheaters would have tweaked engines, and nobody else would be able to detect it. And they pointed to Showroom Stock to prove their point. Which was a pretty good argument, given Showroom Stock's then recent history.

But the SEB stuck to their guns, the sunshine period expired, and OEM engine specs prevailed. They are still in effect. So what do you think of the current engine situation? Do we have widespread cheating? Does anyone think that if someone has tweaked an engine that it would be undetectable? And in the final analysis, did this rule change help the sport or hurt the sport? Did it cost us money or save us money? Did it help us grow or limit our growth?

Think about the arguments that are being presented. Do you really think shock internals can't be measured? Do you think our current system, which has kept engine cheating well under control in stock, will be incapable of doing the same thing with shock absorbers. I've been on many protest committees at nationals that dealt with engine teardowns, the last just last year. Our competitor body is willing to put up the bond money to take apart an engine to find out the truth. And by and large, the truth is, we don't have rampant engine cheating going on. A protesting individual can provide a new shock, or the money for one, way cheaper than he can dive into an engine, I'll guarantee that. It's a bold step, to change from the status quo. It was a bolder step in 1994 to go forward with even more sweeping changes in our engine preparation. But the sport is better for it. Can any of us imagine returning to the old engine rules now? Would anyone like to stand up in favor of the old engine rules?

I believe that if we adopt OEM rules for shocks that we'll feel the same way eight years hence.

--Byron Short  
President, Extreme Geez"

Eric Larsen - RATTLE Editor  
PO Box 1003  
Georgetown TX, 78627

