

**HOLY
COW!**



I'M 40!



NEWSLETTER

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From The Editor:

Quite an amazing feat. Far back in 1981 Greg Prehodka and a bundle of his friends had an idea. They created a place, a club, a family where silly and sometimes foolish folks like us could connect and enjoy our mutual love of racing MG's. How many thought, 40 years ago this month, that his creation would be alive and thriving?

To honor those who have done so much for MGVR we have started an Honor Roll of members. The criteria was not how quick they were or how many races they won, but those who never said no when asked to help; those who always contributed to the focus races, contributed to the website and newsletter and unselfishly done something to promote, help or support the MGVR or MG racing.

Some will say "how about my friend XYZ" and we agree. If you know someone who meets the criteria we want to hear about him/her from you along with why you think they deserve mention.

MOST IMPORTANT; Many of you wrote short stories about their times with MGVR and they are all presented. With photos. Along with these quick reminiscences we have some longer stories about those days from the folks who were there. This is our history! I am sure you will get a kick out of these reminiscences. And write me some of yours.

And, of course, a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Now is the time to relax, enjoy your family and friends and let your faithful racing or driving steed do the same. There will be time to get them ready for 2022 after the New Year starts.

MG Vintage Racers

A Brief History

November 2021



Post WWII sports car racing in North America started on the streets of Watkins Glen, New York in 1948. From there it grew and spread. But with time the racing became more competitive, as newer, more modified, and faster cars forced the old ones to pasture. In reaction to that "**Vintage Racing**" began to take root in the 60's, as a flashback to the earlier - *and simpler* - days of sports car racing. In this new venue, "**the cars were the stars**", where their vintage character would be maintained. Cars were generally restricted to "period original" modifications, and winning was not important, as this was nostalgic racing just for the fun of it!

In 1959 the "**Vintage Sports Car Club of America**" (VSCCA) was founded, as it started the vintage car racing movement. But in 1959, MGA's were still being produced, and only the older MG's were eligible to participate with the VSCCA. Vintage racing was rather obscure back then. Fields of cars were usually small, and rules minimal. Classes were often just "**Fast**" and "**Not so Fast**" - regardless of what you were racing. The first "**All MG**" vintage race was sponsored by the "New England MG 'T' Register" in 1977 - and repeated again in 1978 - at Lime Rock Park, Connecticut. At it, 'T' series, and older MG's, raced in a simple format - where a helmet, a seat belt, and 50 bucks got you on the track.

Other vintage race clubs began emerging in the US and Canada. In 1974, the first "**Monterey Historic Races**" were held in California. MGA's now were eligible in several of the vintage race clubs. MG's were being vintage raced in many vintage clubs, but had no common forum. In 1980 MG production ceased in Abingdon, England. Then in 1981 active MGTD vintage racer **Greg Prehodka** suggested that MG vintage racers stay in touch with each other through a simple newsletter. With much positive response to his suggestion, in December of that year, he started the "**MG Vintage Racers' Newsletter**" (MGVR), with 40 members. Racing an MG was a requirement to join. In 1981, no-one foresaw the growth vintage racing would experience in the years to come, or the role MGVR would play.

Vintage racing and the newsletter grew in the following years. The newsletter fostered a strong camaraderie among the MG racers. It also worked with various vintage race organizations to support "**All MG**" races. In the 80's, SVRA started vintage racing and had their "**MG Safety Fast Championship**" at Road Atlanta, Georgia, and in 1985 SVRA revived the spirit of the *Collier*

Brothers MG racing at Watkins Glen from the 50's with their "**Vintage Collier Cup**". More vintage race organizations were forming. Then in the 90's, MGVR's "**Focus Events**" evolved. MGVR did not sanction races. But MGVR would select one vintage race event every year as their "**Focus Event**" and work with the sanctioning body to put on an all MG race within it. Then they would encourage all their MG members to attend that race event, and would compliment it with their own dinner, special MG guests, their own trophies, and other fun stuff. The idea took hold and grew. This produced record fields of MG's racing at: Pittsburgh, Lime Rock, Watkins Glen, Waterford Hills, Mid-Ohio, NHIS, Mosport, VIR, and Road America. MG was back in the racing spotlight! Based on this success, the **Vintage Racing Automobile Association of Canada** (VARAC), established an annual "**All MG**" race for the "**Simms Cup**" in 1998. MGVR also established their own annual award - the "**MGVR Spirit Award**" to be awarded by a vote of the MG racers to one member who best embodied the "**Spirit of MG Vintage Racing**".

In support of its members, MGVR sends out a members newsletter several times a year; has published its "**Tech Tips**" on race preparation of vintage MG's; did a comprehensive member's racing census in 1990 and 2000; has a web site (MGVR.org); has an e-mail discussion group, and of course its annual "**Focus Event**".

Editorship (*and leadership*) of MGVR was turned over from Greg to MGA racer **Mark Palmer** in 1995. Then to **Chris Meyers** in 2006 and then **Dave Nicholas** in 2020. With their leadership, the group has grown and evolved to higher levels. There are currently about 250 subscribers, mostly in North America, all with the common bond of racing MG's. In 2001 MGVR celebrated its 20th Anniversary at Road America, Wisconsin, at VSCDA's vintage race festival when MGVR also produced a video about their history. For their "**Focus Event 2004**" at SVRA's "Zippo Vintage Grand Prix" at Watkins Glen - where the 50th Anniversary of the "*Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy MG Race of 1954*" was celebrated - 143 racing MGs showed up to compete in the "**Vintage Collier Cup**" all MG race! For 2006 they celebrated their 25th anniversary with an "**All MG**" race weekend at Hallet, Oklahoma. Now for 2021 they are celebrating their **40th anniversary**, as they march on! For more information, go to MGVR's web-site: MGVR.org

MGVR is the oldest single marque vintage race support group in North America. It is non-profit, staffed by volunteers, and focuses on its members and MG vintage racing

For more information on it, contact:

-MGVR on the web at: "MGVR.org" (contains a detailed history of MGVR)

-MGVR Newsletter editor, Dave Nicholas, e-mail: MGVR766@gmail.com,

-MGVR Publicity: Greg Prehodka, MGracer53@aol.co

TALES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE MGVR

Told by those who lived to tell about it

Bob Coleman, Franklin, TN

I remember meeting Ian Pryor, owner of the #44, 1961 Class Winner at Sebring, when he came from Australia, and brought his famous Factory Coupe with him. This was the car Carl George & I used as a pattern for our #42 Sebring Coupe, when we created it. Old No. 42 is a composite of several factory cars Abingdon sent to Sebring. We added them up and divided by the number used and it came out 42. We didn't wish to use one of the numbers that one of the "works" cars had used. The factory numbered their cars 43 & 44, and now there is #42.



