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CVAR at Texas World Speedway

VARA/SVRA Duel in the Desert Spring Mountain, Nevada



Salem
Speedway,
Indiana



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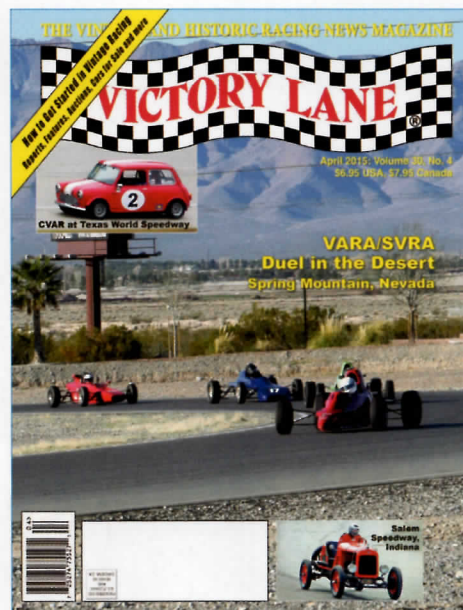
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CVAR Spring Drivers School and Races

Fairwell to Texas World Speedway

February 20-22, 2015

— story by *Don Gwynne*



Texas World Speedway is gone. For CVAR, it's on to Eagles Canyon, Hallett, MSR Houston, Grand Sport Raceway, Bluebonnet and NOLA Motorsports Park.

CVAR's 2015 Spring School & Races at TWS were bittersweet. A huge turnout of 229 cars pretty much guaranteed a great racing weekend, but this was tempered with the knowledge that this was to be the last CVAR race at TWS before it is to be demolished by developers. Cloudy, wet weather prevailed most of the weekend.

TWS was finished in 1968 and its first sanctioned race was held in 1969. In addition to the 2 mile "D" shaped oval with 22° banking turns and 8° banking in the front of the grandstands, the TWS track layout includes challenging 1.8, 1.9 and 2.9-mile road courses.

TWS's oval became known as 'The World's Fastest Speedway' when Mario Andretti set a world closed course speed record of 214.158 mph in 1973 while qualifying for an Indy car race. Mario's record stood in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for a dozen years.

CVAR's drivers school on Friday had a large turnout, with 29 students on track: Elliott Barron Jr., Tim Blakeney, Jean-Pierre Carter, Craig Caudle, Christopher Chilton, Drew Fisher, Kasandra Fuller, Donald Gibson, Jake Hilton, John Kish, Mark Koegel, Pat Magruder, Terry McCormick, Terry McLaren, Phil Mulacek, Ross Mussina, Jeff Neathery, Rafael Olmos, Susan Patterson, Rob Pink, Walter Reid, Scott Robinson, Len Root, Dallas Schultz, John Smith, John Stephens, Patrick Summerville, Alain Vinson and Richard Wright. (Hopefully, I didn't miss anyone)

These students now must compete in 3 more weekends on their Novice Log Book, including a day working corners (to gain more perspective and appreciation for our volunteers), before they can apply for their CVAR vintage competition license.

Students Elliott Barron Jr. and his sister Kassandra 'Kassie' Fuller commenced a

third generation of CVAR racers, following in the footsteps of father, Elliott Barron, and grandfather, Jim Barron, both of whom were students in the CVAR's February 2014 School at TWS. The Barron family now owns three Formula Vees: a red Zink C4, a silver Pegasus, and a red Kellison. Some intra-family seat swapping resulted in Elliott Sr. driving the Zink FV in the Sunday Group 3 points race after Kassie drove it in the school. Elliott (the younger) drove a blue Bigger Hammer rental FV in the school, due to temporary problems with the other cars in the Barron stable.

