



June 2012



PIT SIGNALS

LATE BRAKING NEWS FOR THE VARAC VINTAGE RACER - BY JEREMY SALE



Dave Good reports from Sebring!



Shannonville shenanigans

Inside!
The MGB turns 50!



Shannonville!
B.E.M.C.!
Summit Point!

Many thanks to Vic Henderson, Richard Coburn, Diane Dale, Doug Switzer, David Holmes, Paul Denbow and Kevin Young for all the great photos!

Dave Good reports from Sebring...

2012 is the 50th anniversary of the last MGA factory effort at the Sebring 12 hour. Sebring A's were honoured at the 12 hour event in March as well as at Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance the weekend ahead of the 12 hour. Along with an SVRA Sebring race weekend proceeding these two events, this seemed like a great opening to the season for a few of us MG guys. As such, David Holmes (VARAC MGA 137, myself (VARAC MGA 37) and Brian McKie (SVRA MGB 39) trailed down to Florida (1480 miles Caledon-Sebring) late February for the first weekend of racing, March 1-4.

We arrived in Sebring to great weather, 85-90 degrees F and sunny, as it turned out, the same as back north.



David Holmes, MGA # 137

We corralled outside the track (above right) with a lot of other early arrivers for track entry late Wednesday afternoon. That's David Holmes on the left, myself at centre, and Brian McKie at right. Several of the 12 hour participant teams were practicing that day and we got to watch them – in particular we got an appreciation of the infamous bumps or moguls in turn 17!

Track entry late Wednesday afternoon turned out to be some of the most competitive jockeying for position we encountered on the whole trip! This mass movement from the "corral" to the paddock was similar to a NASCAR event if they had a standing start and raced trucks and trailers! While waiting we learned the motivation behind this- you definitely want in early to get on the concrete- there's fire-ants in that there grass! In a more serious vein, it was a real honour to be at his facility with so much history and legacy-60 years of world-class endurance racing with the names of past winning drivers and marques displayed prominently throughout.

More from Sebring...



Thursday afternoon SVRA organized a race car parade into downtown Sebring lead by a the local police- it was clear that the cop leading the parade certainly had some racing aspirations! Above David Holmes, MGA # 137 heads into town!. The parade culminated in a car show at the downtown park circle and a “beer and brats” party- very well attended by the townspeople.

Below: I enjoyed the famous Sebring track, despite all the bumps!



More from Sebring...

For the few that may not know Sebring's background, it originated as a USAAF WW II aircrew training base- at the height of operations there were 120 B17's at the base! Post WWII Sebring became one of the early sports car racing sites in North America, focusing primarily of endurance racing (evolving into the Sebring 12 Hour), although the first US Formula One Grand Prix was run there in 1959. For us Canadian racing fans of the 60's there still sadness associated with the memories of the 1966 death of Canadian Champion Bob McLean in a Comstock Ford GT40. The track itself is flat (airbase origin), BUMPY- a lot of surface transitions and with 17 corners over 3.7 miles somewhat difficult to learn, but we found as we gained track time, you can eventually develop a nice rhythm. Key track stats: 3.7 miles, 17 corners and two shower stalls! The showers are probably not USAAF issue, but seem close- David Holmes says he won't complain about the Mosport showers again!

The racing was well organized with good track time though numerous cars were victims of the bumpy surface- David and Brian lost exhaust system pieces but with certain innovation were able to recover dropped pieces. My car suffered from a rear end failure and starter issues. Luckily, Bill Treffert, a prominent US MGA racer, lent me a spare "pumpkin" and I was back racing by the next AM. (My daughter, in calls to home kept reminding me -"put on sunscreen, Dad" -my response was that there was no need 'caus I was spending all my time under the car!)

Special thanks to VARAC members Gord Ballantine, Steve O'Connell and Malcolm Taylor who helped us during our racing, dining and partying efforts!

The following weekend was the very prestigious Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. Just an amazing event! As we entered the fairway where the cars were displayed we had to yield to Vic Elford driving in a Porsche 908 he had raced, it's now owned by Jerry Seinfeld! And by the way, he was driving to a group display of Vic Elford driven cars that included the sucker Chaparral 2J , a few Porsche 907's and 908's and a 917!



