

CVAR Race to the Texas North Pole

Eagles Canyon Raceway, Texas

December 8-10, 2017



#12 Berkeley Merrill, 1972 Porsche 914/4,
#02 Doug Hilton, 1971 MG Midget, #59 Tom Giertz,
1974 Porsche 914/4, and the rest of Group 2
on the pre-grid at Eagles Canyon Raceway.





photo by Don Gwynne

#78 Richard Reeves, Porsche 911; #114 John Frymark, 1968 Triumph GT6.

– story by Don Gwynne

Cold, clear weather was the hallmark of CVAR's last points races in 2017. Ninety-five racers were entered. Some may have stayed away fearing mid-December weather in north Texas, but needn't have. That is, as long as you dressed warm in the morning!

own "Rockin' S Bar & Grill" in Lewisville. As if all this wasn't enough, Sam recently purchased the Pinnacle Autosports facility at the top of the hill at ECR, renaming it Concierge Motorsports

Sunday afternoon's CVAR Championship points races started with **GROUP 2** (E Production, F

Production, C Sedan). Of 17 Group 2 entrants, 13 made it to the points race grid, and all of them finished. Andrew Moore's red #179 Austin Healey Sprite proved to be the class of the field, starting on pole, setting the fastest lap, and leading from flag to flag, for the overall win and the F Production class win.

CVAR's Chief Instructor, Berkeley Merrill, started alongside Moore and ran second all race long, to take the E Production class win in

his silver #12 Porsche 914-4. Gary Perser's drive was noteworthy, coming up from last on the grid to a sixth overall finish in his blue & white #90 MGB. A bit further down the finishing order, Bob Pinkston took an unopposed C Sedan win driving his red #7 VW Beetle.

By far the largest field of the afternoon

was composed of the **GROUP 3** Formula Vee cars. Of 25 FV entrants, 21 came to the grid. Houston's Mac Wolff proved untouchable,



photo by Brandall Binion

#15 Gary Reed, 1967 MG Midget.

starting on pole, setting fastest lap, and leading from green to checker driving his red #62 Lynx B. Hunter Barron was lurking to



photo by Brandall Binion

#47 Richard Fisher, 1959 Austin Healey Sprite; #79 Len Root, 1969 Triumph Spitfire.

Race Chair Bobby Whitehead and his Race Coordinator Bill Wolff put on a smoothly run event. ECR's 2.5-mile, 11-turn course features lots of elevation changes, and the new owner, Livio Galanti, has put a lot of thought, time and money into improvements everywhere you look. The ECR lunchroom and restrooms are sparkling new, for example. Track surface improvements are also evident, with more to come.

After the track went cold(er) on Saturday late afternoon, dinner and a very good local band were enjoyed under a huge tent, courtesy of long-time CVAR benefactor Sam LeComte. Great food was served up by Sam's



photo by Brandall Binion

#89 Greg Reynolds, GT350; #587 Bjorn Dischington, Porsche.

keep him honest, finishing just 5 seconds back in his yellow #113 Caldwell D-13. Mac's father, Bill Wolff, came third in his white #68 Zink Z-5 after starting the race in fifth.

In stark contrast, the smallest field of the afternoon (**GROUP 4**) came next, with only four of the six entrants coming to the grid. After starting in third, Gary McFarlane moved up to finish first overall and win the VC class in his one-off white #91 "Thundermug" which competed in H-Modified class "back in the day." Thundermug's history is interesting, and is covered on page 243 of "Vintage American Road Racing Cars 1950-1970" by Harold W. Pace and Mark R. Brinker. Originally built by Dale Tholen, Thundermug's hand-laid fiberglass body weighed only 24 pounds, but the "poot-poot" sound of its unique engine



photo by Brandall Binion

#98 Jason White, 1965 Zink C4; #19 Bretton Liming, 1968 Zink.

