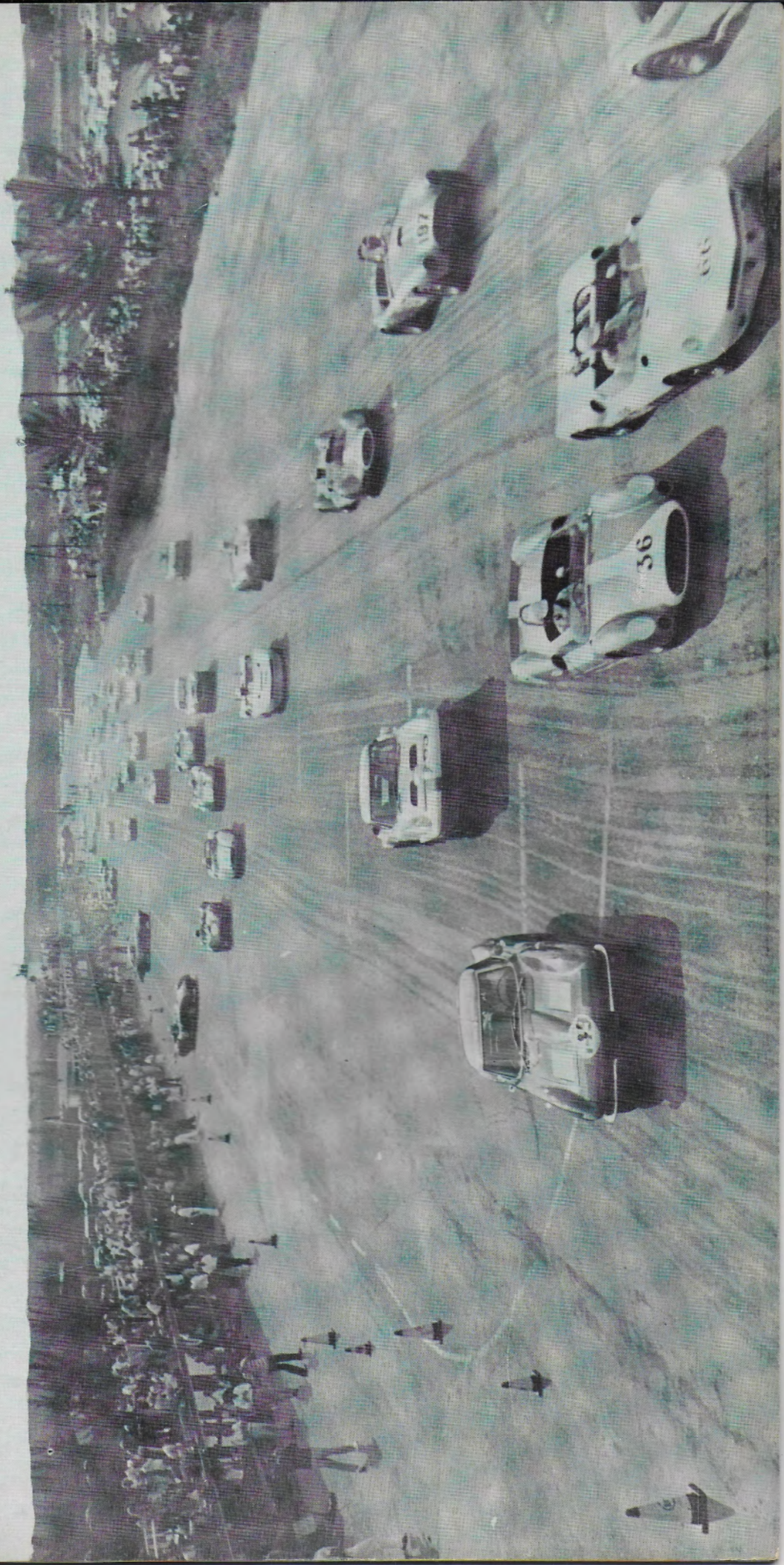


TOP GEAR

Jan/Feb

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Volume II, Number 1

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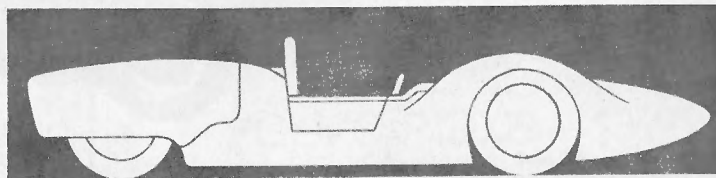
RALLY ADVISOR

Paul Ely

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

The Brains Trust

Featured in our first two-color cover is the start of the 1963 Nassau Cup race, and though the first two or three cars have already passed under the Esso bridge, we see from left to right: Gordon Butler, Stingray (149), Penske (36), Jim Hall, Chaparral (66), John Cannon, Stingray Grand Sport (65), Augie Pabst, ex-Penske Cooper Zerex (55), and Ken Miles, AC-Cobra (197) leading an assortment of machinery including Hap Sharp in the other Chaparral, Frank Gardner who finished 7th overall in the other AC-Cobra and Ray Heppenstall (71), whose Cooper-Ford finished 9th overall after handing the car over to Bob Holbert. As can be seen the Le Mans start stragglers are still pulling out of the pit area, and indeed there were one or two cars which got off to a late start due to starting problems. The Oakes Field spectator area is on the right, and the pit area with its most excellent promenade deck is directly opposite. The hangars in the background housed all the racing machinery during cocktail time. — Bakerpic



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The way we see it

... this is going to be quite a year in motorsport circles, both on the regional and the national scenes. From the year end news about Vine-land becoming bogged down local enthusiasts find themselves in the position of having no less than three separate groups involved in racing track plans. The Philadelphia-based Road Races, Inc., upon whom we reported in the December issue; now word reaches us that the long-delayed Pocono International Raceway in northeastern Pennsylvania is getting underway once again and with the assurance of new capital it seems likely that we may see the first sports car race program premiere early in 1965; and to the south, in Delaware, plans are going ahead to build a 2-2½ mile road circuit, along with a paved oval track, comprehensive spectator facilities, etcetera. Yes, 1964 is going to be quite a year.

Our publication schedule calls for ten issues per year, and since the turn of the year usually provides little or no sports car activity we are making this first issue of 1964 a combination January/February magazine. There will be one other such combination later in the year, and every other TOP GEAR will appear monthly.

Each year, in late fall, the rumor and conjecture begins about the following year's SCCA Performance Classes. The discussion and battle rages furiously until late winter when the list eventually comes down from Westport. Then begins the crying and outrage. Well, this year the list came out early, and in this promptness lies a story. A proposal to put any change in classes or rules up to a vote of the competition drivers was itself recently subjected to a ballot of the membership. Although defeated, this proposal apparently made it clear to Westport that the membership would like a little better, and more prompt, idea of the rules it will be racing under the coming year.

By now there can be little doubt that the system of classifying cars by performance is superior to classification by displacement. The question of how to judge the performance potential of a car, and especially of a new model, lies behind most complaints regarding performance classes. The best parameter by which to estimate a given car's performance is the power-to-weight-ratio. Getting accurate estimates of car weights is fairly simple, if time-consuming. Getting data on power is quite another matter.

There are several goals which are sought when setting up performance classes, and quite often the attainment of one goal precludes achievement of another. Some of the problems which must be considered follow, not necessarily in order of importance:

1. The number of production classes appears to be fixed to around eight. This is necessary to allow a fairly well-balanced program of events to be scheduled and to prevent spectator confusion due to multiplicity of classes.
2. The number of cars expected to compete within any class should be about equal to those in any other. This is an area which has

been poorly handled in the past, and seemingly again for 1964. Last year's C Production class is a good example.

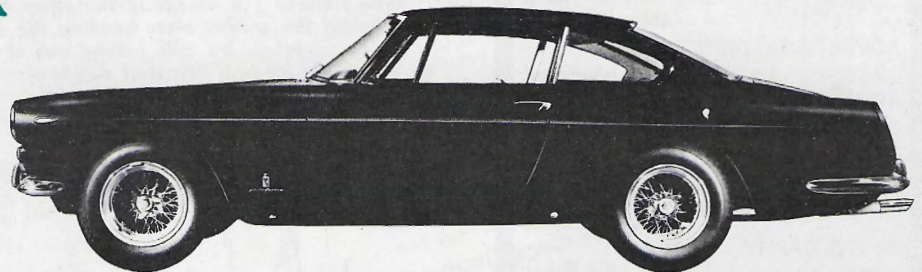
3. The cars within a class should be fairly evenly matched. This may seem to be a trivial statement, but in the light of some limitations being described, this point is often subject to considerable compromise. In particular, the problem of classifying a newcomer (e.g., Turner-Ford for 1964) amid developed and proven designs (e.g., Triumph TR4) is one in which considerable discretion should be exercised. There are plenty of odd and interesting cars which are plainly misclassified (and hence competitors are discouraged from attempting to race them) even in fully developed form, let alone without performance history of extensively prepared examples. Sick indeed would have to be the man who chose to race a Renault Alpine (1200 lbs.) against a Morgan 4=4 Mk V in E Production!
4. Safety considerations dictate that light and heavy cars should not race together. From the spectator's viewpoint, this David-and-Goliath type of competition is most exciting. Effective compromise in this area is difficult but necessary. Dave Clark's spectacular driving of the Lotus 7 amid the epoxy elephants seems to press good luck too far, however exciting it may be. In considering the separation of light and heavy cars for safety reasons, it is well to remember that quite often classes are combined within one race for the sake of a balanced program of events. Last year there were few races where A and B Production didn't run together in the same race. The 1964 classes will result in all heavy cars running together if A and B are combined. If C and D are run together, the Lotus 7's and Porsche Carreras need only deal with Jags and Daimlers whilst lapping.

An excellent combination of most of the above problems may be seen in the example of the Lotus SCCA 7. This car is far from unproven, having appeared with a variety of powerplants in the past few years. The latest version has the 116E English Ford engine of 1600cc capacity. During the 1963 season several examples of this car ran in FM without much success. Now this Lotus is not a modified car; it is series produced in fairly high volume, can be driven on the highway, but has no doors (needed to comply with SCCA's modified car rules). In 1964 the car will run in C Production along with its 1340cc brothers. A lot of 109E Ford-engined Lotus owners are poorer because of this classification. They must take a beating on the resale value of their car, or shell out a big chunk of cash for a new engine, as the 109E and 116E are quite dissimilar. At the track the situation is grossly unfair to the 109E-engined car. The decision to put these two cars in the same class is inconsistent with the more reasonable classifying of the Morgan 4-4, which have variants of the same two engines. The 1340cc Mk IV model is in FP, and the 1600cc Mk V model is in EP. While all the above is true, to put the 1600cc Lotus in BP would mix Lotus and Corvette, something we were trying not to do, remember? So the lot of the handicapper is not an easy one, this we see.

In general though, Performance Classes have solved more problems than they've created. Going back to displacement classes seems more ridiculous now than ever when you consider a MG-TF racing against a Lotus Seven! And it seems a lot easier to criticize the system than to come up with a better one. Now, if we weighed every car, and used a dyno, and everyone was honest, and no one cheated, and . . .

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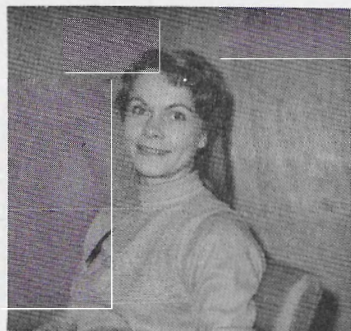
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Metropolitan New York Edition of TOP GEAR

Early this Spring TOP GEAR will expand to include a second edition of TOP GEAR magazine — TOP GEAR, Motor Sport News of Metropolitan New York. Like the current edition, the Metropolitan New York edition will follow a policy of strictly regional coverage including Long Island, New York City, suburban New York, and Fairfield County, Conn.

Judy Lent of Yorktown Heights, N. Y., founder and director of the Taconic Auto Sports Club News Service, has been named editor for the Metropolitan New York TOP GEAR. Judy's editorial experience goes back to 1948, when she served as assistant editor of Yorktown High School's quarterly publication, *The Echo*. As *Echo's* editor-in-chief, 1949-50, she changed the status of the quarterly magazine to that of a ten-page weekly news bulletin, marking the first high school paper to be published weekly by a small school in New York's Westchester County.



After graduation from St. Lawrence University, Judy taught social studies at Dryden High School, Dryden, N. Y., and acted as a faculty advisor for the school paper there.

Upon returning to Yorktown Heights in 1958, Judy and her husband Wes were among the founders of Taconic Auto Sports Club, known throughout the area for its two-day rally, the Taconic Autumn Tour, and for its News Service, a publicity-information exchange among motor sport clubs in the metropolitan area, which received mention in the June 29, 1963 issue of *Competition Press*. Current TASC publicity chairman, editor of TASC's monthly *Tailpipe* and director of the News Service, Judy has served on the TASC Board of Directors as Corresponding Secretary, has written a novel, some short stories, by-lined articles for several Westchester newspapers, as well as the scripts for Wes' "Motor Memo," a motor sport program which was heard daily over WVIP, Mt. Kisco, New York.

Both Judy and Wes are members of the Madison Avenue Sports Car Driving and Chowder Society, for which Judy is a committee chairman as well as executive editor of the official monthly, *Return of This Here Thing Weekly*.

The Lent family includes two boys — Derek, 8, and Douglas, 5; a golden retriever, Boone; a black and white kitten; assorted hamsters and tropical fish; an Austin-Healey Sprite Mk I; a Triumph Herald coupe; and a 1950 MG Y Tourer.

In order to introduce the new edition of TOP GEAR, the first three issues of the publication will be mailed free to all interested parties requesting the magazine, as well as to the complete sports car membership of the area outlined above. As with this edition, subscriptions will be called for after the introductory period.

BULLETIN BOARD

Ice Racing Moves to Lake Stillwater

Ice racing may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it flourishes in Scandinavia, parts of Canada, and in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. Until this year local race drivers who were looking for winter action to keep their reflexes in tune usually hied themselves to Lake Naomi. However, Skip Miller's 1964 ice racing program has switched its venue to Lake Stillwater, also in the Poconos.

Miller has presented this Arctic form of motorsport every year since 1957, and each year he has been in the fortunate position of seeing more and more cars and drivers attend, and he has also welcomed increasing spectator groups. Certainly one prime feature of ice racing is the variability of conditions that face the drivers. And contrary to popular opinion, no one type of automobile has the edge over another in this type of competition. True, front-wheel-drive cars race in a class by themselves, but then so do all production Porsches. In addition to these two classes are two others for general sports cars, plus one class for compact cars, foreign economy sedans and so on, except fwd cars.

If you plan attending Skip Miller's ice races as a spectator, don't forget to bundle up with warm clothing, especially insulated footwear!

This location for this winter wildness is one mile west of Pocono (Pocono Summit) on Route 940, or four miles east of Pocono Pines on Route 940. Turn in at Stillwater Lakes Estates. Since weather is a variable, on the spot information concerning the ice condition may be had by calling (717) 646-2727. Check our Datebook column for dates and times.

Phila. Region SCCA Slates Gymkhana Series

Philadelphia Region, SCCA, has just announced the formation of a gymkhana championship series for the 1964 season, and the first event in this new category is set for Sunday, February 24th, when the region will hold a gymkhana on the parking lot of the Gimbel's store in Northeast Philadelphia; pinpoint location is the intersection of Cottman Avenue and Bustleton Avenue, just west of Roosevelt Boulevard (Rte. 73 and Rte. 1).

A slate of five or six events will be points-scoring for this new championship series, however, at the time of going to press no further definite information was on hand. Activities Chairman Jack Thompson will be in touch with area clubs in the near future, and for those of you who wish to call him, his number is (215) TU 4-1852.

ATTENTION ALL CLUBS:—We earnestly ask your cooperation in forwarding to TOP GEAR, Box 482, Warminster, Pa., schedules of all club, and automotive sporting events slated for the New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania areas. Remember, if your club has suffered from poor attendance in past events, it probably was because no one knew about them. And to those of you who have been forwarding forthcoming events news, thanks, and keep the mail coming in!
—The Editors

Jersey Sports Car Council New Officers

The New Jersey Council of Sports Car Clubs held its annual awards banquet at their regular meeting place, the picturesque Old Heights Hotel, Hightstown, N. J., Saturday, January 4th. Awards were made to rally and trials competitors who skilled their way into the winning spots; this was the fifth such presentation, the rally and trials series having been started in 1958.

Officer election results were also announced after a hearty smorgasbord. Bob De Cray will serve again as the Council's president and he will be assisted by: Jim Love, vice president; Clem Izzzi, treasurer; Karen Snow, recording secretary; Pat De Cray, corresponding secretary.

Jersey SCC's Monte Carlo Winter Rally

The first event of the New Jersey Council of SCC's 1964 schedule will be the Jersey SCC Monte Carlo Rally. Set for Saturday, February 8th, this will be a 250-mile all-night event which should appeal to those who like their sports car fun in strong doses.

The Monte Carlo (JSCC-style) should appeal to the inactive race driver, ice racer, hill-climber, trials driver types especially, in addition to the regular rallyman.

Along with other prominent area winter events of this type Ralymasters Bob Scheurle and Vic Franco are calling for all cars to be equipped with three flares, tow rope, salt or sand, shovel, and in the event of snow, snow chains. Trophies will be awarded to the first five places, and only two persons per car will be allowed.

The starting point will be located at Swingies Colonial Diner, on Route 22 westbound lane, with the first off at 9:01 p.m. Pre-registration is recommended; however, start point registration will open at 7:30 p.m. For further information call Scheurle at (201) 687-3274 or Franco at (201) DE 4-0941.

SCCA Junior Membership Plan Now Under Study

A recently-appointed planning committee, comprising SCCA members Dick Templeton (Chicago Region,) Larry Reid (Northeast Region,) and Guy Bates (Philadelphia Region), is studying the possibility of opening up a class of SCCA junior membership as aired in a proposal put to the national board of governors last November 27.

