



PIT SIGNALS



LATE BRAKING NEWS FOR VARAC VINTAGE RACERS - April, 2020 - JEREMY SALE



With everything on hold due to the circumstances we find ourselves in, I found myself posting photos I had taken in the sixties at Mosport on the "Remembering Mosport" website. This led to a (virtual) encounter with Micheal Hunt. The photo above is one of his. He has kindly consented to letting me include some of his really evocative scenes captured, as they say, "back in the day". Also included in this issue is a remembrance of Higgs Murphy by Gary Magwood, plus some Stirling Moss encounters with VARAC, some snippets from Sebring 2020 and a few other odds and ends. I hope you enjoy the issue, you really don't have that much else to do after all....

Cheers and stay safe! Jeremy Sale.

2020 Race Medicals

Another one of the many impacts of this year's government restrictions is that drivers are not able to obtain current race medicals. In normal times, a new medical form is required as follows for a CASC-OR regional competition license:

2.2 MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Drivers shall submit the report of a medical examination performed by a medical practitioner at the time of the initial application for a driver's competition licence. Medical examination reports shall be submitted every five (5) years for drivers ages 15-35; every two (2) years for drivers ages 36-59; and every year for drivers age sixty (60) plus. The medical reports shall certify the applicant to be medically fit to drive a car in speed events. In years not requiring a medical examination, drivers shall submit a self-declaration form attesting to their physical and mental fitness to participate in motorsports.

For the 2020 season **while the government restrictions remain in place**, a competitor that requires a new medical examination, but is unable to obtain one due to the restrictions, may submit a self declaration attesting to their medical fitness, with an undertaking to provide the required medical form as soon as the restrictions are lifted. This may only be done for renewals – a driver must have had a valid medical on file for the 2019 season in order to self-declare in 2020. New racers may not self declare.

The requirements for a VMC license are somewhat different. From the VMC medical form:

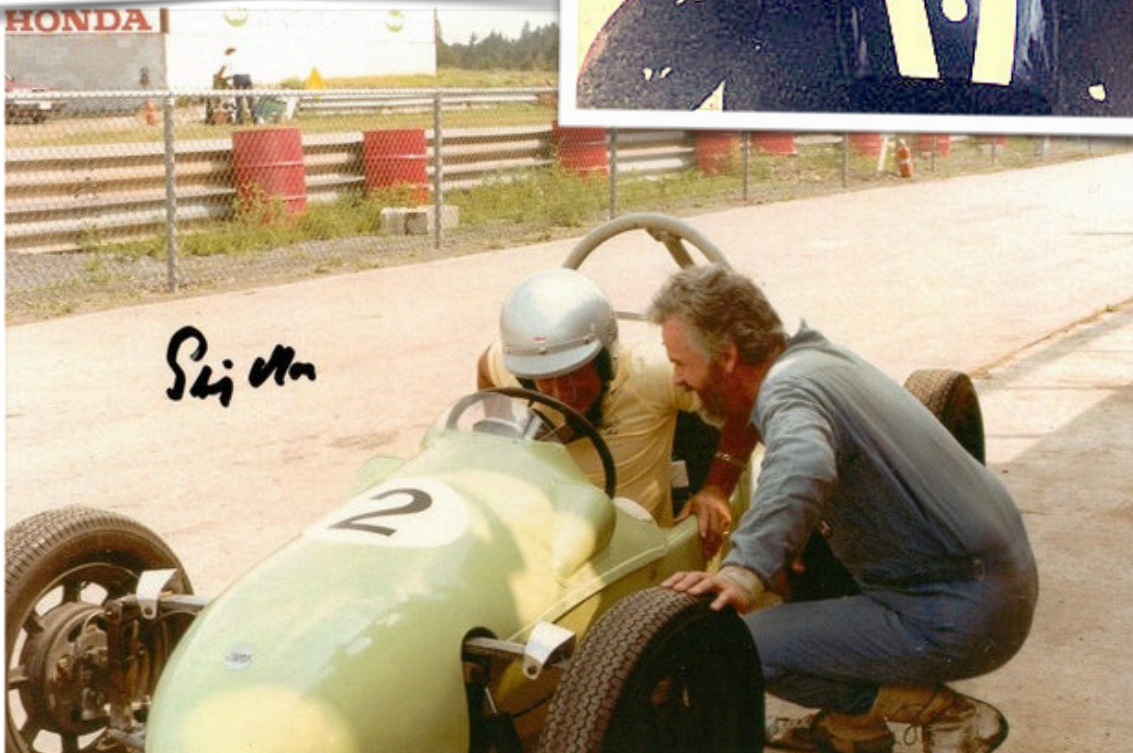
If you are between 18 and 35 years of age a physical examination is required every 5 years, 36 and older every 2 years.

