



#41 Greg Blake, 1958 Triumph TR3.

CVAR Brad Balles School and Races Eagles Canyon Raceway, Texas

November 1-3 2019

— story by *Don Gwynne*

— photos by *Kim Hill*

CVAR's 2019 season wrap up was held at the new and improved Eagles Canyon. Under the new ownership of Livio and Paula Galanti, ECR is undergoing massive improvements, and it is still a work in progress. While certain aspects are not yet completed, such as some areas of paddock paving, the clubhouse and the 1.65 mile short course track are complete and are really nice. Unfortunately, the final asphalt paving of the redesigned long course had not sufficiently cured to allow racing on it. Happily, lunchtime drive-arounds were allowed, and many took the opportunity to tour the new 2.75 mile long course, dubbed the "Italian Canyon." CVAR's ECR event on 24-26 April 2020 will use this new long course.

Despite being the same weekend as Formula 1 at COTA in Austin and NASCAR just north

of Fort Worth at Texas Motor Speedway, CVAR had a great turnout with about 120 cars at ECR. The Saturday evening festivities included a great Italian dinner put on by Sam LeComte, highlighted by the "swearing in" of the student drivers into CVAR.

The student driver class included Jeff Moore, Mason Griffith, Jonathan Musgrove, Ray Creech, Rafael Olmos, Marcos Hoffman, Barrett Schwarzlose, Brett Oliver, Simon Hughes, George Wright and Chuck Strong.

Student driver Jeff Moore brought a lot of SCCA and Vintage experience with him, but this was his first wheel-to-wheel racing, and his first racing start. He has driven on (not raced) on 13 different tracks, and crewed his own racing team from 1987 onwards. An expert engine builder, Jeff builds the 6 cylinder Corvair racing engines for many well known Yenko Stinger racers, including Russ Rosenberg, Curtis Wood, and Chris Langley. He drove Curtis Wood's white #13 Yenko Stinger in the school. Jeff is also still an active National Scrutineer in the Ozark Mountain Region SCCA. A founding member of the Corvair Society of America,

Jeff is now thinking about the fun he could have racing a 1960 swing-axle Corvair with CVAR in A Sedan or FIA class! His parting



#3 Sam Lecomte, Camaro; #71 John Scott, 1971 Corvette.

comment to me was to note that George Follmer was shown on several California entry lists in the 1962-1963 era to drive a Corvair. I checked and sure enough, according to racingsportscars.com, George Follmer was entered to drive a 2.4 liter Chevrolet Corvair Spyder, in races at Santa Barbara, Pomona and Riverside, but supposedly never actually showed up at any of them listed. Fascinating food for more historical research, that one is!

Student Mason Griffith followed in the vintage racing traditions of his dad, David Griffith, driving a Formula Vee in the school. It doesn't seem that long ago that we were delighted to see young Mason sitting in the miniature MG replica that his dad lovingly built for him. How soon they grow up!

Although I wasn't able to reach Jonathan Musgrove for comment, I noted that he shares an e-mail suffix with Chip Fudge and Taylor



#88 Gary Perser, 1960 Austin Healey Sprite Mk 1; #60 Bruce Revenaugh, 1960 Lotus 18.

Fudge, so I suspect I know how he got involved in vintage racing. He drove green #28 Cooper front engine Formula Junior in the school.

Ray Creech flew in from Trafalgar, Indiana (a suburb near Indianapolis) to take his first drivers school in the grey #40 FV owned by his friends, the Barron family. This was Ray's first experience in road racing, vintage or otherwise. He did race "Legends" cars in the Indianapolis area from 1996 to 2001, and commented that it was much more expensive, because of the constant need to repair damage done to his car by the cutthroat level of competition. He really likes the more civilized approach seen in CVAR vintage racing, and said he probably had the most fun of anyone at Eagles Canyon that weekend. He plans to be at CVAR's next race at MSR-Houston as well.