The new class of membership will be open to age group 16-21, with full conversion privileges involving little or no further formalities after age 21. Under discussion at this time are the several legal and insurance problems which might arise, and it is certain that junior member participation in SCCA events will be restricted to non-speed events, such as rallies and gymkhanas. Racing and hill-climbing are out.

In addition to these two restrictions junior members will most likely not be permitted to work SCCA speed events as flagmen or corner workers. However other areas of activity in working a race meet will be possible, and duties on the respective crews of timing, scoring, paddock, public relations and technical inspection will all be open to junior members.

Along with this ambitious junior program, SCCA is also giving consideration to associate memberships with a reduced membership fee. This would cover family members, in particular the wives of present members. In the case of both associate and junior memberships there would be no voting privileges. Further discussion of these new types of membership will be discussed at the forthcoming annual meeting to be held early in February.

PHA Banquet Slated for February 22

The annual banquet of the Pennsylvania Hillelimb Assn. will be held at the Cascade Lodge in Kintnersville, Pa. Dinner reservation information may be had by calling Muriel Watson, PHA secretary, at (215) TU 4-1525.

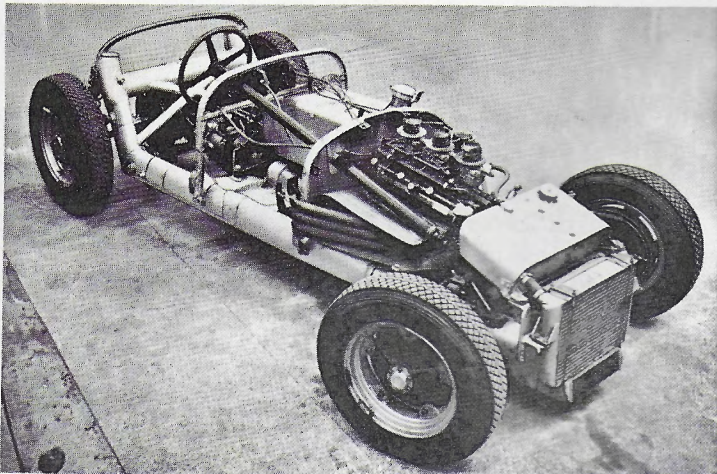
international

photoquiz

It seems as though the Photoquiz puzzler in the December T. G. stumped many of the academic types, in fact so much so that we had only two completely correct answers and a dozen guesses all of which were completely off the mark.

Charlie Rogers of Huntingdon Valley, Pa., was first in with a correct identification of the mystery car, and along with our congratulations we will be mailing him a year's free subscription to TOP GEAR.

The car was of French manufacture and was a Gobron-Brillié. Of the many advanced items this car featured from 1903, perhaps the most interesting was the fact that this was the first example of a tubular-type space frame to be seen on a racing automobile. Others were the low-mounted radiator, situated at a point of near-maximum pressure; and the engine, a 4-cylinder, 12-liter monster which ran on an alcohol mixture. The engine itself was very unusual in that it featured an opposed-piston layout wherein the lower pistons were operated by the crankshaft, and a series of countershafts actuated the upper pistons. Ignition took place when the pistons had compressed the mixture toward the center of the cylinder, and accordingly the spark plugs were located in the middle of the two paired cylinder blocks. Performance-wise this car was a mean runner. It was, in 1904, the first internal combustion-engined car to officially exceed 100 mph, and in the years '03-'04 Gobron-Brillié won four major pre-grand prix events, the last one being run over the old Nieuport-Ostend circuit in Belgium, when Rigolly AVERAGED 103.56 mph to win.



And now to this month's mystery car. Tell us the make, the year this particular model appeared, its racing successes, and the unusual feature of this automobile. Mail your postcards before February 10, 1964, to TOP GEAR, Box 482, Warminster, Pa.

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First, let me compliment you on a fine publication. I think it is about the best thing that could have happened to motor sports of all types in this area.

Second, I wish to express extreme dissatisfaction regarding a situation which arose about five weeks ago; one which irritated not only myself but, I am sure, everyone else on hand except a very few lucky ones. With me it is strictly a matter of principle, because just how much can one hope to accomplish with a spokeless wheel? I refer specifically to BSCC's recent Mountain Goat, in which anyone adhering strictly to the general instructions could not possibly reach even the odometer check and restart.

Later on in the day, after having started the timed portion almost at the center of a fairly large town nearby, there was an assortment of misspellings which threw off course practically everyone who was trying to negotiate the course from a standpoint of being technically correct (and let's face it: there is NO other approach to be used on a rally of today's standards). My loss of a wheel prevented me from covering some portion of the morning run, but by the time one was halfway through the afternoon run it was necessary to ASSUME (and this is usually fatal!) that "Terr." on the clue sheet and the word TERRACE written out on a stone gatepost were one and the same if one was to complete the course.

I think the most disturbing aspect of the whole thing is the attitude taken by a faction of the committee regarding protests. I should point out that I myself am hardly what could be considered a "professional"; I do not use any of the standard additive equipment so commonly seen today; my cars are not even fitted with anything other than their original odometers, and I do not compete for Appalachian Trail points. Therefore, I have no axe to grind.

However, I would not have thought it possible to contrive a situation where so many obviously valid protests, properly registered, would be greeted with a reaction where the protest fees were returned but NOT ONE of the protests was upheld, and this being done in the height of arrogance.

Taken in long view, it is to be hoped that whoever in SCCA Phila. Region determines which events are to be sanctioned for Appalachian Trail points will take the facts of this case under advisement. Too much of this will lead the sport of rallying straight to the guillotine.

Wes Lewellen
Southampton, Pa.

With regard to your item in the December TOP GEAR concerning the Beidler hearing, I would like to clarify one point.

At all SCCA events the SCCA requires two Stewards of the Meeting. I was the other Steward of the Meeting, and not acting as Ike Williamson's legal advisor as noted. I do not have the qualifications to even act as a guard house lawyer and wouldn't want my friends thinking I was pretending to be one. Thank you.

Oscar Koveleski
Scranton, Pa.

Concerning the problem at Vineland, unless improvements are made to the track and spectator facilities are dealt with IMMEDIATELY, sports car racing will be short-lived at that track. These are not our problems basically, but they should concern the Vineland management.

Specifically I would recommend the following:

- (1) Add more spectator bleachers
- (2) Pave the parking lot
- (3) Improve the rest room facilities — families shudder at the sight of the present arrangements
- (4) Lengthen the track to the necessary mileage to qualify for a national race location
- (5) COMPLETE safety equipment for each station, FULL fire extinguishers, etc., maybe even a hay bale or two?

Barry Michel
Fort Hood, Texas

mail

While visiting a friend, Dr. H. C. Baumann, Pottstown, Pa., I had a most pleasant experience. I had just purchased an OSCA from Dr. Baumann and he handed me the December issue of TOP GEAR. I immediately spotted my OSCA and also the three pictures of a 4.5 liter Ferrari coupe. The 4.5 coupe is the matching model to my 4.5 roadster. Enclosed please find a picture of my 4.5 roadster which is a real fine piece of machinery (retired).

George L. Sterner
York, Pa.

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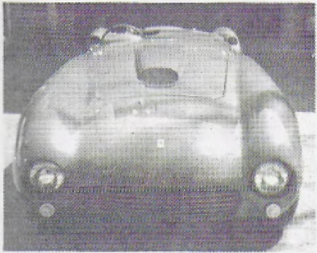
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call



In your December issue you have raised the ghosts of races past. In fact, you have dated me terribly. On page 12 of TOP GEAR, which you have been good enough to send me, refer to "Remember When?", at Convair Airport. Opposite a photo you say "... dices it up with an unidentified MG" ... when, in fact, the MG was my car with me up.

The photo must have been taken during practice before the car numbers were assigned, as the MG subsequently bore the number 42 in the race. As a matter of fact, this was my first race and I came in 3rd in the novice race, if my memory serves me right.

Old age, marriage, children, dogs, etc., have halted the racing but I would appreciate the original photo if possible. I can always have it copied and return it to you if you require. Please let me know if this is possible and I wish you continued progress with TOP GEAR.

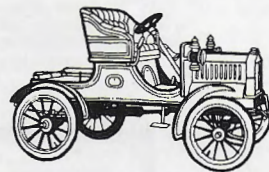
David P. Hotz
New York, N. Y.

The members of Neshaminy Foreign and Sports Car Club thoroughly enjoyed Penny Mercer's article on the club in the December issue. However, there was one serious mistake in the otherwise well written story. With regard to the annual Indian Trails Rally, it was stated that "the club pays its members for competing in this event." Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, and experienced rallyists will immediately spot the error. NFSCC, like all other sports car clubs in the area, is a non-profit organization, so such an arrangement would be out of the question. In fact, the Indian Trails Rally is closed to club members; that is, club members must work on the rally committee, and may not compete in the event, since it is our major rally of the year. In order to avoid confusing those who are newcomers to the sport of rallying, we hope that you will correct this misstatement in a future issue of TOP GEAR.

Edward J. Schaller
President, NFSCC

... greetings to each and every one on the TOP GEAR staff. Your December issue is the finest for 1963. Keep up the excellent work.

Joe Lattanzi
Brockton, Pa.



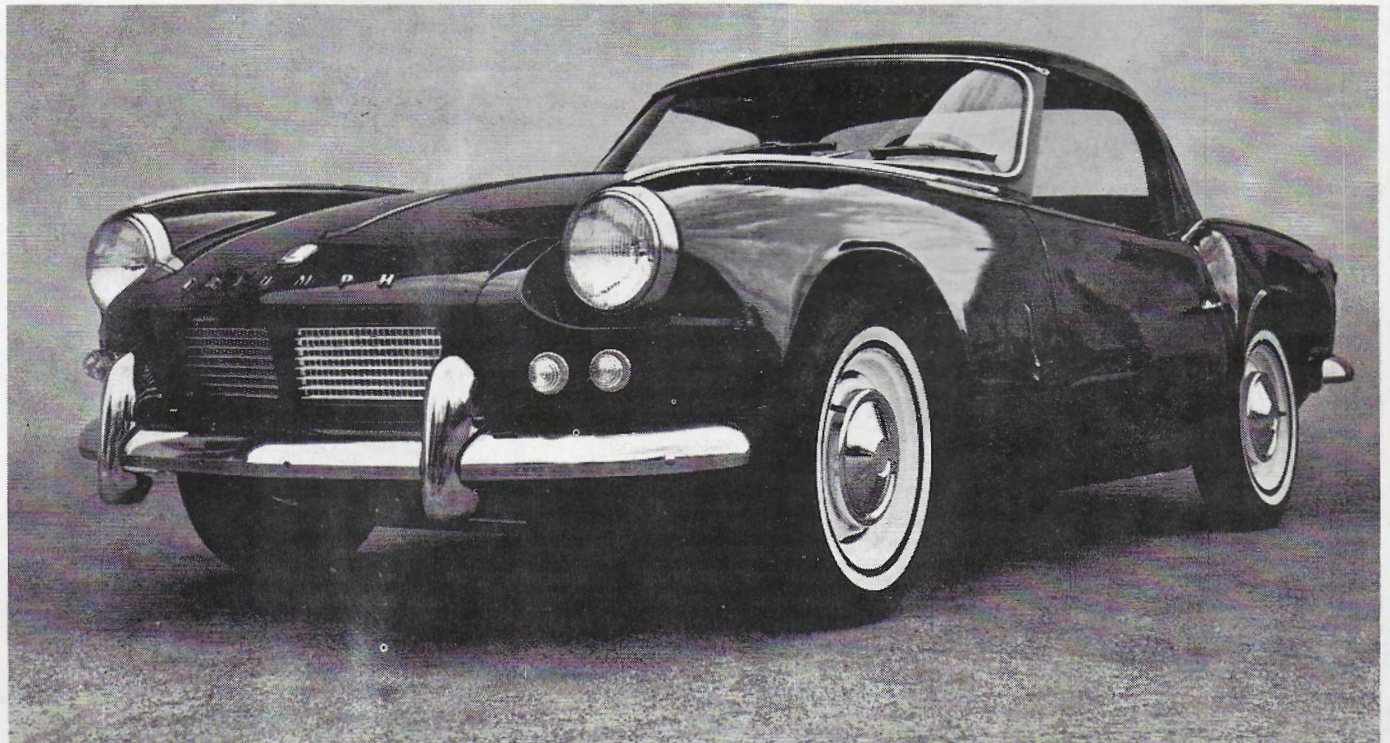
The next issue of
TOP GEAR
will appear in
MARCH

DEADLINE
for all news and
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Where We Stand

1963 N.J. COUNCIL TRIALS CHAMPIONS

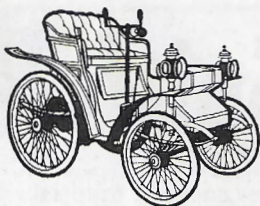
Class A—Bob Carrington, Mini-Cooper	Suburban SCC
Class B—Frank Faranese, MG-TD	Suburban SCC
Class C—Jack VanWettering, Porsche	Jersey SCC
Class D—Al Costa, (?—)	Jersey SCC
Class E—Vic Franco, TR3	Jersey SCC
Class F—Bob Roblins, XKE	
Class G—Don Allinger, Lotus 7	
Ladies Class—Karen Snow, Sprite (State Champ.)	SJR-SCCA

1963 N.J. COUNCIL RALLY CHAMPIONS

Drivers		Navigators	
1—W. Stirrat	464.05	1—T. Weiner	485.15
2—M. Cole	455.45	2—R. Fletcher	419.25
3—J. Clay	443.91	3—G. Atkins	416.97
4—J. Louis	411.20	4—H. Louis	405.88
5—K. Stickley	347.15	5—B. Stickley	265.39

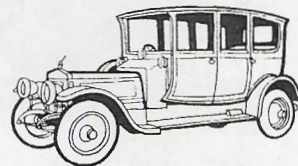
1963 DELAWARE AUTOSPRINT CHAMPIONS

Class A—John Debaugh, Stingray	54
Class B—Jack Lofland, Lotus Super 7	63
Class C—Bill Kneppshield, Jaguar XK150S	63
Class D—Harry Smith, Porsche Super 90	60
Class E—Walt Hoover, Porsche Super	60
Class F—Willis Weldin, MGA	53
Class G—Gerry Donovan, Spitfire	54
Class H—Dick McCarthy, Sprite	45
Touring I (over 1200cc)—Bob Stockman, Volvo 544	54
Touring II (under 1200cc)—Steve Dunn, SAAB GT	57
Ladies Class—Silver Kneppshield, Jaguar XK150S	53
Modified Class—Dennis Membrino, Borgward Special	30



ATTENTION ALL CLUBS:—We earnestly ask your cooperation in forwarding to TOP GEAR, Box 482, Warminster, Pa., schedules of all club, and automotive sporting events slated for the New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania areas. Remember, if your club has suffered from poor attendance in past events, it probably was because no one knew about them. And to those of you who have been forwarding forthcoming events news, thanks, and keep the mail coming in!

—The Editors



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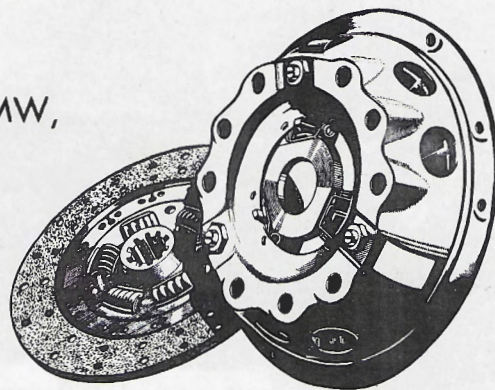
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Feature

Rally

by
*Charlotte
Dunkle*

Lakes SCC Ghosttown

You say you've never heard of the Lakes SCC? Well, let me tell you a little about this group of people who specialize in graciousness and congeniality. Although they don't boast a membership running to three digits, they have more participation and enthusiasm than most clubs I know. Virtually all of their events are closed to members and invited guests, which does not mean that they are trying to be exclusive. It simply means they enjoy a variety of events, low pressure in design, that are strictly for fun. Most of today's rallyists are sticklers for precise measurement and timing without gimmicks, and therefore wouldn't be interested in just going for laughs. However, once a year the Lakes Club, under the expert direction of George Atkins, presents the Ghosttown Rally for everyone.

Seventy-one cars started off with a roll of paper, three inches wide, on which there were arrows indicating the turns. On this roll of paper we also found circled numbers that referred to an information sheet that contained a vivid description of all the historical points along the route. Old Indian reservations and burial grounds, old town ruins, stagecoach stops and once-famous mills that formerly were a vital part of New Jersey's industry.

After the first checkpoint we were given 40 minutes to go through the New Jersey History Mobile that was set up just for this rally. The tour through this trailer gave us the opportunity to view many old relics and documents dating 'way back, including the original state constitution. I personally found this to be tremendously interesting and a pleasant deviation from the ordinary and usual rally.

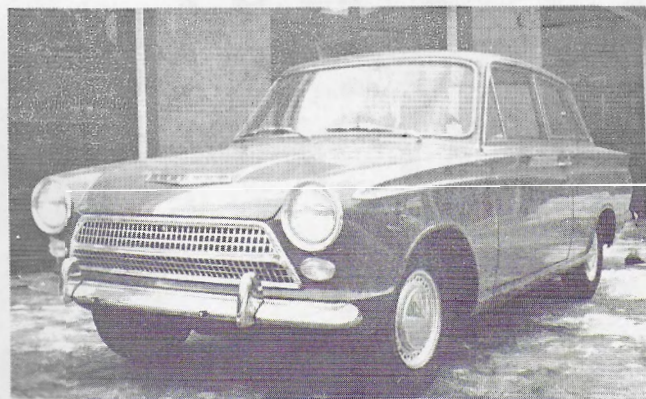
The course itself was excellent with the timing and measurement as precise as you could find anywhere. Ken (my husband-navigator) and I went merrily off-course at one point and by the time we got back on we were ten minutes late. As a once-in-a-lifetime break would have it, we came to a spot with a fifteen minute break *before* the next checkpoint! If George had placed the checkpoint *before* the break, we would really have been sand-bagged! (That's an old Bill Kamps cliché!)