Amelia Island

As mentioned, racing Sebring MGA's were celebrated as the anniversary of their last participation at Sebring, eight cars with racing heritage were displayed-one from Australia that was including was doing a driving tour of the US. Several of these A's competed during the vintage portion of the 12-hour event the next week at Sebring. We left Amelia with sore jaws from walking around all day with our mouths hanging open!

More from Sebring...

We were back to Sebring Monday afternoon for our portion of the 12 Hour event. (SVRA runs the Vintage /Historic participation in the program that supports the main 12 hour event.) There were over 100 cars participating – broken into two groups; Vintage-pre 72 and Historic-post 72. We ran late in the day i.e. 5/6PM +/- Tues thru Sat -after the big boys were done daytime practice/qualifying and ahead of their nighttime practice sessions. The racing was “ very interesting”- very large fields (the enduro had 84 cars!), very large speed differentials (GT40's; Lola T70's; Corvettes; Audi's, etc vs us in our MG's!) coupled with visibility issues due to low sun glare! The infield party is an unofficial part of Sebring's 60 year heritage- and it looks like some of the partiers have been to every one! Well over 120,000 spectators- but they do bring in 5 or 6 more shower stalls in a trailer!

As participants we were allowed access to the hot pits during the 12 hour event-it was amazing to see the technology and support behind the pro teams. A typical 2-3 car team has 20-30 techs supporting the car with live data streaming into 10-12 screens!

Kudos to SVRA – they did a great job in hosting and organizing both events !

It was a great “once – in -a -lifetime” experience ! 23 days “door to door”. Certainly a highly recommended experience.

Story by: Dave Good

Photos by: Richard Coburn,
Larry Smith, Dave Good.



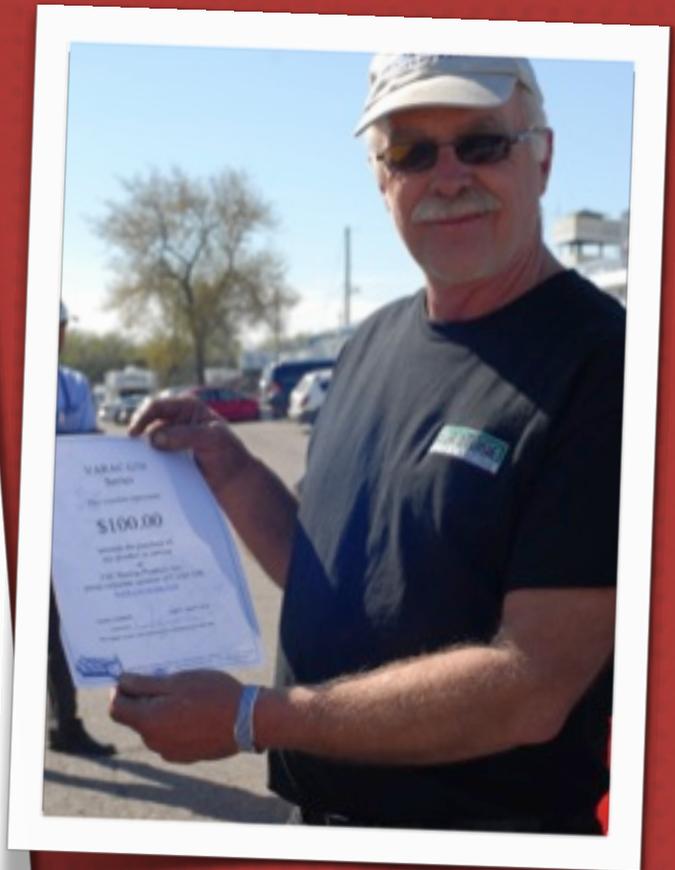
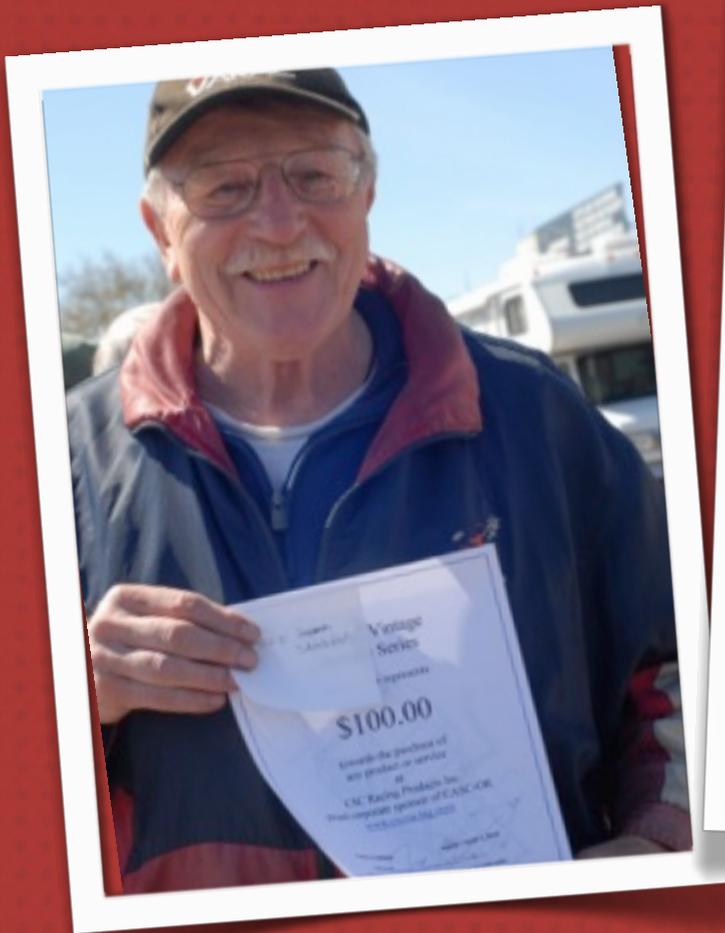
Some other cars at Sebring.