Susan Patterson

So I "graduated" from SVRA racing school and needed a race car. I found an old blue MGTD in a barn in Connecticut. I bought it unseen, except by pictures, and had it shipped to San Antonio to an amazing vintage race car mechanic Kermit. In just a few days Kermit got it as race ready as possible and I raced my first event at the SVRA national finals at Circuit of the Americas in Austin!

I was hooked on MG's! I was blessed to become an official member of the Zapata Racing Team.

Later I was racing Laguna Seca track in California when my engine blew. I had registered to race that special track for two weekends and staying the week between in California and the amazing Louie Shefchik found an MGA that was English racing green 31 which the owner would sale me on the spot!



As this MGA was entered already in the Laguna Seca races, I was able to continue in the race. Thus I again became a huge fan of MGA's!

I had a personally deficit year in 2021 and had to sell all of my race cars but one - I chose to keep the MGA green 31. Thus with great honor I continue to be Zapata!

Dave Smith and Dave Quinn on behalf of the Michigan rowdies

An MGVR & Michigan Rowdie memory!

I remember a June 1986 trip when the Michigan Rowdies made our annual pilgrimage to Waterford Hills Racetrack. While Rowdies were wandering thru the Paddock we met up with Greg Prehodka.

He asked the group if we would like to sit in a vintage race car. Silly question, but it did have the desired effect. Dave Quinn quickly jumped in and was sitting in Greg's MG TD. Greg then said:

"Start it up and take it for a drive". Dave drove around the Waterford Paddock and our group was very impressed (and a bit jealous) with this activity. Without a doubt, the Michigan Rowdies interest in Vintage racing went up several notches that day and that interest continues to this day.



Mark Barnhart

Wow! Seeing this photo (the one above) reminds me of a special evening at The Glen. I have almost always stayed Sunday night after the race and enjoyed just being there in the quiet savoring the memories of the week. I can't remember what year it was, but Fitch was the guest of honor that year. I drove through the town and pulled into a restaurant to get dinner and was seated at a table all alone in one of the rooms. The waitress asked me if I was a racer as she had seen me pull up in my MGA. I told her yes and she said "there is another gentleman racer in the other dining room also by himself and would it be ok if she

asked him if he would like to join me for dinner. I said yes and when the waitress walked in the room, the person with her was Fitch. We had a great evening and talked for at least 2 hours. What a wonderful and interesting gentleman.

Bob Satava, MGTD #7

It was meant to be. When I was in high school, I used to ride my bicycle about six miles to a quarter mile dirt speedway to watch midget racing. It was neat with the smell of Castor oil in the air, and we could visit the pits afterward. Little did I know but a racecar could be bought for \$500 at that time. Not that I had that kind of money. I only made 35 cents an hour on my various jobs. Then they started racing stock cars in the fifties. I hated them – too much pushing and shoving cars off the track, etc. But the crowds enjoyed it!

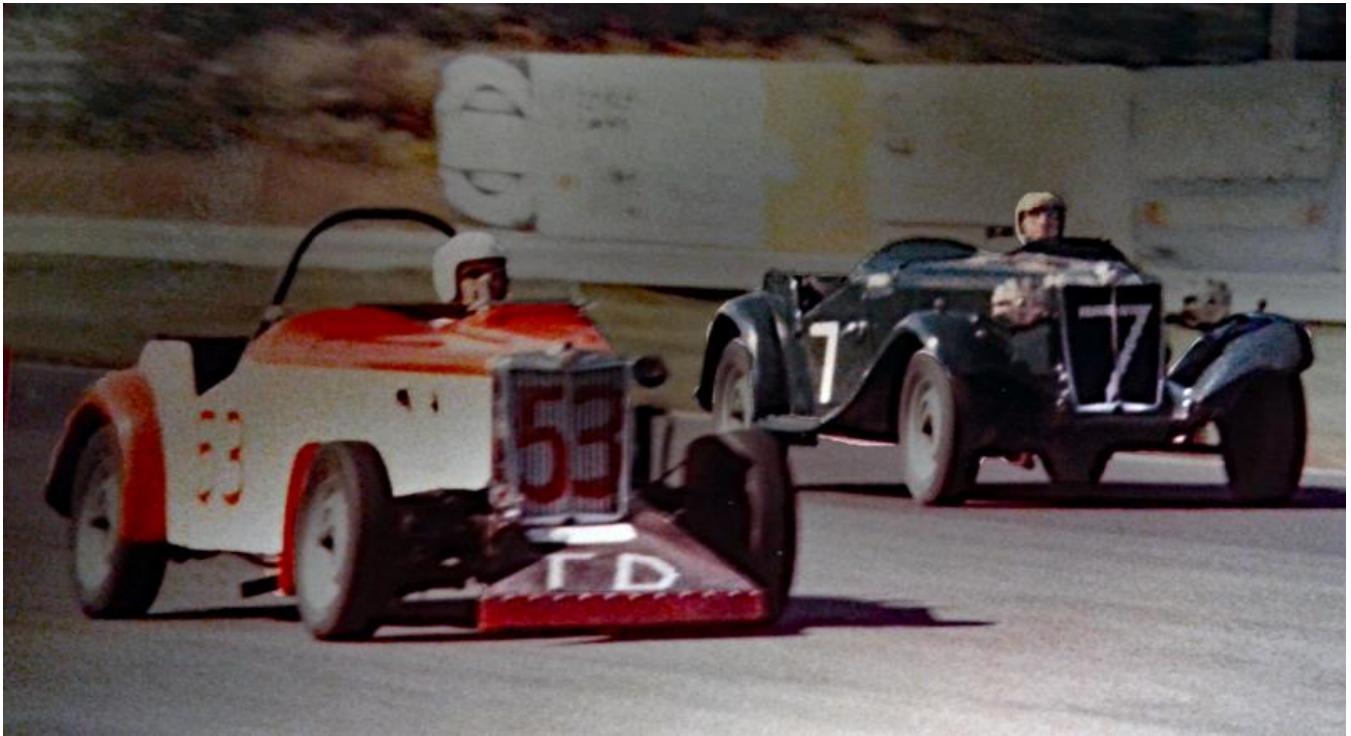
I got my first MG in 1954 - a MGTD. I joined the Cleveland Sports Car Club which later put on the Put-In-Bay road races out on Lake Erie for eight years. I worked tech inspection and safety communications. Racing was good again! We went to tracks all over from Watkins Glen, to Cumberland, and Akron Airport races. I joined a safety and communications group so I could be close to the action every weekend.