Tim Blakeney, although a CVAR school student, is no stranger to going fast. Tim has driven a 300ZX Turbo in Chump Car and Lemons events, and has previously raced at TWS and Daytona. For vintage, he dusted off an old Austin Healey 100/6 that he bought in 1978 for \$800. It had been sitting for years, and driven on the street just enough to keep it



photo by Nick Johnson



photo by Don Gwynne

#64 Alain Vinson, 1966 AC 427 Cobra; #44 Steven Cole, 1963 Corvette.

from decaying. Six months of hard work put it on the grid at TWS school, albeit still in gray primer. It ran well for him all weekend, except for a hydraulic problem that took away the overdrive on Friday afternoon. After losing the overdrive, Tim taped the word 'SLUG' on the big Healey's license plate, much to the chagrin

pedigree. Bought from Tony Whitworth in Fort Worth back in about 1990, the car had been raced for years by Dick Fisher in Wisconsin. It won the SCCA Central Division A Sedan National Championship in 1976. Craig owns a 1968 AMX which suffered an engine blow-up at Road America in 1997. Craig used to race it in A Production with a 390 ci engine, but is now busy resurrecting it in B Production form with a 343.

he was impressed by the well-organized, progressive training syllabus and the quality of the instructors. He is currently negotiating to buy a vintage-prepared Porsche 911, and said he will be coming to Hallett in either a 911 or a 510, for sure.

Pat Magruder ran into a bit of trouble early on in the Sunday student race and was DNF, but otherwise had a good weekend driving his Lola T644 FF3.

Terry McLaren drove a Sprite, a rented Storage 105 car. Although he once did a Bondurant School in the Poconos, this was his first time back in a race car in a long while. He said his school weekend went great, with no problems encountered (other than getting a little wet).

Jeff Neathery was renewing his CVAR license currency in his lime green notchback Mustang.

Susan Patterson and her husband watched the Monaco Grand Prix in person last year, and she decided, then and there, to become a racing driver. Sort of a "bucket list thing," she said. Her good friend Brenda Chapman has been very supportive. Susan rented a Bigger Hammer FV for this school, and said "I'm hooked." She had so much fun she can't wait for Hallett in April. A retired prosecutor and former law enforcement officer, Susan said that the kangaroos (!) she raises on her south Texas ranch remind her of a T-Rex: big heads, little arms. She is planning another Bigger Hammer rental for Hallett, hopefully



photo by Nick Johnson

#71 Skip Duplissey, 1971 Porsche 911T; #31 Seth Higgins, 1974 Porsche 911 Carrera.

of a few drivers he nonetheless managed to pass! After the weekend, Tim bought Don Gibson's Royale RP-16 Formula Ford, and plans to drive it at Hallett in April sporting a new white livery.

Jean-Pierre Carter has been a car guy all his life, but the TWS school was his first wheel-to-wheel racing experience, to wit: "I had a ball. I'm hooked!" He noted that his Bigger Hammer rental from Bill Griffith was a great experience, and said "Bill is really, really good at what he does." Two things got him to sign up for the TWS school: he has attended CVAR events for a while with Jim Sandberg and his Corvette, and he attended the SVRA Nationals at COTA last October and thought "I just gotta do that!" Jean plans to rent from Bigger Hammer again for Eagles Canyon in May, but there is a definitely a race car in his future now.

Craig Caudle is the youngest of four racing Caudle brothers, and came to the school to renew his VMC license, which was about a decade out of date. Craig was driving his brother Ken's Camaro, which has a long racing

Bill Griffith's shop.

CVAR President Herb Hilton wrote: "The race was personally special since we had three generations of Hiltons on track, with Dan and Doug in G2, Grandson Jake in G5, and yours truly in G1. It just doesn't get any better than this!" Student Jake Hilton started the weekend in his Royale RP3A Formula Ford and then, when the need arose, drove Bill Johnson's FF, and finished the weekend in papa Hilton's MG Midget.

John Kish, at 72 years old, thoroughly enjoyed his first wheel-to-wheel racing experience. He has however, done a couple of PCA DE events at TWS in his Porsche 996, so he was no stranger to going fast at TWS. John rented Mike Lovay's Datsun 510 for this school, and found it a wonderful, forgiving car to be training with. Kish praised CVAR's school, saying that



#14 Reed Yates, 1935 MG N Special.

