

How the NNL Began

The original, first ever NNL took place in the summer of 1980, at Tom Woodruff's mid-Ohio, USA, house and garage. Although many of the country's top model car builders were invited to attend this first-ever non-competitive get-together, just six would answer the call: host Tom Woodruff, Chuck Helppie, Gary Dale, Andy Martin, Bob Bost, and I. We had a great time sharing our hobby and our friendship that day, topped off by the hospitality and scrumptious food of Tom's wife, Karen.

Just prior to that weekend, the latest issue of Scale Auto Enthusiast magazine had arrived, and "Putty Thrower" columnist Mark Gustavson had vented about certain car modelling "*national luminaries who shall remain nameless*" who failed to register for his own first-ever national contest, an event designed to replace the recently-discontinued MPC National Customizing Contest Championship. Realizing that Mark was likely referring to us (among others), we joyfully adopted the name "Nameless National Luminaries", or as Chuck suggested, "NNL" for short. Based on the great success of that first event, we began more-or-less semi-annual get-togethers, strictly following our credo of "no rules, no dues, no meetings, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, no JUDGING or CONTESTS!!!"

The event really caught fire and began a period of great growth with our "Merc-Deuce Reunion" theme at the fall, 1981 event. See Scale Auto Enthusiast #17 (Jan '82) for a detailed account.

Not long thereafter, I was transferred cross-country to California's Bay Area (San Francisco / San Jose / Oakland). Anxious to spread the NNL "gospel" on the West Coast, I worked with modelers there and we conducted our first "NNL West" in the summer of 1982, near Modesto, California. The participants in that NNL were Don Graham, David Dale (brother of Gary Dale), Rich Rothermel, Gary Gollehon and myself. Our 2nd NNL West event in Millbrae, near San Francisco Intl Airport, in January 1983, grew exponentially in terms of participation, and set the stage for the success of various NNL-themed events across the west coast ever since.

By the early 2000's, NNL events were being conducted on every continent of the world other than Asia and Antarctica. Two of the most successful NNL events outside North America remain those of Australia and your own South African NNL.

Congratulations and best wishes for continued success with your South African NNL's - it's great to be able to count your participants among the "NNL family" worldwide.

Best Regards! Tim Boyd