George Atkins and his entire crew from the Lakes SCC proved it is possible to stage an event which is different, enjoyable and interesting — as well as precise. I would like to see this club open more of its events and I for one would be glad to leave the rally gear home and just have a real good time.

RESULTS

- CLASS I**
1—Donges & McCarthy, LSCC;
2—Fannon & Fannon, LSCC;
3—Jan Curry & Curry, LSCC.
- CLASS II**
1—Hoffman & Comforth, SJSCC;
2—Louis & Louis, HSCC;
3—White & Freiling, LBSCC.
- CLASS III**
1—Dunkle & Dunk'e, SJSCC;
2—Hein & Bock, SJSCC.

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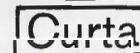


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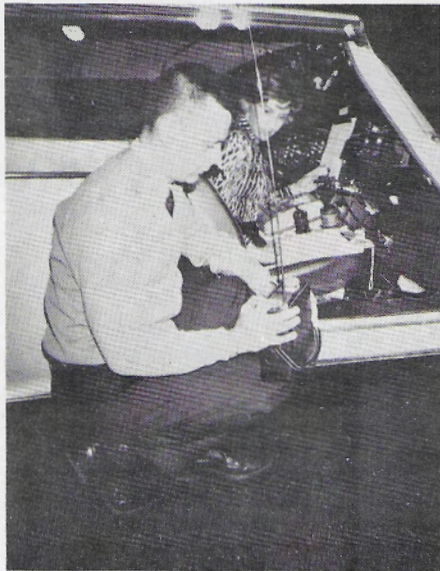


TEAM 300



The O'Learys in action, this time on their way to a support place ensuring yet another Team 300 win.

— Photo by Alix Lafontant



Among the several items of navigational equipment used by the O'Learys are: Heuer stopwatch; Bohn Context calculator; two Curtas; short wave radio; spare stop watch; an Avion adjustable odometer; a Navichron timer which registers each 1/100th min., and a readout counter showing consecutive minutes; a Roligator digital readout counter, which is electrically driven and into which an average speed can be programmed. Although this may sound extensive, it is actually less than the average national rally crew uses!

Team 300, East Coast Division, here seen after their Historic New York victory. Left to right: Mike Siccardi/Roger Bohl; Renee O'Leary/Jack O'Leary; Sally Koelmel/ Dennis Koelmel.

— Photo by Alix Lafontant



by JACK & RENEE O'LEARY

In May of 1963 an addition, in the form of a white Chrysler 300, arrived at our home, 3 Fox Lane, Newark, Delaware. After five hectic days and nights of rally equipment modification, installation of same, and a formal christening party (dinner jackets and all!) our Chrysler became known to us as the the Big 3, and it shortly thereafter embarked upon its first national rally, the 1963 Virginia Reel.

On the Reel all the Chrysler 300s proved themselves to be excellent rally cars, and magnificent motoring in the grand manner ensured all of us that extra edge which is often so important. Mike Siccardi and Roger Bohl engaged in a duel with myself which resulted in Mike and Roger taking first, the O'Learys second, and to round the Team 300 accomplishment Dennis and Sally Koelmel brought their car in high to clinch the Team Award for the Chrysler Corporation and their 300s.

Six months, 30,000 miles, 10 national rallies, as well as several Appalachian Trail and PRCA championship events, later (and 61 trophies) we are overjoyed to look back on the Reel as the first of many rewarding rallying experiences in the 1963 season. This has also been true of the other members who campaigned 300s throughout the year.

In point of fact factory-sponsored Chryslers have walked off with nine out of 13 national rallies entered. A Chrysler 300 has placed second in three out of four rallies not otherwise won outright. And perhaps the most notable 300 feat in the 1963 national rally season was the 1-2-3 win notched in the Singing Sands National, held in Indiana. Victorious crews on this one were Scott Harvey/Warren Tiaht, Suzanne Hundertmark/Bob Mollman, and our own Dennis and Sally Koelmel.

Our biggest personal moments in the 1963 lists came on the Berkshire and Johnny Appleseed national events. How we ever managed two wins in a row is still a bit beyond us! On the debit side, a flat tire on the Jersey 500 just before a checkpoint dropped us from fourth to 11th, disappointing us tremendously into the bargain, as well as shooting down our chances for finishing in the top three nationally. But such is life!

Other Chrysler 300 rally car accomplishments include the Koelmels' win in the Historic New York, thus earning them the honor of being the first two-time winners in this annual national. They also breezed home to a handy win in the

Rip Van Winkle. First-place team awards went to three-car Chrysler 300 teams on all but two of the nationals entered. The Delaware Valley contingent of the Siccardi/Bohl, the Koelmels and ourselves, also brought home the team award in the now classic MG 1000 Rally.

Perhaps the whole team's greatest pleasure, aside from the trophies, glory, and so on, has come from the tremendous spirit of enthusiasm and rapport shared by all of us. Knowing that the Chrysler Corporation has been behind us all the way has meant more than can ever be expressed in words.

In addition to the Koelmel hopes of placing in the top ten nationally, the Huntingdon Valley, Pa., pair are in first place for the Philadelphia Region, SCCA, Appalachian Trail championship honors and fifth in PRCA standings, while we have struggled into fifth spot in the Appalachian Trail, and third in PRCA.

When the time comes to trade Big 3 for our new 300K, emotions of excitement and joy will once again be with us. After having driven a few other types of rally cars, we both feel that the comfort, performance potential, and general appointments make the Chrysler 300 one of the greatest-ever rally cars, certainly one that has no equal.

Sit in with a group of rallyists talking over past rallies, and, sooner or later, the conversation will get around to night rallies. Stay around a little longer and someone is bound to mention the Rose Tree All Night Rally. It's no wonder, Rose Tree's all night event is unique in the area; for ten years their 12 hour, 300-plus mile rally has drawn cars from as far away as New York, Virginia and western Pennsylvania. Most dyed-in-the-wool rallyists count the All-Nighter as being a real test of driver, navigator and automobile. So far, they have not been disappointed.

The records show that the Rose Tree Motor Club was founded by a dozen or so sports car fans back in 1953. Gathered in the salesroom of a foreign car dealer in Media, they started in an informal way, but, as membership grew, they took their name from nearby Rose Tree Hunt and officially incorporated themselves in 1955. It wasn't long before the budding organization began holding their own rallies.

Credit for the creation of the All Night Rally goes to one of the club's first lady members. In late 1954 Kitty Uebelhoer decided that the club needed a rally which would separate the men from the boys. She worked the idea into a recipe. Start with a cold night late in January, provide roads "out in the country", concoct a set of route instructions that need close examination and imaginative interpretation, add some zesty average speeds with just enough clock-watching to keep the navigator honest. Blend carefully into a full night of high adventure that they'll long remember. Serve to from 100 to 150 cars that want to play a friendly, congenial game.

Husband Fred, and Bill Lilley picked it up from there and on a cold Saturday night in January 1955 some 70 cars lined up for the start of the first Rose Tree All Night Rally. This was the largest turnout for a rally in the area to

date, and was the first rally to present such things as county route numbers and average speed changes on the Pa. Turnpike.

Later in 1955 the club inaugurated their well known Spring and Fall Invitational Rallies, to be held for the tenth time next year.

As the club's membership roster grew, so did its list of noteworthy events: the automobile show held for the benefit of the March of Dimes in 1955 (when sports cars were still somewhat of a novelty), the Medicine Man Rally a few years later, held in conjunction with

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



Evan Bennett, RTMC president, at the start of Rose Tree's 1963 Fall Invitational Rally.

a local hospital and the club's yearly outing to the mountains, the Pocono Bash, a weekend devised by the active minds of Harry Wareham and Evan Bennett.

Somewhere along the line Rose Tree held the first major all-picture rally and later used a picture section in an All Nighter. Pictures proved to be so popular that at least one Rose Tree event each year has featured a photo section. The club was one of the first groups in the area to classify rally cars by past performance and equipment, and has consistently featured a novice class in each of their major rallies.

One of the club's most popular outings is the yearly Fourth of July Kiddies-Picnic-Rally. Planned just for the children of the club members, it has been attended by over 150 adults and children. Rally route instructions are designed for youngsters and awards are given for boy and girl navigators. Following the rally route leads to the picnic area where fun and games are the order of the day.

Although primarily a rallying club, Rose Tree generally holds a yearly gymkhana and several years ago was among the area groups participating in time trials at Baker's Acre. Many of the members are drivers or workers in regional and national races. Rose Tree crews have brought home the Best Checkpoint award from the Appalachian National Rally three years in a row.

The club, now numbering some 80 members, is looking forward to another active year; their meetings are always open to anyone interested in automobiles and sports car activities. Monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, 8:30 pm, at the Longhorn Ranch, Route 1, approximately five miles west of Media, Pa. Information concerning the club or its activities can be obtained from the Secretary, Connie Goslin, at (215) EL 6-1517.

THE ROSE TREE

TENTH ANNUAL
ALL-NIGHTER

JANUARY 25, 1964

All cars will undergo Technical Inspection, and you are advised that Seat Belts, Fire Extinguishers, First-Aid Kits and Snow Chains will be required.

Entry forms are now available from:

The Secretary
RTMC
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To Nassau

**As told to
TOP GEAR
by
Jack Deren**

You might say that the 1963 Nassau Speedweeks started for me, personally, on November 15th, the day I stopped in at McKean Chevrolet in Philadelphia, to see Roger Penske. My visit just happened to be coincidental with the fact that he was expecting the arrival, the following day, of the bits and pieces which were to be the next Zerex Special race car.

With this in mind he asked me if I would be free for the next few days, because he had some work to be done on his new car. Since I was at a loose end right then I agreed to undertake the project for him. His regular mechanic, Roy Gane, had recently left to join the Mecom Racing Organization and was in Culver City, California, assisting Jim Travers of Traco in the build-up of the Chevy engines for the Mecom team's efforts at Nassau.

That afternoon I called Bob Holbert and arranged to borrow his trailer for the job of hauling the car from Philadelphia International Airport to the premises of Updraught, Inc., on the Main Line in suburban Philadelphia.

The car, which was to be the basis of the new Zerex Special, was the Cooper Monaco which Roy Salvadori had raced at Laguna Seca, Riverside, and Kent, Wash-

ington, late in the 1963 season. As it was on the forklift truck, being unloaded from the plane, I must say things looked most unpromising. It had no engine, only the transmission, the general condition was dirty, and it still wore dark green paint and racing numbers.

Up to this point I had no idea that this project was headed for Nassau, and so, feeling there was no hurry, I headed back to Updraught, planning the disassembly and rebuild as I crossed the Penrose Avenue Bridge.

The first stumbling block I came across was a lack of proper tools. Gane had taken most of his kit to Culver City, so I started in with my assortment of Craftsman wrenches and began to strip the Cooper of its body and running gear. Once I had the frame exposed and ready for magnafluxing Roger dropped the bomb.

"Jack, this will be the car I'm driving at Nassau, so you'll have to have almost everything more or less ready by November 29th. You'll leave for Miami and sail across the following day. Since there won't be time in Nassau the car will have to be ready to run when it gets there. OK?"

Where to start?

Fortunately the Colotti Type 37 gearbox had just been installed in Detroit by some Michigan friends, and in fact it was from Detroit that the car had been flown to Philadelphia. At this point I was ably assisted by Don Kean, a mechanic at Philpenn, in nearby Bryn Mawr; Mike Sutherland, a Main Line resi-

dent; and Bill Scott, of Scott Special fame. Bill did all the machine work in his own shop, Don assisted in the evenings (and into the night!), and Mike was, therefore, the only one with me full time.

Since time was almost non-existent we had to forego magnafluxing, sandblasting and so on, and consequently the chassis received only a close visual examination for cracks. The car itself was a fairly new Monaco showing no signs of damage, and once we decided all was in order the chassis was painted and set aside. On November 18th the body modifications were started at Molin Bodyshop, Wayne, Pa. Harry Tidmarsh was the man responsible for the fine rear end job, necessitated by the wider track of the larger wheels which would be mated to the Colotti gearbox and 283 cu. in. Chevy aluminum engine. The rear spoiler was also modified; there was no time to do any of the intended front bodywork mods. In fact there was hardly time to do anything other than work on essentials!

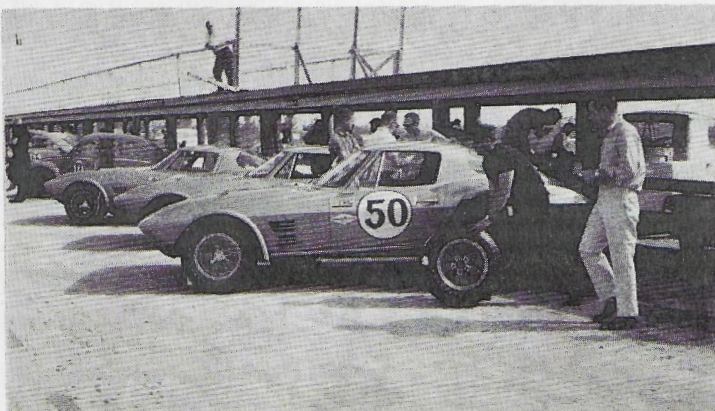
The next job to be tackled was the brake rebuild, and here I ran into a problem. On examination I realized the caliper rubbers would have to be replaced — but none were available locally, east of the Mississippi, that is. A phone call to California was successful in locating the necessary items, and airmail took care of the rest. Since I knew there were no master cylinders available out west, another call, this time to Texas, became necessary, and two master cylin-

ders arrived by airmail the following day.

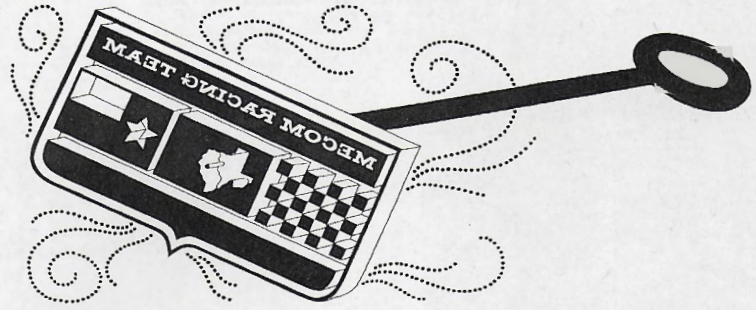
November 19th saw the commencement of rebuilding, and by dint of much midnight oil we proceeded slowly but surely in our race with both clock and calendar.

The engine preparation was all being handled by Traco out on the Coast. The only exception to this was the ex-Reventlow Scarab, whose engine work was being done by Troutman and Barnes. Traco's specialty is Chevrolet power plants, and many of their units are in use in race cars, as well as in hydroplanes where it is not unusual for a 327 cu. in. engine to be run at 10,000 rpm in water competition! The engine which we would install in the new Zerex Special was an aluminum 283 cu. in. unit. Basically this was the twin of the old 1955 Chevy 265 cu. in. V8, stroked to give a slightly larger displacement, which in terms of metric measure is about 4½ liters. As set up by Traco our unit was dynamometer tested and found to be delivering 380 bhp.

Roy returned with the engine on the 24th and the following morning found us ready to drop it into the chassis. It all sounds so simple now, but at the time the job seemed to be monumental. We had to unbolt or slacken off so many odds and ends on the engine in order to get it into the chassis that it might have been easier to do the engine buildup in the chassis! I know I thought so then! The problem was that the Cooper frame had not been altered in any way to accept



with



the larger engine more easily, and we found the headers to be fouling up the installation. After considerable fudging and cussing we finally completed the job, bolting up everything that had been slackened off in the process. The remaining two days were spent in putting the finishing touches to the car—preparationwise, that is. It's appearance was something else again!

At 7 am, Thanksgiving morning, I set off with the tow-car and trailer for Miami. The newly thrown-together Zerex Chevy on the trailer behind me was in primer and our hope was that it would be painted in Nassau. The following afternoon I arrived a half-hour after the barge, carrying everyone else's race machinery, had left for Nassau ahead of its scheduled departure time. And so another day was lost, since the s.s. *Bahama Star* normally left from Miami at 9:30 pm on Saturdays.

Our connection with the other members of John Mecom's racing team was made early Sunday morning, and on arriving at Oakes Field we found that the Lola GT had arrived completely ready to run. The three lightweight Grand Sport Stingrays had been set up ready to race before leaving the States, but testing had pointed up a few things which required attention. Actually the three 'Rays were tended by two GM factory men, Bernie and Tony, both of whose names I can't for the life of me remember right now! But of all of us there, these two boys worked like dogs keeping the lightweights in order.

Of the other Mecom cars, Troutman and Barnes took care of the Scarab exclusively; Travers and Olson worked on the engine we had lately put into the new Zerex; Roy Gane tended the 2½ liter Climax-engined Zerex, Roger's former mount, now owned by Mecom, and which had been assigned to driver Augie Pabst. I worked anywhere and everywhere in between putting the last-minute touches to the Zerex Chevy.

One thing I will say, and this is not letting any secrets get out. the Mecom Racing Organization sure needs a team manager! The disorganization at Nassau was almost comical, and that the team's cars and drivers did as well as they did was in spite of the fact that they were running under the Mecom banner! Actually, for the 1964 season Mecom will have a professional manager, and I personally believe they will have a good year. With Traco preparing their engines, and team discipline, plus Mecom's resources, all this should surely result in a winning combination.