If you are not sure if you require a new medical for 2020 please contact Deb in the CASC-OR office or Ivan Samila, the VARAC Membership Director.

Sir Stirling Moss and VARAC

The late Sir Stirling Moss spent time with VARAC at both Shannonville and Mosport, promoting vintage racing. On this page: (1) Moss in Roger Fountain's Cooper Formula Junior, chatting to Phil Lamont at Mosport. (2) Phil and Moss in the paddock. Bottom: Phil Lamont says he and Moss "shared a laugh at Shannonville about the "stimulating" effect of Phil's Norton 500cc single vibrations-some may remember "magic finger" beds offered in no-tell motels..."

2



Close Encounters

By Alain Raymond

Self-employed and teleworking from anywhere with an Internet connection has been for me the perfect recipe for Close Encounters of the Pleasant Kind.

Amelia Island Concours d'Élégance, 2007 - Standing in line to pay for a book. Turning around, I see this older man of rather short stature. Is it... is it him? The only motorcycle and F1 world champion? John Surtees? "Excuse me, Sir John, may I trouble you for an autograph?" "No, trouble at all, young man". And he graciously signed my cap with a wide smile and a handshake. "Young man"...he made my day!



Sir John Surtees

Cavalino Classic Concorso d'Eleganza, 2010

Great event to attend if you're wintering in Florida. And why not write about it? It pays for the expenses. Donning a white GAP baseball cap, I see Andrea Zagato walking in the crowd. "Buongiorno Signor Zagato, may I have a few minutes for an interview for French weekly *La Vie de l'Auto*?" "Si, I am free now". Quick, my notepad. We strike an interesting conversation



Andrea Zagato and the 1956 Ferrari 250 GT Zagato

lasting some fifteen minutes and then I conclude with two questions: "Signor Zagato, what do you think of modern car design?" "Look around you...we all drive washing machines...They all look alike; they do what they are supposed to do but they have no soul. Do you know anyone in love with his washing machine?" OK... last question: "Putting aside Zagato creations, if there was only one car you could keep in your garage, which one would it be?" "The Jaguar E-Type". Coming from an Italian master, could there be a better compliment?

Alain Raymond

Photos From Back In The Day

Michael Hunt is a racing enthusiast who documented Canadian racing back in the day. I made contact with him recently and we are publishing some of his photos and his story here for you. Some we have ID for, some not. Enjoy!



“I’m just an amateur photographer, never had any training. I had a very small camera and didn’t know anything about depth of field and all that stuff. I took everything at about 100 speed at 5.6 with a 50 mm lens. I hope you enjoy the photos!”

Michael Hunt

Below:

A.J.Foyt and Pedro Rodriguez at Mosport.



Photos From Back In The Day

By Michael Hunt

“When I came to Canada my first job was with Eaton’s China Department. In 1951 I got a job with the Toronto Star as an office boy and eventually worked my way up into the accounting department. While I was with the Star I got to know all the departments very well. They knew I was interested in racing, so they used to save photographs of car races and events for me.



I started taking photos at Mosport and Harewood. As you can see here, not all racing turns out well!

