



VINTAGE SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

20 September 1984

Dear VSCCA Members,

Sixty-two new members have joined our club since the beginning of 1984. I am delighted to extend to each of them a warm welcome and the wish that they will find in the VSCCA the pleasure of shared interests with congenial people, and of using "our kind" of car in a spirit of fun and sportsmanship. Having extended this welcome in all sincerity, however, I confess to a certain deviousness because I intend to use it as a way into another point that has been bothering me for some time.

Reviewing the applications of prospective members, and the letters of their sponsors, I have noticed in recent years that an increasing proportion (by no means all) appear to be interested in the VSCCA mainly because it holds races. Some random quotations may illustrate my point: "*Mr. Doe holds an SCCA competition license and will be an asset to the club.*" "*I'm getting too old for SCCA racing and would like to take a crack at your vintage races.*" "*I don't have a car now but am on the lookout for one that will be eligible for your races.*"

Allowing for the fact that such remarks do not necessarily reflect an applicant's (or his sponsor's) total point of view, I nevertheless sense in them, because of their concentration on racing and the frequency with which they occur, a disturbing shift in our appreciation of what the VSCCA is. My personal devotion to racing is long-standing, pre-dating by many years my association with the VSCCA. But, because I feel strongly that one of the jobs of a president is from time to time to remind the organization of its ideals, I want to re-state here what I see as the root purpose of the VSCCA, and to define some principles that grow naturally from that purpose, and have become part of our tradition.

1. **In the VSCCA, *the cars* are of paramount importance. This means that the races and drivers are secondary. We are institutionally indifferent to who wins our races; for this reason we give no trophies.**
2. **The VSCCA is not primarily a racing organization. We exist "to encourage the acquisition, preservation, restoration, and operation of vintage sports cars" (cf. VSCCA By-laws, Article I, Section 2). Our races should be seen in this context. Of course, they are fun for**

drivers and spectators but, first and foremost, they are settings in which *the cars* can be used appropriately, *not* all-out contests to prove which is the fastest car or who is the fastest driver. Those seeking exercises of the latter sort should look elsewhere for their gratifications.

3. The VSCCA is not intended to be a cheap or easy way to go racing. We must resist any tendency which makes it seem that this is our purpose.
4. Ideally - and historically - interest in belonging to our club originates in a serious interest in vintage sports cars (perhaps even in a particular vintage sports car) and in the pleasure of driving them. Not, willy-nilly, in a strong competitive urge. Of course, the two can go hand-in-hand but I believe the distinction in emphasis needs to be made.
5. The widespread notion that only sports-racing cars are eligible or welcome in VSCCA events is erroneous. The club is no less concerned with sports cars of the road-going or touring type than it is with those which don't go anywhere but around a race circuit unless on a trailer.

I hope this message will help to clarify the identity of our wonderful club, and to define some important ways in which it differs from many of the vintage car clubs and commercial organizations which have come into being since the VSCCA was founded, and whose primary purpose is racing. I hope, too, that you will agree that this difference is a valuable one and worth preserving. Happy motoring!

William F.B. O'Donnell
President