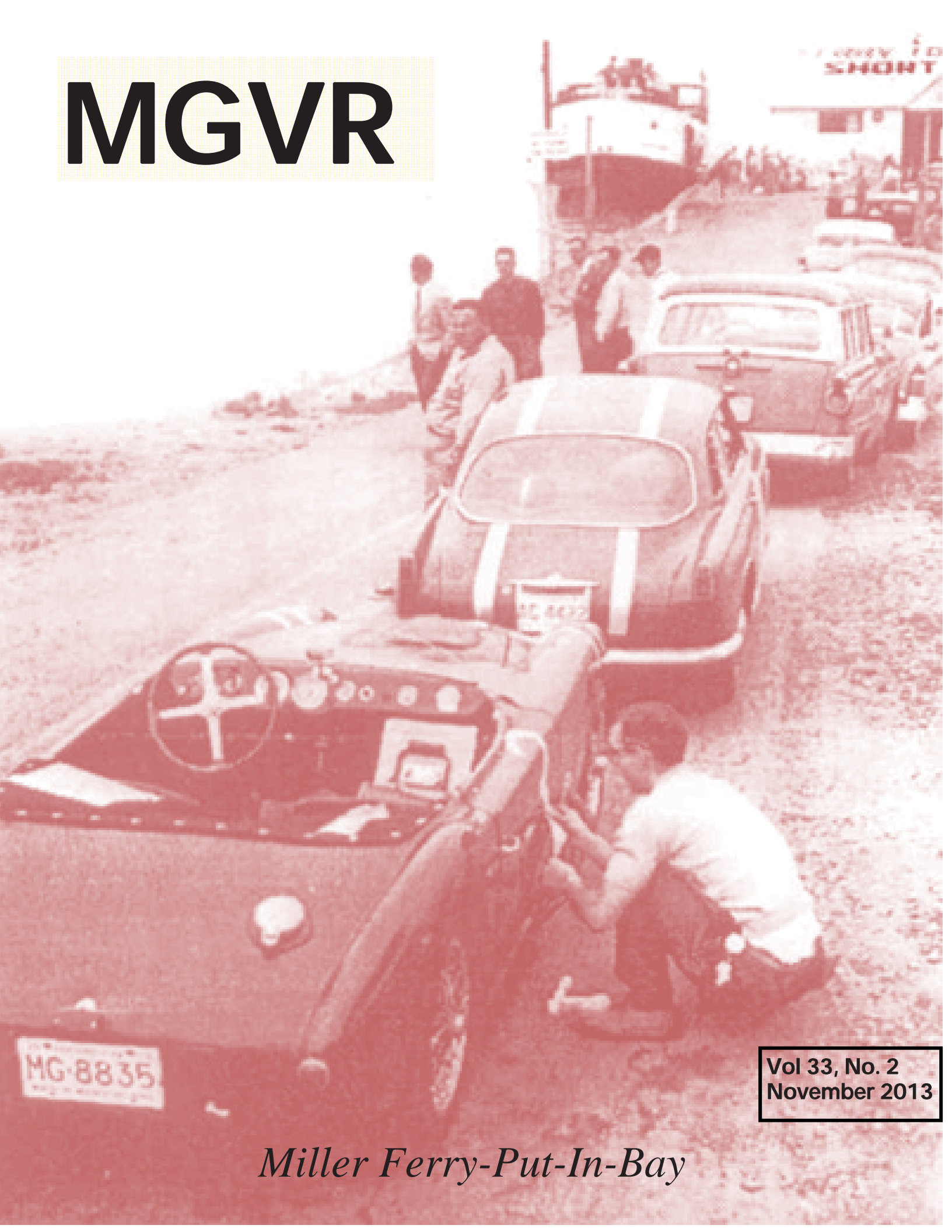


MGVR

... to
SHORT



Vol 33, No. 2
November 2013

Miller Ferry-Put-In-Bay



From The Editor:

I consider myself lucky to know someone as persistent as Greg Prehodka-it's Greg's prodding that brings me to offer a change in Newsletter format. Many of you have suggested electronic Newsletter distribution. Well...it appears as if your humble editor will take you up on it as the largest demon associated with getting out the newsletter is in fact the "printing, stuffing, licking, stamping, hauling, and mailing". Hitting the 'send' button ten, or eleven times is a walk in the park by comparison. As of this issue the majority of subscribers will receive the deluxe *in color* electronic issue. If you wish to receive the hard copy issue please send me an email noting as much and I'll send you a snail mail issue.

2013 has been a good year for MG vintage racers. Starting with the Mitty at Road Atlanta in late April with this year's MG feature race, followed closely by our Focus Event at the Jefferson 500 where 74 MGVRs joined their VRG friends for *tons* of track time in mostly sunny, warm weather. See our event report in this issue. In July many of us joined PVGP at Schenley Park for their *MG-Triumph Heritage Challenge*. Schenley Park should be on every vintage racer's bucket list. Next up was the Collier Cup with SVRA at Watkins Glen. This year we had NO RAIN for the Collier Cup race. Next year will be equally dry and warm-guaranteed! Last on the MG event list for this year was the VSCCA Fall Finale at Lime Rock Park. This year they ran an ALL MG Challenge race similar to the race they ran a few years ago. If I missed any special MG races, please forgive me and send me a note to include in the next newsletter.

Next year looks to pick up where last year left off. The first BIG MG race of 2014 looks to be the Triumph-MG Can-AM Challenge at VARAC's Canadian Historic Grand Prix at Mosport June 13-15. The Friends of Triumph gang is working with VARAC to make this a *must be there* event for next year. Consider it a top notch tune up for our Focus Event! The BIG EVENT FOR 2014 is our Focus Event with SVRA at the Glenora Wine Cellars US Vintage Grand Prix, where we celebrate the Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy's 60th Year! We expect over 100 MGs including West Coast, and overseas entries. Did you make your reservations yet? Do you know of other special MG races for next year? Please contact me-I will make note of it on the All MG Race calendar.

I want to thank all who have supported MGVR activities in 2014. While the list is extensive, please read text block to right for starters. Read the Focus Event article in this issue for a list of volunteers who contributed their time and resources to make this year's event a classic. And thanks to all who contribute to the newsletter and online forum-your efforts are appreciated. Keep up the good work!

Until next issue...enjoy MG vintage racing!

Chris Meyers, Editor

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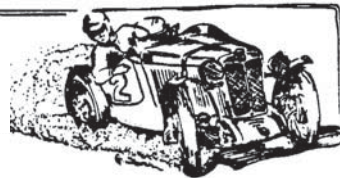
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Letters and Recollections



John Fitch Remembered

By Blair Engle, MGTD Racer #99

John Fitch was one of my idols, while growing up. I saw him race many time at such tracks as Lime Rock, Con., Thompson, Con. and Long Island, NY. The following are some of my memories of the man, and I thought some of the MGVR members might enjoy reading them.

In the late '40s some of my college buddies and I hung out at Ev. Poorman's, International Motors in North White Plains, N.Y. We would check out all the cars for sale, etc. I was a Hot Rodder with a modified 1937 Ford convertible, and didn't think much of the Hillmans, Morris Minors, etc. There was a guy that often came by in some very interesting cars like an XK 140 Jag. His name was John Fitch. One evening I found Mr. Fitch working on a MGTC. I asked him if it was his, and he said, yes it was his. He explained that the was replacing the 1-1/4" SU carbs for a set of 1-1/2" SU's. He said that he just had the head milled, and had just put in a new hot cam shaft. After he got it running and tuned, he headed out for a test drive. It was dark, and down the road we heard the very loud car coming, and sure enough, here comes John going like a bat out of hell! When he came back, he had a great big grin, and he said "Wow, that's the fastest I have ever gone in an MG". One afternoon I went up to Poorman's, and there was Mr. Fitch working on a very cool, modified XK-120 Jaguar. He told me the Jag belonged to Briggs Cunningham, and he was going to race it at Thompson, Conn. He was modifying the radiator, and asked me to give him a hand. Not for my great mechanical ability, but as his, "hand me that wrench and hold this", helper. Some months later, one Saturday, Mr. Poorman asked me if I would take the company pickup down to Alfred Momo's shop in New York City and pick up some things and take them up to Fitch's home Greenwich, Conn. I picked up my girl friend Lorry and away we went. Momo's place was cool, but we didn't have time to check it out. When we got to Fitch's house, John's wife asked Lorry to join her while "the boys" unloaded the truck. When we finished "the girls" had tea and biscuits for us. John had some wonderful stories to tell us, and then he showed us his trophy room. WOW! As we drove home we were on cloud nine. Through the years, Lorry and I would look back and remember our very "Special Saturday" with John Fitch!

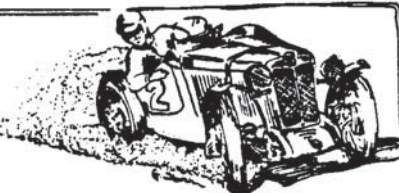


Greg

The only picture I have, is one I took at Thompson, Conn. in 1956. It is a 35mm slide of the drivers meeting. I sent it to Denise McGluggage, and she autographed it and identified several folks I didn't know. Briggs Cunningham, Healey 300, Bob Grossman, Walt Hansgen, Denise Jag. XK150, John Fitch, D Jag., Paul O'Shea 300 SL, Frank Blunk N.Y. Times, and Maston Gregory D-Jag.

POR,
Blair

Competition



Season Finale-Vintage Drivers Club of America

By Bob Spruck-Motor Mouth/South

The weather in Savannah, Georgia may be pretty oppressive for some during the summer months, but it is downright near perfect in the winter. So much so that Vintage Driver's Club of America's *Season Finale*, held on the first weekend in December for the entire 10 years that the Club has been in existence, attracted a few dozen racers all the way from the Northeast and Mid-west. Either these guys and gals just needed to get one more race in before their season ended or they needed a break from the cold up North. This event allowed them to do both. When the inveterate ride-mooch from Chicago, Burt Levy, was asked to look mean and lean for the camera, he declared "Mean? Mean? How can I look mean when I am so happy down here?" It could have been because of the beautiful 70 degree day or the fact that he was waiting to take his first stint in Gordon King's Royale RP-4 sports racer in the hour and a half enduro. But, more about that later.

