

Larry Chan - Lifetime Achievement Award (2023)

Written and presented by: Peter Bollenbecker (2022 Regional Executive)



Good morning. I have the pleasure of doing something that we've certainly not done recently, and maybe we've done some time before, or maybe not, but I'm also sure there is someone here who will be able to let me know. A good number of you know the person we are giving special recognition to today, and a good number of you who are newer should know this person

as the Region wouldn't be what it is without their innumerable contributions, and consistent dedication to the Region and its autocross program.

They ran their first autocross as a high school senior with the Delta Region SCCA at the Gulfport Mississippi Naval Seabee Base and got hooked, when "CAM" was just "AM." The car was a 1976 Camaro Type LT, with 8 x 15" rear wheels and tires bumping them from F-Stock to B-Stock – yep, the rules have always been like that. The sweet 8-track tape player was allowed though.

Jumping to 1979 at Texas A&M University, now with a new 1979 Toyota Celica GT Liftback, they joined the student-run sports car club hosting “high speed” or “Solo I” autocross events at Texas World Speedway, attracting drivers from all over the state.

They began running timing and scoring at the club’s events. The “system” was a home-built timer sitting on the dashboard with cables clipped to the car battery for power. The start/finish sensor was a Radio Shack infrared entry alert system. They also made and posted event flyers all over campus to attract new students to the events. In my head, and I’m not sure why, I can actually see them doing this.

Fast forward to Texas, 1984. They first joined the SCCA and in 1985, decided to attend the then “Solo II” National Championship in Salina, Kansas, finishing 7th out of 14 in the H-Stock Celica. Proving some things never change, whether Kansas or currently Nebraska, what they remember from that event was wearing almost all of their clothes because it got so cold.

After college, it was time to upgrade and they moved on to a 1987 Toyota MR2 in San Antonio, Texas, running at the local high school football stadium (probably a decent size lot since Texas takes high school football seriously). They also took their first Region leadership role joining the Board.

Fortunately for us, career opportunities brought this person to San Diego in 1987. Their first San Diego event was on July 12, 1987, judging by the oldest printed results that could be found – ultimately proving that that document, like so many spare parts we keep, was ultimately going to be useful someday - 35 years later.

At that time San Diego autocross was sanctioned by the San Diego Asebring Association or “SDAA”, an independent group that coordinated autocross events amongst its member car clubs, and was not part of SCCA. In 1993, SDAA merged with San Diego SCCA to incorporate autocross, and the Solo Committee was formed. This member was involved with the merger of the two organizations and the transfer of autocross equipment from SDAA to SCCA.

Around 1993, and still involved with timing and scoring, they helped upgrade the autocross timing system from four re-purposed stop watches housed in a metal box with manual selector buttons, and a single start/finish trip light, to a purpose built JA Circuits timer (of which we still have two, with one perhaps giving up the ghost finally at our last event). In 2005 they helped with the implementation of the AXWare computer timing and scoring system we use today, after more than a few software upgrades along the way.

In the pre-internet, pre social media days, they maintained the membership lists for mailing event flyers and results, and maintained the Solo Supplementary Regulations from 1994 to 2018.

Setting out an every 10 year plan after that first cold and wet trip to Nationals, they returned in 1995 with the trusty MR2 to a new site, Forbes Field, Topeka, Kansas, and again in 2005 in their Street Touring Ultra 1997 BMW M3. These were the first and last of 10 years of events at Forbes Field. They broke with the plan in 2006 and went to their last Solo Nationals in 2006 in Heartland Park, Topeka, again in the M3.

They have served on the San Diego Region Board of Directors as secretary of the board, and in near every capacity in the Solo program including treasurer, secretary, and vice chair, as well as the Equipment Chair and Timing & Scoring Chair. They were instrumental in the design, layout, purchase, and outfitting of the Region's equipment and timing trailer that we use today.

For all this time, Larry Chan always preferred to work in the background making events operate smoothly and getting things done. If you paid attention, Larry was always, always busy. I remember being new, and getting to know Larry since we raced together in the same class, also with his wife Kim. Larry would be there first thing in the morning, gathering and inputting all

the info for timing and scoring, then running around doing I didn't know what, nowhere near grid, Kim getting the car ready and Larry suddenly appearing to lay down a fast time, almost always having never walked course. Then, back into the trailer, and Larry would also always be there at the end of the day, packing things up, and making sure that anything that needed attention would be taken and fixed, repaired, or refilled for the next event. And then there were the audits and final results to do at home. All in the background, never seeking attention or praise.

I can tell you that it's taken many of us, and I mean many of us vs Larry to understand - even though he wrote it down for us, and told us - that things like pens and post-its don't just magically appear in the trailer, timing and scoring takes attention to detail and commitment and focus. Equipment doesn't just work all the time if you're not relentlessly maintaining it.

Larry also stayed with us and came to all of our events for several years, even after he stopped driving, to transition all that he knew, and particularly to ensure that we developed a group of timing and scoring staff to carry us forward. I personally can't thank him enough for these things.

So, we are taking the time today to thank Larry, and give him the praise and recognition he has always earned and deserved, with a lifetime achievement award. Given his commitment over time, his efforts in timing and scoring, and his efforts to ensure that our equipment was always running and events ran like clockwork, we chose a clock to represent these attributes of his service.

Larry, if you would come up, we would like to present you with this award. As a member driven club, I can only say we should all try to be like Larry.

The inscription on the clock reads....