Juniors ran into tough luck. Robert Merrill's yellow #159 front-engined BMC Formula

Junior started on pole and was leading the race until the points plate in his distributor came loose, and he was DNF on the sixth lap. Taylor Fudge ran into difficulties on his third lap, and was DNF in his BRG #28 rear-engined Cooper Formula Junior. Danny Piott chose voluntarily to run as "non-conforming" for his first shakedown outing with his blue #43 VW Beetle and thus was excluded from the official finishing order.

Although

GROUP 6 had 15 entrants, only five of them came to the grid for the points race. Angus Lemon started on pole in his purple #86 Merlyn 11A/17A, with Dale Schaper alongside in his blue #13 Hawke D12A. When the green flag waved, they commenced a pretty good battle, with Schaper gaining the lead on the third lap, only to DNF shortly thereafter. After Schaper dropped out, Lemon was never seriously challenged, finishing first overall to win the FF1 class. Pat Magruder finished second overall to win the FF3 class in a red Lola T-644, but trailed Lemon by just less than half a

minute at the checkered flag. Tim Blakeney took second in FF1 another ten seconds back in his white & blue Royale RP-16. Jim Barron rounded out the four finishers to win the FF2 class driving his silver Lola T-540.

The **GROUP 7** (C Production, D Production, B Sedan) race was punctuated by a blistering drive from dead last to first by Alex Smargiasso in his silver #59 Datsun 240Z, but he was running under CVAR's "non-conforming" car rules, and thus isn't officially credited with the win. That honor goes to Richard Reeves, driving his C Production green #78 Porsche 911, who crossed the finish line about a half



photo by Don Gwynne

#113 Hunter Barron, 1968 Caldwell D-13; #68 William Wolff, 1968 Zink Z-5

was where it got its name. Tholen mated three Maico 250cc single cylinder two-stroke motorcycle engines by way of a custom crankcase. Today, the car is powered by a four cylinder Crosley engine. Two Formula



photo by Don Gwynne

#59 Alex Smargiasso, 1972 Datsun 240Z; #43 R. Burt Williams, 1970 Porsche 911.



photo by Brandall Binion

#02 Doug Hilton, 1971 MG Midget.

second after Smargiasso. Reeves had started on pole, but was passed by Smargiasso's Datsun at mid-race. R. Burt Williams started the race alongside Reeves on the front row of the grid, briefly dropped to fourth mid-race, and regained the slot behind Reeves at the checker, to be credited with second in C Production class. The red/white/blue #68 Datsun 510 driven by David McCullough came in behind Williams to win the B Sedan class. Chris Langley's blue #99 Yenko Stinger took an unopposed win in D Production class.

Last race of the event was for the big iron, CVAR's **GROUP 1** (A Production, A Sedan, B Production, and FIA). CVAR President Herb Hilton sat on pole in his



photo by Brandall Binion

#59 Tom Giertz, 1974 Porsche 914/4; #39 Jay Zittler, Porsche.

yellow #17 notchback Mustang, with Steve Cole alongside in his black #16 Corvette. The second row saw Greg Reynolds on the inside driving his white & blue #89 Shelby

GT-350, with Joe Robau alongside in his white #11 Corvette. After the green flag waved, Hilton and Cole fought it out until the sixth lap, when contact caused both to

DNF. This left Robau in first overall with Bobby Whitehead in second overall driving his blue #54 notchback Mustang. Reynolds had dropped as low as seventh overall in early laps, but came charging back to finish third overall when the checkered flag fell. Thus Robau won B Production, Whitehead won A Sedan, Reynolds placed second in B Production, and Jay Zittler won the FIA class in fourth overall with his #39 silver Porsche 914-6. John Scott won the A Production class in fifth overall with his white #71 Corvette. Although it wasn't the fastest car in the field, Tracey Robinson's white and red #72 Dodge Dart got a lot of attention. Don't see many of these.

CVAR's next event will be the Brad Balles Race and Driver's School, on February 23-25, 2018 at MSR-Houston.



photo by Don Gwynne

#67 Pat Magruder, 1984 Lola T644.