Student Rafael Olmos appeared in a photo on page 27 of the April 2015 issue of Victory Lane! He drove the blue #60 Orc Veloz FV, which he built in about 1999 re-using some parts from a homebuilt FV that he and his brother Moses Olmos made from scratch back in the early 1970s while in high school. Rafael drove the earlier FV at Green Valley in 1976. A shop accident injury took him out of vintage racing just after the February 2015 CVAR school, and only recently was he able to get back with it. For the Friday driver's school, Rafael drove his same blue #60 Orc Veloz FV that appeared in the Victory Lane photo. Then an engine problem developed. To his surprise and delight, fellow CVAR racer John Strnad stepped in and offered him an extra FV he owned. So Rafael finished the weekend in John's blue and red #68 FV. Talk about fellowship! Thanks go also to Elliott Barron and Bill Griffith for encouraging Rafael to bring his FV out of retirement and join the fun again.

First of the Sunday afternoon CVAR Championship points races was for CVAR's "big thunder" **GROUP 1** (A Production, B Production, A Sedan, FIA, and one historic 1958 Echidna C Modified, which today



#30 Michael Kopecky, 1971 Porsche 914/4; #572 Karl Keiger, 1966 MG Midget.

would be classed as A Sports Racing). Sam LeComte's red #3 Chevrolet Camaro started on the pole. Alongside on the front row was Seth Higgins, driving his blue #31 Porsche 911 RSR. After the green flag dropped, LeComte led for most of the race. Higgins, on the other hand, was almost immediately under attack by Kevin Ford's blue #49 Chevrolet Camaro. At the checkered flag however, it was Michael Saxe's orange #979 Porsche 911 Carrera that took second overall and the FIA class win, with Higgins third overall and second in FIA class. LeComte's red Camaro wound up fourth overall and second in A Sedan. Joe Robau scored an impressive B Production class win in fifth overall driving his white #11 Chevrolet Corvette. The A Production win went to John Scott in his white #71 Chevrolet Corvette in ninth overall. The blue #66 1958 Echidna driven by Steve Steers finished a credible 13th overall for an unopposed C Modified class win, well ahead of five much younger A Sedan cars.

Next up, the race for **GROUP 2** (E Production, F Production, and C Sedan) featured an impressive charge by Robert Hoemke up from eleventh on the grid to take the overall win and the C Sedan class win. He was driving his historic #51 "Purple People Eater" Mini, which was part of Fort Worth's Overseas Motors team back in the mid to late 60s. While Hoemke was reeling everyone in, a battle for second through fourth overall was going in between Michael Kopecky's E Production yellow and

orange #30 Porsche 914-4, Louis Gladfelter's green #654 Mini, and Doug Hilton's blue #33 bugeyed Sprite. Then Hilton's Sprite faltered on the ninth lap to eventually finish several laps down. Thus Kopecky won EP in second overall, and Gladfelter placed second in CS with a third overall finish. Karl Keiger's green #572 MG Midget won the F Production class in fifth overall.

Thomas Schluter started the **GROUP 7** (C Production, D Production, and B Sedan) race on the pole, led every lap, and set fastest lap on his way to the overall win and the C Production class win in his orange #34 Porsche 911. Chris Beckwith started on the outside of the front row, ran in second overall the entire race, and finished about nine seconds behind Schluter to take the B Sedan class win in his yellow #25 BMW 2002. Back in sixth overall, the D Production class win went to Russ Rosenberg and his white #83 Yenko Stinger, in sixth overall.

The **GROUP 4** (VB, VC, FJ-1, FJ-2, SFP, and G4T) race saw several good battles. Bruce Revenaugh started on pole in his green #60 Lotus 18 Formula Junior, and ran strong to eventually win the FJ-2 class in second overall. Houston's Mike Vecellio started the race alongside Revenaugh, but finished ahead of him to take the overall win and the VB class win driving his black and white #12 EMPI Crusader. His margin of victory was just half a second, so it was a close battle to the checkered flag. After starting fifth, Gary Perser moved up, eventually finishing third overall to take the VC class win in his blue #88 Sprite. CVAR stalwart Robert Merrill finished fourth overall, less than a second behind Perser, driving his yellow #159 BMC Formula Junior, for the FJ-1 class win. David Hopkins took an unopposed win in the SFP, or "Spec Sprite" class driving his orange #50



#30 Mike Love, 1977 Zink Z-10B; #35 Nick Leonard, 1981 Ralt RT-4.