“the prettier blue one.” She praised her school instructor, Bill Griffith, although she joked that “he’s a little bit crazy.” The parade lap around the full NASCAR oval before the start of her race was a bit daunting, due to the steep banking. That, and the fact that someone in front of her lost a rear wheel. The three-wheeled car went high, the loose wheel dove low, and she got past both without getting more involved. Whew!

John Smith brought out a nicely prepared Datsun 240Z. His car is still street legal, with an almost stock engine. He said he enjoyed an uneventful weekend, and that adding a third of a quart of oil was all the maintenance he had to do. John has raced with SCCA and NASA on and off since 1984, alternately driving his wife’s VW Rabbit GTI in SSC, a spec sports racer, and a GP Fiat 124 Spider. This was John’s first time back to TWS since he drove it in 1993. His prior experience showed, when he won the Sunday morning student race in the rain, and placed second in the student race



photo by Don Gwynne

Students on course in Formula Vees as part of the Drivers School.

He also owns a Chevy-powered 1960 Austin Healey, which he may try to get on track in CVAR’s Group 4 as a C-Modified car at some point in the future.

Chief Instructor Berkeley Merrill noted that after the 427 Cobra developed an engine problem, Mark McIlyar loaned Phil Mulacek his Corvette in which to finish the school. A loan from Bill Gardner kept Terry McCormick running, and Bill Johnson loaned his FF to Jake Hilton to keep him running for a while, after which Jake stepped into the Hilton family Midget to finish up. These generous expressions of support for the students are what make CVAR so unique and popular.

The Corinthian Classics Group 4 Formula Junior drivers held their 4th Annual Cooper-Lotus Pablo Gonzales Memorial Challenge over the weekend. Teams were drawn and some close

racing ensued. Our Challenge Race was the last race on Saturday, with no timing sheet and a celebration to start. Team Cooper was, by general consensus, determined to be the winning team, breaking a three year ‘domination’ by Team Lotus. Lon McKinstry, a retired Elva 100 FJ driver, opened a bottle of 2001 champagne he won at that year’s Front Engine FJ gathering. Drivers, wives and friends all raised our glasses and bid a fond farewell to TWS.

Before the first CVAR Championship points race, a 15-minute **STUDENT RACE** was run. Jake Hilton skillfully drove his Bugeye Sprite to first overall, setting the fastest student lap time at 2:08.239 in the process. John Smith, driving his Datsun 240Z finished second, a little more than three seconds behind Hilton. Student driver Alain Vinson finished third overall, very carefully driving his uncle Phil’s FIA 289 Cobra). Consider that this car’s history goes back

to the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1964, and is worth more than most of our homes. Your author salutes young Alain, and car owner Phil Mulacek, for letting this beautiful and historic car ‘fire some shots in anger’ like it was bred to do, instead of just letting it languish in car shows. Cobra(s) owner Phil Mulacek finished fourth overall, driving Mark McIlyar’s blue Corvette. Phil brought a gorgeous 427 Cobra to the school, but on Friday, it suffered a pushrod problem, and in the best CVAR “help the student get through the school weekend” spirit, Mark graciously loaned Phil his big block Corvette for the Group 5 student sessions, while driving it himself in the Group 1 races. Phil’s 427 and 289 Cobras are both real deal cars from the mid-1960s, not continuation cars or modern clones. What a wonderful addition to CVAR’s last ever races at TWS. Thank you, Phil.

GROUP 6 led off Sunday afternoon’s CVAR Championship points races, with Chalmer McWilliams on pole driving his Lotus 41 FB. When the green flag waved,



photo by Don Gwynne

#61 Rex McDaniel, 1965 Austin Mini Cooper S; #7 Bob Pinkston, 1966 Volkswagen Beetle.

on Sunday afternoon.