I joined the New England MG 'T' Register in 1964. About that time the Cleveland club rented Nelson Ledges racetrack for time trials. That was great fun! After that I got the bug and built a race out of a 1953 MGTD. I hill-climbed that car with great success! And then the NEMG 'T' Register rented Lime Rock Park, Ct. race track for running a "Double Three" race in 1977. It had two three hour stints of actual road racing around its 1.52 mile track. After driving the first three hours myself, I didn't want to turn the wheel over to my co-driver, the late Dan Glow. But I did. We had one motel room there. I was dating a very attractive girl at the time and all-night various pit crew and friends were popping in. We had people sleeping on the floor and even in the bathtub. One of the last to come in looking for lodging at two AM was Craig Seabrook of the Whitworth Shop. You should have seen the look on his face when he saw me in bed with this gal! The next day during the race they were standing on a corner holding a flag and paying no attention to the race. So much for "Safety Fast"!

As an aside, Dan and I ran three 1,000-mile street road races that ended at the T Register's "*Gathering of the Faithful*" (GOF's) - that was great fun! In the first race I drove the whole 1,000 miles. Needless to say, my co-driver was upset because he didn't get to drive. There are a lot of stories that could be told - enough to fill a book!

I raced from St. Louis to Shannonville, Ontario – all great fun. At St. Louis we even had a river boat race down the Mississippi.

Today at 90 years old I do my racing on TV and also with MG Valve Covers. It is still great fun!



Jim Weissenborn

MGs have been part of most of my life..MGTD on to a 1500TF in High School. I had to wait for my 21st B-Day to go racing in SCCA. 1960 was first year on track with a SCCA National license and a marriage license....A Porsche speedster and Alfa Veloce kept us on the track the first couple of years. Fun simple times. We would drive to the track, run the car all weekend, and drive it home. We were back to MGs in 1962 with the purchase of one of the 1960 Sebring Factory twin cam roadsters. All this was on East coast tracks, Bridgehampton, Marlboro, Vineland, Watkins Glen, Thompson. We moved to California in 1965 and then my family increased, and racing decreased.

Enter Vintage racing with CSRG 30 years later and all the fun started over. We now have four MGAs which we run around the country. A 1959 Twin Cam, 1959 Jim Byers CR90 MGA 1600 Special, a 1959





MGA 1600 coupe..(east coast rainy day special..)1962 MGA 1622 MKII. These cars have competed on just about every racetrack in the US and Canada over the past 25 years. They all can still be driven to the track. The 1959 red MGA 1600 coupe was purchased from a veteran driver from the Philadelphia area, and we kept it on the east coast for a few years but moved it to CA a few years ago. Fun cars I can work on and keep on the track and go fast enough to scare me.

***"I just wanted to thank you for including my dad in the 40 Anniversary of MGVR! He enjoyed being with you guys, who welcomed him with open arms! I believe it added years to his life!. He was proud to be a member!
Sincerely, Denver Cornett III"***

Bill Hollingsworth

You have strong legacy to follow in being the Editor following Greg, and Mark and Chris. There are so many moments and to pick one does disservice to the others, when Greg formed the Newsletter and many of us began racing T Series MGs, we became a "band of brothers." The highlights of racing the TC were at Watkins Glen and at Road America. On Sunday at Road America, two weeks after 9/11, it rained. I was gridded 13th behind 7 or 8 MGA's and the MGB's. I think I finished 5th having passed all the MGA's. On the way there and on the way home, flags were draped on the bridges on Route I-80. On Saturday John Kieley blew his transmission and stayed up all night with the help of Chuck Woodworth, installing the rebuilt transmission. They got his TD together and he raced it on that rainy day, starting probably last because he did not have a qualifying time.



I think the group awarded him the Copper Bucket. Our Saturday night dinner was at Siebkens, a very laid-back resort with pretty good food, an abundance of

atmosphere and operated by two very attractive sisters. Our speaker was to be Al Moss who cancelled two days before the weekend when he broke his leg loading his MGTC on the trailer in Sedona, AZ. Art Evans flew in from Los Angeles to cover for him and narrate Al's film on 50's racing in California. Sid Silverman, who did not enter his MGTC, but still owned SVRA and Vintage Motorsport Magazine sent Burt Levy to cover the event for the Magazine. The article was vintage Levy. He made us all proud to be there. We were a "BAND OF BROTHERS." THANKS, GREG!

Greg Prehodka

In 1976 the New England MG 'T' Register announced that they would hold an all MG 'T' series "six hour endurance race" at Lime Rock Park, Ct. in 1977. I had just finished restoring my MGTD and competing with it in a week long Bicentennial Rally in July of 1976. But I felt racing it might also be fun, - so I mailed in my entry papers and a \$35 fee for the race even though I had never raced before! What was I getting into?? I recruited friends to form my "Team 53" (*my car # was 53*). Over the next year my MG was disassembled again and rebuilt to resemble a racing MG of the early 50's, with cycle fenders on the front, and a roll bar and seat belts installed. As is all too often the case with these kinds of wishful projects, work fell behind schedule, and unforeseen problems arose. Having the MG ready for the race became questionable! We worked on the car late into the night - until around 2AM - the night before race day - just to get it finished enough to race, - and rolled it on the trailer, getting only around 2 hours of sleep! Back up at 4AM as we headed off to Lime Rock! I lived in Edison N.J. back then, and the race was in Lime Rock Ct. I borrowed my brother's Chevy Blazer as my tow vehicle, and a friend's car trailer. Unbeknown to me at the time, this was NOT a good combination! So we drove off in the dark of early morning, half asleep. Once on the Garden State Parkway I slowly got up to speed. Then without warning the trailer, all of a sudden, started violently fishtailing back and forth across three lanes of traffic - (I'll NEVER forget that!!!)