Honoring the Founder of CVAR

Organized vintage racing in Texas and the Southwest officially began when the Corinthian Vintage Auto Racing incorporation papers were submitted to the state of Texas Nov. 9, 1988, with Brad Balles as President, Frank D'Aquino Secretary, Jeff Williams Treasurer and J.C. Kilborn Competition Chairman. The corporate headquarters were at Brad's home in Addison, just north of Dallas. This was the culmination of Brad's many conversations with local past SCCA racers and a few Texas vintage racers who

competed across the U.S. in vintage club organized events. I had heard of his efforts when traveling on a regular basis from Silicon Valley to Dallas on business and regularly met with some local racing friends of the Texas SCCA racing scene of the late 1950s and early 1960s. There were many who wanted to see this happen, but it took Brad's initiative, efforts, phone calls and holding many meetings with prospective vintage racers to make it all happen.

Soon after the formal CVAR organization the inaugural event, a car show and party, was held at Frank D'Aquino's race prep facility in northwest Dallas. The first on-track event was

vintage car time trials on the Army helicopter training base at Mineral Wells, Texas, some 60 miles west of Dallas. I was fortunate to attend and drive some of my friend's cars. Soon thereafter CVAR ambitiously organized a one day vintage race at Texas World Speedway near College Station. I can say we all had a great time. I remember racing four different cars. We had so much track time, that by the mid-afternoon "All Comers" race most were too tired to enter.

CVAR has now grown to be one of the top vintage racing clubs in North America. There are six events on CVAR's 2020 schedule.

— Dan Davis

Sprite. CVAR's relatively new G4T class had only one starter, so Boerne's Stephen Heitzke took an unopposed G4T win driving his blue and white #82 MG Midget. At the checker, he was less than a tenth of a second behind Hopkins, for another close finish.

Speaking of close finishes, the best race of the day had to be the FV's of **GROUP 3**; Hunter Barron's red #113 Kellison led Devin Boucher's blue #2 Nash Scrambler and Elliott (E.O.) Barron's red #110 Kellison to the flag for the win. The interval between the first three cars was only 143 milliseconds, with Hunter's winning margin a scant 91 milliseconds. Wow! Devin Boucher's drive deserves special mention. Hunter and E.O. Barron both started the race at the front, whereas Boucher carved his way up to second overall in a field of 22 Formula Vees after starting back in 14th place. Wow, again!

Heather Barron finished fourth driving her yellow #82 Caldwell D13. The Barron family continues to set the bar pretty in Formula Vee.

Last race of the weekend was for **GROUP 6** (B Sports Racing, FF1, FF2, and FC). Chalmer McWilliams sat on the pole in his green and white #19 Lotus 51A. Steve Lafferty sat alongside in his Merlyn Mk 20. And that's how they ran for the entire twenty minute race. Thus McWilliams won the FF1 class and Lafferty took second in FF1 less than one second in arrears. After starting back in seventh, David Bell finished third overall to win the Formula C class in his Swift SE-3. After two more FF1 cars, another Formula C car driven by John Taphorn

finished sixth overall and second in FC in his Reynard. It was nice to see the relatively rare



#19 Tom O'Grady, 1959 Stanguellini FJ-1.



#49 Kevin Ford,
1969 Camaro.

GROUP 1 PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 AS K. Ford/1969 Camaro 1:16.650
- 1 FIA M. Saxe/1974 Porsche 911 Carrera 1:17.712
- 2 FIA S. Higgins/1973 Porsche 911 RSR
- 2 AS S. Lecomte/ Camero

- 1 BP J. Robau/1964 Corvette 1:19.260
- 1 FIA G. Kopecky/1973 Porsche RSR
- 4 FIA J. Zittner/1970 Porsche 914/6 GT
- 3 AS R. Williams/1968 Camaro
- 1 AP J. Scott/1971 Corvette 1:21.895
- 5 FIA B. Dischington/1974 Porsche 911
- 6 FIA M. Briggs/1973 Porsche 911
- 2 AP J. Sandberg/1969 Corvette
- 1 CM S. Steers/1958 Echinna 1:24.574
- 4 AS K. Thomas/1969 Mustang Boss 302
- 5 AS M. Baker/1970 AMC Javelin
- 6 AS J. Couture/1966 Ford Mustang

GROUP 2 PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 CS R. Hoemke/1965 Cooper Mini S 1:23.268