More than 100 racers agreed with Burt and made the last race of 2012 season for VDCA (AND for the entire country) on December 7th - 9th at Roebling Road Raceway near Savannah, GA a rousing success. The only people who seemed to be underwhelmed were the tow truck drivers who were pretty bored most of the weekend – no accidents and only a few mechanical problems requiring a tow back to the paddock. Even the hot-shot BMW drivers of the Tarheel Chapter BMWCCA, who the vintage club shares the track with every year, kept it clean and on schedule. The vintage contingent got 2 ½ hours of track time, assuming no mechanical gremlins. That doesn't even include the Happy Hour Bracket Challenge Classic race or the hour long Endurance race or the Sunday morning warm-up. Good thing the Sunoco 110 was relatively cheap - we used plenty of it.

The hour long, all Groups, all Classes, included – in – the – registration - fee Endurance Race ran between 9:30 and 11:00 AM Sunday, finishing just before the quiet time. Some of us conserved our energy and the trouble-free hours left in our cars for the feature races Sunday afternoon, but those who chose to run the Enduro at least had more than two hours to straighten things up between the Long Race and their Big Race. As in any race, the faster cars ran at the front and the slower cars closer to the rear. The first British car finished in 15th place, six laps back. What does that tell you? The S2000 sports racers took 5 of the top 6 spots of the 39 starters and covered 39 laps in the hour and had lap times a full 10 seconds faster than the production cars. Dave Handy started his Swift DB2 on the pole and finished first after some hard racing. A full course yellow on lap 3 changed some pit stop strategies suddenly. Some ducked into the pits right away while others waited until they felt the yellow would last a while (it did). Handy, Peter McLaughlin (Swift DB2), and Rossella Manfrinato (Swift DB2) took to the pits right away and returned five minutes later way back in positions in the 30s while Ben Sinnott (Lola T90/91) stayed out until lap 19 and then pitted. The Swifts had a long and ding-dong battle back to the front while the Lola had less traffic and fewer positions to make up. The finishing order was Handy, Sinnott, McLaughlin, Tom Benjamin (Alfa GTV, late pitter), and Manfrinato.

Group 1 is the small bore contingent and had the usual plethora of Bugeyes, Spridgets and Spitfires, with a Mini, a Turner, and a Lotus. The Sprite of John Jones and the Midget of Andy Russell dominated all the sessions with Alan Collard in a DSR Hague right up there, too. With an unusually small grid of only 18 cars, they got pretty well strung out and most sessions didn't have much passing. Larry Smith's 1308 1962 Midget did well all weekend. Bob Van Kirk and his '65 Midget did pretty well after a long layoff and long term mechanical problems, finally determined to be attributed to a cracked head. Bob Spruck could have done better in his '67 Midget but blamed infrequent racing, old tires, and a poor internal lap time clock as his excuses. Becky Labat, a relative newcomer in her '73 Midget did well keeping out of the clutches of Spruck, each trying to avoid being last in each session. Only three Midgets started the feature race on Sunday, with Smith and Van Kirk among the missing. Russell started

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Competition



third behind the DSR Hague of Collard and the Sprite of Jones at the front. Jones led all the way and Russell moved up to second when the sports racer stopped on lap 6. Labat passed Spruck when he couldn't keep it fast in the turns and finished in front of him at the end.

Groups 2, 5, and 7 were the next session up and included the S2000s, Club Fords and Formula Fords, a Bobsy and a Merlyn FMod, and two very fast Royale and Legrand sports racers. Because the group included sports racers as well as open wheel Formula cars, a split start was used. As expected the 2000 cc sports racers out ran the 1600 cc Fords. Finishing positions 1-4 and 7 were filled with S2000s while 5 and 6 were Club Fords. Ben Sinnott, Dave Handy, Peter McLaughlin and Robert Higdon piloted the sports racers and Doug Meiss and Rollin Butler the Fords. Every one of the cars finishing this race had a best lap time better than any other car in any other class.

Group 3 & 4 are the larger production cars and include such names as MGB, Morgan, Volvo, and Alfa Romeo. The beautiful Lotus XI Le Mans of Glenn Stevens was driven smoothly and quickly to an uncontested flag to flag first place, four seconds ahead of Greg Miller in a Morgan 4/4. The sleek Volvo P1800 of Gary Jebesen was third. Torsten Kunze (MGB), Stan Heath (MGA), Sterling Heath (MGB), and BB Bullock (MGB) all chased gremlins all weekend but were able to overcome them and had a great race on Sunday. Torsten is now driving an MGB roadster instead of his MGB GT and doing quite well. He led all the MGs in the Group from Saturday on, and finished as 1st MG, 2nd in class, and 4th OA on Sunday. Stan had carburetor problems but solved them for the most part and was able to garner a 1st in Class in the feature race. BB Bullock spent most of the weekend either nursing a weak clutch or up on two wheels trying to fix it. But, he made the feature race and finished just a little behind Torsten.

The largest and fastest production cars in Groups 6 & 8 were combined for their Feature race. Ten different models were represented by the 19 starters and cubic inches and high RPMs reigned. Tim Smith took his Shelby Mustang to first and Tom Cotter was fourth in the sleek '64 Corvette. The high revving Alfa GTV and Duetto of Tom Benjamin and Caesar Cone were in between. German iron was well represented by the Opel Kadett of Ernie Bello and the BMW 2002 of Skip Bryan in the next positions. More German cars and two Japanese models filled out the rest of the field.

Always fun to watch are the Formula Vees. Nine started their Feature Race, followed at an increasing distance by the Pre-War cars. Mike Jackson dominated as usual in his Shadowfax and pipped Ed Ziegler in the Beach Mk 5C on the second lap. The Michael Ennis Lynx B came out of nowhere and took second place until Ed managed to draft by before the end. It was Jackson, Ziegler, and Ennis under the checker before anyone else. Although they weren't particularly fast, the Ford flathead powered 1939 Old Gray Mare Special driven by Ben Bragg, the slightly ill MGTF of George Pardee, the 1935 Ford Indy Continuation of Dick Waite, and the 1929 Ford Model A Speedster of Bill Steicher were all beautiful to look at and entertaining to watch. George discovered a cracked intake manifold early in the weekend and his son/mechanic Nick and he pasted it together with some JB Weld and duct tape that got them through the weekend.

In addition to great racing opportunities, VDCA's social "Club" aspect is also evident at their races but more so at the *Season Finale*. Friday evening's program included a review of the awesome Vintage Racing Today video by director, Ben Cissell. Ben and crew accompanied Nashville's Zapata Racing Team on 12 race weekends to document what vintage racing is all about. In addition to some fantastic in-car footage of close racing and track details from such venues as Watkins Glen, Road Atlanta, VIR, Pittsburg, and Sebring, to name a few, there are many interviews of drivers explaining what vintage racing is and what it means to them. The best part is those of us who race will recognize many of the cars and the interviewees as friends, competitors, or at least people we have read about, putting a face to the name. Check out their web site at www.vintageracingtoday.com.

Despite lots of great racing for three whole days, many of us felt the high point of the weekend was the always delicious, Saturday evening tradition Oyster Roast and Barbeque. Bugeye racer and roaster extraordinaire, Gary Barnhart, passed away earlier this year, but apparently trained his replacements well as there was nothing but compliments for those who took his place. The southern pork barbeque was also just right, not to mention the assortment of our favorite beverages and desserts

VDCA's *Season Finale* is the best way to finish up a racing season. It always has good racing, plenty of racing, good food, plenty of food, and good friends, plenty of good friends. And the best part is – VDCA's 2013 season starts only two months away with the Winter Games at Road Atlanta on February 15th -17th.

VDCA SEASON FINALE

Competition



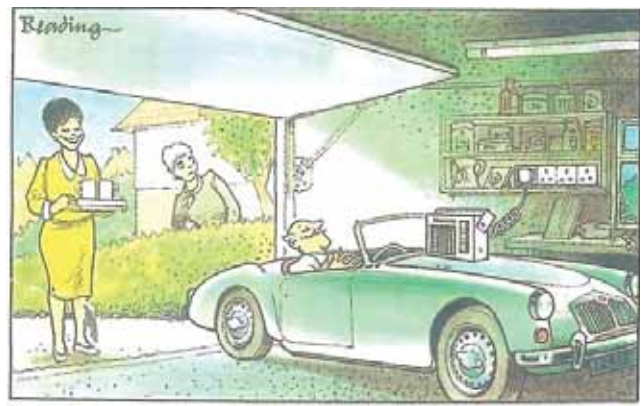
Photo 1 Bob Van Kirk's '65 Midget
Photo 2 George Pardee's '54 TF
Photo 3 Stan Heath and BB Bullock practicing



Photo 4 Bob Spruck's '67 Midget
Photo 5 David Conrad passes Spartan
Photo 6 Stan Heath, Torsten Heath and Sterling Heath



Storm catches Manley airing out the TD



"LUCKILY WE MADE A TAPE OF THE ENGINE SOUND BEFORE FUEL GOT SO EXPENSIVE"



2013 Collier Cup with SVRA at Watkins Glen

Story by Chris Meyers Photos by Angelo Lisuzzo

The books are closed on this year's Glenora Wine Cellars *U.S. Vintage Grand Prix* at Watkins Glen. What a weekend! Weather at Watkins Glen was the usual fare-hot, cold, rainy, sunny, shorts and tee shirts to wool caps, long pants and rain gear. This year's Collier Cup was raced IN THE DRY-always a bonus! Here's the report:

Many of us reported to the Glen late Wednesday to set up-by the time I arrived Wednesday afternoon the unofficial MGVR paddock was already filling up. By Thursday morning the paddock started filling up as the SVRA test groups ran laps around the Watkins Glen circuit. By mid afternoon MGVR Central was up and running with photos, snacks, Collier Cup memorabilia etc. Group practice followed test group racing. By evening almost all MG racers were settled in and roaming around the paddock reuniting with their friends and race buddies.