Patrick Summerville came from Lake Charles, Louisiana, to renew his vintage license. No newcomer, he took his first school in Art Summerville’s Mustang a long, long time ago. For that matter, the FV that Patrick drove this weekend has been in the Summerville family for 16 years. Papa Summerville is reportedly “not thrilled” with the car’s current black, “rat rod” paint job. For the last 23 years, Patrick has worked as ship’s captain of a 200-ton ‘Self Elevating Offshore Work Platform’ off the West African coast. What interesting lives some of our members lead!

Richard Wright, a long-time Jaguar mechanic, brought out an MG Midget for its first racing outing. A broken water pump casting and mismatched tires caused some problems, but he got them sorted out and finished the weekend successfully. At one point, however, Instructor John Hamilton loaned Richard his “Great Pumpkin” MGB so he wouldn’t miss one on-track training session. Richard raved about how it was the friendliness and spirit of all the CVAR people that made the whole event special for him.



photo by Nick Johnson

#186 Lou Marchant, 1959 MG; #12 Mike Vecellio, 1963 Empi Crusader.

Chalmer checked out, set the fastest lap, and finished more than 48 seconds ahead of the rest of the field. Behind him, however, it was a scrap. Mitchell Hibbs fought his way from eighth on the grid to finish second overall and win the FF1 class in his Merlyn Mk11A. Greg Hibbs likewise came up from tenth on the grid to finish third overall and second FF1



Ghost signage at Texas World Speedway

in his Merlyn 20A. Back in fourth overall, Mike Bond won the FF2 class, driving his LeGrand Mk21. Fifth overall and first in FF3 was Robert Metcalf, driving the Lola T-640. Robert Rodgers won FA in his Abarth, and Jeff Walker took the win in BSR driving his beautiful, blue Elden sports racer.

The second points race combined **GROUP 1** with **GROUP 7**, and the damp track conditions favored the Porsches over the Pony Cars. Skip Duplissey sat on pole, turned the fastest lap, and led from the green flag to a fourth lap black flag to take the overall win and the C Production class win in his Porsche 911T. Seth Higgins trailed Duplissey the whole way in second overall, to win the FIA class in his Porsche Carrera. The first A Sedan to cross the finish line was the Mustang driven by Carl Janin, in fifth overall. Stephen Seitz won B Production in his Mustang. Bob Kramer won CVAR's new DP2 class in his Triumph TR-6. The entire field was black-flagged after four laps when Tim Woodruff's BMW 2002 B Sedan developed an engine bay fire. Tim got the car stopped safely and egressed OK. The fire was soon extinguished, but cleanup was going to take a while, so the field that was lined up on the fast pit lane after the black flag was told that the race was over, there would be no restart. Whenever a race is stopped prematurely due to an incident, the official finishing positions are determined by the last completed lap under green, hence the results sheets show that Tim Woodruff won the B Sedan class in ninth overall. Small consolation for a sooty engine bay, but hopefully the damage was mostly cosmetic. A rubber fuel hose had come loose at a Weber carb connection, continuously spraying fuel

and win F Production in his Triumph Spitfire. Dennis Racine romped to a C Sedan win in ninth overall driving the historic purple Mini, one of the original 'Purple People Eater' Mini team fielded in the 1960s by Overseas Motors of Fort Worth.

GROUP 3 was composed of a large field (25 cars) of Formula Vees, with all but one finishing the 15-minute points race. Bill Griffith sat on pole, led every lap, and took the win driving his Warrior. Alexandra Acemyan scored a solid second place finish after fighting off a determined Dwight Calkins during the middle of the race. Calkins did set the fastest lap in his Lynx B on his way to a 4th-place finish, less than a tenth of a second behind Nathan Baldauff's Beach 5C.