Above: the ex-Peter Ryan,
ex-Jack Boxstrom Lotus 19.

Right: Don't see too many
of these! Steven Alcalá, 1962
Sunbeam Alpine



B.E.M.C. REPORT



Happy winners Fred Samson, left and Dave Margolese , right, won a \$100 dollar gift certificate from CSC! Brian of the Yellow Mollusk, right, looks happy, too, as he used some driving tips from Messrs Bondurant and DeMaria to good effect and dusted off some wanker in a Lotus Seven.....



NOTES ON ANDRÉ'S POLE.....



By Andrew Celovsky

Saturday saw some great racing on the V/H and G70+ grids. at B.E.M.C. (Well, Sunday may also have seen some great racing, alas I got distracted with servicing my car, sorry). Anyway, back to Saturday....

Capturing his first pole, and in anticipation of the race start, André Gagnon was hurriedly seeking advice on leading the field for the pace lap for the rolling start. So, with Andre leading the cars onto the front straight, 2-by-2 in beautiful formation, the Canadian flag was thrown.... the cars accelerated down the front straight, Andre in front, Howie Freeman looking to steal the lead. Brian Thomas and Jeremy Sale sizing each other up for what proved to be an epic battle, Gavin Ivory and Peter Lambrinos, likewise pairing off for battle.... downdown the front straight and into corner 1. Whereupon chaos erupted with a spinning Porsche scattering the field. No harm, a Lotus wound up awkwardly in the gravel. (A nice piece of driving to avoid contact!) This immediately brought out the red flags. Not only was this to be André's first start from pole, it was to be André's first *re-start* from pole. The field came around and to a stop on the front straight.

The Lotus was towed out of the gravel and given a push on its merry way to rejoin the waiting grid on front straight. The cars on the front straight were shuffled back into their starting formation. Again André took the field around on the pace lap in anticipation of the re-start.... but NO... one of those English cars could not get running for the restart and the red flags were thrown for a second time. A brief