One of the first things to be done on getting settled in was the completion of the car's paint job, and once it had its silver blue uniform on things at least began to look more ship-shape.

During practice sessions Roger was able to get the feel of the car and everything seemed to be just fine. The clincher was put on this when he turned the first-ever better-than-100 mph lap on the rough and bumpy Oakes Field circuit. My

own feelings about this achievement were more of relief at the car running so well than anything else. I must also say that, in my opinion, Travers builds a great engine.

Race plans called for the new car's first outing in the Saturday 5-lap modified feature, mainly to use this event as a shakedown for the following day's Nassau Cup 250-miler which would be the final and major race of the week. Everything went well and Penske took a first overall, giving the Shelby King Cobras a taste of what was to come. The car was not raced in the mid-week Governor's Cup event, and Roger drove a lightweight Stingray in this one.

Even though all of us mechanics were fully involved with the pressures of car preparation, we could feel an undercurrent around the Mecom pits and we all hoped we were on the winning team. As you know, in the Nassau Cup race Penske took the lead within a couple of laps or so and began to run away from the rest of the field. We now had the time to experience the thrill of seeing the car we had worked on run so well and so strongly.

Roger's first pit stop, while he had a good lead on the field, was on account of a broken water hose. Due to a lack of leadership it was almost impossible to get to the car. Many of Roger's friends, photographers, the press, all crowded around him wanting to know what had happened. We managed, despite the lack of organized crowd control to get the engine cover

opened and the trouble repaired. Unfortunately none of us remembered to open the cooling system steam-escape petcock when the water was being poured into the header tank, and when the cold water hit the area of the cylinder heads an airlock developed. The water filler was, therefore, under the impression that the cooling system was full, when actually it was not.

And of course we omitted to double-check that the engine hood was properly secured before giving our driver the OK to head out. This boo-boo resulted in his having to pit once more to have the cover tightened down.

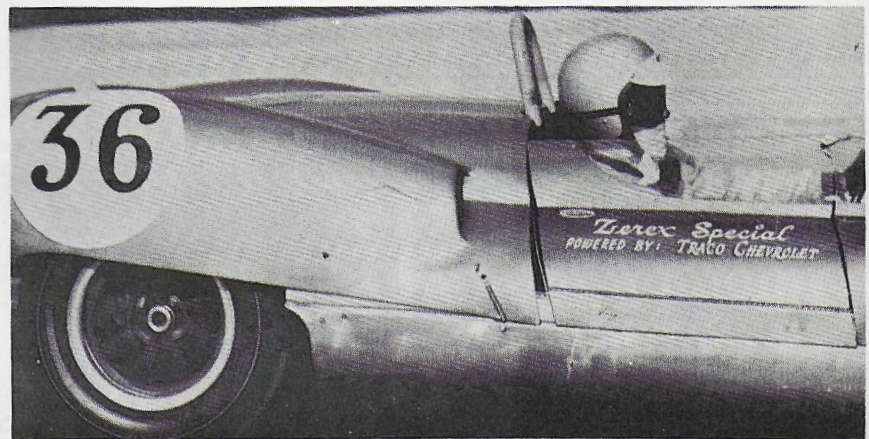
Due to the airlock and insufficient water Roger retired on lap — with an overheated engine. He had, even more unfortunately, lost his lead and was quite a way back after the second pitstop. Undoubtedly the car had the potential to be a winner at Nassau and had it not been for the slap-dash pitwork (again, without proper management) he would surely have been a winner, since he was pulling away from the field even while in a commanding lead position.

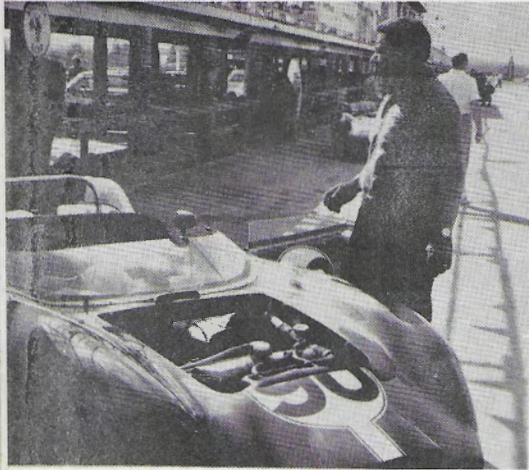
All in all, though, I enjoyed the experience of working with a team that has the possibility of being one of the best — and although the work resulted in our missing the cocktail parties, the Nassau sun in midwinter helped make up. In fact, the week after the races it became very hot — 90° — and our biggest problem was to find ice cream trucks!

"Early Sunday morning saw us checking out the final details . . ."

"... fortunately we had the Zerex Special all ready to go . . ."

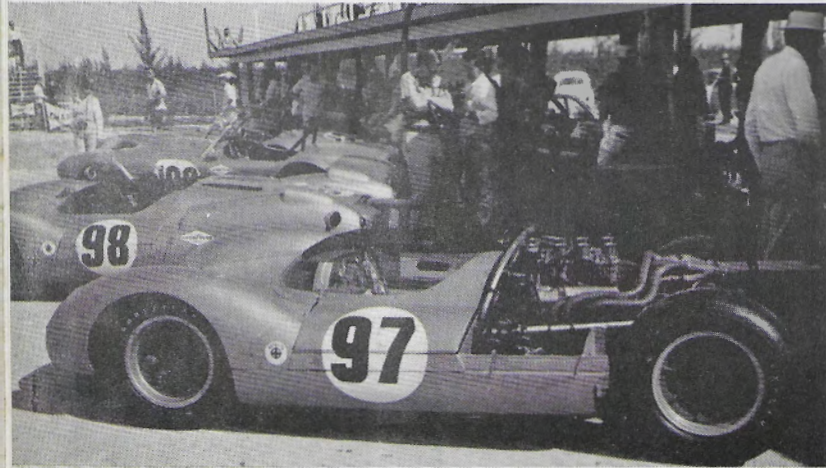
"... and while it ran it really set the pace."





Charlie Jefferson rode herd on Bob Grossman's 2-liter V6 Ferrari.

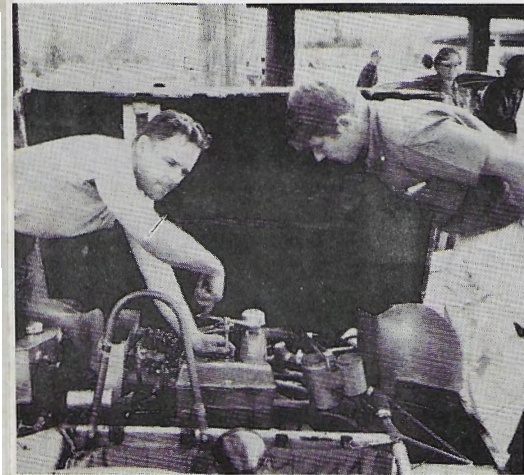
The snake pit—otherwise known as the Cobra Camp.



Shelby and Miles.



Since LeMans starts are compared Mecom (second from right) had some stolidly nonplussed Team

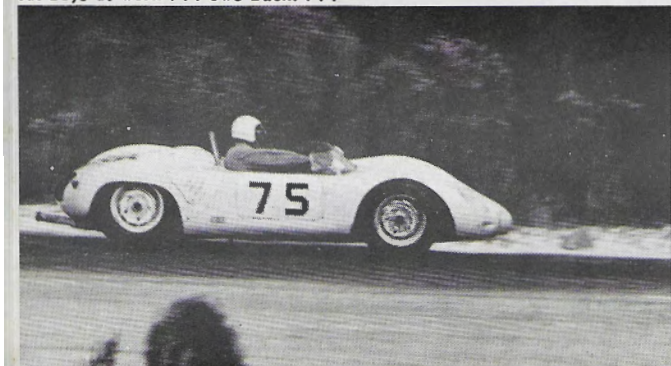


Tim Mayer's Lotus 23B ran well despite Skip Scott's attempts to see what makes it tick!

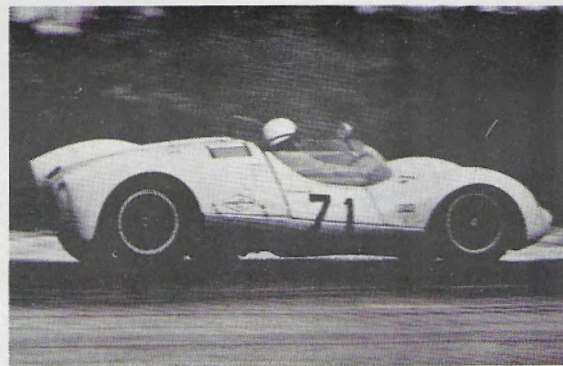


Comic relief in the form of a natives' bicycle James in true Vineland style!

cal boys at work . . . Uwe Buehl . . .

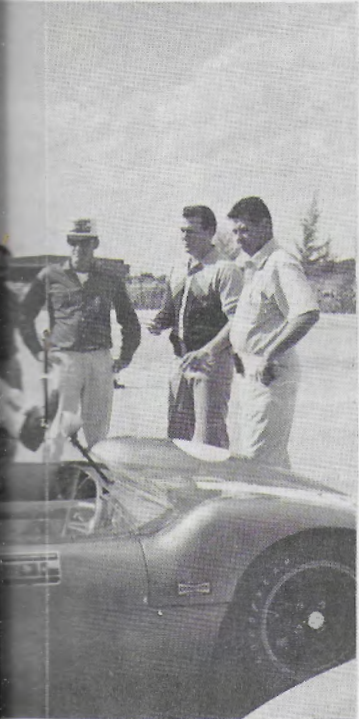


Ray Heppenstall . . .



Howard Hanna . . .





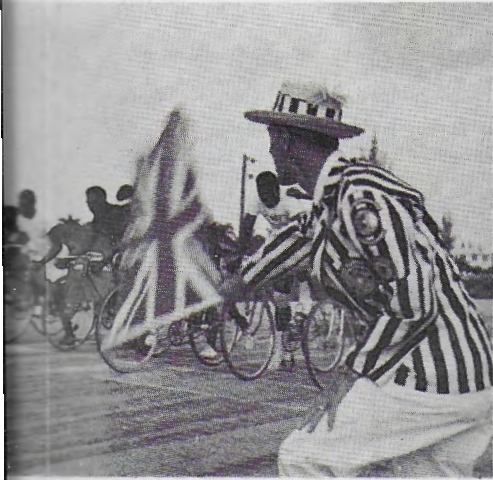
Gurney's winning VW.

Dave Darren (right) gets the word from a Champion plug technician that mice are not responsible, while Jim Beattie obviously has his own ideas about that!

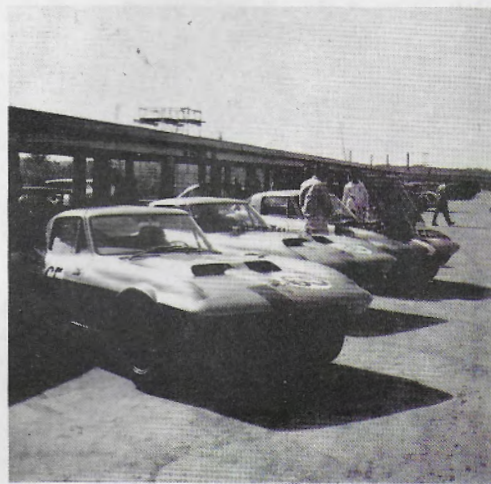


Hanna's Rene Bonnet gets the Gilbert Erector set treatment.

comparatively new to A. J. Foyt, John [unclear] had him go through rehearsal while Team Mecom members look on.

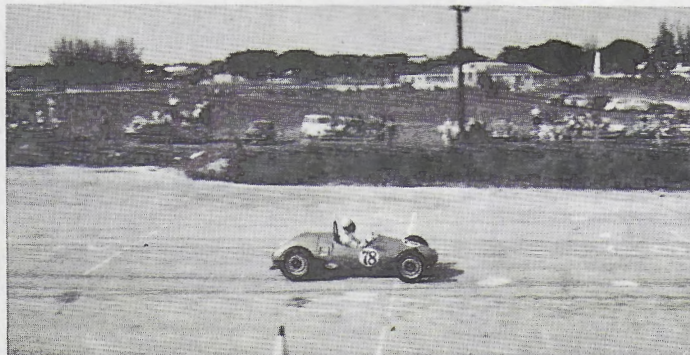
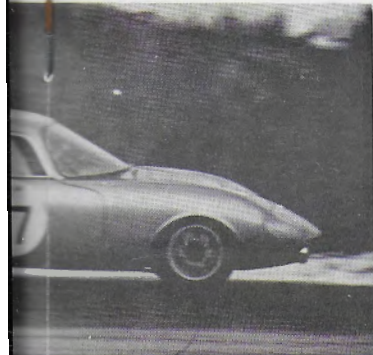


Bicycle race gets the Union Jack start from Arch

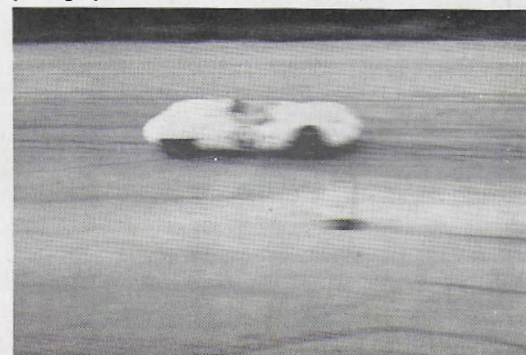


Those lightweight Grand Sport Stingrays ran fast and well, causing many to conjecture what GT racing would be like if GM really got into racing full time.

and the Vees looked like this strung out over 4 1/2 miles . . .



while this was about all anyone saw of Tim Mayer putting up the finest drive of the week,



Escape to NASSAU!

the trip...

A cold, dreary December 4th did nothing to dampen the spirits of 109 TGBC escapees who gathered at Philadelphia's International Airport to board their personal BOAC Britannia aircraft for Nassau and the International Speedweeks.

This trip was the culmination of months of planning, and incidentally, was probably the first and certainly the largest successful single-group flight of enthusiasts to travel south to this annual international race event.

The flight south was perfect. After all, it could hardly have been anything else! BOAC treated all 109 TGBC travelers to a complete open bar, and this, along with a magnificent four-course dinner, put everyone in the very best of spirits. (No pun intended!)

Once the group had arrived a fleet of cars, VW station wagons, and limousines transported people and baggage to the Sheraton British Colonial Hotel which was to be the Boosters' Club headquarters for the next four days. From this point on the group was left to its own devices with regard to activities, and some of the members started right in to enjoy themselves. For instance, two Boosters managed to get themselves arrested and locked up within the first 12 hours on the island! Another pair found themselves out in the sticks at a place called Jungle Jim's and not having a rented car at their disposal, nor being able to find a taxi at 3 am, they proceeded to rummage through cars parked in the street. They had hoped to find a set of keys in someone's ignition! Fortunately a cab finally hailed into view and they were rolled into it and so back to the hotel.

Then later in the week one of the gang found his rented Mini-Minor had developed engineitis. After calling the rental office it was learned that the mechanic had tied a bag on the night before, and that he would have to be temporarily released from Her Majesty's Prison in order to

effect the repairs!

Sightseeing, skin-diving, water-skiing, shopping, and cocktail parties made up the round of activities, other than the races themselves. And not necessarily in that order! Everyone, but everyone, brought back their duty-free gallon of booze, and several Boosters made judicious buys in the camera equipment line while in Nassau.

One problem which arose was the extreme shortage of rental cars available in Nassau during this week when the island is filled with sports car people. Even scooters were scarce. Tom Hillyer and Marv Cohen managed to get the last two scooters available, so the Hillyers and Cohens traveled in comparative style while the rest of the crowd laughed themselves helpless at Tom's attempts to master the balky little two-wheeler!

During the course of the Sunday Nassau Trophy race, commentator Art Peck mentioned the Club on the PA system, so the group has now gained a little international notoriety!

But, alas, it all had to come to an end. After four most enjoyable days, wherein all present discovered that the Nassau cocktail parties were really as rumored — wonderful — that the racing was as rumored — secondary to the parties — the 109 TGBC-ers left Nassau in almost as high spirits as they had arrived.

Again BOAC did an excellent job, and despite some rough weather toward the end of the trip, the arrival in Philadelphia was uneventful. That this first Escape to Nassau was a 100% success was evidenced by more than a dozen and a half people who wanted to make reservations for the 1964 Nassau Speedweeks during the flight home.

To those of you who were unable to go this time, plan now for the 1964 event — we could almost make book that the Boosters' Club will fly two planes the next time this is done!



Nassau Speedweeks racing is spread out over a week's duration with most of the action taking place toward the end of the week. The course itself is a shocker. As one Booster aptly put it: "It's nothing more than a glorified Vineland!" And, indeed, that just about sums it up. Of all international race events, Nassau draws nothing in the way of spectators, therefore it is a literal busman's holiday for the competitors.

The infield of this 4½-mile circuit is a mess of discarded trash, beer cans, weeds and overgrown scrub. The vegetation grows wild and restricts the infield view at many points around the circuit. So much for the negative aspects. The racing itself was great.

Of course the vanguard Shelby American team was present with both AC-Cobras and the Cooper-Ford King Cobras. John Mecom was present with no less than seven Chevrolet-powered cars, including the three lightweight Grand Sport Stingrays; Midwest Nickey Chevrolet team fielded two Chevy-powered Cooper Monacos; Charlie Kolb, normally Porsche mounted, was entered to drive the much-modified ex-Lloyd Ruby Lotus 19, now running with Ford Cobra power and renamed the Harrison Special; Dan Gurney was present with a Lotus 19-Ford; the North American Racing Team entered two Ferraris to be driven by Pedro Rodriguez (V12 3-liter), and Buck Fulp (V8 2.6-liter); also entered were two birdcage Maseratis, now both sporting Ford power; and two new Chaparral cars from Texan Jim Hall's stable; plus a flock of other assorted individually-entered machinery as well as the smaller cars, which only last season were the dominant force in North American racing, the Elva VIIIs, Porsche RS series, Lotus 23s, et al.