pulling the Blazer back and forth along with it!!! Oh HOLY SHI*!!! Fortunately, we did not collide with any other vehicles (*thank you, thank you!*)! Whew! I was at the controls as I really felt that the MG and trailer were possibly going to flip over, - possibly taking the Chevy (and us) with it!!! Agggghhh! Was my racing career going end even before it began!! Now an accident could have really ruined our day!!! Everyone was more than wide-awake now! After carefully slowing down and re-gaining control, a little testing determined that towing was OK up to around 35 mph, when trailer would begin swaying again. So for the rest of our trip, we drove at 35 mph or less! In the end we made the race and had a great time! My brother Barry and I co-drove my MG in the race, completing 189 laps of Lime Rock's 1.52 mile course by the end of the race. And this is how I got hooked on MG vintage racing! This became the beginning of my MG racing adventure that would roll on for over 40 years! Ah – so many memories!!

George Pardee

REMINISCENCE - Bryar Motorsports Park, Loudon NH, 1980

Very early days, when MGVR may only have been a gleam in Greg's eye - racing with the New England MG 'T' Register at beautiful Bryar Motorsports Park (before it was obliterated by NHIS). Safety gear was a lap belt, t-shirt and motorcycle helmet. Sarah Carr, Kevin Cox, Roy and Mary Jacobson, Greg, Bob Satava, Jim Williams and myself were there to carry the octogen to glory.s



The high point of my weekend (and probably my career as a racing driver) was winning with #53 close behind. I must reveal that old #53 was shoed by Jim Finne, rather than our illustrious founder.

No place I would rather be, than in the seat of an MG, racing with my friends.

George has another story about the Mount Equinox Hillclimb



The annual Mount Equinox Hillclimb is Vintage Sportscar Club of America's signature event. Run yearly since May of 1950, it is one of the most historic sports car competitions in the entire United States. Racers drive the same course as John Fitch, Bill Milliken, Briggs Cunningham, Carroll Shelby, Bill Rutan and

Rene' Dreyfus to name a few of the legends. In keeping with the club's role of protecting the cars of the era and their histories and the histories of the places and events where they ran, the VSCCA took stewardship of the event and its history in 1973. (By that time, the current Can-Am cars had dropped the course record to barely over 4 minutes and were frequently airborne at the entry to the Saddle; it became apparent that technology had outrun safety.)

To encourage understanding and appreciation of this history, VSCCA has several awards associated with the event. The **Rene' Dreyfus Award** recognizes the driver, selected by the Corner Workers, who best exemplifies the style and grace of its' namesake pre-war Gran Prix great. It seems often to go to the driver of a red car, previously and most deservedly to Ed Callo Jr. in his red TC; this year to Charles Schoendorf , driving his spectacular two tone red and white Arnolt Bristol Bolide.

SCCA racer Malcolm Donaldson served long and enthusiastically as the Starter, flagging the cars off on their runs. The **Mal Donaldson Award** recognizes a driver who most exemplifies the spirit of the event and has maintained a commitment to it for many years. The permanent trophy that is the Mal Donaldson Award is kept on display in the St. Bruno Visitors Center at the top of Mount Equinox. I was pleased and honored beyond words to receive the Mal Donaldson Award this year.

The **5-50-500 Award** recognizes the competing car **driven** the farthest to hill.



My first climb was in 1981 at the wheel of an MG TF1500, which I drove to the mountain from our home in Connecticut. Since moving to Florida, my family has made the 3,500 mile round trip as often as possible. In 2000, honoring the 50th anniversary of the climb, the four of us drove the familiar grey TF1250 and our MG Y-type Saloon to the hill from our home in Clearwater, FL, earning the 5-50-500 Award. In 2019, coming up short on preparation of the TF, Elyn and I drove her MG'B' to the event completing all runs and adding 1,000 miles to the trip, touring New England and Virginia during our return to Florida.

These wonderful pilgrimages would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of my family: Elyn, Nick and Will, and our loyal crew Dot and Joe Novak. Enduring thanks also to MGVR Founding Members Greg Prehodka and Ben Bragg.

Eric Russell

They say you always remember your first time. Well, my MGA doesn't have any race provenance, but it is special to me. It is my first car – I bought it when I was in high school. I paid \$235 in 1971. I drove it through my high school & college years and married my high school sweetheart in 1976. A few years later when we were starting our family and the budget was tight, I suggested that we could sell the MG. My wife said, "don't sell it, you love that car – we'll get by". So, I still have my first car and my first wife!

After years of spectating, I decided I wanted to race. I considered buying a race car – it would have been less expensive and got me on the track sooner, but I wanted to race my car. So, in 2012 – 2013 I restored my MGA to go racing. I then signed up for VRG's Driver School in May of 2014. With a six-hour tow ahead of us, we left North Carolina planning to arrive at Summit Point, WV around 6pm.



Less than hour from home the trailer blew a tire. I had inadvertently pulled the brake break-away switch exiting our driveway and was dragging the trailer brakes for 25 miles until the heat built up and the tire blew. It took an hour to get everything cooled down enough to remove the damaged tire and put the spare on. We slowly drove back home and I dejectedly commented that maybe this was a sign I should quit. My wife wouldn't hear of it. She replied, "you worked hard to get this far now fix the trailer so we can get going again". The local auto

parts store had new bearings in stock. By now I need a flashlight to remove the old bearings and get the new ones installed.

We again headed north, and after stopping for a nap in a highway rest area we arrived at the track about 7am in time for an 8 am start of Driver School. At the conclusion of the two day school, I was given my probationary license and allowed to enter VRG's Jefferson 500. I was not the fastest, but nobody could claim to be having more fun!

Richard Navin

MGVR has played an integral role in the enjoyment I received from vintage racing with my MGB #246. Looking at my records, it seems that I have been a member of MGVR for about 18 years. During that time, I participated in about 10 Focus Events, in at least Watkins Glen, Mosport Park, Summit Point, Lime Rock Park, Loudon, Mid-Ohio, Beaverun, Grattan and VIR. This is a unique experience that only a great group like MGVR can offer.