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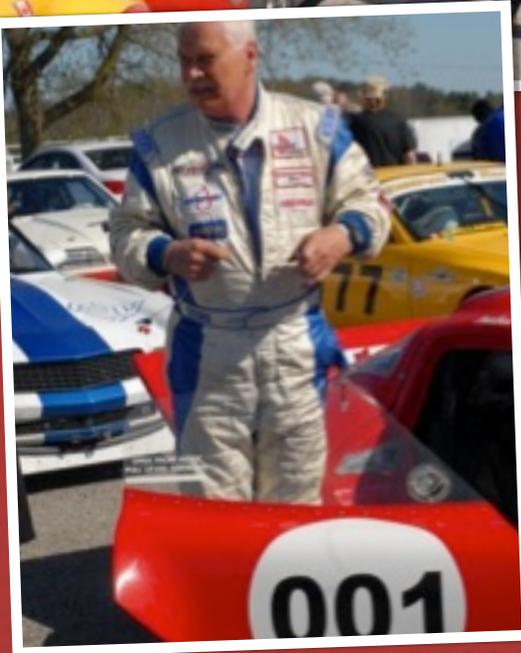
stop on the front straight and again André took the field around for a third pace lap, while the non-starting English car was efficiently dispatched from the track. André' kept the field nice and tight for the *re-re-start*... out came the Canadian flag, and they were racing (finally!). Three tries for André's first pole position, but he kept everything under control, just as the pole sitter should do.

The grid quickly split themselves into 2 and 3 car battles. Howie's Formula Ford nipping at André's Lotus in the corner, with André eking out a horsepower advantage on the straights. Brian and Jeremy made two go into Two, Peter's Volvo was pressing Gavin's Porsche in the corners, as Gavin kept the boxy Volvo away down the straights. The beautifully prepared matching bug-eye Sprites of Ted Michalos and Julie ... *roared* around the track. (OK, I am being a bit kind, as after all, they are Sprites.) Fred Samson was back for another Lotus season with his son, and I was also looking forward to another epic battle of the MGB twins (Richard Navin and Joe Lightfoot) Alas, Richard retired early with ignition issues. Doug Switzer and Peter Viccary appeared with their Formula V's, with Doug taking the advantage. Ken Lee had his beautiful red Alfa fuelled with espresso, care of Christopher Creighton, (Chris is pictured at right, doing his famous version of "The Scream", as he tries to remember if he brought the biscotti.)



Saturday's G70 also saw was also a great race. Nose to tail for the entire race were the 240Z's of Rob McCord and Kevin Young. Never more than a few cars length between the two, with Rob just barely winning the battle. (OK ...where was the blue 240Z?) Up front was a gleaming silver Porsche opening a big lead over a group of two thunder pounding Corvettes and a Trans-Am with a second Porsche in tow. About half way through the race the leading Corvette shook himself free of the pack, and slowly reeled in the leading Porsche. The gap between the leading Porsche and the chasing Corvette got noticeably smaller. "He's going to catch him... if there is enough laps left" I thought to myself. The second chase continued their battle as the Trans-Am, Corvette and diminutive Porsche mixed it up on the straights and in the corners. Suddenly the Dave Margolese Porsche failed to appear, leaving the chase group to the thunder cars. In the closing laps the big Corvette caught and passed the leading Porsche to open up a lead, while second place remained a heated battle right until the checkered flag, with Rob Martin, Pat McDermott, and Gary Allen all finishing nose to tail for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th respectively."Cheers, Andrew C.

B.E.M.C.



Top left: Dan Rosewall. Right: Julie Wildman. Middle left: John Coome. Middle right: Peter Viccary's Kelly FV. Bottom left: Howie Freeman's 1968 Merlyn. Bottom right: Gord Ballantine.

G70+ AT B.E.M.C.

PHOTOS BY VIC HENDERSON



Top left: Rob Martin's Camaro.
Top right: Rob McCord, 1972 240Z.
Middle left and right: Gary Allen's '82 Porsche SC.
Left: Rob McCord's 240Z.

Some notes on Shannonville, Horticulture, and the HANS device...

by John Greenwood

The Shannonville event started out with some criticism over the organizing club (DAC), who shortened the track time of all groups to 90 minutes so that they could shoehorn in an additional one hour GT race at additional entry fee for those who qualified. Otherwise the event was great and well run. I apologize for not having much knowledge of the G70+ field (*G70+ reporter urgently needed. Ed.*) other than saying it was a decent field of approximately 15-16 cars, however there were only 7 G70 cars taking the green flag on Sunday afternoon. My old friend Colin Gibson (pictured at right) described what happens when a brake line explodes on the Honda when chasing son Sean into the FAAAST right hander on the back straight... at least he didn't hit anything and the car will be OK for the Festival coming up in three short weeks.....