Friday at the Glen is busy-group qualifying as well as Mock Tech at Smalley's Garage in town followed by the Downtown Festival. As always the paddock goes quiet as vintage cars leave for the festival followed by laps of the original circuit led by the county sheriff *at pursuit speed!* Nothing compares to the thrill of driving your MG vintage race car from the track to the town and back again after two laps of the old circuit! By 7 PM the paddock came alive as racers returned from their excursion. In a display of cooking excellence, Lou the Spatula soon had the grill smoking with grilled chicken, Fillet Mignon, and other goodies. Frank Tropea worked the salad and Jane and Dan Leonard treated the gathering MG gang to Syracuse Salt Potatoes-a treat unlike any this food enthusiast has ever enjoyed. Some 40 or so MG vintage racers/crew joined us in the impromptu feast/banquet. Thanks to all who contributed food, snacks, wine, beer and enthusiasm to this gathering!



David Good battling Dennis Gonzalez

Saturday promised to be a beautiful Watkins Glen September day, especially considering that the Collier Cup was scheduled for 11:30 AM. The day started with group qualifying and the usual on-track mischief that tends to delay the schedule. By 11:45 we had 22 MG vintage racers take the flag for SVRA's 29th Collier Cup Race. Competition was fierce throughout the grid as the MGB's of Jeff Devine, Bill Shields and Gary Allen dived for the lead followed by last year's winner Richard Navin, Brian McKie, Bob Eagleson and Paul Gelpi. Butch O'Conner and Yours Truly

were nose to tail for three laps until Butch decided to place pedal to floor and dispatch with my snarling MGA. The Midget racing was just as fierce as Tom Glanville and Dennis Gonzalez dived for the Glanville Cup for Midgets while holding off a feisty David Good in his quick MGA and David Patton's persistent MGB. Mike Barstow showed the fast way around the Glen's 3.37 miles in a T Series while battling with Joe Puma's Midget, and Jim Holody's Twin Cam MGA. Kurt Byrnes, who shadowed Mike Barstow all weekend in Prewar racing, was not far behind followed closely by Dan Leonard's TC Special, and Dick Powers in last year's Bucher/Decker winning MGA. Ed Cronin, who dived with Dan Leonard all weekend, suffered a clutch failure and dropped out by lap 4. Dawn Myers and her screaming fast MGA coasted to a stop on lap 3 after losing a pinion gear. This year's Give Me a Frigging Break Award goes to Ted Hershey who broke an axle in Saturday's morning qualifying race, then broke a world's axle repair record only to break a suspension bolt two laps into the Collier Cup race. Running a close second for the same award was Dick Rzepkowski who broke a transmission, then dedicated his Friday evening to a transmission swap and then ate a valve during Saturday morning's qualifying race. No-shows due to the usual reasons included Frank Mount, David Holmes, Dick Rzepkowski, and Pete Thelander.



Tom Glanville Joe Puma Ted Hershey

Following the Collier Cup Race we joined SVRA for our awards ceremony at the Winners' Circle where MGVR fa-

(Continued from page 7)

Competition



vorite John Targett addressed the gathered crowd to express his appreciation for the outpouring of well-wishes following his struggle with health issues. Now the awards:

- ♦ The Jack Archibald “T Cup” awarded to the first production T Series MG to cross the finish line-Mike Barstow from Fremont, California
- ♦ Bucher/Decker Trophy awarded to the first MGA to cross the finish line-Yours Truly from Burlington, Connecticut
- ♦ Bill Glanville Trophy awarded to the first Midget to cross the finish line-Dennis Gonzalez from San Juan, Puerto Rico
- ♦ The podium was filled with Glanville family members who came to Watkins Glen to remember Bill Glanville and cheer on their MG family!
- ♦ Denver Cornett Trophy awarded to the first MG to cross the finish line-Jeff Devine from Ontario
- ♦ Denny Cornett and family took to the podium to award the Denver Cornett Trophy and honor the legacy of Denver Cornett, Jr.
- ♦ SVRA Collier Cup as chosen by MG vintage racers-Pete Thelander from Westminster California

Many thanks go to the following folks who made this year’s event special:

SVRA for their support of the Collier Cup Race

SVRA’s Jon McKnight for helping with organization, and awards

SVRA’s Kim Hoxie for help with VIP registration

Dan Leonard and friend Jane for their support of MGVR Central and MG dinners/mischief

Lou ‘the spatula’ Manzi for his work at the grill

Frank Tropea for his grub support

Richard and Brenda Navin for snacks, wine and enthusiasm

Ontario MGVR Gang (David, David, Jim, John, Leno, Malcolm, Frank, Connie, Brian (NY province), Bernie, who did I forget?) for their support and enthusiasm.

Dick Powers for help with the Collier Cup

A special thanks to all MG Vintage Racers and their families whose participation in this year’s 29th Collier Cup Race made this year special!



MGs take the green flag at 2013 Collier Cup race

Remember-next year’s Focus Event will be at Watkins Glen to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy Race! Mark your calendars. See you there!



Powers, Glanvilles, Gonzalez, Barstow, Meyers



2013 Collier Cup Winner Pete Thelander



2012 Collier Cup Recollections

By Chris Meyers

Let us look back at the 28th SVRA Collier Cup weekend at the Glen. Weather was typical Glen; hot, cold, dry, wet. We had a wet Collier Cup race with only 13 of 32 MGs taking the green flag. Winner for 2012 was Richard Navin in his MGB, followed by Jeff Devine in his MGB. Dick Powers was third in his MGA. Here are the trophy winners :

Jack Archibald T Cup went to Ed Cronin
 Bucher-Decker Cup went to Dick Powers
 Glanville Cup went to Peter Uzdavinas
 Denver Cornett Cup went to Richard Navin
 The Collier Cup went to Ed Cronin!!!

With the rain we had the above five trophies presented in the press room winners' circle with plenty of press attention. Funny thing was that Ed Cronin and Peter Uzdavinas were among the missing. Someone finally tracked down Ed but Peter was not to be found, so we had to modify the Glanville Cup presentation with Suzanne Glanville and family assisting, and repeat both T Cup and Collier Cup presentations...pretty funny. Denny Cornett joined us for the Cornett Cup presentation. Tom Glanville and I found Peter U at his paddock and did an impromptu Glanville Cup presentation as a wicked storm front came upon us.



Dick Powers Photo



Michael DiPleco photo

Collier Cup Winner Ed Cronin



Dick Powers Photo

Devine Navin Powers

Denny Cornett, Yours Truly



Dick Powers Photo

Peter Uzdavinis with Glanville Trophy



??? took this photo



Bob Beierlein photo



The Jefferson 500 MGVR's Focus Event with VRG-Part 1

Story by Chris Meyers Photos by Nial McCabe and Greg Prehodka

MGVR's 18th annual Focus Event at the Jefferson 500 with VRG is in the record books. By most reports everyone had a grand time at Summit Point. This year's Jefferson 500 grew to over 260 participants; up from last year's 170 or so racers. VRG and their volunteer organizers and helpers did a splendid job of keeping the gears oiled. MGVR had 74 racers turn out for what turned out to be a mostly warm and rain-free four days of wheel to wheel action. A quick event report:

Many racers showed up early to 'beat the rush' -by Wednesday mid afternoon the line stretched from the front gate to the entry road. By 8 pm Wednesday the MGVR paddock was organized chaos as racers looked for their friends and fellow racers to paddock with. By late evening MGVR Central was up and running with information, regalia, and memorabilia taking a prominent place in the paddock. Everyone looked forward to turning out for Thursday's test

dents, many of whom were on-track for their first race-like session ever! Following our test day MGVR hosted a Wine and Cheese meet and greet reception at MGVR Central. Racers showed up ear-



ly for what was the largest Thursday party ever at Central, with wine, beer snacks and smiling racers turning out to swap stories and share the day's experience with their fellow MGVRs. Thanks to everyone for sharing snack and drink duties-we had tables full of cheese, chips, wine, beer and other goodies. Friday's schedule included timed qualifying, sprint races and enduros, MGVR group photo, Track Walk for Wounded Warriors and Movies at MGVR Central. Photographer Bill Stoler worked his magic to gather and organize a rag-tag bunch of rowdy racers around Start/Finish joined by Honeybee MGA and Don Munoz's MGB GT V-8-all this for the MGVR Group Photo. Brian Redman hosted a rather brisk Wounded Warrior walk where he shared stories of racing as he described the fast way around Summit Point. Rounding out the day's activities, some 45 or so MGVRs gathered at dusk at MGVR Central to watch movies and enjoy Dan Leonard's theatre-style popcorn. This year's feature was Vintage Racing Today, Ben Cissel's documentary covering the racing exploits of the Zapata Racing Team. A grand way to end a fantastic race day.

Saturday began with cloudy skies and cooler weather. On-track activities included qualifying and race



day.

Thursday looked to be warm and sunny as most of us took to the track for one of three test groups. VRG Tech did a fantastic job of moving racers through tech, ably assisted by Storm Field who roamed the MGVR paddock. My small bore test group had nearly 60 racers, including Porsche 911's, Alfas and a few sports racers among the MG's and sports cars. Our 4th and final test session included VRG stu-

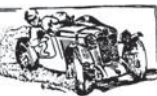
(Continued from page 10)



sessions, lunchtime parade laps featuring street MG's, and TWO All-MG Feature Races. MG Race 1 participants included T Series MG and MGA. Yours truly and Mark Palmer swapped the lead several times during what turned out to be an exciting race, with Spankey 029 eventually taking the lead for good as Mark found himself behind a slower group of cars. Finishing third was Bill Bartlett in his MGA Coupe. T Series racers had a time of it as well with Steve Konsin taking first among T's, and California's Mike Barstow coming home second, followed by Kurt Byrnes. Other notable finishers included Roger Morse in his long-suffering MGA Clementine, and Jim Warren, racing a nearly stock MGA. All in all a great All MG race. MG Race 2 featured Midgets, and MGB's. Winner this year was Les Gonda, followed closely by Donald Dickey in his red MGB and Mike Zappa in his immaculately prepared black and gold MGB. First among Midgets was Peter Uzdevinis, followed by Larry Smith, and Garth Knorr. This was a VERY exciting race with second through 12th place finishers turning in lap times within two seconds of each other! Following race action everyone headed across the track to the Summit Point Barn for VRG's Banquet and MGVR's awards. At-



Competition



tendees were treated to a buffet of fried chicken, roast beef, salad and other dining pleasures along with wine served in commemorative Jefferson 500 wine glasses. With ex-TC racer Bill Hollingsworth offering historical perspective to the Jefferson 500, and event co-chair Cal Trumbo sharing his gratitude with all who made this event a huge success, your humble editor took to the podium to offer thanks to the MGVR volunteers who keep the wheels turning at the newsletter and others who turned this event from a concept to a memorable Focus Event.