CVAR's farewell race at TWS was for its historic **GROUP 4** cars. Strangely, of 32 cars entered in the class, only five stuck around for the last race. Forrest Tindall started on pole in his Lola Mk 1, only to be overtaken on the first lap by a determined Lou Marchant, driving her dark green MGA. Forrest didn't give it up easily, regaining the lead briefly on Lap 4, finally having to settle for second overall and first in C Modified class. After starting last, Reed Yates won the VC class with a 3rd-place overall finish in his MG Type N Special. Wes Wigginton won the SFP 'Spec Sprite' class in his MG Midget in fourth overall, with David Turner just behind him in his Austin Healey Sprite. Safety Chairman Gary McFarlane wrote in the

under pressure until fuel pump electrical power was shut off.

GROUP 2 saw Gary Perser start from pole and set fastest lap in his MGB, but it was John Hamilton, driving his orange 'Great Pumpkin' MGB, that took the overall win and the EP class win while Perser lost the lead on Lap 4 and slipped to seventh overall. Joe Hovey moved up from fourth on the grid to finish second overall

CVAR newsletter: "Congratulations to Lou, Forrest, Reed, Wes and David. You were the Final Five! Lou has the distinction of being the last CVAR driver to ever win a race at TWS and David has the distinction of being the last CVAR driver to ever cross the finish line."

Then a final quiet settled over CVAR's final event at TWS.

Derek Livingston, a likeable young mechanic who worked for Bill Griffith's Bigger Hammer Racing, had been brutally beaten with a brick by two thugs in Arlington, Texas, in early January 2015, and died in hospital three weeks later. CVAR folks at the February TWS School and Races bought memorial stickers and made donations to the tune of more than \$3,000, which was gifted to help Derek's mother by the Bigger Hammer team. Although Derek's name was misspelled as 'Derrick' in the *Victory Lane* coverage of CVAR's September 2014 school, he was favorably mentioned: student Joe Robau was hoping to attend the school in his grey 1964 Corvette, but it wasn't quite ready, so he rented a Formula Vee from Bill Griffith's Bigger Hammer Racing. In his own words, Joe had an absolute ball,



#33 Mark Mcilyar, 1971 Chevy Corvette.

and found himself giddy and giggling inside his helmet as he drove the FV around TWS. He was highly complementary of the entire Bigger Hammer support team, especially Derek, his crew chief. "There was nothing I needed that Derek didn't get right on."

RIP, Derek. We all miss your cheerful smile.

CVAR's next race will be at the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit near Tulsa, Oklahoma, on April 17-19. Join us there for the 8th Annual Mike Stephens Classic, including a Formula Ford feature race and the Ron Shade/Bill Hill memorial races.

GROUP 5 STUDENTS PL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 J. Hilton/1959 Austin Healey Bugeye Sprite 2:08.239
- 2 J. Smith/1971 Nissan/Datsun 240Z
- 3 A. Vinson/1966 AC 427 Cobra
- 4 P. Mulacek/1971 Corvette
- 5 D. Schultz/1965 Ford Mustang GT
- 6 T. McLaren/1966 Austin Healey Sprite
- 7 J. Kish/1969 Datsun 510
- 8 W. Reid/1964 MGB
- 9 R. Wright/1973 MG Midget



#979 Michael Saxe,
1978 Porsche 911.

- 10 R. Mussina/1966 Datsun 240Z
- 11 T. Blakeney/1958 Austin Healey 100/6

GROUP 6 PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FB C. McWilliams/1966 Lotus 41 1:50.536
- 1 FF1 M. Hibbs/1969 Merlyn Mk 11a 1:56.214
- 2 FF1 G. Hibbs/1972 Meryln 20A
- 1 FF2 M. Bond/1975 Legrand Mk 21 1:55.301
- 1 FF3 R. Metcalf/1982 Lola T-640 2:00.726
- 3 FF1 R. Hoemke/1969 Winkelmann WDF1



#84 Jim Sandberg,
1969 Corvette.