WHAT THE?

VIC HENDERSON SNAPPED A G70+ DRIVER'S CREW USING THIS CONTAINER TO FILL HIS RAD!

VERRRRY INTERESTING.....

HE COULD AT LEAST HAVE USED A CONTAINER WITH THE BRAND NAME "MOLSON".....



MY TIRE!

MY TIRE!

Despite some errant bodywork causing tire problems, the Loose Tools Racing team hung in 'till the end and was rewarded with a class win...(I thought grooving tires was illegal in G70!)



COLIN GIBSON

DAD COLIN'S HONDA HAD AN AGRICULTURAL MOMENT BUT NO HARM DONE...

SON SEAN WAS ALSO THERE IN HIS HONDA AND THE SMARTER GIBSON HUNG AROUND TO PICK UP TWO THIRD PLACES OVERALL ON SUNDAY, GOOD WORK!



ABOVE: MELISSA AND MATT MOLSON POSE PROUDLY WITH MELISSA'S NEW CAR!

TOP RIGHT: IT'S HOT IN THE SUN AS THE OPEN WHEEL BRIGADE LINES UP ON V/H MOCK GRID.

AT RIGHT MIKE STEPLOCK PICKED UP VALUABLE POINTS ON SUNDAY WITH TWO FIRST PLACE FINISHES.



The V/H group had 20 entries overall, although all of these cars never ever, all raced together due to gremlins of one sort or another...Despite this there were still 13 V/H cars taking the green flag on Sunday afternoon and I believe 12 finished to attend the post race celebration behind the front grandstand where nice car models were presented to the winning drivers. The presentation was done by regional race director Nick Majors and a special award of \$100 from CSC racing was drawn from a hat and won by John Kinear. Along with the motley crew that regularly attends SMP we had André Gagne and the lovely Carole with the Lotus 23, who seemed to be out before I had time to get scrutineered and fit my INFERNAL horse collar...I hear he had a brake problem that took him into the weeds and thereby damaged his radiator.

Ted Michalos brought out the red Mallock and the white bug-eye, (driven by CASC office queen Debbie Johnston). Ted had starter problems and took the car home Saturday evening. The bug-eye was not out on Sunday. Richard Navin only attended on the Saturday to sort out the "B" for the CHGP. Say no more, his car was Fast, and a threat for all the MGs. Meanwhile John Kinear was chasing misfiring gremlins in his MGB all weekend and failed to finish most sessions, though he determinedly continued to keep trying to fix the car. Good thing he won the \$100 gift certificate from CSC!

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ABOVE: JOHN KINNEAR "CHASED GREMLINS ALL WEEKEND..."

TOP RIGHT: DOUG SWITZER ALWAYS SEEMS TO HAVE FUN!

BOTTOM RIGHT: GARY ALLEN THROWS HIS MGB INTO THE TURN...

PHOTOS BY KEVIN YOUNG.

sort out the "B" for the CHGP. Say no more, his car was Fast, and a threat for all the MGs. Meanwhile John Kinear was chasing misfiring gremlins in his MGB all weekend and failed to finish most sessions, though he determinedly continued to keep trying to fix the car. There were three cars there that are new (to me anyway). Gary Allen had the newly prepared (by John Dodd) MGB with nice factory hardtop, Keith Jewell was running a good consistent rookie race in the blue MGB roadster and finished every session. Hiekki Slegren (entered as an Ontario Z club member) had a 1973 240Z out with us but the last time I saw him he was out studying the weed crop at corner 9! (Let's face it, there are quite a few keen horticulturists among VARAC drivers, I know that I went for a ride on corner 2, just to get a closer look at a blue and red pansy) To sum up, "It was another Grrrrreat day furr motorrr rrrracing,,,,," with nice sunny weather, not a hint of rain...a terrific, challenging 17 corner track...lots of sunshine..but...now the baaad part, missing three laps on first session trying to put on the infernal horse collar for the first time, and then trying to get the ***** thing off again at the end of the session. Do we really need this contraption? I need to apologize to all those who were trying to help me fit the infernal apparatus, with little experience in fitting the clips or deciphering Scottish cursing. You gotta love sitting on the grid in the hot sun, many minutes early, balaclava, helmet, belts, all on because you cannot fit your helmet on by yourself. So, whoever voted for HANS becoming mandatory in CASC... (Sorry, comment deleted pending legal advice. Editor)

Cheers, John G.

