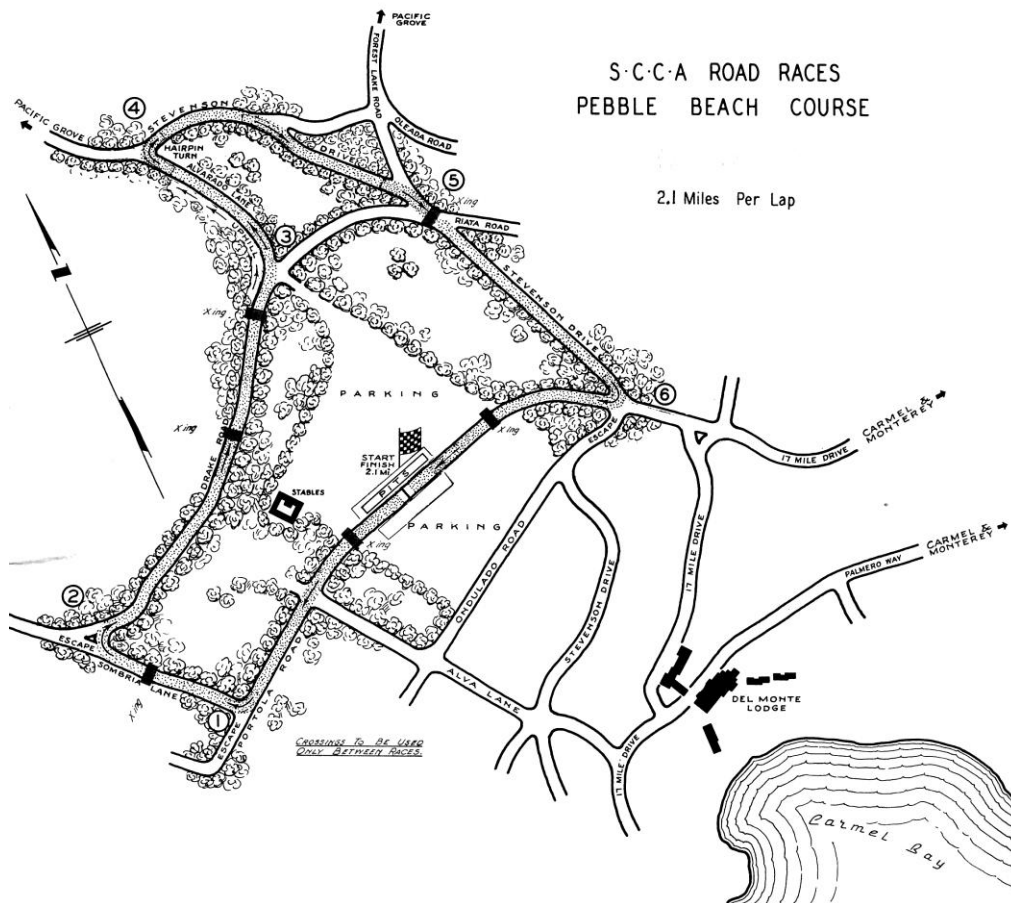


# The Preservationist

The Member Newsletter of the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits Preservation Society  
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## The Parallel with Pebble Beach



*The 2.1 mile Pebble Beach course used in 1951 through 1956. The 1950 course used the short road shown between corners three and five.*

The roar of un-muffled engines, the clash of square toothed gears, the screech of drum brakes and the wild excited cheers of the crowd... The cacophonous sounds of open road sports car racing will forever bond Pebble Beach and Elkhart Lake. While separated by over 2,000 miles, the parallels between the history of sports car racing in Pebble Beach and Elkhart Lake share amazing similarities.

Both races were organized by fledgling SCCA Regions; San Francisco at Pebble Beach and the Chicago/Milwaukee in Elkhart Lake. Both Regions held their first race in 1950; Elkhart Lake in July and Pebble Beach in November. Both held their initial races on shorter interim circuits; 1.7 miles at Pebble Beach and 3.35 miles at Elkhart Lake. Both expanded their circuits the following year; 2.1 miles at Pebble

Continued on page 2

Beach and 6.5 miles in Elkhart Lake. Both initial 1950 races were low key regional events and both were later expanded to National Championship events.

Drivers who raced both at Pebble Beach and Elkhart Lake include Jim Kimberly, Fred Wacker, Phil Hill, Sherwood Johnson, Roger Barlow, Mike Graham, John von Neumann, Bill Spear, Carroll Shelby, Bill Pollack and Irv Robbins. In an amazing coincidence Phil Hill placed first in the shorter Del Monte Handicap race in 1951 and fourth in the longer Pebble Beach Cup race. He came to Elkhart Lake just five months later and finished first in the shorter Sheldon Cup race and fourth again in the longer Elkhart lake Cup race.

The Pebble Beach organizers had one huge advantage over Elkhart Lake. While the Elkhart circuits were laid out on public roads regulated by state and county laws, the Pebble Beach circuit was laid on private roads owned by the Del Monte Property Association. State laws like the right of access law that ended racing in Elkhart Lake in 1952 did not apply to racing in Pebble Beach and the races continued for four more years on the Pebble Beach circuits.

While many drivers considered the Elkhart Lake circuits to be dangerous, Pebble Beach was even more dangerous. The track wound through dense forests for most of its distance with large and small trees pressing in close to the road.

Then in 1956 the inevitable happened... Ernie McAfee (no relation to Jack McAfee) lost control of his Ferrari on the long downhill back stretch near the approach to turn six, somersaulted into the air and struck a large pine tree squarely amid ship. He was killed instantly ending open road racing in Pebble Beach.



*Phil Hill behind the wheel of the Alfa Romeo 2900B at Pebble Beach in 1951.*

Although open road racing in both locations had come to a close, the amazing parallel in the history of the two circuits did not. Just as the open road races in Elkhart Lake led to the construction of Road America, the Pebble Beach races were shortly followed by the creation of Laguna Seca Raceway, the premier closed road race circuit on the West Coast.



*Spectators crowd Drake Road during the 1951 races. Note the densely wooded nature of the course.*

Today both Elkhart Lake and Pebble Beach play host to annual celebrations of vintage motorsports, the July Vintage Festival in Elkhart Lake and the August Motorsports Reunion in Pebble Beach, both lasting tributes to the racers and the cars that started it all.

*Continued on page 3*



## **2013 July Dinner Social Schedule**

The July dinner-social will be held on

**Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup>**

Preceding the “Brick” summer vintage race weekend at Road America

Please note the change from the usual Thursday to Wednesday

A program featuring CanAm is being planned

**Details will follow... Save the date!**