Spearheading the East Coast driving talent were Bob Grossman, and Morrow Decker from New York; Dave Darrin, N.J.; Dick Thompson, Washington, D.C.; Bob Holbert, Roger Penske, Uwe Buehl, Howard Hanna, Ray Heppenstall, Tim Mayer, Otto Linton, Ed Hugus, all from Pennsylvania.

At least the TOP GEAR Boosters' Club had enough people from the East Coast to cheer on and give their support to!

The first event of 1963's Tenth Annual International Speedweeks was held December 1st. In the Tourist Trophy, for GT and Prototype cars, Augie Pabst scored a fine win for the Mecom Team in the (at present) only Lola-GT in captivity. This must have been a blow to the pride of Ford since they now control the English Lola concern, and are planning to produce the lithe and low Lola GT coupe for competition. Why? Well, Mecom had a Chevrolet engine stuffed in the rear of the car instead of the originally planned Ford engine!

Following this opening event things quieted down and the next activity was on Thursday, the day following the TGBC arrival. Thursday saw a mandatory practice session for all cars, and races were programed for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Friday's racing opened with the much-heralded Grand Prix des Volkswagens, a 23-lap, 103-mile race for both Formula Vees and modified VW sedans. A total of 35 cars (17 Vees, 18 sedans) started, and after a drearily dull event the checker saw Charlie Kolb bring in the top-placed Vee with Dan Gurney likewise doing the honors for the California EMPI-entered VW sedan. With a 4½-mile lap, these cars just could not do any better than a 4-minute time per circuit, and an hour and a half of this sort of thing makes you lose hope, interest and whatever else you came to the track with.

But as we remarked earlier, Nassau is the only place in automobile racing where the spectator does not count, and the races, consequently, are run for the fun of the drivers. A. J. Foyt drove at least two-thirds of the race in Crocky Peterson's sedan, and afterward claimed he had had a ball. It most likely gave him an opportunity to scout the circuit and decide what he was going to do in the Governor's Cup, which was to follow the GP des VW fiasco.

It is a tradition in 10 years of racing at Nassau that the winner of the Governor's Cup has never taken the premier feature, Nassau Cup. So all eyes were on the cars to determine who would NOT be a winner the following Sunday.

After a grid start this 25-lap feature race settled down to a battle between A. J. Foyt and Jim Hall. Foyt was in the Mecom Chevy-Scarab, the last car built by the now-defunct Revetlow racing organization; Hall was driving one of his new fiberglass Chaparrals, this one sporting a 327-inch Chevy engine. These two drew steadily away from the Penske-Rodriguez-Pabst trio who were driving GS Stingray-Ferrari-GS Stingray cars respectively. Eventually the pace began to tell and Hall ran out of brakes, causing him to mow the back course shrubbery somewhat. Exit Hall, and onward Foyt.

Back in the pack east Coasters drove valiantly and well. Penske put the lightweight 'Ray into third spot, thoroughly vanquishing the regular AC-Cobras; Dick Thompson in a similar car placed sixth; Bob Grossman driving his Charlie Jefferson-prepared 2-liter V6 Dino Ferrari (rear-engined) scored first overall in under 2 liters and a solid seventh overall, Pittsburgh's Ed Hugus climaxed a steady drive with first in the 1600cc category and eighth overall, Uwe Buehl also shone with his tenth overall in a reliable but out-classed Porsche RSK.

During the Thursday practice session we had seen Foyt play dirttrack-style, and even in the Friday race he occasionally hung the tail of his Scarab, but he was, in the main, polished and steady, and that was what it took to win his first major international sports car victory. Now we knew who wouldn't win the Sunday main event. Or so we thought!

After a series of minor races the following day, in which Lillian Hanna won the ladies race for VW sedans, the day was capped by a short 5-lap race for modified GT sports cars. The King Cobras with Holbert and MacDonald up were on the front row of the grid, Penske was also present with his new Zerex-Chevy, Rodriguez again in the NART 3-liter prancing horse, plus the rest of the gang. This was a short and sweet ding-dong with Penske taking first spot, while it could be seen that the King Cobras and A. J. Foyt were going to have their hands full the following day in stopping Rapid Roger. Holbert managed to notch a second in this one, and that was his week that was!

The Nassau Cup, run over 250 miles of the rough and bumpy Oakes Field course, started only 25 minutes late, which according to the island's regulars, is some sort of a record in itself! The day was hot and windy, and promised to be a record average mark once it was all over. Penske had done the first better-than-100 mph lap in the Thursday practice sessions — 100.621 mph to be exact — and more of the same was to be expected.

As Arch James dropped the flag on the Esso Bridge, the Le Mans start got under way, with one of the Nickey Chevrolet-Monacos getting the jump on the rest of the field. Charlie Hayes blew his engine within the first 100 yards and just managed to pull off to the side above the

the races...



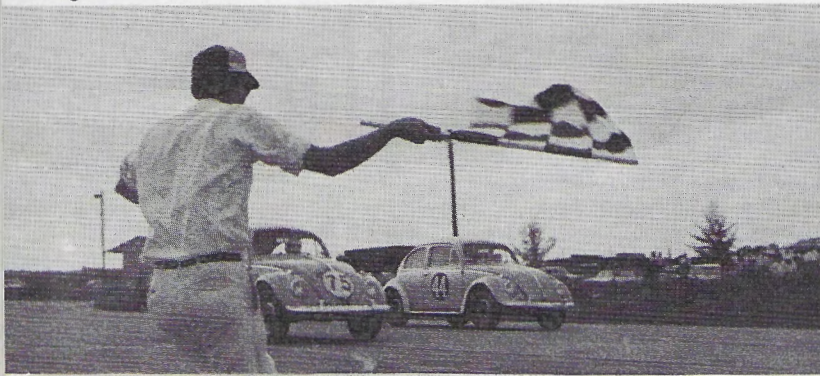
bridge as the tailenders roared by. Canada's Norm Namerow also suffered expensive engine trouble in the first lap when his Genie-Ford expired within minutes of the start.

As the leaders came around on the first lap it was a mess of blue as the King Cobras and Mecom cars blasted by the pits with Penske ahead by a couple of lengths. The Zerex-Chevy continued to pull away from the rest of the field until the 20th lap when his water hose gave out. Hall once again laid in second place after a few laps, and Foyt, MacDonald, Rodriguez came close behind. Surprise at this stage of the race was Ray Heppenstall who was right up there with the leaders in his Cooper Monaco-Ford and who at one point in the proceedings was even running in fourth place!

By lap 30 Foyt had taken the lead, driving a steady race with only a trace of his earlier elbows-waving-tail-out coming through now and again. Rodriguez, Gurney, Hudson and Mayer tagged along, and Holbert, who went out on lap 5 with a broken front end, was back in the pack having taken over Heppenstall's car some time before. Though not in the first ten at this point, the Warrington VW dealer was seen pushing hard to get up to the leaders.

Gurney went out around lap 31 with a broken suspension unit — that rough Oakes Field was taking its toll. Lap 34 saw Penske withdraw, and Foyt continued on his merry way. Pit area spectators were treated to the sight of a race engine blowing up when George Reed's Ferrari-Ford did same going through the high-speed straight leading under the Esso Bridge. There was smoke everywhere and scant seconds following the big bang four cars vanished into the cloud, also at high speed. Fortunately everything worked out all right, and Reed was able to get his car to the side of the track without further incident. Another such incident occurred to one of the Simca Abarth coupes as it was being given the checker — again a dense cloud, but by then the race was over.

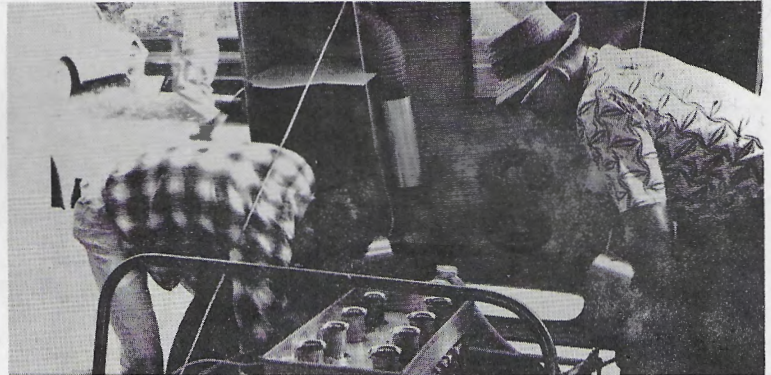
TOP GEAR



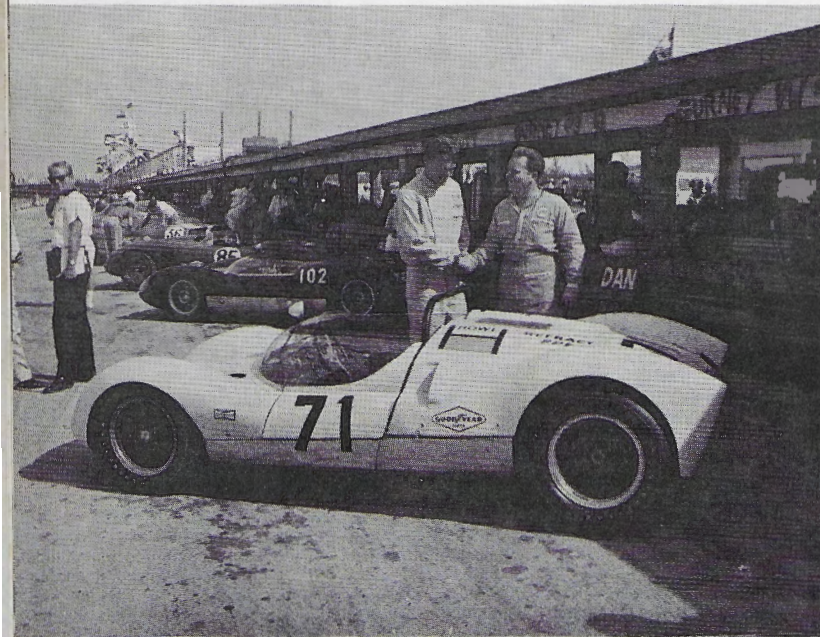
Howard Hanna's better-half, Lillian, just beats Chuck Hayes' better-half, Marian, in the VW Sedan category of the Ladies' Race.



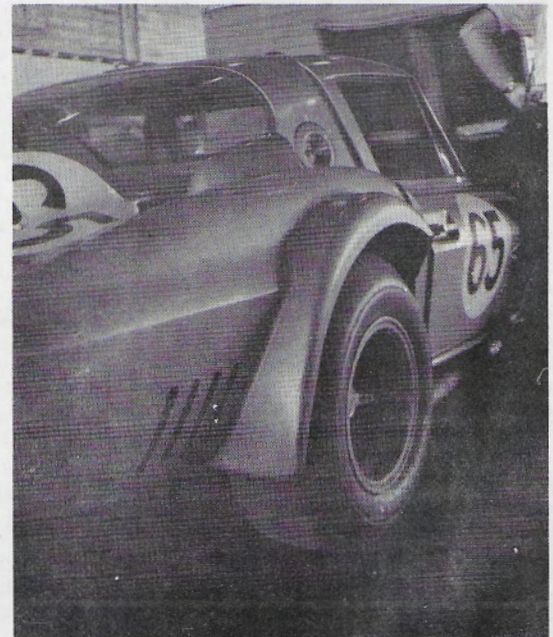
A. J. Foyt dispelled the critics with his twin wins at Nassau.



Dick Stockton supervises the preparation of Gurney's Lotus XIX powered by Ford



Gurney and Heppenstall do the publicity bit.



Team Mecom's not-so-normal Stingray!

When Arch James dropped the checker at the end of 250 miles, A. J. Foyt became the first driver to win both the Governor's and Nassau Cups in the same week; he showed most of us that a driver is a driver, regardless of the type of car he drives; and it also brought to light the fact that the Anglo-American combination of chassis and engine will be the thing to beat in the coming season.

Almost unnoticed throughout the whole race was the brilliant drive put up by Tim Mayer, Dalton, Pa., who placed his diminutive Lotus 23B (1800cc Cosworth-Ford) in third overall behind Foyt and Rodriguez. This was truly the drive of the race and it remains to be seen if Mayer will continue with the smaller-engined car through the major part of the 1964 season.

He is certainly the man to watch in future big-time races. Other Penjerdel drivers who did well, but not well enough were Holbert in the Heppenstall car, ninth overall, and Ed Hugus, 12th overall.

And so ended the Nassau Speedweeks. On the plus side the TGBC trip gave most of us the color & glamor of international racing, plus the opportunity to rub elbows with some of the greats and near-greats in our favorite sport. It certainly was an unforgettable four days, even although the overriding impression was, that if it weren't for the parties and the Nassau vacation activities, the races themselves would have fallen flat. On the negative side was the disappointing impression the Oakes Field made on

most of us. Naturally it would be unwise to spend money on a circuit which is not going to draw a heavy spectator turnout, and it seems unlikely that Nassau will ever do this, but still, the mess and litter is surely unnecessary.

Plans are under consideration to do something to the road surface of the track itself. Certainly the high speeds which are attained on the Nassau circuit would seem to indicate that a complete resurfacing, at the very least, would be needed, if only for safety's sake. Some of the big-bore cars looked to be quite a handful for the unfortunate drivers. And that Grand Prix of Volkswagens . . . better to run another modified sports car race, or something else . . . but, please, Red Crise, no more Volkswagens!

To Whom It May Concern (even if it doesn't really)

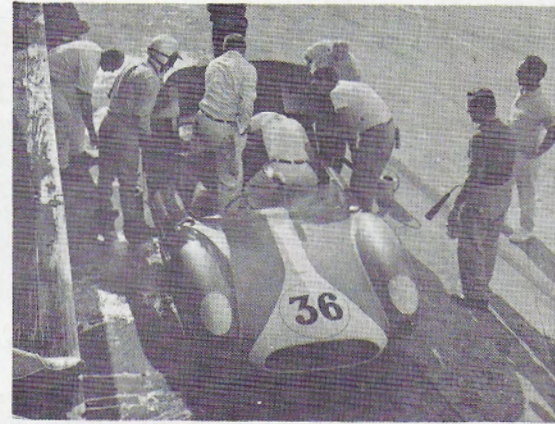
By WOODY YOUNG

Speedweeks 1963!! A ball!! Us freeloaders arrived on the Bahama Star to be greeted by our stumpy-footed leader Tex Ashe, King of the Freeloaders . . . thank you Tex for two weeks of parties and five days of complete confusion . . . accommodations were the most; the course, all four and a half miles of it, the worst . . . parties every night, but we survived all but the Governor's Ball (my tuxedo was obsolete but ready!) . . . TOP GEAR came through with a cocktail party at the Sheraton British Colonial but ten days of partying discourages even some of us freeloaders . . . about the night life, and there's plenty of that . . . George Symonette singing at Blackbeard's Tavern in the evening and Andre Toussaint in the afternoon, were both marvelous . . . at the Sloppy Joe Lounge Blind Blake's Trio also bombed them . . . and Le Fin, with Charlie Charlie, got going after 3:00 a.m. when things start developing down there! . . . one of our mob applauded so enthusiastically he received free drinks wherever he went! . . . the sightseeing was also colorful, and the native market abounded in sights, sounds and smells . . . Nassau, the capital of New Providence, is really quite fascinating; the piers afford one the opportunity to watch native fishermen expertly axe, knife and extract live conch (a large shellfish much like a snail but big enough to be held in two hands), dice them and sell same raw to be eaten for about 20¢ . . . delicious, but you have to be a seafood aficionado . . . if you want to gamble, go to Freeport, Grand Bahama . . . and the races . . . well they just seem to be entirely incidental to the whole week, but after all, you have to do something toward the end of the week! . . . I rented a scooter, but it wasn't too practical since it vibrated so much that I kept spill-

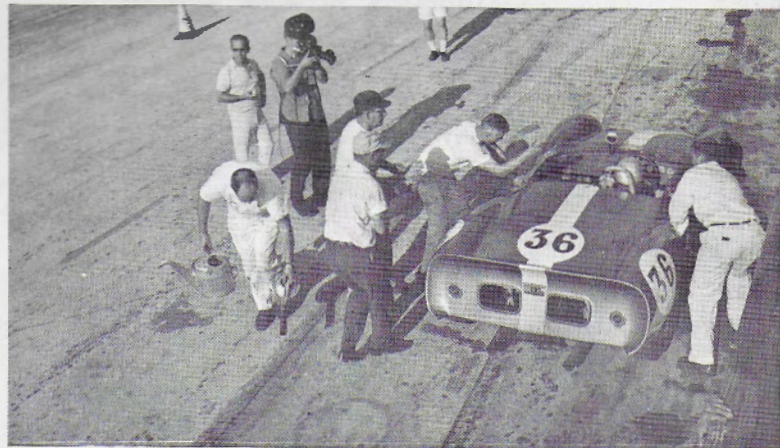
ing my beer when I would put it on the platform to do a two-handed downshift! . . . of course you could rent a Volkswagen (un-Gurney type), or something else . . . or walk . . . after the two-mile drive to Oakes Field, the gate personnel greet you with a cheery "Morning Guv'nor", and you bash through to your post at the Good-year pylons . . . from there you can see the race sights beautifully . . . unfortunately the girl watching was not up to snuff anywhere on the island except at the course, so-oo-oo . . . Lillian Hanna won the VW Ladies race against her father Howard's, wishes . . . spoke to Dan Gurney, also chatted with Moss who refused a local brew Pauli Girl beer, saying, "I wouldn't put that stuff in my stomach, old boy!" . . . he seems to be back to super-normal . . . Shelby got himself married pre-Speedweeks, by flying to London (England, that is, not Julie) . . . Roger Panske, grim as usual, eked in a few points, but Keely Smith out-beautied him . . . ABC-TV and CBS-TV, along with a Canadian gang, descended on the track Sunday, after using up a lot of drinking space at the Emerald Beach party a pair of nights before . . . A. J. Foyt went on film with Moss . . . and the Houston ace batted 1.000 winning two out of two . . . local boy Bob Holbert had unusual bad luck in having both tire problems and a steering link failure, the latter, thank goodness, happening at a slow bend . . . and every so often one of those rowdy TGBC people would elbow their way to the fore!