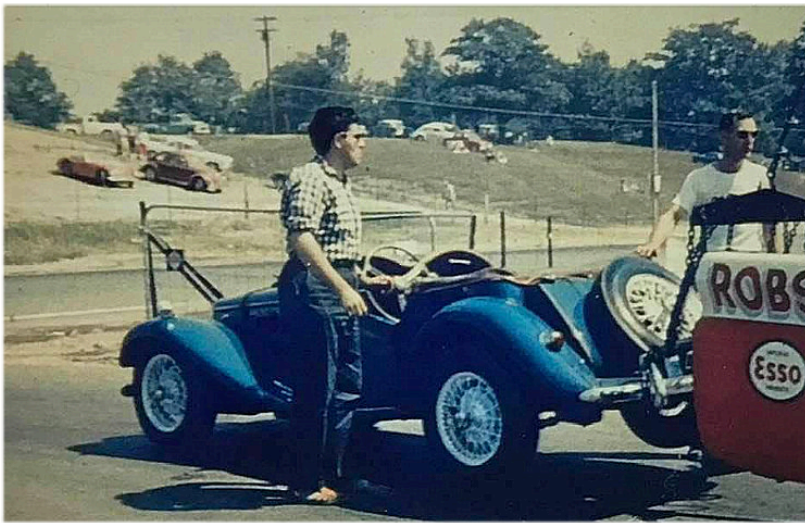
I grew up in England in the village of Bray, which was also the home of Stirling Moss. However, I didn't get to meet him until years later in Canada! “



Photos from back in the day...



"I borrowed this car to do a driving skill test at Mosport and broke the rear axle..."



"Racing my MGTD at Harewood."



"I joined the British Empire Motor Club in 1951 and enjoyed marshalling events like hill climbs and races at Harewood and Mosport. I also used to do a lot of rallying in the early 50s where I met my friend Bill Moffet, who had a 1953 MGTD. I had a 1952 MGTD. In 1955 Bill Moffet met a representative of the Nuffield Group, who asked if we would be interested in starting an MG Car Club. This we did in June, 1955, at Edenvale race track. We managed to sign up about 90 people and this is how the club started. At the moment it has about 300 members. I am the only continuous member from the beginning, being member number two!"

I took most of my photos with this little camera below, the size of a can of beans. 50mm @100, no zoom or telephoto..."



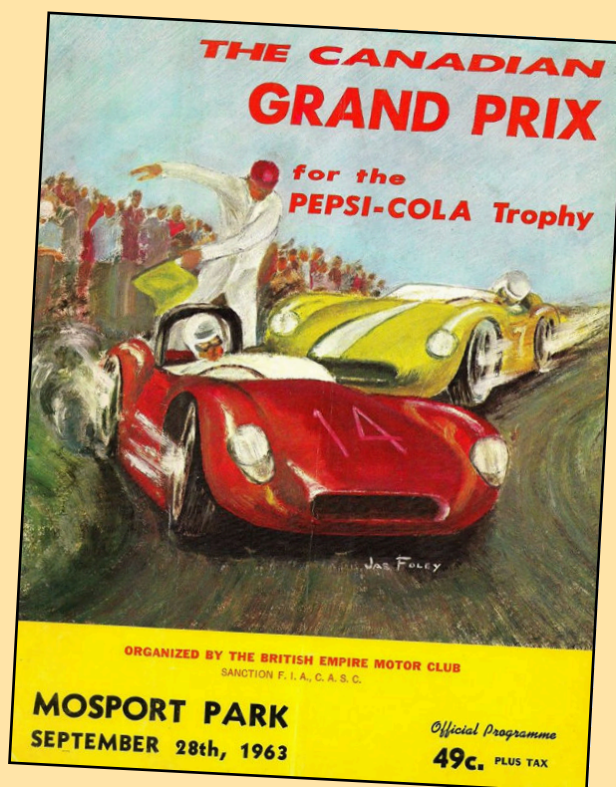
The Canadian Grand Prix For The Pepsi-Cola Trophy

Michael Hunt was present at the event on the poster at right and took some intriguing photos on that occasion and others, shown on the following pages. Of course the earlier Canadian Grands Prix were not F1 races, as we all know, Grand Prix just means Big Prize.

There were high-quality entries for the GP at Mosport, September 26th, 1963. Ferrari entries included England's John Surtees, in his first year as a Ferrari F1 driver, with 23-year-old Mexican Pedro Rodriguez, both in 250P's, plus a Ferrari Dino 268 SP for Lorenzo Bandini. Wayne Burnett brought his aging Testa Rossa and Ian Walker had entered a Lotus 23B for Graham Hill and a Brabham BT8 for Frank Gardner in the Under Two Litre Class. In the GT class there were Ferrari GTOs for Grant Clark, Bob Grossman, Mike Gammino and one in green for England's David Piper. GT opposition included Cobras in the hands of Ken Miles, Bob Johnston, and Canadian Eppie Wietzes.

