



I'm getting that itch again, that stirring in my soul to go out there to leap tall buildings, right wrongs, rob from the rich and give to the poor. Believe me when I tell you that there is a direct correlation between how I'm feeling and the inauspicious start of the 1990 Pro Rally season. An ill wind is blowing from Denver. It's a wind that defied the gulf stream by starting in Georgia, gathered momentum over Chicago and streaked into Colorado only to be deflated by a door slam and the sound of paper shredding.

Since achieving two score plus years, I find myself being highly selective in the battles I chose to fight. And frankly, to this point, things had reached such relative calm that I hardly ever batted an eye over the price of iceberg lettuce anymore.

Well, the 80's are over and that stirring can't be denied this time. I know this feeling, I remember it's passion, it's righteousness, it's vigor. It's how I felt for most of the sixties as we protested Nam, burned underwear, wore flowers in our hair, believed the lyrics to Lennon and McCartney songs (from Sgt. Pepper on). I find myself reaching back for those memories by practicing that tone I had in my voice, that squint or glare in my eyes, that angry posture that meant I meant business.

But, I'm getting away from myself here... thinking about the sixties does that sometimes. So what was it that started all this burning and festering in my soul? Well, to be painfully honest, it wasn't so much what happened as the potential precedent for what happened that has me perched on this soap box with bare feet, bell bottoms and love beads. After all, if one is going to stage a sixties style protest, one must dress the part. Hmmm, wish I hadn't cut my hair.

The cancellation of the Chattahoochee Forest National PRO, at first blush, looks like just another one of those pesky, unanticipated administrative snafu's that just couldn't be repaired. The original dates for the event had to be changed because of a conflict with the SCCA National Convention, the organizing region had established a budget based upon a minimum of 30 cars and had an insurance policy that had the potential of lapsing before the event could run. Now, call me crazy if you want but who's in charge here, Roger Rabbit?

Under the best of circumstances, assuming the helm of a PRO rally event in this day and age is tantamount to scaling the Brooklyn Bridge blindfolded. With one arm and leg tied together. In a hurricane. With the entire news staff of "A Current Affair" climbing

after you inquiring how you feel. But there are a few guarantee's. First, you probably won't make it to the top unscathed. Second, SCCA-Denver will NOT be there with a lifeline. And last, the insurance industry will have a clause in your event policy that will render it null and void if anyone even remotely connected to the event ever attempts to scale the Brooklyn Bridge. Blindfolded. With one arm and leg tied together. In a hurricane and with the entire news staff of "A Current Affair" pecking at their heels.

While Chattahoochee may seem to some like a comedy of errors and simply write it off, I view it in a far darker context. That ill wind I spoke of before, and mark my words here, will gather itself again this season and before long the 1990 Pro rally schedule will show the telltale signs of ambush. While there is no doubt in my mind that SCCA-Denver considers Pro Rallying as little more than a pesky fly that, to date, has successfully eluded the swatter, the real denizen is the insurance industry. If we as competitors were offended by the \$50.00 per car "insurance" surcharge imposed during the 1989 season, the recent shenanigans in Georgia will surely give new meaning to the old saw, "if you want to play, you'll have to pay." As long as we entertain this nonsense we allow the underwriters to make all the rules.

So, my first question to the powers that be is: Could you please detail for me exactly how many claims have been submitted over the past five years as a direct result of a Pro Rally event? Question 2: What was the pay off on each of those claims? Question 3: What then is the basis for establishing a premium for a Pro Rally Event? (Answer: AHUMINA HUMINA).

Given the age in which we live and our propensity to jump on the law suit bandwagon every time we stub our toe, I truly understand the need for insurance. I'll even go so far as to say that we shouldn't operate without it. But there is a point where fear and paranoia take over, turning a reasonable proposition into lunacy. Considering the untimely demise of Chattahoochee, that point has been passed. We are actively relinquishing the control of our sport to those faceless button down shirts and stripe ties that sit behind highly polished desks in Denver and Chicago.

Every September TH and I fork over several hundred bucks to SCCA for the privilege of annual membership and Pro Licensing. That buys us a monthly issue of "Sports Car", a rag that rarely contains more than one page of Pro Rally information per issue. It allows us to enter Divisional and PRO Rally events anyplace in the continental U.S. and Canada, assuming we can muster up the entry fee and bear the burden of expenses. And that is all. SCCA will not market PRO Rallying so the possibilities for major corporate sponsorship are all but non-existent. It is up to the individual event chairperson and individual competitor to get out there and beat the bushes for whatever support they can get. SCCA's only response to our sport is in the form of a National Rally Steward who cannot possibly do more than he is already doing. I'll use this forum to sincerely thank John for all his efforts. He's pretty much a lone ranger out there in a world of desperados cutting him off at the pass.

So what's the solution? Well, every radical bone in my body keeps sending the same message to my brain:... secede... vamoose... adios... vacate... retreat. Let's establish our own sanctioning body, make our own rules, find our own corporate sponsor and insurance carrier, negotiate reciprocity and do for ourselves what Denver fails to do for us. We have the talent, we have the enthusiasm and heaven knows, we have the need to do something to survive. The only question is: Do we have the guts?