Concerning the TOP GEAR Bash to Nassau, all I heard was RAVE, RAVE, RAVE!!! "Let's do it again!" "Perfect!", etc. . . . a word of warning, however, be sure to bring along a load of sleep with you because you sure won't get it down there!

Mecom crew investigates Roger Panske's Cooper-Zerex on his first pit-stop while leading the Nassau Cup field ...



... repairs the burst water hose; after Panske checks the job the rear deck is zipped down and to the strains of a TV accompaniment Roger roars off to rejoin the fray.



Only spectators were allowed in the pit area!!





JOHN HOLMES

and



HANK THORP

take pleasure in announcing that

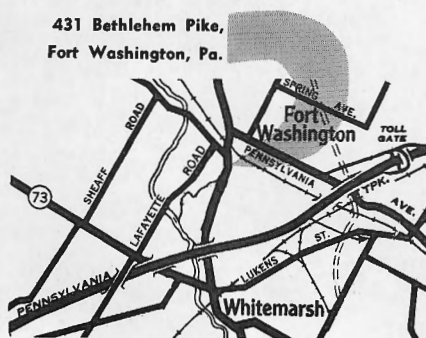
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Comment

This column will concern itself with amateur sports car racing in this area and how it is affected by national SCCA policies, pro racing, and other factors. We'll present facts, draw conclusions, and express opinions. Our aim is to make racing better by having better-informed drivers who help make the rules they race under. The author is a driver you might know, and this column is dedicated to the amateur driver.

East Coast tracks, and for that matter, East Coast sports car racing, obviously could use a shot in the arm. But Westport just killed the hopes of our local tracks and the local drivers with their recent decision to have the Divisional runoffs at Riverside, California. Although the East Tennessee Region was the first to formally propose the idea, nobody really expected them to get the race. But Riverside, while not a bad track, certainly isn't centrally located, and doesn't need another big name race. Even regionals out there pull crowds!

The East is ruled out because of weather. The Divisional races themselves run into late fall because of conflicting race dates, though this could be corrected. With an earlier runoff date we might even be the hosts some year.

I queried a few drivers on what they thought about this whole scene and their comments were all the same. Although it means a long and tiring tow out in uncertain weather, the chief objection was that in one race anything could happen — one race doesn't really prove anything. As you know, Divisional entry fees will have to be increased to give the qualified drivers expense money.

Now the real problem is, *will the big modified boys stay away from the Divisionals because of the increase in entry fee?* I think very few are interested in the Riverside runoff itself, even if they qualified. So why not go to a Regional for less dough? This is just one more reason for the modified field to be poor beyond belief at the Nationals this coming year.

The Nationals have lost their importance because of the SCCA/FIA Opens and the USRRC Races. A race is a race unless you are actively going for a championship. Apparently nobody in the big modified classes really valued the title. Roger Penske won his title by winning two Nationals (con-

venient to home) against fields of one other car and three other cars respectively. Worse yet, three Nationals had no D modifieds, and two fielded one each! One competitor took his championship with two second places!

What does all this mean to you? — your Bazooka V-9 runs in H production (a sure winner) and what's an extra few bucks?

Well, for one thing it further deflates the importance of the National. Westport recently referred to the national racing program as the backbone of SCCA racing. What a laugh! The SCCA/FIA Open at Laguna Seca drew 80,000 for the weekend. All TEN Nationals drew only 132,000 but the killer is Lime Rock and Bridgehampton, both of which suffered poor paid attendances. These are the tracks we depend on! (The situation at Vineland is well known, a problem which we'll cover separately.)

Secondly, doesn't the runoff somehow kill the original idea of the Divisional Championship being a local sort of thing? Now you're National Divisional Champion, is that better than a National Champion? How about a runoff between the National Champion and the National Divisional Champion at say Kent, Washington, or maybe even Waikiki Beach? Maybe some drivers would rather just be Divisional champion of their own division and leave the chasing around to the hotshot who wants to spend the time as well as the money that the National Championships demand. Maybe we can get the Nationals to mean something again to drivers, spectators, and track owners!

Next time we'll discuss the two proposals which were recently defeated. Few people seemed informed as to what proposal #1 was trying to accomplish. The other had 65% of the votes cast, but was defeated. They'll come up again so let's know more about them next time.

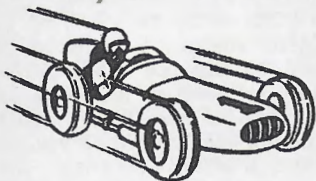
If you can convince your Regional Contest Board Chairman to have open Contest Board Meetings, they can be valuable. Hank Thorp started them in the NNJ Region and they have been a success. Some hints: Keep discussions general. Don't tolerate a lot of babble about items that are clearly covered in the GCR. Don't allow a driver-vs.-flagman debate as to what the flags ought to be. Hold the meeting at a pub and invite pretty girls. It can't miss!

—TOVIC

Attention

**TOP GEAR
BOOSTERS' !!!!!
CLUB**

INDY 500



Join us on this one-day flying trip to the famed Speedway Classic, May 30th, Memorial Day. Fly from Phila. Intl. Airport to Indy, return same day. Breakfast and dinner on our own private airliner. Reservations close March 10th.

All-incl. fare includes rd. trip, Speedway seats, etc.

\$69³⁵



The trip of the year! 24 days in Europe, including 5 days in Paris, 5 days in London—plus

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This wonderful trip includes touring on our own private trans-continental bus fleet thru Germany, Belgium and Holland, to England. Visit Daimler-Benz and Porsche factories, plus many other additional attractions too numerous to mention. Reservations close April 30th.

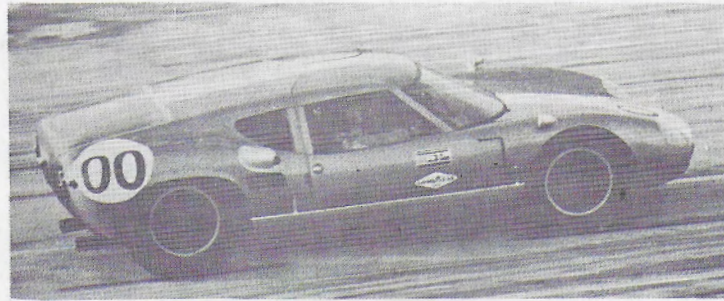
Complete trip, all-inclusive for 24 days

\$578⁰⁰

Round trip only (to Paris, return from London—no partial tour arrangements or hotel accommodations)

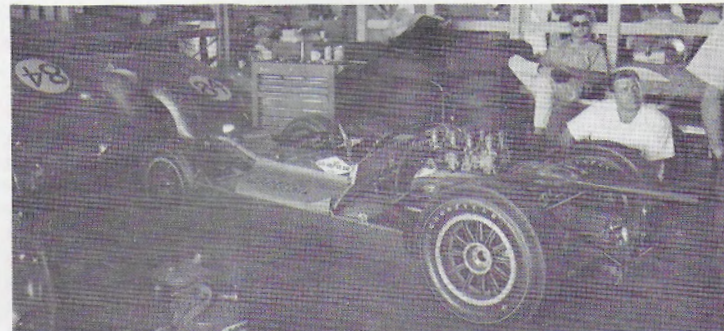
\$276⁵⁰

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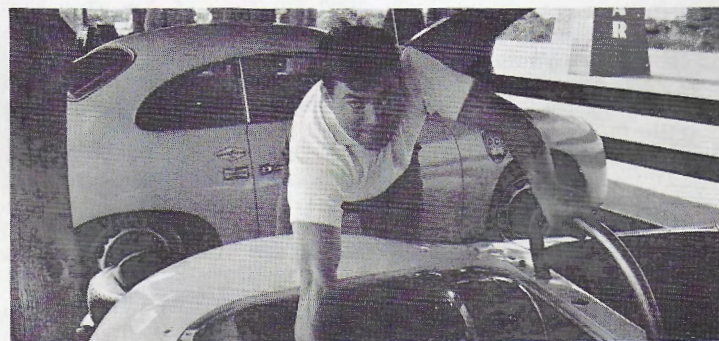
MORE NASSAU

Augie Pabst, Lola GT



Charlie Kolb's Harrison Special

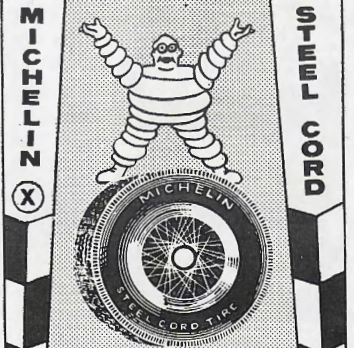
Bob Holbert barely conceals his disappointment at the King Cobra having DNF'd so early, as he walks with Tom Fleming to take over the Howe Sound Cooper Ford from Heppenstall. Holbert managed a 9th overall.



Uwe Buehl, Class 2nd and 10th OA in Governor's Cup.



Gordon Butler's not-so-lightweight Stingray! —Check Page 18.



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I CONVERSATION PIECE

In this first Conversation Piece of 1964 we have gathered three people who have considerable experience in sports car racing, both past and present. Senior citizen of this group is East Coast personality, Lawrence "Woody" Young, who can lay claim to a racing background going back to the late 30s, when as a member of the now-defunct Automobile Racing Club of America he raced a variety of machinery at several of the then-current courses and circuits on the East Coast; Bill Baker, our own staff photographer, former SCCA member and MGA driver in local club events in the mid-50s; and last but by no means least, current USRRC Champ Bob Holbert.

The subject, Past and Present.

TOP GEAR — The Sports Car Club of America was founded in February of 1944 and from a small band of seven people the club has grown in almost 20 years to a national organization of some 14,000 members. In the early days of SCCA's existence the club's main function was to develop an interest in the automobile as an individual thing, its preservation and dissemination of knowledge concerning it. Nowadays SCCA's chief claim to fame is the fact that it is the national sanctioning body for sports car racing. Back in the early days road racing took place on roads which were temporarily closed to the public by prior arrangement, and this is in contrast to today's trend wherein almost all road racing takes place on circuits designed expressly for the purpose of automobile speed competition. In review, then, what would you say are the chief differences in racing today compared with the early days of the sport, or even the period prior to the founding of SCCA?

BAKER — I believe one of the biggest changes, at least noticeable to me, is that there is not quite so much of a fun outlook on the sport as there used to be. There is more of a keen competitive sense being developed, and I don't necessarily mean a do-or-die attitude. This probably has something to do with our own times, the increasing mechanization and automation, things of that kind.

HOLBERT — Things are different from ten years ago. Today we have a whole lot more people interested in the sport, and a lot more people involved in it. We have made an awful lot of progress in the ma-

chinery, and changes in the equipment. I don't feel we have gotten away from the club events. We still have these, and they probably make up about 90% of the racing that goes on. But there are so many more people involved now, and another thing is the fact that everything changes so quickly. One year you are on top and the following year you can be obsolete.

TOP GEAR — One change which has been for the better, even though the actual mechanics of operation are not to everyone's satisfaction, is the manufacturers' support program. Do you feel that this has been a help or hindrance, Bob?

HOLBERT — Well, I can't see where they have too much connection with the club events, but I am sure they are not hurting us any in that respect. Generally the manufacturers seem to be making improvements which they have found through racing experience to have been necessary. I believe they have been a big help if anything, and it appears to me that they are quite cooperative.

YOUNG — It seems to me that there are many more limitations nowadays, but with regard to courses I believe things are improving.

BAKER — About the manufacturers' participation, I'm inclined to agree with Bob. Their assistance has been of real value, and if you just take a look at any of the factory option lists you can see there is so much available to one who wants to go racing. Actually, you can go just about as far as you want to — the sky is the limit because options are available, and the way ahead is wide open what with the current SCCA regulations.

TOP GEAR — Woody, you have the longest background in actual racing. When did you actually start?

YOUNG — Back in 1938, and although it sounds kind of idiotic now, I ran an Austin Nippy then. I also had two midgets, one of which I drove only once — quite disastrously!

TOP GEAR — Who was the sanctioning body for racing then?

YOUNG — Well, the midgets were dirt track style cars and we ran under AAA — American Automobile Association. The Nippy I ran in road races under ARCA regulations, that was the old Automobile Racing Club of America. The whole background of this group is covered pretty well in John Ruetter's book *American Road Racing*. The Collier brothers, Barron, Sam and Miles, were instrumental in getting this group started. I never knew Barron, but I have raced against Miles and Sam at an old venue called Alexandria Bay in

TOP GEAR

New York. Not very well, I'm afraid, but it was fun.

TOP GEAR — Looking back on those days, what would you say is your most vivid memory?

YOUNG — H'mm. Probably the sophistication of the machinery. There were all kinds of cars, from home-built single-seaters with hopped up Ford V8s in them to Alfa Romeos, Maseratis, and even several Bugattis. That was a real machine, now! There were examples of each with single-cam and twin-cam engines.

BAKER — And for this country at that time these were highly sophisticated!

YOUNG — Oh, my goodness, I'll say so. Actually I borrowed the word sophisticated from Stirling Moss' reference to the Lotus 29s of today. But these Bugatti engines were just beautiful. Mind you, our efforts at tuning were largely quite amateur, and on the home-builts the suspension was definitely amateur, but the fun was there!

TOP GEAR — On the fun aspect, Woody. Do you think this has substantially changed?

YOUNG — No, not really. This sport is like any other, if you want to do it, you just go ahead and do it. And you go into it as deeply as you feel you ought to. At least, that's my considered opinion. Bob, have you ever run on ice?

HOLBERT — No, I never got into that phase of things.

YOUNG — Well, I have, and ice racing is probably the oddest of any kind of motorsport there is. I have run at Franconia, in New Hampshire, and several other places. Nearby Lake Naomi in the Poconos runs ice races after the first of January every year. A lot of people think ice racing is a pretty weird sport, but as I said before, it's all a matter of what you like.

BAKER — I'll go along with Woody. The individual gets out of this, or any other sport, what he puts into it. It's up to oneself whether it will be fun or whether you'll find yourself walked on.

HOLBERT — Yes, I feel that way. If a driver is not out to have a good time he doesn't belong there. There is fun in getting the car ready, the preparation, and everything else, along with driving a race.

TOP GEAR — And you feel this is true even though you are running more or less in the big leagues now?

HOLBERT — Well, yes, I would say so. I run because I enjoy it. If it were otherwise, I wouldn't be running!

TOP GEAR — Bob, you have been racing since 1952, this makes 11 years of active competition. What motivated you to get into

road racing?

HOLBERT — I don't know myself, so I can't really tell you. Back in those days the sports car movement was just beginning to pick up momentum here in the States, and at the first two or three events I attended as a spectator, I remember the equipment fascinated me. The cars were small, and they could go. I know that it occurred to me it might be something different to drive one of these sports cars and I eventually found myself in an MG TD. Actually, back then you didn't have to do anything formal. You joined the club, you drove the car to a race, and you raced. That's about all there was to it, it was that simple.

BAKER — I don't think your backside knows it has been anywhere until you have driven clear to Thompson and back! That's the way it used to be because the Glen, and Thompson in Connecticut, were about the only places to run.

YOUNG — Did you ever run Brynfann Tyddn, Bob?

HOLBERT — Sure, I remember that one very well.

BAKER — I guess one of your first and biggest wins was scored at Brynfann.

HOLBERT — It probably was. And I certainly surprised myself as much as anyone else! That must have been about the third time out for me, and it was one of the first times I had finished in an MG race. In those days there were plenty of marque races and, since the MG was the most popular, we'd end up with 20 or more cars in a race. Shortly after that, say 1954 or so, there would be two MG events on a program because so many MGs were turning out to have a go.

YOUNG — Did you ever run against Dave Ash and Fred Windridge?

HOLBERT — Yes. Thinking back now, the very first race I finished was up at Thompson. It certainly was a funny experience! I got up there, and I was absolutely green at this racing thing. I had been there the year before but never made the race because the car broke down just before the event. So anyway, I'm up there in time for practice and all, and when it came time for the MG race they didn't have a place for me on the grid. Naturally, I asked one of the officials where I was supposed to be, and on checking his list he didn't have a spot for me. But he did find out that I had sent in an entry, so after apologies all around they decided that the best they could do would be to place me in back of the pack. Well, the race started, and when it was all over I found that my start from the back resulted in a first overall!

TOP GEAR — In the December

TOP GEAR we published the picture of that race Bob, and it showed you on the way to your first win.

YOUNG — The starter for these Thompson races used to be Sherwood Johnson, and he usually ran in the feature race. I'd say Sherwood outweighed Holbert, wouldn't you, Baker?

BAKER — By at least three times!

HOLBERT — And he's not getting any smaller, either! I think Bill Spear and Johnson would both block any major traffic artery!

BAKER — Spear was the darndest guy for driving and shifting that big four-nine Ferrari of his. He never used the clutch and he never missed a shift. That thing must have gone about 8000 every time and he was just as quick as a wink when he shifted.

TOP GEAR — We had three active fellows on the hillclimb circuit on Conversation Piece recently. Have any of you done any hillclimbing? I know Bob has.

BAKER — I ran Duryea a couple of times.

YOUNG — And I took a second at Hyner running a Dauphine against a VW. Then there was the thrill of it all when I lost a wheel at Duryea's third turn a year or two back. But I'd rather hear Bob's opinion on this.