Practice was a bit different in that Canada Track & Traffic reported "practice sessions let everyone out at the same time, so for several hours sedans, production sports cars, GTs and sports racing machines mixed it up..." I asked Ross de St. Croix about this, he told Pit Signals "That was the case in many race events. Lots of cars, so why not run at the same time? Gave us all lots of experience with cars of different performance. Sometimes it let us catch up with cars of a different class but lacked in handling capabilities. It was fun anyway!"

There was some attrition in practice. Ross de St Croix, says "We broke the cam shaft in my Lola 1100 in practice, even though qualifying for the start. We gave a thought to going to the grid, taking the flag and thus getting starting money, which was all of \$200. Not bad money for those days. The car ran but we didn't know what the problem was. Better judgement prevailed and we went home after the race to find out the cam was gone. Popped in a new one and Bob's your uncle and it ran fine. That finished the season for us, however."





Above, Englishman David Piper's GTO finished third in the GT class.

Others who did not make the start included John Cannon's Comstock EXP, which blew its engine in practice and dumped a trail of oil. John Cox in his Speedwell Special slid on the oil into the embankment and thus out of the race. The spare Cobra engine for the Comstock EXP was instead put into the Falcon Sprint of Jerry Polivka, who finally beat the Minis, winning the sedan race over Grant Clark's incredibly quick Mini.

Eppie Wietzes in a Comstock Cobra won the production sports car race ahead of Dave Billes, Corvette, and Al Pease in his very quick MGB, (which occasionally beat the Cobras, but not on this occasion).

Two VARAC members were entered that weekend in the Formula Junior race, Walt MacKay in his Lotus 18 and John Greenwood, who was entered in a "Waddington" "I barely remember the car", says John. "It was a "trade in" for a new TVR and Dick Shelton wanted the car exposed to the race crowd so he asked me to race it. It was not a bad car but it *badly* needed alignment work. Fortunately the car overheated, and I was happy to bring it into the pits before race end. I hadn't sat in the car before that weekend; it scared the hell out of me. The other scary moment was in practice when I was passed either side by a couple of Ferraris going at a heck of a lick!"

A crowd of just under 30,000 watched the start of the feature race as Rodriguez took the early lead over Surtees. When it was all over the finishing order was Rodriguez, with Hill second, and Canadian Denny Coad's Lotus 19 in third. Eppie Weitzes, Comstock Cobra, battled the Ken Miles Cobra for the GT class and they finished first and second with the Canadian driver prevailing.



Above, Surtees, Ferrari 250P. Below, Lorenzo Bandini's Ferrari Dino 268SP





On the following pages are more photos by Michael Hunt taken at various events at Mosport. Above, the Ian Walker entered Loti and Comstock Cortina. Below right, Graham Hill finished less then two seconds behind Rodriguez in the Canadian Grand Prix. Below is Jim Clark, also photographed at Mosport.





Above, Pedro Rodriguez brought his Ferrari 250P home first in the 1963 Canadian Grand Prix.

Right: Lola GT Mk6

Below: Bob Hurt's Ferrari 250 TR

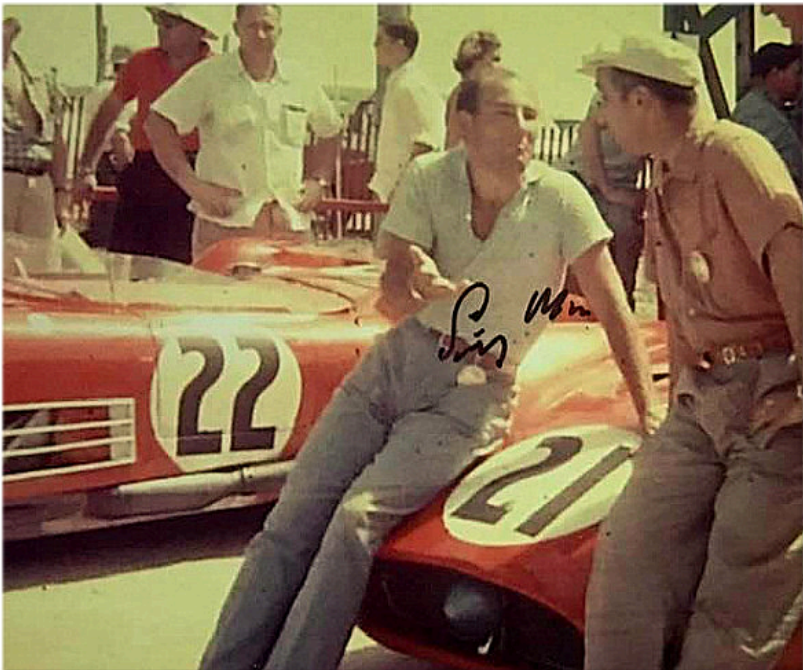


Michael Hunt at Sebring...