GROUP 1

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 BP J. Robau/Corvette 2:08.663
- 1 AS B. Whitehead/Mustang Notchback 2:10.343
- 2 BP G. Reynolds/Shelby GT 350
- 1 FIA J. Zittler/Porsche 914/6 2:09.080
- 1 AP J. Scott/Corvette 2:14.313
- 2 AS R. Mussina
- 3 AS T. Robinson/Dodge Dart
- 4 AS H. Hilton/Mustang
- 2 FIA B. Dischington/Porsche



photo by Brandall Binion

#12 Berkeley Merrill, 1972 Porsche 914/4.

GROUP 2

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FP A. Moore/1964 Austin Healey Sprite 2:12.200

- 1 EP B. Merrill/1972 Porsche 914/4 2:15.479
- 2 EP G. Blake/1958 Triumph TR3
- 3 EP T. Giertz/1974 Porsche 914/4
- 2 FP G. Reed/1967 MG Midget
- 4 EP G. Perser/1966 MGB
- 3 FP R. Wright/1972 MG Midget
- 5 EP J. Jones/1972 MGB
- 4 FP R. Fisher/1959 Austin Healey Sprite
- 5 FP D. Vick/1964 Triumph Spitfire
- 1 CS B. Pinkston/1966 VW Beetle 2:29.823
- 6 FP L. Root/1969 Triumph Spitfire
- 7 FP C. Stutzman/1966 Datsun Roadster



photo by Don Gwynne

#159 Robert Merrill, 1959 BMC Mk 1.

GROUP 3

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FV M. Wolff/1969 Lynx B 2:15.248
- 2 FV H. Barron/1968 Caldwell D-13
- 3 FV W. Wolff/1968 Zink Z-5
- 4 FV D. Calkins/1972 Lynx B
- 5 FV J. White/1965 Zink C4
- 6 FV M. Rogers/1968 Bobsy Vega Fv
- 7 FV D. Fisher/1972 Lynx B
- 8 FV E.O. Barron/
- 9 FV E. Barron/1969 Pegasus C4
- 10 FV M. Jones/1968 Nash Scrambler



photo by Brandall Binion

#68 David McCullough, 1969 Datsun 510.

- 11 FV G. Curl/1970 Zink C4
- 12 FV B. Liming/1968 Zink
- 13 FV J. Strnad/1967 Zink C4
- 14 FV D. Dyckman/1965 Autodynamics
- 15 FV D. Peterson/1972 Zink McEntire Special
- 16 FV F. Iqbal/1972 Caldwell D-13
- 17 FV S. Smith/1968 Zink
- 18 FV P. Summerville/1967 Zink Z-5



photo by Don Gwynne

#72 Tracey Robinson, Dodge Dart.

- 19 FV J. Williamson/1970 Caldwell D-13
 - 20 FV L. Summerville/1968 Zink-4
 - 21 FV D. McDowell/1969 Zeitler
- GROUP 4**
PL CL DRIVER/CAR
1 VC G. McFarlane/1960 Thunderbug H-Modified 2:32.075

- 1 FJ-1 R. Merrill/1959 BMC Mk 1 2:13.860
 - 1 FJ-2 T. Fudge/1961 Cooper FJ 2:15.846
- GROUP 6**
PL CL DRIVER/CAR
1 FFI A. Lemon/1969 Merlyn 11A/17A 2:07.089



#14 Robert Blake, 1963 Triumph TR-4.

- 1 FF3 P. Magruder/1984 Lola T644 2:09.544
 - 2 FF1 T. Blakeney/1972 Royale RP-16 2:17.444
 - 1 FF2 J. Barron/1979 Lola T-540 2:17.444
 - 3 FF1 D. Schaper/1970 Hawke D12a
- GROUP 7**
PL CL DRIVER/CAR
1 CP R. Reeves/1972 Porsche 911 2:02.956
2 CP R.B. Williams/1970 Porsche 911
1 BS D. McCullough/1969 Datsun 510 2:11.526
1 DP C. Langley/1966 Yenko Stinger 2:16.260
2 BS R. Rosenberg/1972 BMW 2002
3 CP J. Kish/1973 Porsche 911E
4 CP A. Nigro/1972 Porsche 911

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