- 1 FA R. Rodgers/1980 Abarth 33 2:05.325
- 4 FF1 A. Lemon/1969 Merlyn Mk 11a



photo by Nick Johnson

#2 Trevor Bond, 1965 Austin Mini.

- 1 BSR J. Walker/1970 Elden Sturdgess 2:06.131
- 2 FF2 P. Brownlee/1978 Royale RP-24
- 2 FA J. Barron/1972 Lola T240
- 3 FF2 M. Winn/1978 Merlyn Mk 31

GROUP 1

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 CP S. Duplissey/1971 Porsche 911 T 2:02.495
- 1 FIA S. Higgins/1974 Porsche 911 Carrera 2:05.460
- 2 FIA G. Kopecky/1973 Porsche RSR
- 2 CP D. Hightower/1972 Datsun 240Z
- 1 AS C. Janin/1968 Ford Mustang 2:05.653
- 2 AS H. Hilton/1967 Ford Mustang
- 1 BP S. Seitz/1965 Ford Mustang 2:12.522
- 3 FIA M. Saxe/1978 Porsche 911
- 1 BS T. Woodruff/1974 BMW 2002 2:16.910
- 3 CP R.B. Williams/1970 Porsche 911
- 1 AP J. Sandberg/1969 Corvette 2:20.372
- 1 DP2 B. Kramer/1976 Triumph TR6 2:13.398



photo by Nick Johnson

#22 John Sommer, 1972 Datsun 240Z.

- 1 DP P. Lee/1963 Triumph TR4 2:23.387
- 2 BS L. Gladfelter/1971 Datsun 510
- 2 DP A. Kramer/1962 Triumph TR4
- 3 BS C. Trifilio/1971 Fiat 124 Coupe
- 4 BS D. Gwynne/1970 English Ford Escort
- 4 CP T. Taff/1971 Porsche 914/6
- 3 DP R. Blake/1963 Triumph TR4

GROUP 2

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 EP J. Hamilton/1965 MGB Roadster 2:12.785
- 1 FP J. Hovey/1967 Triumph Spitfire 2:20.987
- 2 EP S. Brady/1972 Fiat Abarth 124 Spyder
- 3 EP G. Blake/1958 Triumph TR3
- 2 FP S. Knight/1968 MG Midget
- 3 FP P. Sandy/1959 Austin Healey Sprite
- 4 EP G. Perser/1966 MGB
- 4 FP A. Hofeling/1971 MG Midget
- 1 CS D. Racine/1965 Austin Mini Cooper S 2:23.095
- 5 FP D. Littlefield/1974 MG Midget
- 5 EP R. Reed/1972 Porsche 914
- 6 FP R. Fisher/1959 Austin Healey Sprite
- 6 EP K. Barstead/1965 MGB Roadster
- 2 CS D. Charlton/1967 NSU 1200TT
- 3 CS T. Bond/1965 Austin Mini
- 7 FP P. Glawe/1966 Austin Healey Sprite
- 8 FP D. Nicholson/1971 Triumph Spitfire
- 9 FP D. Vick/1964 Triumph Spitfire

GROUP 3

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FV B. Griffith/1969 Warrior
- 2 FV A. Acemyan
- 3 FV N. Baldauff/1969 Beach 5C
- 4 FV D. Calkins/1972 Lynx B

- 5 FV G. Byrne/1971 Zink FV
- 6 FV J. Ridings/1968 Zink C-4
- 7 FV D. Peterson/1972 Zink McEntire Special
- 8 FV R. Weingartner/1968 Beach 5C
- 9 FV W. Wolff/1965 Zink C-4
- 10 FV W. Murphey/1966 Zink FV
- 11 FV D. Rolison/1967 Zink Z-5
- 12 FV F. Brock/1967 Zink C-4 FV
- 1 STU R. Olmos/1970 Olmos Veloce FV
- 13 FV K. Fuller/1963 Kellison
- 2 STU M. Koegel/1969 Zink C-4
- 14 FV L. Thacker/1972 Autodynamics Caldwell D-13