“As I mentioned I grew up in Bray, England, the home of Stirling Moss. I didn’t ever meet him until years later at a reception at the Royal York Hotel. It was an MG Car Club event to recognize Moss and his exploits in an MG at the Bonneville Salt Flats. Anyway, Moss and I had a good discussion about our village and when I told him I was hoping to go to the Sebring 12 Hour race he said to come and see him there!”

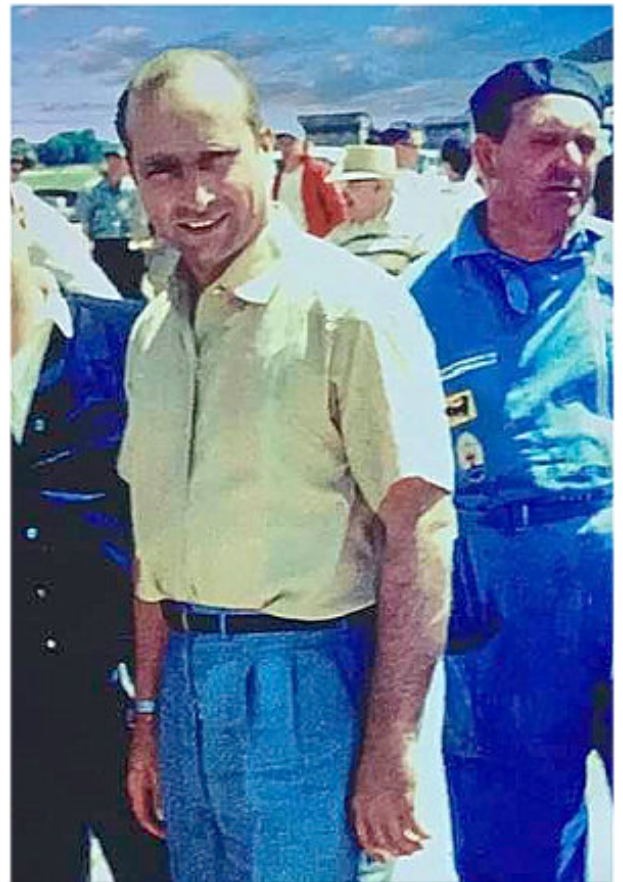


“The Star sports editor, Milt Dunnell subsequently got me a working press photographer pass. At Sebring my new friend Moss (left) introduced me to a number of the drivers, so I had a marvellous time, photographing the cars and drivers and meeting people like Mike Hawthorn and his co-driver, Ivor Bueb.”



Fangio, right, and Jean Behra won the 1957 Sebring race in a Maserati 450S.

The Maseratis (above) of Salvadori/Shelby, #21, and the #22 car of Bonnier/Scarlatti did not finish. Moss and Harry Schell in a Maserati finished second with Hawthorn and Bueb third in a D-Type Jaguar.



Above, the great Juan Fangio.

2020 SVRA Sebring Vintage Classic

by Dave Good with photos by Richard Coburn

Or, another appropriate title, The Last Vintage Race! Just kidding...we all hope we'll be out there burning up tires and race fuel later in the season. SVRA held their annual Sebring Speed Tour Thursday, Feb 27-Sunday Mar 1st.



Sebring is about 150 kms south of Orlando, a 2260 km haul from my place in Caledon. We left Mon afternoon, stayed over with friends in Buffalo area, enjoyed a few wings Monday evening and hit the road early Tuesday am. We overnighted in SC and dropped the trailer at the

track Wednesday pm.

Travelling with me as “crew” (I put this in parenthesis since there was a lot of beer drinking and lawn chair time involved) were the “Chief”, John Burgess, well known to MG owners and racers, and Bob Spaulding, crew chief for an ex SVRA racer out of Buffalo area.