2014 Focus Event chair Richard Powers took to the podium to announce plans for next year's Focus Event with SVRA at Watkins Glen September 4-8 **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

As tradition would have it, MGVR once again set about to recognize those special vintage racers whose spirit and love for the hobby bring smiles to all who know them. Here are this year's award winners:



Doff of the Cap Award-this trophy is awarded to the MGB racer who is dedicated to preserving the racing heritage of the iconic MGB 4 cylinder sports car. This year's winner is Joe Lightfoot

MGB V-8 Trophy-this trophy is awarded to the winner of the All MG race. With two All MG Races, this year's award went to the winner of the 'big' MG race, Les Gonda.

(Continued from page 11)

Bill Parish *Master of Speed Deception* Award is presented to the racer who is *HAVING THE MOST FUN, AND BEING A MASTER OF SPEED DECEPTION WHILE BEING UNCONCERNED ABOUT WINNING* -IN MEMORY OF MG RACER BILL PARISH. This year's winner is Dave 'Big Kahuna' Nicholas.



MGVR Spirit Award "Big Copper Bucket" is presented to the MG vintage racer who best embodies

Competition



the MG vintage racing spirit as selected by their racing peers. This year's winner is John Burgess! Congratulations to all award winners!

Sunday's racing consisted of early small bore warm ups, optional enduros and All Comers races for those of us who didn't pack up and leave for home. Thus ends MGVR's 18th Annual Focus Event. Congratulations to all MG Vintage Racers who participated!

I wish to thank the following folks who worked up front and behind the scenes to make this a hugely successful Focus Event:

MGVRS Greg Prehodka, Dan Leonard, Larry Smith, Bob Watkin, Chris Kintner, Mark Palmer, Bill Hollingsworth, Storm Field, Scott Fohrman, Jim Warren, Butch O'Conner

VRG members Cal Trumbo, Jim Karamanis, Tivvy Shenton and the Tech gang, Registration gang including Dick Barnes and Michael Orritt among others. All VRG volunteers who worked this event.

Corner Workers AND

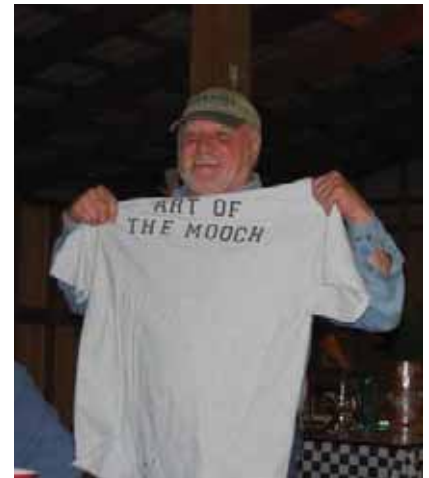
Summit Point Raceway owners and their staff.



Competition



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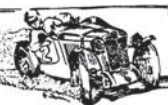


more *Jefferson 500*

Competition



Stay tuned next issue for Part 2 of this report



Double the MG FUN-at PIB

By Greg Prehodka

All photos by Greg Prehodka except as noted

What is more fun than racing my MGTD? Having my daughter Rachel racing it too - at Put-In-Bay! Double the FUN!

Not that easy as she lives in Colorado and I'm rooted in the Keystone state. Rachel has had seat time racing my MGTD for the past five years now. But when she raced, I always served as her head wrench on the sidelines. When I told her I was planning to race at Put-In-Bay, Ohio (a 5 square mile island on lake Erie, about between Cleveland and Toledo), she said she wanted to come too! Great! MG was a featured marque and I wanted to go! I told her "OK, you can come as my crew." Well, her reaction to that was pretty much what I expected "Dad, why can't I race your MG?" Tugging at those 'dad strings"! I had a dilemma! We both wanted to race my MG! Humm - what to do? So, with nothing to loose, I contacted the organizers about us both racing my MG - one of us in its normal race class, and one out of class, and to my surprise, "THEY APPROVED"! Thank you, thank you, thank you! What a great way to spend a week with my daughter! Plane reservations were made for her to come to my house and go with me. Now I would also have someone to share the long drive to and from the event with. Part of the trip would included a ferry boat ride to the island.



It was held the last week in August, and although rain threatened us at times, it held off. Put-In-Bay has several levels of history. Today it is primarily a "vacation island", that I would best describe as "The Jersey Shore on fresh water" - eateries, bars, swimming, summer houses, golf, entertainment, B&B's, gift shops, wineries, boating, yada, yada. But in 1812 it played a significant role in the war of 1812, and the in the 1950s sport car races were run on its public roads. Yes, they "raced", but they also partied a lot! Party at night - pry open your eyes and race the next morning! Several of the racers even raced under "alias" names, so as not to jeopardize their regular racing licenses in other racing organizations. To this day, they still are not exactly sure of just who raced there! The revival of these races is now called the "Put-In-Bay Road Race Reunion"! Although it was a three day event, only one day would include "racing". It had

three aspects: First: Racing vintage cars similar to those originally raced here on the public roads in the 50's; Second: Reflecting on the history of the original races, through presentations, talks, and car shows; and Third: just "Having FUN" and enjoying history, our vintage steeds, and each other! Not your typical race event by any mean! More of a vacation than any serious racing. Although Rachel and I went there to race, a number of folks just drove their vintage sports cars to the event, to be there, enjoy the cars and activities, participate in its car show and parades, and party! (Eighty some vintage sports cars came - around half of them raced). It also gave me a chance to meet up with a number of my old MG buddies - some going back as far as the 70's! 13 MGs would be racing, plus many additional MGs were there! Although race cars were not "legally" allowed to drive on the island's "public roads", the constables failed to notice them driving by with their open exhaust and roll bars (thank you)!

Day one included a warm welcome and presentations on the early street races (1952-59 & '63). Chris Kintner gave a slide show of the original races, which his grandfather and grandmother helped organize and run! Later a round table discussion was held at the local yacht club with some of the folks who raced here back in the 50's. Opening ceremonies were held downtown at the historic start/finish line and race memorial stone, later followed by the race and show cars doing a few "parade laps" around the original street course, as folks stood street side cheering us on!





The roads today are almost identical to the way they were in the 50's! Back then some of the faster cars would even go air-borne on parts of the course! (it's a bit scary to think about racing on these roads - if you could only see them!) There is also a wonderful historical museum on the island, well worth going to! This evening, it was party time for racers and crew at the "Getaway Inn"! Plenty of food, wine, and beer for everyone, as racing tales flowed freely. Believe me, this is "The Event" to be "Crew" for! Fortunately I was within walking distance of my lodging after an evening of "party!"

Day two was "Race Day". "Road Racing" of the 50's disappeared for obvious safety reasons. It was dangerous to racers and spectators alike! So our "race course" would now be on the island's airport runways, with hay bales creating "soft" corners and curves for cars to weave through

and corner about. They had two runways. We raced down one, crossed over and raced back on the other. Repeat! The cars competing reflected the cars that raced here in the 50's: MG, Morgan, Triumph, Turner, Sprite, Porsche, etc. Rachel would race my MG in "Group 1" - which included mostly Morgans and Pre-War cars. I would race in "Group 2" which included most of the MGs. Since Group 1 and 2 raced back to back, "our challenge" would be coming in from the end of one race, switching drivers quickly, and going right back out in line for the next race with the second driver. NOT as simple as it sounds! Remember 5-point safety harness, arm restraints, mirror adjustments, etc., plus be sure there's enough gas in the tank! (embarrassing to run out of gas!) And since Rachel is smaller than me, she needed cushions put under and behind her in the "fixed" driver's seat set up for me! Not even time for the drum brakes to cool down! As a plus, Rachel would also get to race in the featured "All MG Race"!

All was going just fine, as we practiced racing in our classes in the morning, feeling out ol'53 and getting the rhythm of the course. Working on braking points, nipping hay bales, finding the best lines to drive, refining shifting points, etc. Thankfully they did not time our laps - so the question of who is faster - dad or daughter - still begs answering! (Experience may be my advantage, but she has the weight advantage!) Then as Rachel was racing and I was waiting to go out in the next race, I heard over race communications "Car #53 needs tow-in" Holy Toledo! That's Rachel in my MG! At that moment those parental emotions of "waiting and not knowing" kicked in! I could only wonder and worry? "Is she OK. An accident? Mechanical failure? Hit another car? Another car hit her?" Your mind can imagine strange things under these momentary conditions! Then in the distance I saw my MG being rope towed to the paddock with Rachel in the MG's driver's seat. Relief!



This meant she was alright, and the MG was rolling on its own wheels! So I wondered - what happened, and what was wrong? Once in, she told me "I over corrected going through the hay bail chicane and hit a haybale". Minor damage to the front bumper - and unfortunately damage to the "oil cooler" - which was located behind the front bumper. When the oil line on the oil cooler broke, the car quickly pumped out five quarts of oil! Wisely when the oil pressure "WENT TO ZERO" she shut the engine off immediately! So was our racing "finished for the day?" Not if we could help it! Investigation showed I might be able to by-pass the oil cooler with the right fittings and hoses. Rachel and I worked together to fix it, and with some help, parts, (and 5 quarts of oil) from friends, we managed to by-pass the oil cooler, and were back ready to race! Just as I topped up the engine oil, her racing group was lining up to go out - what timing! Oil pressure was looking

good, and no oil leaks! Whew -as she barely made it to the end of the line as her group went out to race! Rachel wasn't rattled at all (cool kid), ready to race again, but now a bit wiser about her racing techniques and over steering. You



don't learn how to race on a video game – you need “seat time”! We ran the afternoon races and were “Winners”. Now what do I mean by being “Winners”? Winning in my book means that you're able to race your car and then drive it back onto its trailer when the racing is over! Finishing place doesn't matter! To top it off, this day just happened to be my 66th birthday – it couldn't have been a better birthday for me! The day's activities ended with a “picnic” for everyone at “Joe's Bar and picnic grove” on the outskirts of town that evening. The beer flowed freely..... as did the camaraderie! What great juicy homemade hamburgers!