SHANNONVILLE

Kevin Young sent these photos to Pit Signals, thanks Kevin!

Top: Jean Boisvert about to go pansy hunting...below, Joe Lightfoot two-wheeling it...#8 is Don Hooton's Sprite...below: the FV boys, Doug Switzer (left) and Peter Viccary (right) battle it out.

Joe Lightfoot says:

“This year at Shannonville I tried something that I thought would make my car quicker but in fact it made it horrible and I struggled all weekend. Congratulations though, to Heikki Silegren in the 73 Datsun 240Z, Peter McGlone in the 61 Lotus 7, and Doug Durrell in the 66 Bobsy FV, who all gave me an ass wuppin’.

Also congratulations to Brian Thomas who wupped us all.

I did however, enjoy the beautiful weekend with friends and my 6am. morning walks with Buddy. Surprisingly Shannonville has some nice trails.”

Joe Lightfoot

Disgraced “local boy”.



John Sambrook reports from Summit Point, May 17–20, 2012



Sambrook leads the MG Midget of Larry Smith and the Austin-Healey Sprite of Richard Jefferson at Summit Point. *Photo by Paul Denbow.*

Our over capacity race group of over 60 cars, was divided into two, with our group limited to 34 cars of under 1300cc. VRG, operates a strange system at SP, which in my opinion puts the drivers under exceptional stress and leads to more on-track incidents than is usual in vintage racing. There is no untimed practice and just one qualifying session of 20 mins before the 1st. race, where up to 25% of the cars have not been on the track at all.

With only one short qualifying session drivers are easily pressured into costly mistakes. This is where my troubles began. I was 6th in line out of the pits, and on the first flying lap, going into the slow blind turn 5, I was 30yds behind a group of 3 cars, one of whom spun, and was driving into my path as I appeared. Contact was unavoidable, so we kissed nose to nose, with both suffering minor body damage.

Following a stewards review we were both exonerated. The consequence was that I started the race 33rd. My race was shortlived. Beginning the first lap I improved my position 5 places and when exiting corner 8 decided to overtake a Mini on the inside. He moved over on me as I began my pass, so I switched to the outside as we approached #10, an 85mph corner with a huge gravel trap on the outside. He moved over on me again, leaving me no option to stay in the corner. As I did not fancy the gravel trap, I turned left instead of right and followed a narrow strip of grass, which led me around the trap and back onto the track near the start- finish line. Now hopelessly last, I pitted and voiced a formal complaint to the stewards. They were most assiduous in their investigation, finally concluding that the Mini driver never saw me (what no mirrors!), and that I was too aggressive.

Meanwhile Rick was going well. He qualified 5th. o/a and finished the 2 races 8th. & 9th. I was doing quite well in race 2, driving mid-pack and behaving myself, when the engine lost power, so with the prospect of a big event coming up at Mosport, I decided to retire after 8 laps. We had a disappointing enduro, Rick started, but had to retire when the alternator failed. The social side of the w/e was lots of fun. We shared paddock space with Richard Jefferson who acted as host to a cook out on 2 nights. The guest speaker at the Saturday night dinner, Peter Brock, had lots to say about design at General Motors, the evolution of the Shelby cars and how he came to run the Datsun team.

Happy Birthday! The iconic MGB turns 50!



Killer Bees at B.E.M.C.

Above: Bob Eagleson.

Top right: Richard Navin.

Right: Gary Allen.

Below: Joe Lightfoot.



Hard to believe that the MGB was launched 50 years ago at the Earls Court Motor Show. With a price of £949 Motoring News called it “undoubtedly the best all-round conventional sports car on the market...extraordinarily good value.” It was the best selling British sports car of all time with an 18 year production run producing sales of half a million.



A GT, or Grand Touring car, is a motor car which, in order to meet the demands of its name, must combine the high performance characteristics of a true sports car with the weather protection, luggage capacity and creature comforts of a luxury saloon car.

The MGB GT is a GT.

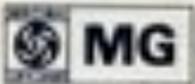
Sport the real thing. MGB GT. 

Image courtesy of M.G.Car Club U.K.