There is no way to properly measure the enjoyment, camaraderie, competition, friendships and memories from this experience, it was simply amazing. Picking one highlight is impossible, there are just too many, MGVR celebrates a great marque and the terrific people who become your friends. They are the highlight.

Pete Thelander, 1934 MG NE Tourist Trophy Magnette

I have enjoyed being a part (albeit a very small part) of MGVR. California is just too far from your base of activity.

I have retired the '34 MG NE after the 2017 season. It was a great honor to be awarded the Collier cup on our trip east in 2013. But I am 87 years old now with a heart attack (in 1992), six stents and a pacemaker. I doubt I could pass the physical for a competition license anymore.

So I have moved on from the race scene and please unsubscribe me from your fine newsletter. (not a chance. Ed)



I am keeping busy restoring the 1954 TF that I bought while I was in Germany with the Army. I gave it bit of an update with a Chevy II Super Thrift 153 four banger and Corvair Series II Transaxle and independent rear suspension back in

1968. It had a fuel line leak resulting in a small fire in 1973. The damage was pretty much limited to the wiring, hoses and paint. That was 45 years ago.

I started the restoration three years ago. Covid has given me the opportunity to put a lot more time on the project. Best wishes to you and my fellow MGVR group.

Dave Nicholas

I hadn't raced in about 30 years and one day said "I need to go racing". Somehow I ended up at the MGVR focus race at Sonoma in 2011. I met so many friends and made the decision that I loved vintage racing and needed to



get back. I started in 1963 in an MGA and after meeting all the MGVR crowd it became apparent that's the car I wanted. I got a huge kick meeting Bob Schoepfle and his Honey Bee. The car wasn't fast, but it was reliable and a year and a half later Bob and I agreed and Honey Bee was mine. Since 2012 we've won over 30 races in her. Without doubt one of the best decisions I ever made.

Joe Tierno

You asked for comments for the upcoming celebration of the longevity of the MGVR. I was ambivalent because I have been away from those glorious days for so long I feel disconnected.

Then it all came back to me with a fresh perspective. While preparing to sell the house that I shared with my late wife for over 35 years, I came across a stack of MGVR newsletters. I thought they were saved copies of when I was active, but I was wrong. Many of them were from Dave Brown, a member of Jake's Stable and the BARC.

He had hopes of racing the TC he had imported from England but those hopes never materialized. He introduced me to the MGVR by giving me many back issues. I am very grateful for that.

A few things stand out from the issues dating back to 1983. Greg Prehodka's contributions to the Marque are on par with any of the MG organizations around the world. The picture of him in short sleeves twisting the chassis of his TD at Lime Rock is priceless.

Steve Konsin and John Faulkner, among others, are still at it today, which I find amazing. We owe it all to Greg. Thank you, Greg, for giving all of us a pathway to friendship, fun, and a lifetime of memories

Joe has provided any number of legendary stories.
A few MGVR members remember

Dave Smith

I am likely the worst person to remember events from so long ago, but here is what I recall.

This was very early in our racing experience and we had not yet learned that the 1500/1600 crankshaft was just too fragile to run over 5500 RPM. I believe we lunched a motor at Road Atlanta and also at the Glen.

Fortunately, the Glen motor broke in an early practice session. Joe Tierno was willing to chase down a replacement engine. I do not recall how we knew of an old MG dealer or at least an MG garage, but I do recall we drove the trusty Pontiac Station Wagon and I believe, it was to Syracuse. The MG Garage was quite large and was heated with a Coal fired furnace. The furnace was about 5 foot in diameter. That part of the room had no lighting.

The garage had about 10 B series engines, either short blocks or with cylinder heads attached. However, 6 or 7 of the engines were 5 main Late MGB and would not fit into # 29. One of us looked behind the furnace and in the dim light, saw a short block between the furnace and the wall. We grabbed a 5 foot long coal hook (used to stir ashes) and hooked the engine, sliding it out for inspection. That was when someone noticed the last 3 digits of the engine # was 029. The shop owner did not know this engine was behind the furnace, and said it must have been there for many years. It was a 1600 MGA engine.

The top of the block had heavy dust and light rust. The bores also had light rust. The shop staff got excited when they learned that we were racing at the Glen. We borrowed a crescent wrench and tried to turn the crankshaft. It did turn after we put penetrating oil onto the four pistons. The shop loaned us their engine hoist and we hung the engine over their parts washer. We used an air tool to pull the oil pan bolts and pulled the oil pan. The oil was very thick and there was about 5 quarts. I borrowed a large Channel lock wrench and wiggled the four connecting rods. All four had good clearance to the crankshaft, so we knew it had not spun a bearing.

The shop loaned us a stud puller and we took all of the head studs out of the block. On the way back to the track, we stopped at a Hardware Store and bought a fine toothed file and Brakleen aerosol cans. At the track we used the file in a cross pattern to remove the rust from the deck. We then stripped the head and other bits from the race engine and transferred them over to 029.

Octagonally Bob Vitrikis

Thanks for your memories of the Watkins Glen weekend and finding the 029 engine in an old New York MG Dealership. When the short block # 029 got back to the track, there was an all-nighter and Keith and Mary Brown were in the next paddock. They too stayed up all night and made coffee and sandwiches to feed the NY-Michigan race team.

The 2 2X4 engine hoist was an act of desperation and we did put a minor dent in one of the front fenders. Not sure if we told Joe about that piece. Likely, Chris Meyers can still find that mini-dent even today. I still use that Tierno crankshaft flywheel end from that blown motor as a garage doorstop. A cool memento of the effort to go racing.

We got the engine back into Joe's MGA with first call to the grid from the loudspeaker. We used pushback from the starter to retard the distributor enough to fire the engine. No time left for a timing light. Joe took to the false grid and the engine sounded good. However when he came by on lap 1, the smoke out the exhaust was quite thick. The announcer said that 029 was having engine trouble. On the 2nd and following laps, the piston rings were magical and the smoke totally disappeared. Joe took the checker on that practice session. He told us the oil pressure and engine temperature were very good.

I am sure Joe remembers better than I, but the Group race was wet and I believe Joe had a podium finish. Agreed that those were the Fun times. We did not race among hay bales, but we sure had the Haybale mentality! Mark Barnhart: What were your memories of that race weekend?

More from Mr. MG Magic

You have all my feeble mind can recover in my recent email. The one additional thing I recall is asking Joe Tierno, "Do you want to race this weekend?"