Day three was the “car show” and afternoon closing luncheon at the Boardwalk Restaurant overlooking the lake and sailing ships. As we left the island on the ferry boat, I reflected on what a special event it had been, and pondered if we might come back again next year. Many thanks to all involved with putting on this special event and remembering its history! Three days of wonderful memories, camaraderie with car folks, fun, parties, history, and quality time with my daughter! Life is good! Whether you vintage race or not, consider adding this event to your “Bucket List”! Yep, they plan to run it again next year – August 25-27th. Hey, I know it's tough duty, but someone has to do it!

Dan Mainzer photo



Bettsie Kintner



Just needs a little “freshing up”



Letters and Memos



Dear Chris,

Thanksgiving greetings to you and Julie.

I thought you might find this amusing and a "possible" for the newsletter should such lame attempts at humor have a place or if you just need to fill a hole.

This started when John Targett, who was in England this past week hunting down pricing and availability of aluminum flywheels among other tasks, responded to a forwarded email via me but originated from Steve Konsin on the subject. John replied to me - somewhat in jest one presumes, but you never know about the British, y'know? - and castigated me about my obviously ignorant misspelling of the word - having left out that ever-so-English extra "i".

So, ahem, I responded as any Colonial of superior knowledge and intellect should do:

Dear John,

In my defence (note spelling)...please note I merely forwarded Mr. Konsin's misspelling."

However...(now that you've raised the point) I was given a wonderful book by Krisann's brother. It was written by Bill Bryson and modestly entitled A Short History of Nearly Everything"-- an excellent read by the way --which I devoured during a cross-Atlantic flight a few years ago.

It seems, according to Bill (who I believe is a transplanted Brit to New Hampshire of all places), that it all goes back to a young chemist named Humphry Davy who was the first professor of chemistry of Britain's Royal Institution which was founded in 1799 to legitimize and organize the then-young science of chemistry.

Davy identified numerous (humorous, "of course, if you [clods] had anything to do with it) elements such as potassium, sodium, magnesium, calcium, strontium, and aluminum"(1808), but about four years later Davy inexplicably added an h and changed it to aluminium."This pattern-breaking change may have something to do with Davy's discovery of the pleasures of inhaling nitrous oxide which he reportedly took a hit on several times a day until it killed him.

Regardless, we Americans dutifully adopted the term aluminium"(being slow-slugs we apparently didn't even hear about aluminum)" but many Brits, it seems, disliked version 2 because it disrupted the -ium pattern established by the elements listed above. So you guys (go figure) added yet another syllable with the additional l and changed it to the even more trippingly-unpronounceable aluminium" which probably justified raising the price and throwing some more sand into the frigging castings.

Regardless, in my view it's proof again that once Brits get into a pattern, they have a very tough time syncopating (a jazz term that allows one to drop or add a beat without losing the underlying rhythm). Hence we have you guys to thank for institutions like dogged colonialism, Lucas electrics, cricket, driving on the wrong side of the road, boiled beef, kippers, the Royal family, and - come to think of it - MGs! See? We've come full circle!

May God Speed your endeavors in Merrie Olde, and give my regards to Ron Gammons should you run across him (Oh Dear! not literally of course- altho Mr. Shurmer - or whoever prices their crap - may be due. . .)

Just remember ... we want aluminum flywheels.

-M

Editor's note; Manley sent me this note back in November of 2008. Sorry I took so long to publish this-I promise I will be more prompt in publishing my readers' notes and letters from now on. Editor assumes zero responsibility for any and all content within readers' letters, notes and emails etc.

Watkins Glen International



September 4-7, 2014

Bulletin 1

Mark Your Calendars, Make Your Reservations

Greetings MG Vintage Racers and welcome to the first of our Focus Event Bulletins. Next year's Focus Event with SVRA at the Glenora Wine Cellars US Vintage Grand Prix celebrates 60 years of the *Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy*. In 2004 143 MG vintage racers participated in the largest focus event ever as Watkins Glen celebrated the Collier Trophy's 50th. Our **2014 event will be BIG**-mark your calendars and make your plans *now!* Hotels in and around Watkins Glen book early for The US Vintage Grand Prix-make your reservations *now!* Here are some options-

Rooms: available from Sept. 3-7, 2014 **Rates:** held until the end of July 2014. After that the rooms go back for others to reserve. Use the Group Code **MG Vintage Racers**. You should verify the **Rate, Dates** and what the **Cancellation Policy** is when you make your reservation.

Knights Inn

Suresh Shah General Manager
607-739-3807

Horseheadsinn@stny.rr.com

No Personal Checks

Up to 30 rooms at \$68.95/night plus tax.

2707 Westinghouse Rd. Horseheads, NY
At Exit 52 off Rt 17/I-86 and Rt 14.
They are about 17 miles from the track
along Rt 14.

Basic motel with microwave/refrigerator/internet

Americas Best Value Inn

Marcie Stratton Director of Sales
607-962-2456

Up to 40 rooms at \$59/night plus tax

We used them in 2004.

Pet friendly location

The MMM Register has also reserved 20 rooms here.

196 S. Hamilton St. Painted Post, NY 14870
Near exits for RT 17/I-86
Complimentary Continental Breakfast in the lobby/W-Fri.
Has an outdoor pool, but it may be closed by Sept. 3.

They are about 25 miles from the track.

Fairfield Inn by Marriott

Lorie Wasilawski Sales Manager
607-937-9600

Up to 10 rooms at \$169/night plus tax

3 South Buffalo St. Corning, NY 14830
Near exit to Rt 17/I-86

Complementary Hot Breakfast/W-Fri/Indoor Pool/
Workout Room
They are 25 miles from the track.

Candlewood Suites Horseheads

800-355-1533

Prices vary up to \$126/night plus tax for a suite-type
room

198 Colonial Drive, Elmira NY
Near exits for I-86
MGVR does not have a block of rooms reserved but as of this
writing there are rooms available at a reasonable price.

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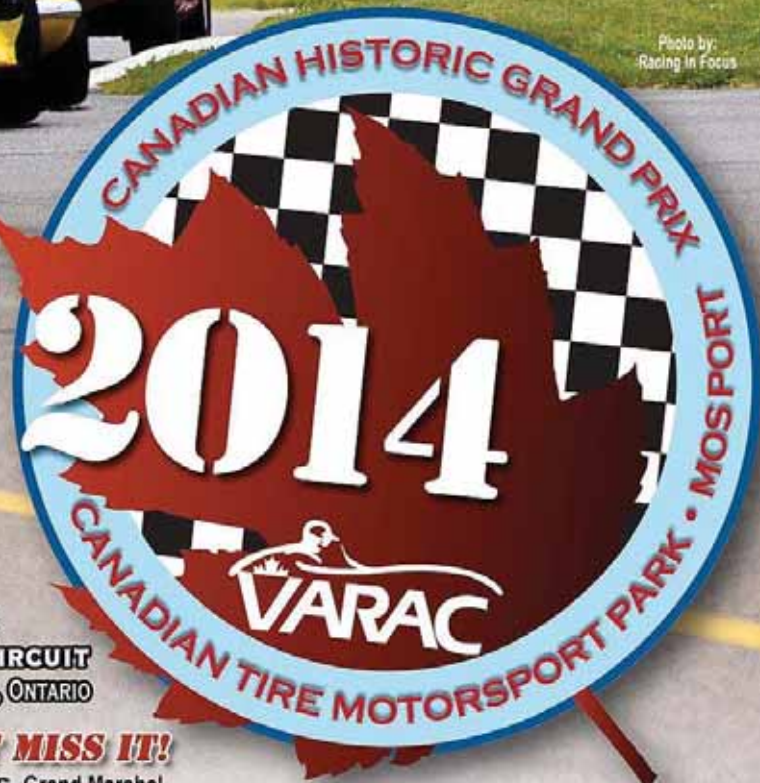
Ange Lazzaro Photo

TRIUMPH VS MG CAN-AM CHALLENGE



Photo by:
Racing In Focus

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MOSPORT GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT
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- Endurance Race
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- Legends of the Autobahn featuring Mercedes, BMW, Porsche
- Mini Meet North
- Special MG & Triumph attractions
- MG & TRIUMPH Showcase Parking
- Checkered Flag Cruise
- **Bob Tullius**, Grand Marshal
- Burt Levy & "The Last Open Road Show"
- Special Guest Speakers
- New Triumph Trophy "Group 44 Inc Trophy"
- MG Trophy - "Simms Cup Award"
- Optional Rally & Luncheon
- Track Touring Sessions for Road Cars & Clubs
- Vendors
- Free Camping

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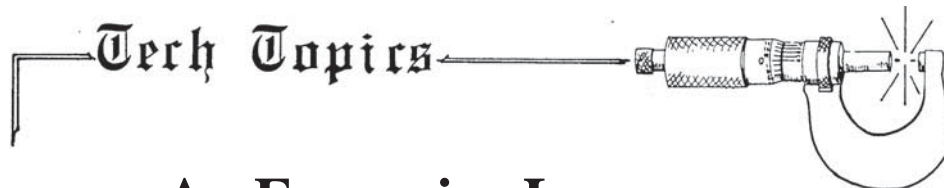
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An Expensive Lesson

By Keith Harmer

Race car preparation seems too often to be the search for the golden fleece, or the pursuit of the unobtainable-especially when it comes to engine modifications

Before starting to race an MGA about ten years ago I had raced some bigger bore machines. Nevertheless I wanted to construct a VSCCA-type of car-namely a 1956 1500cc drum brake model. I applied previously learned modifications to the A and ended up with a very strong car, winning some major races. Not happy with this I pursued the inevitable road to purgatory-if some is good, then more must be better. And here begins the sermon...

Obviously I needed more power. The head was sent to a well known shop and returned with all the 'bells and whistles' plus a cam of not inconsequential specifications. It was time to 'kick ass'. Well, out I went and quickly discovered that a 4 speed wasn't enough. I doubt that a five speed would have handled a power curve from 6200-7500 rpm and not much from 7200 up. A phone call resulted in the "oh-I got a bad batch of cams. Return it and I'll send another". The new cam was no different than the old one. Retard the timing-no change/no power. Try my old cam with less lift and less duration. Still no change. Retard cam 4 degrees, then 8 degrees...still miserable! Egads!

