



The official news source of SCCA's Northwest Region

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The war is here

There is a war going on: Not about Iraq, Iran, North Korea or Afghanistan. Right here! As time passes, I am seeing more evidence that there is a faction out there that wants to do away with motorsports altogether.

Many of us have the attitude that we are here to stay. We have been here for years. This our sport and that will not change. No one is going to take that away from us.

It is bad enough that the cost of everything has gone through the ceiling. If the enemy thinks that eliminating motorsports is going to cure global warming, the cost of gas, save the forests and so on, they are dead wrong. Long before we should be sanctioned, they need to eliminate factories, school buses, the trucking industry — you get my drift.

Their second issue is that we make too much noise. In the venues I have worked we are well below current state standards. Now here are my observations: Did we not take our sport to remote places in spots where noise is not an issue — Pacific Raceways, Bremerton Motor Sports Park, Straddleline Off Road Vehicle Pack (formerly ORV), the woods, etc.? The trucks and the compact car with skinny tires that go “boom, boom, boom” on the highways that drive by these places exceed state standards. What's up with that?

The next issue was that we tear up roads. In organized racing, only a few groups run off road. I can speak for Rally. We rent the roads we usually use. We prep them before we get there and we grade them when we are done (after is better than before). On Green Diamond (formerly Simpson Timber Co.) property, we have litter pick-up days (just because we do). Most of the rest of you run on pavement so the argument is moot.

The scary part of all this is that coached politicians are saying these things. They actually are passing laws to prohibit our activities. Read on ...

History: Here is just a bit of what drives me to make my comments.

In 2003, the Thurston County Board of County Commissioner (BoC) closed the ORV Park on a 2-1 vote. There were several ambiguous reasons for the two commissioner's decisions. Thirty thou-

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**FRANK HAMILTON,
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE**

sand people used that park per year for dirt bikes, camping, stump jumping, mud races and rallies. There were two fatal crashes there, but one was a freak motorcycle accident and other was a pair of trespassers. The park was making money the last five of those years it was open, contrary to what commissioners said.

When Thurston County closed the ORV Park, there was suddenly an increase in complainants to the sheriff that noisy dirt bikes were riding in neighborhoods — that was predictable! Kids will be kids if you don't set rules and give them an outlet for their energy.

The ORV Park remained closed for about two years. Much of its county owned equipment disappeared and its employees became jobless. There were several break-ins and thieves stole some of its plumbing. Thurston County was left with a debt of over \$1 million owed the state in grant money.

Just after the closure, Northwest Outdoor Collation (NWOC) was formed. NWOC was made up of a number of motorsports enthusiasts. They included the American Motorcycle Association (AMA), Tacoma Trail Cruisers, 4x4 clubs, Northwest Region SCCA and many more. The mission was to get ORV back open and preserve the very few motorsports parks in Washington State. NWOC came up with solutions but politics got in the way. Even the state DNR seemed to want to support the continued operation of the park.

Many of these site users bring their families to ride, drive and camp together. It would be fair to say these events are family functions much of the time. Communities like Shelton, Bremerton, McCleary, Olympia and so on experience an economic surge during motor-sport competitions. Local businesses, stores, ATV retailers, motels, casinos, gas stations and more feel a favorable impact, too.

NWOC started having meetings with Grays Harbor County commissioners and the town of McCleary. That was