Of course you said "Yes." So I said, "Well then let's find you an engine!" A few of us on the Tierno crew spread out in different directions and in about 15 minutes we had a lead on that engine in Rochester. I've retold and relived that story many times since. It gets better every time!

Another Tierno Story worth reading

Singing in the Rain by Joe Tierno - 1996

Whenever September approaches, the excitement of competing at the Watkins Glen vintage races builds to a fever pitch. This is followed by an equally high level of dread trying to guess which major component will fail on the car this year. Consider this. My poor car has failed to finish in five of the last eight races I've attended at the historic track. The failures usually are catastrophic: two broken crankshafts, one pulverized transmission, one melted piston, etc.. If nothing else, this has provided gambling opportunities for my friends who usually gather in the first turn and wager on my expected failure.

Brimming with confidence I concocted a brilliant plan. I would forego my usual schedule of four to six races and put all of my eggs in one basket and compete in only one race this year, the SVRA Zippo Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. Furthermore, the only person who needs to be happy is my charming wife, Bridget, who simply stated "I'd be happy if you went around more than once". Hey, I can do that!



When the entry form arrived, it included an option to enter a two hour enduro. Two hours!! Feeling like a drunken sailor, I said to myself, "Hey, I can do that!". I've always wanted to race in an enduro, but it would require a lot of gall to cough up the extra \$175 entry fee knowing that in years past my car was on the trailer long before Saturday, when the enduro was scheduled. I knew now that I was tempting fate. When I sent in my entry fee, it seemed like an internal clock began the countdown to when the other shoe would fall. A new twist this year was that it was mandatory to have a co-driver. This was going to require a leap of faith the width of the Grand Canyon as the only other person to have

raced this car was Bob Bucher. Back in 1957, he began a winning streak that included two Collier Cup victories. In fact, according to my records, he never lost a race with this car. And now SVRA wants someone else to drive it ? After many sleepless nights, I concluded that Mark Palmer, editor of "MG Vintage Racers", would be the best candidate. He currently vintage races an MGA and has known the disappointment of breaking two crankshafts. I figured with four broken cranks between us, maybe the racing spirits would point their wrath in another direction.

The busy "weekend" at the Glen began on Tuesday when my good friend Dick Powers and I towed our MGAs to the track. Wednesday was an extra cost test day that I had

signed up for, so arriving early would mean I would be ready to hit the track for the first session on Wednesday. MG guru, Bob McElroy, arrived early Wednesday morning with Rob Morgan, who was attending his first vintage race. In earlier conversations, we had concluded that if the car was to complete the enduro, the weakness of the charging system that has plagued the car for three years, needed to be resolved. Rob, who is an electrical engineer, solved the problem in five minutes. Now that the generator was fixed, the weakness of the regulator surfaced by dumping huge quantities of current back to the battery. The battery, when charged far beyond its normal capacity, spewed acid all over the pristine interior of the trunk. Rob reinstalled the old regulator which had been removed three years earlier. It worked flawlessly. I am happy to report that these were the only repairs to be made to the car the entire weekend. I should end the story now, but.....When we arrived at the track on Thursday for our 8:00am drivers meeting, we found the ever cheerful Mark Palmer. I now know what parents must feel when a young man arrives to pick up their daughter for her first date. Knowing that Mark would be driving my precious beauty, I spent the rest of the day giving him "fatherly" advice: "Don't exceed 6000rpms. It's only vintage racing. You're faster than me and have nothing to prove. What is your net worth? Do you want to see your wife again?"



Finally, the appointed hour arrived for his forty minute practice session and I watched in anguish as he drove #029 to the grid, the engine sounding grumpy as ever at low rpm. All my fears disappeared when after the session, he returned the car to me in one piece. As expected, Mark did a great job and turned a 2:39 lap the first time out.

Close enough to my 2:36 (which I did the next morning) to justify my confidence in his ability but far enough apart to save me being humiliated (smart move, Mark). It was about this time that the weather really started getting nasty. Forecasters had predicted 10 inches of rain as a result of a series of hurricanes. Fortunately, this never materialized. However, from Friday through Sunday, the rain was a constant companion. Ferrari was the honored marque this year but was a big disappointment. They concluded their national convention at the track on Monday and of the 150 or so street machines that attended, not more than a handful stayed for the SVRA event. The four or five racers that did show up did an admirable job of putting their cars on the track in the rain, but I must say it certainly didn't compare to the great job the MG racers have done since 1994. Perhaps there is a lesson here, but I digress.

One activity that was spared the rain was the downtown festival Friday evening. This has become a tradition worthy of repeating. Each year the event is bigger and better. The ultimate will be in 1998 when the village and the racing community celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first race through the streets. Of particular interest to the MG community was the induction to the Walk of Fame of Bob Bucher and Sherm Decker, drivers of MGAs who went onto illustrious careers. Close friends in life, these two very popular drivers are now joined in immortality. It was my good fortune to make the introduction of Bob Bucher. It was an extremely emotional time for me and the family members in attendance. What a joy it is that this history is being preserved.

Saturday morning, when the green flag dropped on the 35 cars that took the challenge of the two hour enduro, little did Mark and I realize that we would finish ninth overall. Under dry conditions, we most certainly would have finished much further back, but a slippery track canceled a good deal of the horsepower advantage our competitors had over us. In vintage enduro racing, there are mandatory five minute pit stops and no driver is allowed to drive longer than forty minutes each shift. Lengthy pit stops prevent over eager drivers and crew members from trying to duplicate the skills of the NASCAR pros. In spite of this, we managed to spend seven minutes on our stop fumbling with seat belts and dealing with a balky engine that wanted a rest. This cost us a finishing position, but we never had any real expectations of a high finish. We just wanted to finish. It was fun, a lot of fun.