photo by Don Gwynne

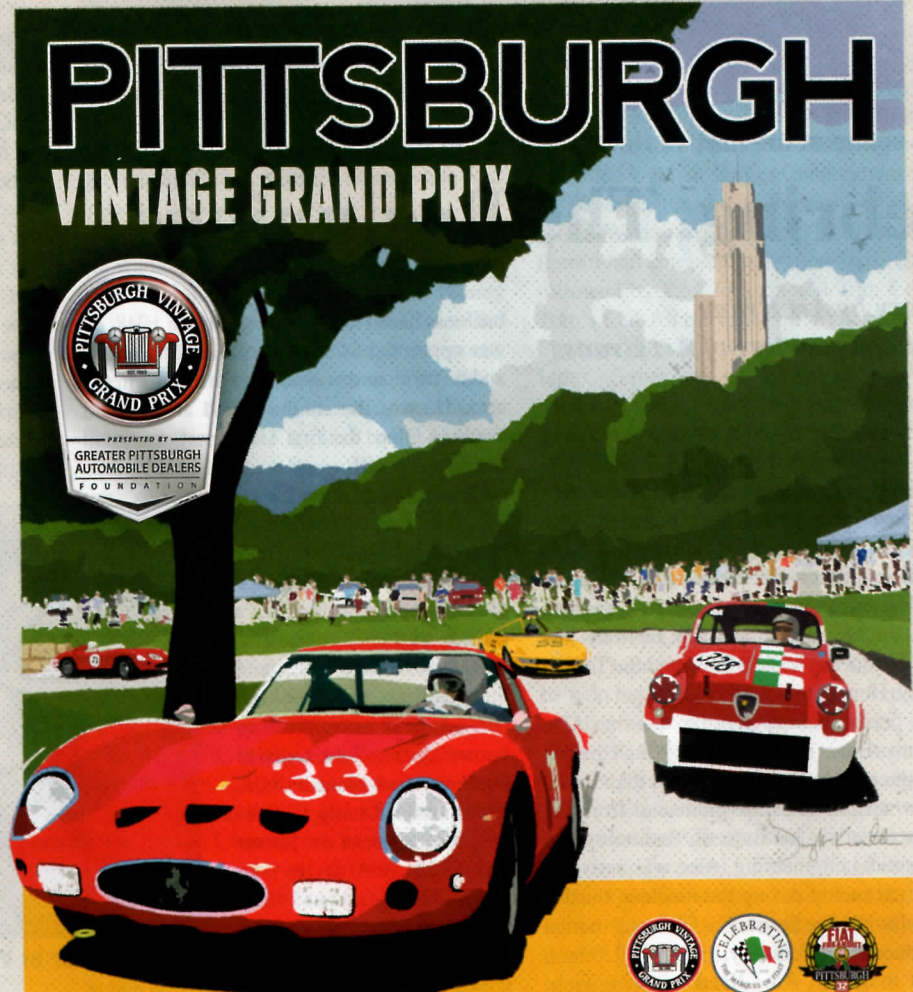
#80 John Hamilton, 1965 MGB Roadster.

- 15 FV B. Liming/1968 Zink C-4
- 16 FV S. Smith/1968 Zink FV
- 3 STU D. Fisher/1965 Autodynamics Mk IIB

- 17 FV P. Summerville/1968 Zink C4
 - 4 STU C. Chilton/1973 Beech RP-16
 - 18 FV B. Wright/1964 Zink FV
 - 5 STU J.P. Carter/1968 Zink C-4
 - 6 STU S. Patterson/1968 Zink C-4
- GROUP 3**
PL CL DRIVER/CAR
1 VB L. Marchant/1959 MGA 2:43.273
1 CM F. Tindall/1960 Lola Mk I 2:41.103
1 VC R. Yates/1935 MG N Special 3:07.754
1 SFP W. Wigginton/1972 MG Midget 3:08.307
2 SFP D. Turner/1964 A-H Sprite

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