So here I am at the 2004 Lime Rock Fall Festival. I qualified about 10th, as a result of working my butt off and turning times of 1:10-1:11 (*not bad for MGA-ed.*) Saturday afternoon I notice that the head has cracked in the usual place on the opposite side from the spark plugs; I figured she'll last a 13 lapper on Monday and she does...with a good dose of water and oil mixing. The super tech F-1 head is shot-cracked up to and between the valve springs. I want to go to the Glen next weekend but it wasn't going to happen.

Sitting over in the corner of the shop is an old head and with what looks like stock "B" valves in it. My machinist returns it in three days. He comments that some of the valves are sunk-I replied that anything will do as long as I can make the September 24-25 Fall Finale at Lime Rock. I calculate that my wife (she also drives the A) and I will get it through the weekend. Friday morning I take the A out just to check it for her. Geezus, what an animal! (the MGA, not my wife). No lap times but the MGA feels GREAT! She takes the A out. She loves it-power everywhere! Finally on the last race on the last day she gives me permission to go out for a 7 lapper. The engine is incredible (even with 2 degrees less ignition timing). A Lotus 7 and I walk away from the field. My times, 1:09.6 to 1:09.7, are the best I have ever done at Lime Rock in an MGA-1/2 second faster than my best times.

So all my woes can be traced to the "F-1" cylinder head. With the 'big head' the engine had no velocity, no grunt, and no top end. This type of head probably would have worked well with an 1800cc engine with 2" carbs but not on my baby 1500cc with 1-1/2" SUs.

The moral of the story is the same as always-*too much is usually too much.*



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Story Time

AN MGA RACER'S STORY Or How to get back to your roots AFTER 49 YEARS! By Dave Nicholas

I'm 70 now as I reflect back on my first race car - an MGA. I knew at the time it was a special car. Bob Bucher, Sherm Decker, and Bob Poupard were all MG race mentors to me and I had spent many hours at Morris Garage getting my hands dirty, so I was an "MG guy". I went with them to many races with their MGs, in the 60's and 70's. I got a job after school, and as soon as I turned 21, I financed everything I could and bought a brand new 1962 MGA 1600Mk II deluxe or "competition" MG in December 1962. Black with red interior, close ratio gearbox, 4.1 diff, oil cooler and sway bar. Basically a leftover twin cam with a pushrod engine. It was gorgeous! I raced it through 1965 and had good success with it, but we parted ways when I sold the MG to buy a Lotus 23... the bad news? The MG was gone and the Lotus deal fell through! In the following years I raced other cars.



Fast forward to 2011. I am at Sears Point, California with the MG racing guys. Bob Schoeplein, the owner/driver of #76 MGA "*Honey Bee*" says this is going to be his last year racing. I had seen Honey Bee for a while and loved Bob and Jane and told him when he was ready, I was first on the list to buy it. I helped out again at Lime Rock, Connecticut, in the fall of 2011 and reminded him that I wanted to be the buyer. For me, I have a desire to enjoy what has brought me the most pleasure from my time here on earth – racing buddies and cars and MGs! I wanted to go back to getting my hands dirty while maintaining the originality of MGs and making sure they go forward in a couple of years to someone else who will perpetuate racing MGA's.

Nothing ever goes as planned: Bob sold his house, was moving and had no time for this other old guy who wanted his car. After lots of pursuit we made a deal and in July of 2012 the check cleared. I figured my first outing would be the Lime Rock Historic races over Labor Day. I had no competition license and because of my work schedule there was no possibility to get to one – unless I wanted to spend 4 figures for Barber or Bondurant racing schools. I had to get a license or why have the car? Charles Bordin from the Vintage Sports Car Club of America, a pure enthusiast and racer, listened to my plea and agreed that with my history of racing they would allow me to compete under observation. I also agreed to go to Lime Rock the Tuesday before the Historics weekend to work the kinks out and get familiar with the car and going fast. Then another big surprise – Lime Rock entries were sold out in May! In my day you could just show up at an event, register and go racing but that is clearly not the case with vintage racing. The folks at Lime Rock are also pure racers and after pleading and joking and sending photos of me on the podium at the Camel GT race at Lime Rock in 1973 (complete with a lot of black hair) and promising pounds of Kona coffee and chocolate macadamia nuts an opening came up and I was in. Did I mention I live in Honolulu, Hawaii?



So I had a car, I had a temporary license and I had an entry. So how do I get from my house in Honolulu to where the car is stored in Culpepper, Virginia to a race weekend in Connecticut? Oh yes – my drivers suit and helmet last purchased in the 70's were no longer valid for anything but a museum. I went round and round on what to do and finally got helmet, 3 piece suit, socks, sexy red shoes and gloves, balaclava, HANS device from Safe Racer. Oops – when delivered, the suit was big enough to swim in so I had to send it back and have the smaller one sent to my girlfriend in California as I was not sure it would not show up half way out in the Pacific Ocean before I left.

Story Time

So now I had a car, a temporary competition license and entry and a spiffy new kit to go racing in. There was still the problem that I was 5,800 miles away from the car; my companion was in California and had the spiffy suit and the race was another 500 miles from where the car was. Not a problem.

I flew on Saturday from Honolulu to Los Angeles with all the gear I had. Met Rosemary at LAX and got the suit and a new Sparco bag to carry everything. We flew to Dulles airport outside Washington, DC on Sunday morning. I had rented a Mercedes based RV a few weeks prior and had planned on picking it up on Monday and testing at Lime Rock on Wednesday but found Lime Rock tests on Tuesday- oops. When I called the RV place to get the vehicle a day ahead of the original – it was rented and I could not pick it up until Monday, the day before testing. Oops. So I rented a car and drove it to Kevin and Heather Richards house in Culpepper to finally sit in the car for the first time and see if the seat fit and to get comfortable. The car fired up beautifully and I took it for a quick spin on some back roads – what a thrill. My buddy Michael Eaton had a trailer for me and Kevin had fixed up boxes of spares and tools and gear to go racing. I love it when a plan comes together.



Monday morning we drove from Culpepper to Dulles, returned the rental car and went to pickup the RV. Oops, it was not ready as the people who had it were late bringing it back. Finally we headed back south to Culpepper. I hooked up the trailer, figured how to get those boxes of spares and beer in the storage of the RV, put our clothes inside and drove the car on the trailer. Kevin gave me his system of locking the car in place and by late afternoon we were on the road to Lime Rock. The drive, from Culpepper it is about 9 hours towing.



Things were going really well. The M-B diesel purred and pulled strongly and delivered 11.5 miles per gallon at 65-70 mph. I got tired about midnight and we pulled over just before crossing the Hudson and caught a few hours of sleep in the parking lot of a great Greek diner. Up at 5am, breakfast in the diner and we finished the drive and parked next to registration at Lime Rock about 8am to catch a few hours of nap before the track opened at noon.

Did I mention that the VSCCA does not use email or electronic 21st century communication for membership? It's all done by post. The result is I showed at Lime Rock without one shred of paper saying I was a member or that I had approval to race. Charles Bordin had done a great job including getting me a conference call with VSCCA president John Schieffelin. With me pestering them both, John had gotten word to Lime Rock that I was OK despite not having paper. Being a skeptical man I walked up to the entrance gate and was confronted by a white uniformed Lime Rock guy. He told me all I needed was my license and to drive my rig up... I explained I did not have my license with me, that it was being mailed. He looked at me and said "Are you the guy from Hawaii?" I nearly dropped and said yes. "I know all about you buddy, c'mon in". Slick as can be we drove in, Scott showed us our RV parking place, I unloaded and got ready for the first session. Could that be the end of the story? Not by a long shot.

First test session I was a moving road block. No guts at all, the car telling me how much faster it could go, the brakes laughing at me saying "coward, go deeper". But it was great. I came back in and parked near the RV. Rosemary was there and smiled but soon walked away. Odd I thought. She should be happy and smiling. She was walking around by the big tree in paddock B. Something was wrong. I got out of the suit and found her and asked what was wrong. "I lost the keys" she said and the RV was locked. We looked and looked but could not find them. Finally she heard a clinking sound, looked in her bra and there were the keys. Funny huh? Except we spent so much time looking I totally missed session #2. Not to worry, there were 3 more 20 minute sessions. I checked the car over as I had years ago. Checked fuel, lug nuts, oil, tire pressures and went out. Hey, for 20 minutes I wouldn't need more than 3 gallons of fuel right?

Story Time



The session went well and I was getting much faster, smoother and was no longer getting passed on both sides. Near the end the car was breaking up at higher revs and I wondered why. At the checker the car was really sputtering and I knew the problem – I was running out of gas and I did on the back straight. This called for the wrecker to come get me and tow me back. I felt so stupid. I tried to get into the RV to get my wallet and go get fuel but it was locked. Oh NO!! Here comes Rosemary and I ask for the keys. She says they are inside. I nearly faint but she says the camper door isn't locked. I say it is. She tries to open it and oops – it is locked. Here I am late getting in after the session because I had to get towed – I have to get gas, see if the car will start, check it over and the RV is locked. Fortunately I remembered the bedroom window was open, so I pushed the

screen in, lifted Rosie up and threw her through the window (She only weighs 105 pounds). But after this saga, guess what? I missed the next session. The good news is we were ready for the last session of the day and I was feeling much, much better. Now I was passing cars and not getting passed at all. I was staying up with cars I knew to be quick. Finally getting back to what it was like in the old days. The session ended well and my first day back racing was done.

We had a fun couple days on Wednesday and Thursday with some old racer friends, Harry Reynolds and Fred Stevenson, who were up selling their memorabilia. Friday came and my license was at registration, got all the goods, went through tech and the paddock was filling with cars. We had a practice on Friday morning and qualifying in the afternoon. Now I would see where I stood with the cars in my group including another 10 MGA's. The car performed really well and I was much better with a few days to think about what I was doing wrong. I felt about 80% and was shocked I was passing so many cars. I went later to see the times and was really happy that my times were almost exactly half way up the field and 6th of 11 MGA's. I knew darn well there was a bunch of seconds I was leaving on the table. That afternoon Kevin, Mike Eaton and his son Jonathon, John Wright and the former owner good old Bob Schoeplein showed up at noon and it was great to see them. Especially now that I knew I was not going to embarrass myself.