Now on to the Collier Cup. Scheduled as the last race of the day, I had the misfortune of being on the pole. Not because I was the fastest, it's just that the faster cars seemed to inherit some of my bad luck (I feel your pain) and were starting a few rows back. Next to me was Andy Schmidt in his MGA. As the green flag dropped



and we rushed towards the first turn, a voice in the back of my head kept saying "Don't crash!!" "The track is wet, don't mess up now." Talk about a psych job, I'm my own worst enemy sometimes as Andy easily passed me and took the early lead. Andy had a great first lap and I was worried that even though I had a faster car, getting by him would be a challenge. I watched anxiously as the rear of his car would slide out from under him and he'd catch it, then slide out again. It seemed he would drive the greatest race of his life or lose it completely. By the second lap, eventual winner Bill Hallandal in a very fast

MGB easily passed both of us. But Andy wasn't ready to give up, however the traction of his rear tires were. In the first left turn of the Inner Loop he lost it in a big way and spun violently, at least two complete times. Breathing a sigh of relief, I looked in my mirror to see a fast gaining MGB of John Targett, who passed me easily. This was no surprise. However, as the race wound down, I could see the familiar MGA of the late Sue Henning gaining on me. I had no idea who the driver was but I could see the car was totally out of control. I resolved that if the driver made a pass, it would probably be a foolish attempt that would jeopardize the body of my car. No way would I let this happen. A little more pressure on throttle and less time on the brakes made for a comfortable gap.

Last turn, last lap and the pursuing MGA with the Derrington crossflow head and Weber carb tried closing the gap, only to lose it completely and have a hard impact with the outside barrier. The picture in the paper the next day showed the car a foot and a half off the ground. Luckily, a tire barrier fronted the steel guardrail and damage was minimal. One of the nice things about the Glen is that they interview the drivers after the race. In years past, the entire field of Collier Cup drivers have been interviewed, which feels so unusual but fun. Unfortunately, I had severe brain fade and said "This is the most fun I've ever had with wet underwear." End of interview. Hard to imagine but there was still one more race to go as Group 3 was scheduled for 9am Sunday. Yes, the track was wet, but I hardly noticed as we took the green flag. Good fortune smiled on me once again as I finished 13th out of 31 starters, which is quite high for me.

It is hard to describe the great feeling on Monday as I washed the MG knowing that any work I do over the winter will be to improve the car rather than recover from a major disaster. I only wish that Dave Smith and the Michigan Rowdies, a group of hardcore MGA owners had been there. They've always been helpful and supportive when things weren't going well. However, the good news is that some of them are now preparing MGs for vintage racing which can only be a good thing for all concerned

Gary Allen

We northern neighbors often have a Triumph vs MG battle at Mosport. In 2014 it was called the Canadian-American showdown. After a confused start, with the Triumphs gridded ahead of the MGs, Bill Warner in the ex Group 44 TR was leading into corner 3 with Gary Allen, Richard Navin and Joe Lightfoot pushing hard in chase- when - a puff of smoke, a loud bang and the Triumph Done Blowed Up! After a long series of yellows to clear the track, we were flagged off for the last lap. As I led Navin across to the finish, my head gasket blew just before the line and the blue 42 coasted to the win !



Ralph Zbarsky

In the pre-covid era of 2018, the stars were aligned such that another epic cross-continent race journey was possible. In September, we drove from Vancouver BC south to Portland for the Columbia River Classic towing our two 1967 BMC Works MGB GT cars. Great racing, no incidents on track (that's a win), and we were awarded the inaugural 'Best British Car' award from Victory Lane. Then we turned left and drove to Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, for the big Vintage Festival, great racing on that iconic track, and the hot drive through the city.



No incidents on track (another win). Now we carried on to Put-in-Bay, Ohio, for the third race week at the historic street course/airport races. The feature marque was the Bug Eye Sprite, which my two racing friends were bringing from the west coast. Of course I walked off with the Best Competitor award, and no incidents on track (another win).

Drained of adrenaline at that point, we started the 3000 km return trip making sure to hit every tourist stop and National Park along the way, including the Indy Speedway and Mt. Rushmore.



One hell of a trip! For the past 2 years, with the border closed to us due to Covid restrictions, we have only been able to occasionally race locally. Hopefully 2022 will allow us to join up with our MGVR race buddies again.

Errabundi Saepe Semper Certi written while driving, pushing the dog away and practicing the clarinet

HONOR ROLL OF MGVR MEMBERS

Denver Cornett: Raced his MGTC in the first Watkins Glen Grand Prix race in 1948, and other early SCCA races. He was SCCA member **#7**. He came back to join vintage racing with his same TC in 1994, and loved sharing his MG heritage and stories with all the MG racers and enthusiasts. He was awarded the “**Collier Cup**” in 1996.

Bill Hollingsworth: Strong supporter and participant of MGVR for many years. Donated the “**MGVR Spirit Award**” (*the big Copper Bucket*). He was awarded the **Collier Cup** by a vote of his fellow MG racers in 2004. He was a significant person in planning for a year and a half, for the 2004 SVRA MG Collier Cup race at Watkins Glen (*143 racing MGs attended*)

Manley Ford: His first race in an MG was with his MGTA at Nelson Ledges in **1974**. Been racing MGs ever since (*that must be a record of some kind*). Has owned MGTA, MGTD, MGTF, and MGB-GT. Also competed in SCCA Pro-Ralley. Wrote articles for MGVR newsletter – plus tech tips. Was awarded the “**Bill Parish**” award at VIR in 2009. Has made and sold MG competition parts. Is an organizer for the “**Put-In-Bay**” vintage races on Lake Erie. MGVR member since 1984

Roy Jacobson: MGVR founding member. Vintage raced his MGTD and Lester MG starting in the 1970's. Organized MG races for the *New England MG 'T' Register* in the 70's and 80's. Served as the event chairman for a number of VSCCA vintage races. Loved MG racing history – particularly of Harry Lester and the “**Monkey Stables**” racing team.

Chris Kintner: Has been the on-line editor of the MGVR website for many years and an MG enthusiast. His family also relates back to the sports car races at Put-In-Bay of the 1950's. Check out the **MGVR website** he maintains at “**MGVR.org**”. **Lots of good stuff** there!

Dick Knudson: A MGVR founding member. Dick is well known as an MG historical expert, and a founder in 1964 of the **New England MG T Register**. He edited its TSO magazine for many years. He had a deep appreciation for MG racing heritage, and has authored books on racing MGs. He ran many articles in TSO concerning MG vintage racing, and MG racing history and was involved with a team racing a MGTD called “**The Secret Weapon**” – which his son Eric would also later vintage race. Plus he was instrumental with MGVR in supporting the historic record breaking 2004 SVRA “**Collier Cup MG Race**” at Watkins Glen (*143 racing MG's there*), - which also was the T Register's “**Gathering of the Faithful**” event that year.