- 1 EP M. Kopecky/1971 Porsche 914/4 1:23.504
- 2 CS L. Gladfelder/1962 Morris Mini Cooper
- 3 CS B. Whitehead/1960 Austin Mini Seven

- 1 FP K. Keiger/1966 MG Midget 1:30.041
- 2 FP R. Fisher/1959 Austin Healey Sprite
- 3 FP G. Reed/1967 MG Midget
- 4 CS J. Lemmons/1963 Morris Mini
- 2 EP T. Giertz/1974 Porsche 914/4
- 3 EP B. Merrill/1972 Porsche 914/4
- 4 FP D. Couch/1962 Triumph Spitfire
- 5 FP D. Hilton/1959 Austin Healey Bugeye Sprite

GROUP 3

- 1 PL CL DRIVER/CAR
- 1 FV H. Barron/1969 Kellison Mk 2 1:24.771
- 2 FV D. Boucher/1969 Nash Scrambler
- 3 FV E.O. Barron/1963 Kellison
- 4 FV H. Barron/1972 Caldwell D-13
- 5 FV J. Williamson/1970 Caldwell D-13
- 6 FV N. Palgrave/1968 Bandersnatch
- 7 FV W. Wolff/1968 Zink Z-5
- 8 FV J. Ridings/1968 Beach Mk 5C
- 9 FV J. White/1965 Zink C-4
- 10 FV S. Rainey/1965 Autodynamics
- 11 FV D. Phillips/1969 Zink C-4
- 12 FV J. Parks/1970 Zink
- 1 Student S. Hughes/1972 Big Hammer 1:28.715



#159 Robert Merrill,
1959 BMC Mk 1.

- 13 FV D. Bevan/1964 Zink
- 2 Student B. Schwarzlose/1972 Treuhaff FV
- 14 FV J. Strnad/1969 Lynx B
- 15 FV S. Schluter/1965 Autodynamics
- 16 FV G. Black/1965 Zink C-4
- 17 FV B. Binion/1971 Caldwell D-13
- 18 FV S. Elieff/1960 Bug Fast
- 3 Student M. Griffith/1968 Zink
- 4 Student R. Olmos/1970 Orga Veloz FV
- 19 FV M. Rogers/1968 Asp Mk III

GROUP 4

- 1 PL CL DRIVER/CAR
- 1 VB M. Vecellio/1963 Empi Crusader 1:32.806
- 1 FJ-2 B. Revenaugh/1960 Lotus 18 1:26.786
- 1 VC G. Perser/1960 Austin Healey Sprite Mk 1 1:34.198
- 1 FJ-1 R. Merrill/1959 BMC Mk 1 1:31.819
- 1 SFP D. Hopkins/1964 Austin Healey Sprite 1:36.562

- 1 G4T S. Heitzke/1964 MG Midget 1:36.019

GROUP 6

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FF1 C. McWilliams/1967 Lotus 51A 1:16.728
- 2 FF1 S. Lafferty/1971 Merlyn Mk 20
- 1 FC D. Bell/1988 Swift SE-3 1:18.304
- 3 FF1 A. Lemon/1969 Merlyn 11A/17A
- 4 FF1 J. Langham/1972 Merlyn Mk 20a
- 2 FC J. Taphorn/1988 Reynard FC
- 5 FF1 T. Blakeney/1972 Royale RP-16
- 6 FF1 J. Carr/1969 Caldwell D-9
- 7 FF1 P. Haggart/1972 Hawke DL9
- 8 FF1 W. Murphey/1966 Elfin Mono Mk 2C
- 1 BSR J. Gewinner/1965 Lotus 23B 1:18.539

GROUP 7

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 CP T. Schluter/1969 Porsche 911 1:23.741
- 1 BS C. Beckwith/1972 BMW 2002 1:24.465
- 2 BS M. Lovay/1969 Datsun 510
- 3 BS C. Trifilio/1971 Fiat 124 Coupe
- 2 CP C. Stutzman/1970 Datsun 240Z
- 1 DP R. Rosenberg/1966 Yenko Stinger 1:26.621
- 3 CP S. Robinson/1972 Datsun 240Z
- 4 CP A. Nigro/1972 Porsche 911
- 4 BS D. Oliver/1975 BMW 2002
- 2 DP S. Barrett/1969 MG Midget