The drive down was highlighted by being pulled over by what we now refer to as “The Citrus Police”. John (the criminal) was driving at the time and upon crossing into Florida we were chased down by what we thought was State Police. “Do you know why you were stopped, Sir?” “No”. Well it turns out this “official” was with the Florida agricultural control agency and any enclosed trailer entering (or leaving) Florida is supposed to stop at the Agricultural checkpoint as you enter the state. So after a lecture about the sanctity of Florida agriculture and a long wait as he sat in his cruiser and checked whatever, he “gave us a break” and only issued us a citation. That served as a good story over beers with fellow racers at the track!

The track itself is probably the most historic road circuit in NA. It has been running road races since 1950. It was the site of the first F1 Grand Prix in NA in the late 50's but is best known to road racing fans for the 12-hour endurance race for sports cars. It's certainly awe inspiring to be on same ground and track as some of our heroes and idols from the past. And sad for us fans of 60's Canadian motorsport to recall the tragedy and death of BC's Bob McLean in 1966 with Comstock's effort at Sebring, in their part in the Ford v Ferrari saga.

The track is 3.74 miles with 17 corners. It is rough and patchy, so the car will "hop" going through most corners. Being an airport circuit it is flat and lacks orientation points so it takes a few sessions to learn. Its most famous feature is corner 17, a blind, sweeping 180, at the end of the long back straight- it has rough patches that will throw the car "outside"... and possibly into the tire wall. Very hard to get it fast and right in a weekend.

Thursday was an optional test day, which I didn't participate in. In hindsight, my next time here, I'll do this test day—as mentioned with the length of the track, the number of corners and its flat nature, it's hard to "learn/remember" the track and to get into a good smooth racing rhythm—the extra day would be well spent.

So, Thursday was setup and chill out day after the long haul and stress of the "Citrus Police" incident. Weather was clear but cool for Florida, single digit C during the night and low teens during the day—but better than home! Our plans for chilling out got sidetracked when our MGA friend, Dave Nicholas, engaged us in troubleshooting his LSD. He had been having some real scary moments in that the car would just 'snap' spin on him—at the Glen last fall this put him into the wall. He had a test process from Quaife to test the torque that the LSD would "open" at and to ensure each side was equal. After performing the test with uncertain results we pulled the dif. Upon removing and inspecting the diff we found that the bolting of the LSD pack to crown wheel was failing to the extent that there were loose bolt bits in the bottom of the housing, most likely jamming the gearing randomly and causing the snap spins! We put in a spare old locker (Studebaker) that Dave had and problem solved!

Friday was Driver's Meeting, Practice and Qualifying. Weather was like Thursday, cool, clear and sunny. David Holmes came down from his winter "digs" in Lakeland to help crew and he brought his immaculate MGTF for the car show. Also, thanks to VARAC member Jamie Shelton for dropping by and wishing us the best.



Our race group was made up of SVRA groups 1, 2, 3 and 4; pretty wide range of cars from Travis Engen's Lotus 23B, MGA's, MGB's, early Vettes, 356's FV's, FF's and some very quick SCCA based Spridgets (and yes-they definitely allow 1275's!). My practice session was basically relearning the circuit and heat cycling a new pair of Hoosiers. Afternoon qualifying was fine- a bit of a dice with a B but still in the "Ok, where am I now?" phase of relearning the track.

As mentioned, this event, like many SVRA events, is run together with the Trans-Am racing group which includes the modern cars as well as the Historic Trans Am Reunion for the cars from the "golden" era of SCCA Trans Am, 66-72. It is very cool to be up close and to watch race cars such as Penske/Donohue Camaro's, Penske/Donohue Javelin, Bud Moore Mustang's, Sam Posey Challenger, etc.



Saturday was clear and sunny-a little warmer but still more duct tape on the grill than we're used to in Florida. Put together a reasonable qualifying time in the am and held my own in the afternoon race. The car ran well, no issues. All in all, a good race day and a good spring day in the Florida sun.

The feature race was Sunday morning. Similar weather, again my car ran well. Set my best lap time and raced a few others, (just got to "go deeper into 17!") but looking at my notes from earlier years I say that to myself every time I race at Sebring! No real car issues, some good times and new stories to tell—so, a great race weekend!