Qualifying came and I felt great. Honey Bee was grinning from ear to ear and I was passing everybody. I finally got an open lap with no traffic and did a 9/10's lap before running into a 3 car chicane. I was very courteous and did not push the subject (*we vintage racers are gentile*) until they spread 3 wide and there was no way past them. I finally did an old fashioned inside out-brake on the shoulder move and got by all three in big bend. By the next corner they were far behind.

You have to know that Honey Bee is not a podium car. Bob raced the car for 15 years and it is a solid competitor. I had no expectations except to be in the top half of the MGA's and stay out of trouble. I had not driven in a race in 31 years (1981 Camel GT at Pocono was my last) and other than lapping in a Formula Ford and some go kart fun I had no idea if any of my old verve was still there. But it was! Friday eve the qualifying sheets came out and there was Honey Bee #76 - 5th overall and 3rd MGA. I was over the moon! I've never been shy and could be described as "confident" but after that performance my head was as big as a watermelon and I must have sounded like an arrogant jerk. But I was one happy fellow. (yes I saved that qualifying sheet)

It all goes downhill from there – at least as far as racing goes. Saturday morning in the warm-up I was pushing through the corners pretty hard keeping the revs at 6200 but could not find a clear lap. On the next to last lap I checked gauges just before the top of the hill – 60lbs oil pressure, 190 water temp, 1100 exhaust temp. Flew down the hill and just about the start/finish line at 5800RPM - BAM – something broke. The back wheels locked but I corrected it and got it out of gear and coasted to the runoff area. Honey Bee and the old man came back on a flat bed. When we tried to see what had happened (it felt like the gearbox broke) Kevin looked under the hood and said "*should I be able to see the crankshaft from here?*" The crank had broken and poked a hole in the block big enough to put a cantaloupe through. We were done!

But it doesn't end here. I put a sign on the back of The Bee saying "Need MG motor, have cash



Story Time

and beer”. Before you could walk the paddock I had offers. Amazing what wonderful folks the vintage crowd has! A few of the offers were motors that were simply too far away to get – one was an MGB motor at a very reasonable price but it was on Long Island. But the guy was sympathetic and said if we wanted it – he would drive to the ferry and take it across the sound and meet us at Bridgeport. Jeff Sienkiewicz, another MGA driver said he had a motor from a wrecked coupe – had no idea what shape it was in but I could use it. It was 20 minutes away. Kevin and I followed him and found it in a neat barn, on a dolly, next to the driveway. Honest, it could not have been easier to get in the back of the car. The next morning – they don’t race at Lime Rock on Sunday – the boys went to Bridgeport and the motor showed up – they were back before noon. We took a look at the motor and some things did not look right. We opened it up and with the help of a dozen friends and a borrowed engine lift, opened it up and checked everything. It took a few hours and a case of beer but by twilight it was ready to put in. Oops – this was a 5 main bearing motor and carried a much bigger flywheel than we expected – the flywheel would not fit the bell housing. We were done – again. Out the motor came and our attention went to Jeff’s engine. It was literally covered with dust, but in checking, it turned over and all the valve train worked.

We had it plugged in by about 10pm and I sent the boys back to their hotel. In the morning I started bolting it in and was just getting finished when the crew re-appeared. We did our due diligence, took the plugs out and turned it over. She cranked and before long I got 25lbs of oil pressure. But she would not fire. 40 lbs of pressure in #3 and only 90 in #2. Again, dozens of new, great friends had suggestions but it was really time to call it a day. We cleaned up the grass garage and started packing and watched the competition on track.

So here was the story. In July I bought a race car that was nearly 6,000 miles away. Went through the hoops getting helmet, suit and safety gear and then figured out how to get a license and somehow got lucky enough to bribe some wonderful folks into an entry at the Lime Rock Historics. One week before the race I came from Hawaii to Virginia to sit in my new steed for the first time. Got an RV, hooked it all up and towed it to Connecticut. I went out in a race car for real on Tuesday for the first time in 31 years. Practiced and qualified for the official event on Friday; blew the motor sky high on Saturday. Made a dozen fabulous new friends, was totally humbled by the kind of help, loaned tools, gifts of the motor and more. Frankly – I think it was more fun and maybe even a better time because of the blown motor. But don’t ask me to do it again.

What a team I have, what a lucky guy. We’ll be back and we’ll finish what we started. Keep an eye out for that yellow buzzer called Honey Bee. She still has some sting in her tail, just like the old man pushing her.

Story edited and distributed by Greg Prehodka



L to R John Wright, Dave Nicholas, Kevin Richard, Michael Eaton, Jonathon Eaton

#32-The Story of a '63 MGB

By Tom Leavy *photos by author*



My first experience driving on a racetrack was in 2009, when my wife Kim and I attended the Austin Healey Conclave, a national meet that travels around North America annually. That year, the Conclave was held in Kingston, Ontario. On our first full day in Kingston, I drove the car on the 2.5 mile track at Shannonville Motorsports Park. I was hooked! I had calmed down a bit about racecars and racing, and by the end of summer it was a dream that was on hold. In early September, I attended the Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen with Mike Kusch. This three-day event draws historically significant cars from all over the continent. When one of Mike's friend's cars got bumped during a race, I even got to help out in the pits and bend the wing out a bit. I came away from that weekend thinking I would build an early Mustang fastback to go racing. Or a Formula Ford. Or a big block Corvette. You get the picture.

Time passed, and the holidays approached. During the week of Christmas, I found an ad on Craigslist for a former SCCA MGB that included a parts car for a very reasonable price. I contacted the seller, and arranged to go see the car on the way to my sister's house on the day after Christmas. As luck would have it, it was only about 15 minutes out of our way. The car looked good, it was complete, already had a lot of racing bits, and the parts car could easily offset the cost of the racecar. I gave a deposit and was back the following week to retrieve my new project. I returned Mike to retrieve the cars. Mike remembered seeing the car for sale at Britfest, and knew one of the former owners, Dave Collier, also a member of the North Jersey MG Club. I remembered Mike talking about the car at the time, it was funny that I found the same car later.

After I got it home, I was able to trace the history of the car back to it's former racing glory. Ron Augustine purchased #32 in 1970 for \$100. Ron lived in West New York (NJ), or some similarly close town in Bergen County. He campaigned the car as an autocrosser at first, and quickly got into road racing by 72-73. Ron had passed away in 1977 from a slip and fall down the basement stairs, when David Collier bought the car from his father. Dave is a member on the North Jersey MG Car Club, and has worked for Moss Motors over the years. I was first introduced to Dave by Mike Kusch. Dave was kind enough to provide me with a lot of details of the car's history. Dave explained that an acquaintance of his, Roy Walhinke, lived across the street from Ron Augustine. Roy was autocrossing with Dave and turned him onto the car in 1993. Roy raced a TR4 when Ron was racing the B. According to Dave, Roy was a pretty good driver, but never could beat Ron- he said Ron was able to win almost every weekend yet still keep anything from breaking on his car.

#32 had stock 63 bolt on wheels when Dave Collier bought it (and sold it), but it came with a set of slicks mounted on Cook wheels. Apparently they were all the rage for hillclimbing in the late 60's, but they were steel 5 spoke wheels that seemed heavy- not a good candidate when you want to keep unsprung weight of the suspension to a minimum.



When I purchased the car I was provided with EMRA (Eastern Motor Racing Association) newsletters that documented Ron's success throughout the 70's with the car. I even received photos of the car taken in the mid 70's at Bridgehampton in a race (flares were not on the car in the photos). I believe the most of the races were with EMRA, and not so much SCCA. The car ran in some hill climbs, ran a few races with the Liverpool Motoring Club (the oldest racing body in the world), and was allowed to run in their annual championship race at Lim Rock (hence the large letter "U" on the rear wings). The car also ran in Can-Am series in New Hampshire. The EMRA newsletters revealed the fact that Ron was a regular pole sitter for E-Production class, and that in the latter half of the 70's the car

Story Time

held the course lap record for E-Production at Bridgehampton. Apparently, Ron and #32 were the driver and the car to beat. I have color glossies of the car at speed in 1977 at the Bridge (courtesy of Nial McCabe). The series of pictures documents the rear end collision with the front of racer Roy Oppedisano's Alfa Giulietta. I have been told that Roy, frustrated that he could not best Ron, rear-ended the #32 car in a rage, causing body damage to both cars, and dislodging the exhaust from the MGB. Roy was supposedly banned from EMRA for life following that incident. Dave sold #32 in 1993 for \$1000, and delivered it to a summer home in the Poconos about 10 miles west of Dingman's Ferry. Dave never got the car to run- the carbs were seized and the foam in the fuel cell was a mess. A few years later #32 was spotted at New Vernon Coach and Motor Works in Morris county. It had been sold to Jerry Fatcheric of Morristown, NJ. The mechanic at New Vernon Coach, Steve Shade, was doing a tech session for the North Jersey MGCC and the car was still there. Steve said they got it running and it was the fastest MG he'd ever driven.



John Mears from the North Jersey MG Car Club sold a lot of parts for #32 to Jerry. Occasionally Dave got updates on the progress. Apparently, Jerry had limited understanding of what he was doing on the car based on the feedback Dave got from John Mears. He tossed the distributor and put in a replacement without checking the curve or the timing first. He had the carbs rebuilt without checking the jets and needles or settings...stuff like that. Even still, Steve said it screamed around their lot. He's now in a smaller location on Rt 202 between Morristown and Bernardsville. Jerry owned a dating service in Morristown near where John Mears worked at the time, and he used to deliver all the parts.

The ownership history trail gets kind of narrow here. #32 was sold to Karen Levenson of Summit, NJ on 9/11/04. In the Spring of 2009, #32 was spotted at BritFest, sitting on a trailer with an asking price of \$1500. In June of '09, the car was sold to Bill Varcadipane of Wantage, NJ. I then purchased the car from Bill on 12/26/09. I posted inquiries on several racing discussion forums, and got the following reply from the wife of a former racer who is still very active with EMRA:

Here's a Ron Augustine MGB story that's true-

Ron was running at Bridgehampton (The Bridge as it was fondly called) and he went off the road at the turn just before the hairpin (they called it station 9) and was disabled driver's right. Carl Jenson, then the caretaker of the place and Tow Truck driver, etc. decided that he could take the truck down behind Station 7 to station 9 and tow Ron back without going on the track - which was done quite often. Anyway, the dirt and stony "road" behind the stations was very rough to say the least. Carl hooked Ron up - and he rope towed him back up the hill. Suddenly a few spectators behind 7 who saw him coming amid tons of dust began screaming for Carl to stop. Carl turned his head around to see the MGB upside down - Ron still inside. It was funny afterward, but not at that moment!!