HOLBERT — I have enjoyed the few climbs I have been on, but the way things have been going the last few years I just have not had the time. There has usually been a conflict of dates.

YOUNG — I read that piece where the magazine had the climbers, and Steve Elfenbein and Al Loquasto who both ran pretty high in the standings, compared the hill route with road racing. How would you compare them, Bob?

HOLBERT — I really can't say that there is a comparison here. They are two entirely different areas. In a hill event you have to do as much preparation as for a race, and you only get two or three shots at it. Running hills takes a lot of experience to be any good at it. I have always found that if you go out and charge up the hill you may think you are going fast, but you will actually be going quite slowly as far as the watch is concerned. You have to go up smoothly and just not make any mistakes at all for your time to be consistently good.

TOP GEAR — A few minutes ago we touched lightly on the subject of amateur status as opposed to running nationally. Bob, since you have gone the whole route would you like to comment on your experiences with the Shelby team?

HOLBERT — As for benefits, running with a team, a factory team that is, has certainly taken a load

off my shoulders. The biggest part of racing for me has been the preparation of the car. Running the Porsche independently as I was doing was getting to be a problem from the time standpoint alone. So my connection with the Shelby Cobra team came as a good thing for me. Now all I have to worry about is getting to the race. The cars are always there, and of course, they are ready to go, usually. We've had a very satisfactory association this past season and I personally have enjoyed it a lot.

YOUNG — How many weekends did you run in 1963?

HOLBERT — I really didn't count them, but it seems to me like every other week, and in September we went out five weekends in a row! We were running at least every month, and some months twice. Except January, that is, when we did not race at all. One big problem is getting your equipment out to a track. I could make it on my own at weekends, and I can get away from the business only on Saturdays and Sundays, and that's it. This way, the equipment transportation is taken care of, and this is a major item.

TOP GEAR — Getting back to reminiscences, especially about course conditions. You have all raced at one time or another on several tracks. Have you noticed improvements in course conditions and road surfaces, or do you feel that most of the improvements have come through engineering innovations that have been worked into the cars through the years?

HOLBERT — I believe that improvements have come as a matter of course, and they have been in all phases, track efficiency, officiating, circuit layouts, safety, and so on. This is also true of the cars themselves. Almost everything has shown an improvement each year, all along the line.

TOP GEAR — Would you say that the trend to closed road circuits as opposed to running on public roads is better from both driver and spectator standpoints?

HOLBERT — Today we do not have much choice, what with the number of entries, the types of cars we have running, and the number of spectators it is now possible to draw. It is impossible to run effective crowd control on an open road circuit. Take the recent Fairmount Park proposition. It has been talked up every few years, and while it would make an ideal road circuit, I don't think they could possibly control the crowds.

BAKER — How about fences, maybe barbed wire, or something that would be people-proof?

HOLBERT — This would be pretty tough to do around a three-mile circuit, especially in a location

which would draw large numbers of spectators.

TOP GEAR — Recently quite a lot has been made of the new science of circuit design. For instance, there is the Dutchman Hugenlotz, who is quite an artist in this respect. Do you think there is much more improvement in circuit design?

HOLBERT — That's a tough question. No matter who designs a road circuit, and no matter how well it is done, you are going to find some drivers who will not like the finished result. There will be differences of opinion about it. And anyway, we don't want a standardized design. But yes, there have been improvements through the years in the circuits, most of them toward increasing the safety margins.

YOUNG — Take the one true road course in our area, Reading. It is 40% airport and 60% true roads, with the types of hazards I think true road racing should have included. Last year, however, a couple of cars ran into telephone poles. This year Walt Hansgen was an observer for the possibility that this will be a national event venue in '64. Depending on his recommendations, I think the filling of a couple of culverts and some of the road area being widened, I think this could remain as a true road circuit. And accordingly, the driver should be alert to the circuit he is running on —

HOLBERT — That may be true, Woody, but we are getting so many people into the sport that even with drivers' schools and so on, the courses have to be set up with a view to safety. If only to protect the amateurs from themselves! Let's not have a telephone pole in the wrong place, you know. But I do agree with you that we started out with the natural road hazards as part of the driving. Nowadays, to protect the novices these kind of hazards just have to be eliminated.

YOUNG — In a recent issue of *Sports Car* the point was made that not all C modified cars were as fast as some others, so how can you eliminate the less adept, say, from the seasoned drivers.

HOLBERT — This is pretty hard to do, grade drivers. The newcomer, or even one and two-year men have to get experience somewhere. Everyone is a beginner at some point, and he is just going to have to race against experienced drivers in the normal course of things. This really isn't a great hazard. The experienced driver, I feel, should look out for the beginners and vice versa. As far as the speed potential of different cars on a course, well, this has to be regulated to a certain extent so you don't get cars together which have such a difference between them.

BAKER — Well, they try to take care of this sort of thing in SCCA production classification on the performance basis, and as you know it goes up and down. In this respect I think the attempt at equalization is being made. But I think Woody was talking about driver ability. Ours is like any other sport. Some people are better coordinated than others and this in itself is probably the root of the problem.

YOUNG — Well, last season we saw too often the Corvettes being chewed up by a little Lotus Super 7. The 'vettes can hardly see these little Lotuses. And this is a car performance difference.

HOLBERT — For this coming year this sort of thing will not be any longer because they have divided these cars, and it was needed because this was a hazard in itself. Also there is the matter of spectator appeal. Of course, if there would be all experienced drivers it would be no problem.

TOP GEAR — Bob, you are the only one here who has run almost every big-time circuit in the country. If you were going to be asked to lay out a course, or advise on the design of one, what qualities would you try to incorporate?

HOLBERT — There are many courses which I do like, and there are a few that I feel it would be very hard to improve on. Basically, you do not want too many turns, too tight turns and too short a lap distance. Quite a number of courses have made some or all of these mistakes.

YOUNG — What about Elkhart?
HOLBERT — Elkhart is beautiful. Its layout and everything about it. But I don't consider it one of my favorites. Look at it closely and you'll find too many 90 degree turns, at least 85% of the turns are like that. Everything else about the place is fine, but these turns! You need a course which gives you some up and down in it, where you are possibly going over the crest of a hill and into a turn. Turns of various speeds, say above 50 and up to 120, or so. I personally feel that the turns which are driven around 80, 90 or even 100 mph can separate the drivers.

BAKER — Which course is your current favorite?

HOLBERT — I think the one course which has all of this is Mosport, in Canada. It's about 2½ miles, and just about ideal in every respect.

TOP GEAR — What is your ideal course lap?

HOLBERT — Well, about three miles, I think. That seems to work out well for me.

TOP GEAR — Why is this?

HOLBERT — Actually anything over two miles is fine with me, but

any course made today has to keep the spectator in mind. And anyway, with safety control, crowd control, communications and so on, a five or six mile course is just too costly to operate. On the other hand a two to three mile circuit means that the local region or local club personnel can usually man it quite well.

YOUNG — While talking about courses, how about VIR? And Nurburgring?

HOLBERT — I never ran the 'ring, only Le Mans, and that's a big nothing. It's really a manufacturer's spectacle. But VIR has, I think, a real fine layout. It is a good course, and if it had been laid out in a populated area, and was well managed, it could probably be one of the top courses in the country.

BAKER — It reminds me very much of Valley Forge Park, with all the greenery around and everything. Maybe we should put it on a trailer . . .!

YOUNG — Bob, you have run Daytona, have you not?

HOLBERT — Sure. On both the infield and the oval.

YOUNG — That appears to me to be a pretty difficult course. Is it?

HOLBERT — It is even more difficult than it appears to be. I am sure a lot of people feel that those banked turns are something anyone can go around, but at speed they are very deceiving. You have to get into the banking properly, and then you have to maintain the right line all the way through even to the point of coming out.

TOP GEAR — Does the unnatural position bother you?

HOLBERT — It exaggerates so much in the speed differential. I mean, 100 mph is nothing! You just have to treat it with respect and feel your way around the first few times. As I say, it is not as easy as it looks, believe me.

YOUNG — Actually, when you look right at it, the only thing around us was Brynfann Tyddn, but it was so narrow.

HOLBERT — There again, Woody, is another example of our machinery having outgrown the course. It's just not practical to run today's hot cars on a track like Brynfann. Too many of them get banged up.

YOUNG — You have a point there. But today's club racing just doesn't seem to me to be what it should be. In England they seem to have a great many club races and it seems that many more people are involved. Can anyone tell me just why they have regional, divisional and national events?

HOLBERT — Well, the way I see it, the regional is just like a local club event. Basically, that is.

YOUNG — But everyone wants to go national. Where does it get them?

HOLBERT — Yes, that's true. But I don't think everyone should. In many cases it would be better for a club or group to stay regional.

BAKER — It's natural, really. Everyone wants to play with the big boys, and in this respect I feel a lot of the old fashioned fun has gone out of the thing.

HOLBERT — Somehow, I feel we have to get away from the three levels — regional, divisional and national. Perhaps two would be sufficient. And it should be according to the region putting on the show.

YOUNG — I keep listening and they say Nocco is not making out with sports car events at Vineland. It's been in this rag recently, so I guess I'm quoting an official source!

HOLBERT — Yes, that's what I hear. He is hurting. But it could also be a matter of being over-raced. They say Nocco is crying the blues, but you can only run just so many events at one course in a year, and stay successful. This is largely why it is tough for anyone, or any group, to decide to build a course today. With the large investment it takes you really can't just build them for road racing.

BAKER — And only decide to use them a couple of times a year.

YOUNG — You guys may think I'm thumping for Reading, but this is one place I feel that could be a great training course. In the East, anyway. It's a combination, and this is something that could build driver experience.

HOLBERT — But, Woody, you've got the problem of setting up the place. After all, it's not a permanent circuit. If they are going to run one event a year, they might as well go for broke and run it as a national, since this is the top, so to speak, right now.

YOUNG — Maybe I said it wrong, but I do think Reading in particular would make a great proving ground.

HOLBERT — It would. But in the same respect we have to get away from these classifications. If SCCA is going to put on an event at Reading, what difference does it make whether it is a national, regional or what-have-you? Right now a national sanction seems to be the thing.

BAKER — I feel that it is purely for the local region's personal prestige. Philadelphia Region in particular has never had a national event, yet it has provided road racing with the greatest selection of talent.

YOUNG — Well, the divisional business. I recall at a national SCCA meeting this matter was

TOP GEAR

brought up by the West Coast because they felt they were being neglected.

BAKER — I for one think they had a legitimate claim!

HOLBERT — Yes, because all the nationals are run in the East.

WOODY — But if they do have a national at Reading, who in the hell is going to come from the West Coast? Forget the idea of naming it a national, I say.

TOP GEAR — The idea of having a national champion for class, to be decided in a runoff between divisional champions, is one which has been mooted recently, and I believe the first event of this nature is going to be held on the West Coast. This is sure to bring a loud squawk from the East Coasters! Possibly the country could be divided into four geographical areas, and develop the area class championship events as a little USRRC. Maybe more areas would be better, six or seven, maybe eight. Then the runoff race could be a big thing each year on one of the top tracks in the country. But the main thing to do would be to circulate it. To get back to the regional and divisional thing. I feel Bruce Jennings is a case in point. Here is a fellow who is happy to stay at the divisional level, and Bruce does not run all that many national events. Only the ones in this area, the East Coast. But he does turn up at all the divisionals and a good many of the regionals.

BAKER — Well, now, Jennings is a guy that just likes to drive. He's perfectly content doing this, and I'm sure he is in it for the fun. If he gets in the points or he finishes high up, that's the frosting on the cake for him.

TOP GEAR — This whole point is mainly a case of driver attitude. So many people feel that they have to try harder, do better and aspire to get into something bigger, better, faster, or whatever. For instance, Woody and Bill, you are ex-racers. Why did you get out of the sport?

BAKER — After setting an MGA altitude record at Vineland coming out of the oval I became financially embarrassed! That was in 1958.

YOUNG — Well, I got too fat to fit into a car! Actually, George Valentine drove my Morgan so damned fast that I was ashamed to ever get into it again? He showed me how to put it into a corner. I really drove too slowly!

HOLBERT — What's a Morgan?

YOUNG — That's enough out of you, young feller!

TOP GEAR — Looking ahead for a moment, what do you gentlemen feel we have to look forward to, in, say, the next five years of racing on the club level?

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BAKER — Power plant resurgence. The recent introduction of American engines into all sorts of chassis is going to make things quite interesting. You're going to find the boys stuffing all sorts of Chevy, Ford and GM engines into anything they can think of, and this will lead to a lot of experimentation. A lot of it will be disastrous, of course, but it should be quite interesting to us bystanders.

TOP GEAR — But this is nothing new. People have been trying to marry Detroit power and European chassis for some years now, with little previous success. It just seems that 1962 and 1963 were the years that things panned out. Why is this?

HOLBERT — We have always had good Detroit engines but we never seemed to have a good enough or strong enough chassis to do the job. The Lister probably had more variety of engines in it than any car before or since, but the Lister's problem is that it never handled properly. Now the newer designs have the road performance, and so it has all worked out. This again is one of the major progress items in recent years.

BAKER — If I had to point at any one thing I'd be inclined to say that the advent of the compact car had as much to do with this as anything else. The GM compacts, for instance, gave us the small three to four liter V8 engines. Then there is the Ford Fairlane unit.

TOP GEAR — Can you say if the Ford organization has learned anything from the Shelby racing program, Bob?

HOLBERT — Well, Ford has put a lot of effort into the project. And in the Lotus-Ford Indianapolis program I know they took those engines apart many times and made many improvements which, in the long run, didn't cost them any more to run in production. I have heard that there are over 20 improvements in the 1964 Fairlane engines due just to the Shelby team lessons.

BAKER — I'll go along with that. Take the recent endurance runs by a team of Comets. That is basically the Fairlane block and components, and they did well enough there.

TOP GEAR — It seems that we are now at the point where our domestic manufacturers are finding out that road racing can pay off in technology improvement. This has been done in Europe for many years. The most outstanding example perhaps, is the Volkswagen torsion bar front suspension. This was taken directly from Porsche's Auto Union cars of the early '30s and scaled down to fit the smaller car.

HOLBERT — Well, my feelings

along these lines are that within five years we will see four, five or six American cars — I mean completely American cars — that will be ready for the street, and be capable of being raced just as are many of today's European cars.

YOUNG — How do you feel the professional American drivers are enjoying getting into the European type of car? Shifting gears, and so on?

HOLBERT — Well, racing is racing, and I'm sure Foyt, Ruby, Ward, Parnelli, Jones, and the rest of them are enjoying the change. If you are a race driver, a professional that is, I don't think it matters what kind of car you drive. There will always be preferences, of course, but the more variation you experience the more of a challenge it becomes. Take Foyt, or Gurney. They have both run all kinds of cars now, especially Gurney.

BAKER — Yes, Gurney drives everything from Formula 1 to stock cars, and does well in all phases.

YOUNG — Bob, did you ever consider running at Indy?

HOLBERT — Too old, Woody! If I had started 20 years ago I believe I may have given it a try, and enjoyed it, just as the Indy drivers are now getting accustomed to changing gears and the new techniques they are learning in today's modified sports cars.

BAKER — There are many drivers now doing the switch. Fireball Roberts ran Le Mans with Bob Grossman, A. J. Foyt did well at Kent, Washington, then at Nassau he really proved that he has what it takes.

HOLBERT — A lot of this has been emphasized in the press, especially when an oval driver enters a major road race to drive a road car. Everyone wants to know what he can do with it. Most of them do very well, considering everything. A driver is a driver, I say. I have a lot of respect for Foyt and others, like him, when they get out on a road course, no question about that.

TOP GEAR — Bob, you say you are too old. Would you feel this way if you were approached by the Langhorne or Trenton people to drive, say, a stock car on the oval, just for the experience?

HOLBERT — Oh, possibly. I would be real interested if I were ten years younger! Especially if this is what I were doing for a living. I'm still racing, as a hobby you might say, because I really enjoy it. It is too late for me to change my whole way of life and try all the other forms of race competition.

BAKER — It's like getting your

kicks. Some people have a ball at the Sunday gymkhana. Then in Arizona the enthusiasts there have dune buggies, which they drive up and down the desert sand dunes.

TOP GEAR — Since sports car racing can be a spectator attraction, many of the people attending our events are comparative novices at understanding the ins and outs of our sport. Do you think the average spectator is influenced by the race driver when he gets out on the highway again?

WOODY — That's probably a loaded question but I'd be interested in listening!

HOLBERT — Well, there are no doubt a few people that are influenced, and always one or two people put a black eye on things for the rest of us. I can imagine after a race, though, some people do put their foot into it just from the enthusiasm they got at the race.

WOODY — Do you think the spectator studies a driver's technique?

HOLBERT — I don't know, I never thought about that.

BAKER — I think they study a driver unconsciously. And of course, they will note the smoother drivers from the others, and subconsciously they will question why this is so.

TOP GEAR — Spectator observance is a funny thing. At the first Vineland divisional of last year I was in the stands for a while and I did overhear a father, who had been there before, brief his young son, who had obviously never been there before. He was telling the kid what the drivers were doing, and I did notice that the people around him were very interested in this since he was at least knowledgeable about the action. He seemed to impart an emotion to the group around him.

HOLBERT — Now this is where a good announcer can make or break the atmosphere at a race. Unfortunately, there are only a few good sports car announcers and you can really tell the good ones from the rest.

YOUNG — Charlie Beidler and myself worked the Reading event last year, and he also handled Vineland recently. I hear he did a good job there. Actually, I work more at hillclimbs than anything else.

HOLBERT — You work more at chit chat, Woody!

YOUNG — No, I insult drivers! As a matter of fact I haven't had a chance to insult you recently, Robert!

TOP GEAR — I suppose you are all aware of recent developments with regard to the plans for a racing plant in or near the Phila-

delphia area. Any comments?