In hindsight I'm pretty grateful to have run this weekend—certainly at the time we knew of the coronavirus but it wasn't at all at the forefront that it became within a week of getting home. We were lucky to get in a great race weekend, some time in the spring in Florida and get home safe and healthy!

Also, in hindsight, knowing this may be the last race (for awhile anyway) maybe I should have raced in the reckless, daring manner that we saw in the race scenes from the movie "On the Beach" that was recently posted on the chat line—but then again, there are those who know my racing and would say—"Could you tell the difference?"

Take care, be safe—see you at the track soon! Dave Good.

Please allow me to introduce myself.....

Chris Creighton

Christopher Creighton (aka Chrustopher Crouton), began vintage racing with his friend, Geoff Layne in 2004, when he turned 50. They raced Geoff's 1965 Alfa Romeo Giulia Spider for a number of years—sharing the drive, until Geoff decided to sell the car. With no other racing options available, Crouton began the conversion of his beloved GTV, Fil into a full-time vintage race car. A decade later, the transition continues.



Crouton has been in love with Alfas since a first, life-changing encounter in the Mosport paddock when he was 15. He has owned 4 of the cars and along with race car Fil, he is preparing Luci, a 1975 Alfa Giulia Nuova Super for life on the streets.

Perhaps the highlight of Crouton's racing was participation in "Alfas at the Glen" in 2015 and his most memorable moment from the weekend was when he had his doors blown off by a simultaneous pass of a 1968, Tipo 33 Daytona on one side and Peter Gibbon's P3 on the other while hurtling toward the 'Bus Stop'. He says "I was so thrilled I almost drove straight through the corner!"



Photo Credit Richard Coburn, Coburnpix

Higgs Murphy by Gary Magwood



“Higgs Murphy, (left) racer, mechanic and log/timber frame builder died late February in Orillia. In true Higgs' style he opted for MAiD. He had no intention of lingering around and deteriorating having been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. It was a most dignified way to die, but the 10 friends and relatives in attendance were all laughing together as we related Higgs' stories right until the end.”

“We met in 1966 when he was starting an apprenticeship at Reputation Tuning on Malley Road in Scarborough. I was a detail guy for REDeX and our office occupied the front of Reptune's shop where I kept my MGB. Higgs expressed interest in helping me with the preparation. He made it fly.”

“When I was approached by mechanic and BP Station lessee John Dobbins to manage the garage when he left to prepare the McLaren M2B that John Cannon was campaigning in the CanAm Series, Higgs and I jumped at the chance. When John Dobbins returned after only one race, Higgs took over the preparation for Cannon who subsequently surprised the Can-Am world with a win at Laguna Seca in 1968 with an engine Higgs built for him after hours while working for Bartz Engine Development in Van Nuys, Calif. Cannon's car was wicked fast in a straight line and blew off Bruce



Higgs Murphy and Gary Magwood

McLaren on the back straight at Riverside. Al Bartz built many of the engines used by top CanAm teams.

But Higgs was bound and determined to become a racing driver by getting his license in a hydroelastic Mini. He was quite a sight bouncing around Mosport at a great rate of knots. Next was a Hawke DL2b in which he managed to scare the hell out of the FF brigade. He later teamed up with Brian Stewart and drove a variety of FFs and Super Vees. Racing eventually lost its lustre due to the inevitable lack of funds.



In a switch of immense proportions, he took his mechanical and fabricating skills into the world of log and timber frame building. For many years he travelled across Canada and even several European countries building and teaching those skills. He was still active until the diagnosis of brain cancer a few months ago slowed him down a bit. Check out some of his log work on his FB page.

He was a great friend and an inspiration for over 47 years and I'll miss his self-effacing laugh, sense of humour and quick wit.