Dan Leonard: “**Mr. MGVR Regalia**”. Besides being a very active MG racer with his historic #409 “MGTC Special”, Dan has taken care of MGVR's “**regalia**” for many years. Getting the items, bringing them to the track to sell, and selling them from his inventory at home. *T-shirts, sports shirts, patches, badges, decals, hats, etc.* “**Show Your MGVR Colors**”! He was awarded the “**Collier Cup**” in 2005.

George Pardee: MGVR founding member in 1981 and a strong supporter and contributor to the newsletter. He still races his MGTF in vintage races and hill-climbs for over 40 years now! His son also raced dad's MG. For George MG racing was a “**family affair**” with his wife and to boys!

Bill Parish: There is a reason why at MGVR's annual focus event we have the "***Bill Parish Award***" Sure Bill enjoyed racing his blue MGTC and making the events all about having fun – without caring a bit about winning anything. He even brought along "***Chef Spatula***" with him to cook up some good eats for his MG friends at the track! He did not go to race - and also party. He went to a MG party - where he also raced! He was a founding member of SVRA, and received their "Ford Heacock Sr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award"

Dick Powers: Long time MG and Morgan enthusiast. He was instrumental in producing a video about MGVR's history for its 20th anniversary in 2001, which was celebrated at Elkhart Lake, Wi. . He was a significant person in the planning committee for a year and a half, for the 2004 SVRA MG Collier Cup race at Watkins Glen (*143 racing MGs attended*) He was awarded the Collier Cup in 2004.

Tony Roth: Also known as the "*Mouth of the South*". Was the early cheerleader for MG vintage racing in the Southeast US, - especially in the late 70's and 80's. What can you say about an MG racer who served Pina Colodas to fellow MG racers and crew from a blender he had in the back of his MGTD racecar! He also competed in the NEMG 'T' Register's "*Bicentennial Rally of the Colonial Capitals*" in his TD in 1976.

Jerry Storch: Founding MGVR member. Raced his MGTD in the 50's including the first race at Lime Rock Park. Was an assistant editor to Greg Prehodka for the MGVR newsletter for 15 years. Did the artwork, logo, and cartoons for the MGVR NL, and wrote articles for it too. Started vintage racing a MGTC (*the bungee cord special*) in the 1980's.

Joe Tierno: Long time MG racing enthusiast ever since when, as a boy, he attended the Watkins Glen road races in the early 50's. Worked as crew on MG race cars. Deep into MG racing history – especially at Watkins Glen with racers like Bob Bucher, Spanky Smith and Walt Hansgen.. Raced Spanky's MGA for a number of years. Was awarded the Collier Cup in 1988 and 1994.

Greg Prehodka

Involved with MGs and MG clubs since 1967 in a variety of ways. Started vintage racing his MGTD in 1977 in a 6 hour endurance race for 'T' types at Lime Rock Park run by the NEMG 'T' Register. Founded the MG Vintage Racer's Newsletter in 1981 and was its editor until 1995. The NL was awarded Moss Motors first place "Journalism Award" in 1995. He was the editor of MGVR's Tech Tips that was published, with articles from the MGVR newsletter on modifying MGs for racing. He supported MGVR as it's publicity person after 1995. He influenced vintage racing organizations to include all MG races in their events. Helped organize some MGVR "Focus Events". Was awarded the "Collier Cup" at Watkins Glen in 1994. Has raced in over 100 vintage racing events with his TD, including in Canada, Bahamas and England. His daughter Rachel began racing dad's MG in 2007 for several years, as Greg then became her proud "head wrench" and "track chef". (*not to mention financial backer!*)

Jim Weissenborn

Perhaps one of the very enthusiastic members we have. Jim has been racing since the early 1960's (he took Drivers School with Mark Donahue!). He still has several MG's and races his Beyers MG Special.

Michael Silverman, An avid MGA racer and also in honor of his father **Syd** who was a huge supporter of vintage racing and MG's. The family is also responsible for Vintage Motorsport's support of MGVR.

Dan Davis, publisher of Victory Lane. Dan has always featured both the Collier Cup and our MGVR focus races in his publications.

Tony Simms: instigated the "Simms Cup" at the VARAC Mosport event. Not sure if they're still awarding this? There used to be an all-MG feature race at this event. In some good years, I think we had 20+ MG's. Tony donated one of his "real racing" trophies from the 1960's (the Alitalia Cup, which was sponsored back in the day by Alitalia Airlines) to be used as a perpetual trophy for this event, and he also worked with VARAC leadership to get the thing started. Plus Tony has a long history of racing MG's in Canada, primarily Twin Cams. At one time, he owned 5 or 6 Twinks (I bought one), including one of the factory Sebring cars.

Mark Brandow

Mark's participation in MGVR activities dates to the beginning of the newsletter. I don't believe he has missed a single Focus Event if we exclude west coast events. That is dedication to our Band of Brothers!

Larry Smith

As treasurer after Ed Cronin, Larry was always there to support the editor and MGVR activities. I still value his connections to the VDCA and Midget communities that made him such a valued member of the MGVR 'inner circle'. Larry is a strong competitor in his midgets and is always ready to lend a hand when someone is in need.

Frank Mount

Frank has raced forever in Canada and the U.S. In the 1960's, he shoehorned a small-block Chevy into an MGA (might have been a Twin Cam, as I recall) and road raced it as a sports-racer. I think Frank recently retired from racing, after something like 60 years. All-around good guy, and he and his wife Connie were always a cheerful, helpful presence in the paddock for so many MG Focus Events. Frank was in on the ground floor of MG racing! If there was fun to be with his TC, Frank was there! A friend to everyone who met him.

Ed Cronin

Past MGVR Treasurer and Keeper of the Roster. As well as keeping the MGVR solvent, Ed became Chris Meyers right-hand man helping with the newsletter, focus events, you name it.

Dave Good

Dave races his kind of purple MGA from Florida to his home country Canada. Dave and family travel in the "old style: setting up his own tent, towing himself and always having a cold Labatt's. Dave has been instrumental in having the MGVR focus races at Mosport and has taken full control of the 2022 event.



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WHOLE YEARS
OF BEING
AWESOME



MERRY CHRISTMAS
TO ALL
AND TO ALL
A GOOD NIGHT