-Cally Kruger, EMRA (Eastern Motor Racing Association)

I began restoring the car in July of 2010. The extensive background that I had on the car inspired me to restore the car as I found it in its' original 1970's livery. It was decided to replace the roll cage to a safer more current configuration. I replaced the rockers, floors, and rear wings. The rest of the tub was in good shape, and by early August the body had been reassembled, and was in a coat of epoxy primer. The engine compartment, trunk and underbody were all treated to a coat of chemical and chip resistant paint designed for subway cars. I was able to get a color match that was close to the original Tartan Red the car would again wear. I gathered parts over the winter months, and in February I picked up the project where I had left off. After the body was paint-ready, I fabricated the roll cage, and applied the top coat of single-stage red paint to the body. Due to time constraints, it was decided to run a street motor for my first time out on the

Story Time

track. It was much easier to pull this car together than it was with the Healey restoration we did on '09. There is so much less to be done on a racecar. Don't get me wrong, this car has been restored to a very high level, there are just fewer parts to install. Visually, it looks the same as it did way back when, sans the fender flares.

Nevertheless, there was still a lot of work that had to be done, and like all of my projects, I worked feverishly right up to the last minute to finish. Kim was very supportive and understanding throughout this process, and I could never have accomplished this project without her help. There were a couple of things, like the tach and speedo, that weren't completed, but the mission was still a go. Mike Kusch helped me quite a bit, and I never would have been ready on time without his efforts. He is the man! We finished the car at around 7 pm on Wednesday and my son Thom and I left for New Hampshire, in the rain, at 10:30pm. Being a faithful restoration to its' former configuration, this car has no top, and a cut-down windshield. I was now going to christen the car on an open trailer through 8 hours of torrential rain. The ride up was rough, and we arrived at the hotel with enough time to take a 1-hour nap. I was grateful that Thom helped keep me awake through the harrowing drive up.



On May 19-22, 2011 I joined VRG (Vintage Racer Group) for their Vintage Race weekend at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. To earn my competition license, I attended their driving school on Thursday and Friday. On Friday afternoon, I joined the rest of my racing group (Group 3), which included an Alfa GTV, a Healey BN4, a 59 Corvette, Mini Coopers and a Datsun 510, among others. The driving school was an incredible experience. The VRG Driver's School did a terrific job of getting us in the seat and prepared to run on the track with other experienced drivers. I am still amazed at how much I learned from them in such a short time. These guys are awesome! I opted to rent a garage stall in the pits, and that worked out nicely. We had internet access, and even though it never rained hard, it was wet at times on Friday and Saturday am. Thom was my faithful pit crew, and he did a fantastic job.

Once we joined the rest of the group when we finished school, everyone else with VRG was most gracious, and their patience, guidance and support really made us feel welcome. The MG performed very well. I am very pleased with how well the car handles. It sticks to the pavement and goes wherever you point it. I ran a set of used radials that I clipped from a parts car as rain tires on Thursday and Friday, and switched to racing slicks for Saturday's race. Once the tires warmed up in practice on Saturday the grip was a drastic improvement over the street radials. After a small leak from the master cylinder was detected and remedied, it was smooth sailing for the rest of the weekend. I tried to connect the tach without success, so I had to drive by ear throughout the weekend and hope that I didn't overrev the motor. I was able to mix it up with a couple of other drivers who were equally matched, and managed to keep from blowing it up.

There is no better way to say this-It is exhilarating to race. I can't wait to do it again, and I can only imagine how much better it will be with one of Mike's race engines under the hood. Kim and I met Butch O'Connor, another racing acquaintance, at NJ Motorsports Park this past Memorial Day weekend. He was singing the praises of the new engine that Mike just built for him. He commented that the table had turned because for the first time in decades of racing, race officials were blue flagging other drivers to warn that Butch was coming up fast from behind (instead of it being the other way around).

The icing on the cake in New Hampshire was when Rod Folia joined us at the dinner table on Saturday night. Rod was a noteworthy racer from the same heyday of #32. Among the different cars he drove over the years, he had campaigned a 65 GT-350 (chassis #73!). It was fantastic to hear about all of his adventures, including time on the track and in the pits spent with the likes of



Story Time

Paul Newman. During his racing career, Rod has been both a regional and national champion. On this particular weekend, Rod was driving an early 70's Mazda RX-3, and challenged the big-block Corvettes running in Group 4. To top it off, when I mentioned Ron Augustine's name, Rod remembered him from EMRA!

My first race weekend was over, and #32 returned safely to my garage without a scratch. With the help of Mike Kusch, my car was ready and able to withstand back-to-back high-performance driving events on that weekend. I got the tach working (faulty ground wire- can you imagine that? On a British car?).

We ran #32 at BeaveRun in July, and the car functioned well until it ran out of oil pressure on the last race of the day on Saturday afternoon. That weekend we paddocked next to Nial McCabe, who remembered our car from its' EMRA days in the '70's and provided me with the photos of the car at Bridgehampton mentioned earlier. Another great weekend with VRG!

After Mike Kusch cobbled together a usable motor from several that I had laying around, I participated in the SVRA weekend at Millville in late September. This was a fun event, and we paddocked with the Joisey Boyz, who helped make the weekend all the more enjoyable. New tires and a motor that actually accelerated made for a much better driving experience on Thunderbolt.



The "B" is a solid platform that a racer can be built on. I am sure that as the suspension and drivetrain are further tuned, the car will continue to turn quick lap times. With the availability of new, used and aftermarket parts, the MGB has turned out to be an excellent choice for this pursuit. It is a great platform for the casual and performance oriented enthusiast alike. This new wrinkle on my automotive pursuits has really been a great experience, and I am looking forward to getting Kim and the kids competitive driver training and some seat time in #32 so they can all learn how much fun racing is!



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MG VINTAGE RACERS' NEWSLETTER

ORGANIZATION: The *MG Vintage Racers Newsletter* is published several times a year by MGVR, Inc., a non-profit corporation in the state of Pennsylvania.

PURPOSE: *To maintain a close camaraderie and open exchange of information among active MG vintage racers, and to encourage the sport of MG vintage racing.* Material is contributed by subscribers, and exchanged through the Newsletter. The Newsletter does not organize or sanction any events, is not affiliated with any club, is non-profit, and does not accept paid advertising (items of value to the members are run free of charge). We are low-key and welcome first-time racers as well as 40 year veterans. *All subscribers are encouraged to submit their fair share of material for publication.*

HISTORY: The newsletter was founded in 1981 by active MGTD racer **Greg Prehodka**. With Greg's capable leadership as Editor, it grew from a handful of enthusiasts to over 150 subscribers in 1995. Greg's Newsletter was awarded the prestigious "**Moss Motors Journalism Award**" in 1994. Major MG vintage events (such as the Collier Cup at the 50th Anniversary of Watkins Glen) have been promoted and coordinated through the Newsletter and its subscribers. In 1995, Mark Palmer assumed the Editor's post upon request from Greg. During Mark's tenure, the MGVR Newsletter grew to over 200 subscribers, while the 'Focus Event' concept became *the* annual race where MG Vintage Racers gather to share the camaraderie they are famous for both on, and off the track. In 2005, Mark turned Newsletter editorship over to Chris Meyers. 2006 marked our first ALL MG FOCUS EVENT at Hallett, Oklahoma. In 2008 we joined our West coast MG friends at Laguna Seca for our first West Coast Focus Event, followed by our second West coast Focus event at Infineon in 2011! **2014's** Focus Event at Watkins Glen marks the 60th *Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy* race!

SUBSCRIBER QUALIFICATIONS: Subscribers must actively race a vintage MG or MG-powered car (e.g. Lester-MG, Tojiero-MG). *Actively* means race at least once a year, or be in preparation for racing within a year. Subscribers are surveyed regularly to maintain the mailing list. Currently, there are approximately 250 subscribers, including complimentary issues to clubs and other organizations.

COST: There is a small initial fee. Subscription fees are requested occasionally, only as required for solvency.

REGALIA: See elsewhere in this issue. **WEB SITE:** www.mgvr.org

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Web site: The address is www.mgvr.org It is actually a "geocities" site right now, but that may change – but don't worry, we have registered the mgvr.org domain so that URL will always get you to our site. **Chris Kintner** is our Web Editor and maintains the site, usually using articles from the newsletter after each issue comes out. He also posts information & notices about upcoming events, etc. It's worth checking this site every few months just to see what's new.

E-mail list: For those new to the internet, an e-list is a way to communicate with a large number of people by sending a message to just one address – the group address. To be part of this, you have to sign up for the e-list (also called a e-group). When you sign up, your e-mail address is added to the list, and you will get all the messages that appear on the e-list. It is not "live chat" or a chat room (which wouldn't work for us anyway), it's just a way to exchange e-mail messages conveniently.

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If for some reason that doesn't work, then do the following: go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>, go to "new users", and sign up for a Yahoo I.D. (there is no cost to do this). Then from the Yahoo groups home page, click on "Join a Group", and then type in MGVR and do a search. The search result will be our e-list (MGVR), and you then click on "Join this group"

After you've joined, you can begin sending messages to the group. Simply send your message to MGVR@yahoogroups.com, and everyone else on the e-list will receive your message. So be a little careful about what you send out, since 90 of your best friends will see what you said! The best uses for the e-list are to ask technical advice, talk about upcoming races & find out who's going or how to enter, etc, or give a short informal report on a race you've just attended. You can also discuss "issues" and ask people's opinions.

If you have any problems joining or using the e-list, contact **Steve Konsin** the younger, his e-mail address is skonsin@gmail.com; he is the facilitator of the e-list for us.

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6. **ANOTHER FORM OF CONTRIBUTION:** *We're desperately in need of race reports and technical articles* specific to MG race prep and race reports!!! Can you help??? We would love to read about your MG racing exploits.

I will write an article on _____

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Next issue-Full report on Grattan, Jefferson 500 Part 2, and more!

Group Photo 2012 Focus Event at Grattan with VSCDA