Gary Magwood





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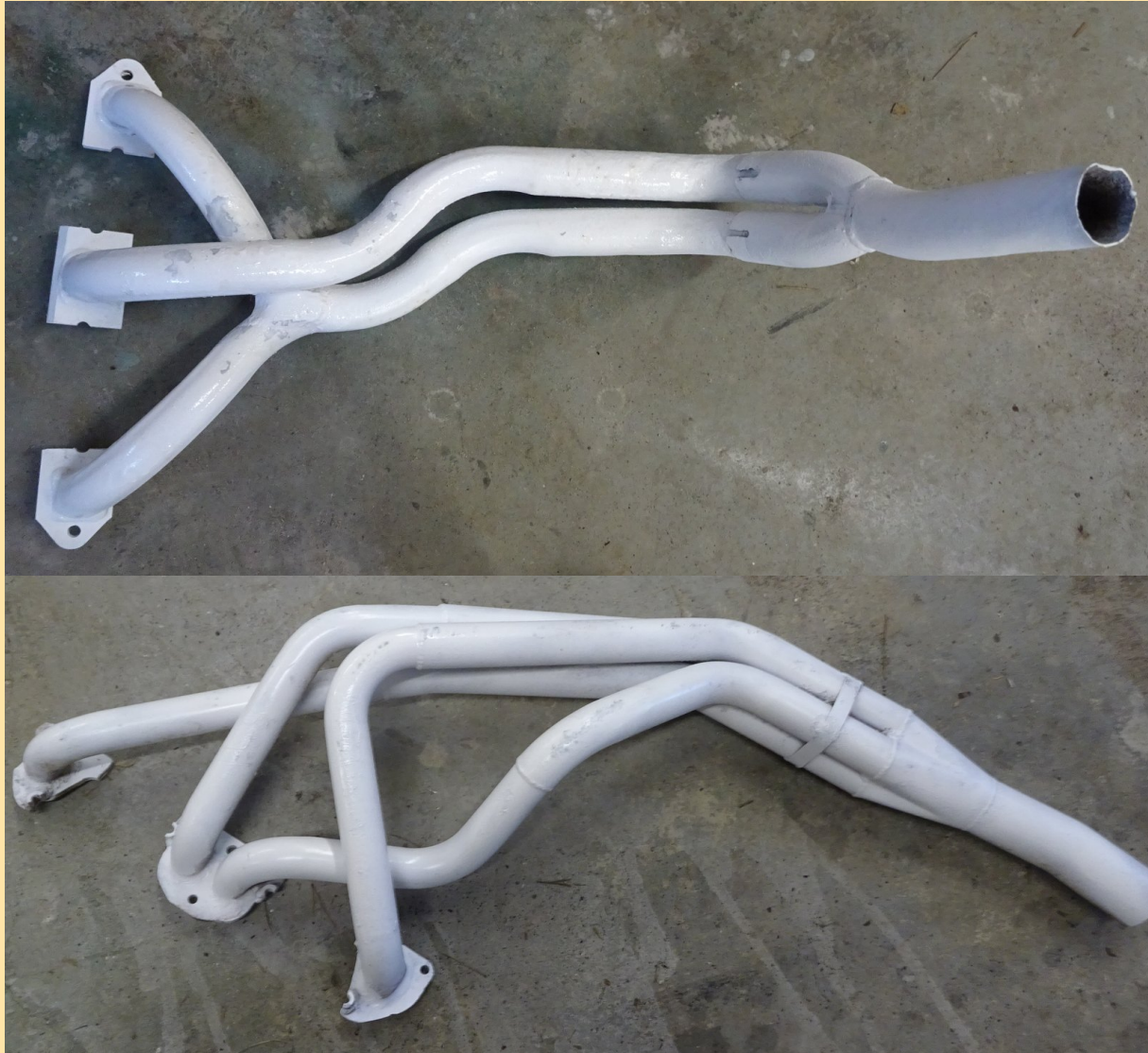
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1	3	5
2	4	

Can you figure out the pattern above? One problem.

The answer isn't 6.

Answer on next page.



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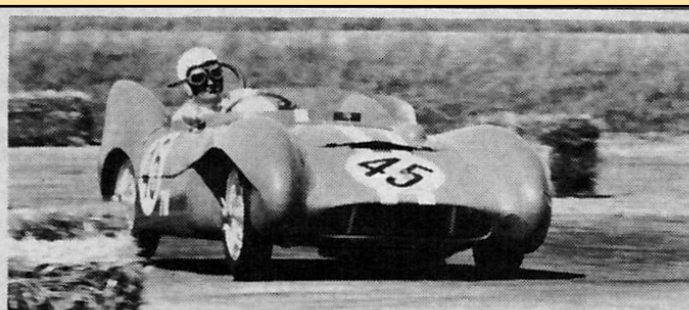
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