HOLBERT — I think it would be great if the money is available to back such a venture. But that again is one of the problems we went over here a little while back. I do feel we are overracing in some areas of the country. If there is a good road circuit, even in a populated area, you can only expect two or three big events in the year. And they can be costly to put on. Just to buy real estate, of course, and then put in the facilities for sports cars is impractical. There has to be a plan to utilize the ground with other activities more or less all year around.

BAKER — Well, Riverside is an outstanding example of that.

HOLBERT — That's right. They have something going on all the time out there. The track is about 60 miles or so from Los Angeles, about an hour and a quarter driving time. A track in the Delaware Valley would be fine, but for one or two people to go into it could be a risky thing. Sometimes it seems like wishful thinking, and of course the longer it's left to go the more costly it becomes.

YOUNG — Well Watkins Glen is just about the longest-run course in terms of time, and that seems to be a gold mine. Or so I've heard.

HOLBERT — I certainly think it should be a good thing if anything is, yet they are always crying poor. And they have been in the racing business longer than anyone else, more successful with crowds and so on, but they haven't put the money back into the course where at least some of it belongs.

BAKER — The last few times I've been to the Glen I thought things had fallen off.

HOLBERT — Yes, I believe they have, and I still think there is no excuse for it. There are so many other courses coming out nowadays that a promoter just can't afford to sit still.

HOLBERT — From what little I can see, any improvements that were made at the Glen the people up there were forced to do, and I believe that in order to get the Grand Prix a couple of years ago they more or less had to build a so-called pit area which turned out to be nothing. And they still have never made a place to park cars. In my estimation about a thousand dollars would go a long way. But . . .

TOP GEAR — So it seems that whatever way you look at it, from the drivers', the clubs' or the promoters' standpoints, as much comes out of racing as is put into it. Perhaps this is something to remember in the future. Thank you for having been with us to express your views in this Conversation Piece.

The OUTSIDE

WORLD

TOP GEAR



The biggest news from the outside world this month must surely be that concerning the early December meeting in Paris of the CSI, decision-making body of the FIA, which in turn is the governing body of motorsport covering international Grand Prix, sports car and rally competition.

And for 1966 it is to be a 3-liter limit for Formula I. The trend of recent years has been to small-displacement machinery much to the detriment of the sport as far as our European cousins are concerned. The major race events over there have been comparatively poorly attended this past couple of years and the fault of this has been laid at the door of small, uninteresting-performing cars. This is somewhat of a paradox, since these 1½-liter machines have been breaking track records wherever they have run, and there are few absolute records left to the domain of the previous Formula cars when the limit was 2½ liters.

It is also true that the drivers have been interested in seeing an increase in the capacity of the engines, since all claimed that the present cars had to be driven at the limit of their capabilities most of the time, and so there was little margin of power left to fall back on in an emergency. So for 1966, everyone should be happy — except possibly the manufacturers who will now have to develop new engines for the impending changeover. Of the major European manufacturers, perhaps Enzo Ferrari will be the one most to benefit from the 3-liter limit. His line of V12 engines of several sizes just happens to come in a near 3-liter package, and it is certain that the middle of this decade will see a resurgence of the prancing horse.

Certainly one of the benefits to come out of this decision will be the fact that there are several American power units which could be modified down to the 3-liter formula. With this possibility in the offering, it is no long stretch of the imagination to hope that one or two Formula cars of purely American origin will be developed, and so we might see the US racing colors assail the fortress of Grand Prix racing with more than a tongue-in-cheek prayer of success.

Briefly the new formula calls for a limit of 3 liters unsupercharged, or 1½ liters supercharged; use of commercially available fuel will be called for; minimum weight of 1102.3 lbs. will include oil and

water but no fuel. This would seem to indicate that 400 hp. will be a jumping-off point for the 3-liter engines; supercharged designs might hopefully achieve 550 hp. when we remember that the early '50s' BRM V16 design was reported to be developing at least 500 hp. However it may turn out that nary a single engine shop or manufacturer will try the supercharged route, since present-day normally-aspirated design could probably turn out a 3 liter engine with less weight and greater reliability than a blown unit.

Anyway it seems that the weight benefits will go with the big threes; the new cars will be running about 110 pounds heavier than at present, and with almost double the power development they should be spectacularly fast.

One of the detracting points about the present formula is that it is small, quiet, and consequently colorless. With the three liters it should be small, noisy and emotional. Designs similar to the Lotus 29's which appeared here at Indianapolis, Milwaukee and Trenton last year will no doubt be the trend, and these cars could hardly be said to be anything less than exciting, notwithstanding their small weight and size.

The sleeper in the new GP formula proposal is the fact that special consideration has been given to rotary (Wankel-type) and turbine (Rover and Chrysler) engines. These units will also be required to run on commercially available fuels, however there will at first be no restriction on capacity limits. Remember now, the 1963 Le Mans Rover-BRM turbine car which finished 7th, is rated as a 2 liter car; so this writer feels that it is only a matter of time until comparison curbs are put on rotary/turbine power units to equate their performance factors with conventional piston engines. Weight limits will be imposed, but there has been no decision on these at this time.

There is so much about Nassau in this issue that I didn't really have the heart to belabor those of you who were not there, with comment on what went on. But to review my own impressions about the racing (the cocktail parties would be another feature in themselves!) I think my most overwhelming impression was that A. J. Foyt is one hell of a driver. Here is a man who has been a pro in the full sense of the word in whatever he has driven.

Three-time National USAC champion; two-time winner of the fabled Indy 500; midget star; stock car race winner, and so on. And now at the wheel of one of our type of cars this man goes out and bombs the heck out of everyone. In his closing commentary at Nassau Art Peck said A. J. is The Driver's Driver. And that just about sums it up.

Secondary impression felt by myself and a good many others with whom I spoke, was that Tim Mayer, of Dalton, Pa., really drove the race of his career in spotting the little Lotus 23B in with the big machinery, third overall and first under 2 liters. Mayer strategized his way to the top by waiting for his chances and by being ready to take them when he saw them available. Certainly a beautiful job of work done by Tim Mayer. Turning to places on this continent, and in this country, a letter from a cousin of mine who lives in the midwest had news of a very interesting development out in his neck of the woods. A column by Bud Vestal, appearing in the *Grand Rapids Press*, Michigan, I think, outlined an idea proposed by two businessmen, to utilize a series of expressway networks for a long-distance road race. Such roads, with their limited access points could presumably be closed fairly easily and it seems that the feeling is the public would not mind too much. This might be a heck of an idea, because I for one would be interested to know just how fast a turnpike, expressway or what-have-you could be travelled. This probably would have to be run in an extensive urban complex, and it is difficult to see how the spectators would be situated. But the idea has a grain there. . . .

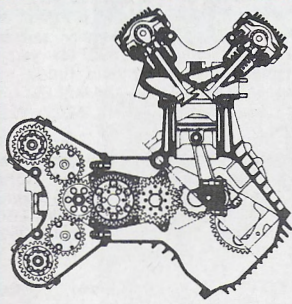
And now for more US manufacturer-participation on the international motoring scene. Chrysler Corp. will field a three-car team of Valiants in this month's Monte Carlo Rally, along with Ford who will enter a three-car Falcon Sprint team. Since Chrysler is now putting the compact Valiant in the com-

petitive arena this may mean an end to the full-size Chrysler cars, the 300's, in national rally competition. Though we hope not, it would mean more to Chrysler to point up the Valiant-sized vehicle in our type of sport. Now if we can be optimistic, maybe they'll run both 300's AND Valiants. . . .

I imagine many of you, as I have, have been asked by unknowing friends if we realized our small economy or sports cars were much more dangerous than say their own big-sized transportation. Taking a naturally defensive stance on this we most likely got into an argument about the pros and cons of large versus small with regard to accident statistics. And neither of us, our unknowing friends or ourselves, really knew if what we claimed was the truth or not. Now, in Hartford, Conn., an auto-injury study is being undertaken to determine which of the two types of cars, large or small, is the more potentially dangerous in accidents. For the purpose of drawing a line here the grouping will be over and under 300 pounds. This, possibly, would seem to work a hardship on domestic compacts such as the Corvairs, Falcons, Ramblers, and others, so it may be that the directors of this study will group the cars more specifically into make, or more weight subdivisions. I think horsepower should be taken into consideration, because in certain cases lack of power has been a contributing factor to serious accidents. A panel of physicians will survey some 1200 previous accidents involving cars of all sizes and findings of this survey will be made public at a later date.

The final word for this month is that Chevrolet may say they are out of the racing picture, and it would only be true in that they do not actively campaign under their own signature. But down there in Nassau the Mecum Team were served by none other than Corvette inspiration - man Zora Arkus-Dunton. Just shows you can't believe everything you're told, now, does it?

—O.H.C.



TECH SPECS

If you have any technical questions which you would like our panel to answer, send them to TOP GEAR, Technical Dept., Box 482, Worminster, Pa.

Instead of answering questions this month, we have eight assorted bits of information, some of which you're bound to find useful. We hope!

1. The problem of keeping wire wheels looking neat requires considerable work. Gunk, an old toothbrush, and patience will render the wheels fit for painting. It isn't necessary to demount the tire to paint a wheel if the following trick is used. Get a port-a-wall one inch larger than the rim size of the wheel to be painted (for example, get a 16" port-a-wall if you're painting 15" wheels). When the wheel is clean and ready to paint, tuck the port-a-wall in around the edges of the still inflated tire. Tedious masking is avoided and a neat job will result by using this trick. Regular floor wax will shine up black sidewall tires; put a seal on the job and paint the "Michelin X" or "Goodyear" with a bitty brush.
2. If you are forgetful about getting gas, an auxiliary container in the trunk will save you long trudges through the night. Most satisfactory is an empty plastic Chlorox bottle, half- or full gallon size. We've been using the same one for over a year without any sign of deterioration.
3. About the most effective stuff around to clean carb parts is acetone. It is readily available and really cuts carbon and gasoline deposits from aluminum parts. Beware of prolonged inhalation of the vapors or extended contact with the skin.
4. An empty plastic squeeze bottle, such as deodorant comes in, filled with Windex makes a handy, unbreakable container for windshield cleaner. Carried in the door pocket or glove compartment, it will encourage you to clean the windshield when it needs it rather than waiting for the next gas station. Along with some paper towels, the bottle will be handy at the races for unsmearing grimy race car windscreens.

5. MGA Owners — We've met three different MGA owners who claim that by merely adding 1/2" blocks under their car's seat their driving comfort improved immensely. The seat layout on an MGA allows this to be done quite easily while retaining the fore-and-aft seat adjustment.
6. TR-2 & 3 Owners — Should you become involved in an accident, even a minor one, your passenger will thank you for having removed that chrome grab rail from the dashboard on the right side. This handy item is so placed to squarely catch the passenger in the teeth as he goes forward into the dash! It takes but two minutes to remove this hazard; a considerably longer period is usually required for the average passenger to grow in new teeth.
7. Jaguar Owners—If you have an XK-120, 140 or Mark VII with disc wheels, and would like to change over to 15" rims, Buick Special ('55-'57) will bolt right on. Since this wheel is wider than the Jag wheel, you won't be able to fit fender skirts, but according to what we've heard, the cars handle better as a result of the change. You may encounter fender clearance problems on the sports models, where the springs are often broken or sagging.
8. English sports car owners in general — If your Healy-4, Morgan, MGA, Jaguar, etc. is having bothers with the dual 6-volt battery arrangement, seriously consider replacement with a single 12-volt unit. Often a single 12-volt of adequate capacity will fit where one of the 6-volt units was previously, with only minor bracket changes. Even if relocation to the trunk is required (as in the case of the Healy-4), the expense is more than justified in terms of increased reliability. While you are at it, scrap those English cap-type battery terminals and replace with American-style clamps. These little English horrors are the cause of at least the electrical problems in cars so equipped.

PEN-JER-DEL Datebook

JANUARY

- 19—Ice Races, Lake Stillwater, Poconos, Pa. Sprints, 5 Classes. (717) 646-2727. (12 Noon.)
- 24-26—Abominable Snowman Rally: SCCA National.
- 25—RTMC 10th Annual Allnighter Rally. Connie Goslin (215) EL 6-1517.
- 26—Ice Races, Lake Stillwater, Poconos, Pa. Four-Hour GP of Endurance. (717) 646-2727. (12 Noon.)

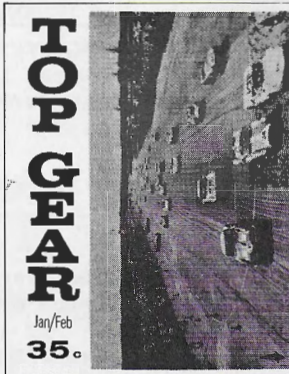
FEBRUARY

- 2—Ice Races, Lake Stillwater, Poconos, Pa. Deep Freeze Little Le Mans and Sprints. 11 a.m. start. (717) 646-2727.
- 8—JSCC Monte Carlo Rally. Bob Scheurle (201) 687-3274 or Vic Franco (201) DE 4-0941. (Jersey Council #1.)
- 9—VFMC Shortest Distance Rally. Jim Abernethy (215) HI 6-6138.
- 16—BMC Valentine Rally. George Alderman (302) WY 8-8672. (Seat belts mandatory) EPSCC Little Alpine Rally. Contact unknown. Daytona FIA/GT Races.
- 23—Phila. R.-SCCA Gvmkhana. Jack Thompson (215) TU4-1852. (First of a new championship series.) BLMC Challenger II Rally. Tom Rees (215) 822-9674. NJ R.-SCCA MMMR Rally. Mary Anne Bradley (201) 748-1164.

MARCH

- 1—SJ R.-SCCA March Lion Rally. Jean Steagall (609) 663-6916. (PRCA #1.) USRRR #1 — Augusta, Ga.
- 8—VFMC Economy Rally. Jim Abernethy (215) HI 6-6138.
- 15—BMC Shad Moon Rally. George Alderman (302) WY 8-8672. (PRCA #2.) BSCC Twist Rally. Paul Ely (215) 348-5320.
- 21—Sebring 12 Hour GP of Endurance.
- 21-22—Phila. R.-SCCA Driver's School. Horace Ott (215) OS 5-7804.
- 22—RTMC Rally. Jim Ridenour (215) NI 4-8575. DVSCC March Hare Rally. Gerry Donovan (302) 736-6549. NFSCC Rally. Bob Chambers (609) 877-8235.

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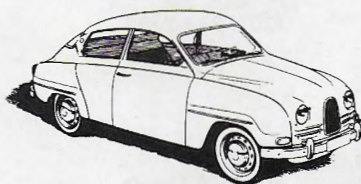
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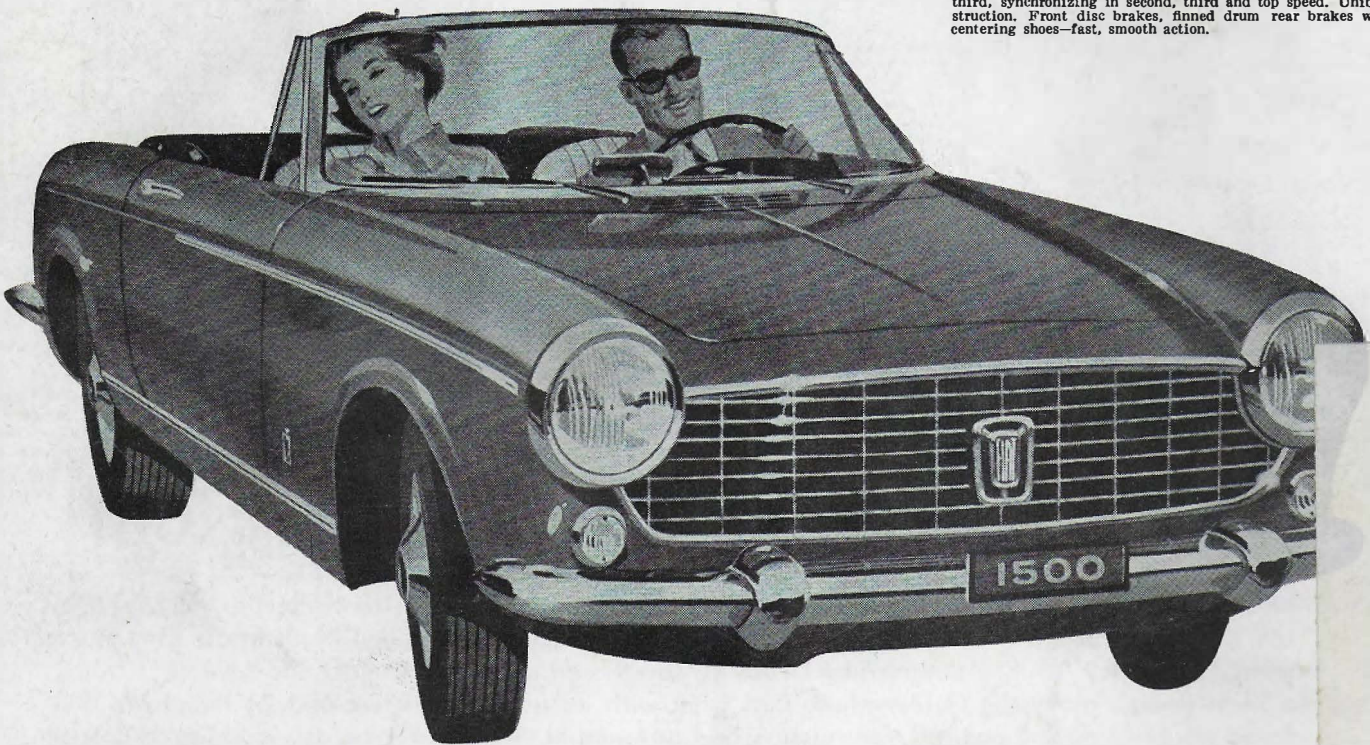
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