

**MAY 1966**

*walking  
the  
course  
at  
LIME ROCK*



<b>THE</b>		<b>MOHAWK- HUDSON REGION</b>
<b>KNOCK</b>		
<b>OFF</b>		

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The Mohawk Hudson Region of the Sports Car Club of America includes the following counties of New York State: Rensselaer, Schoharie, Montgomery, Albany, Schenectady, Fulton, Greene, Saratoga, Columbia, Washington, Warren, Hamilton, Essex, Franklin and Clinton.

Regional meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Circle Inn, south on US 9, Latham, N.Y. Information concerning the Region, membership, activities, may be obtained from any of the officers.

\*\*\*\*\*

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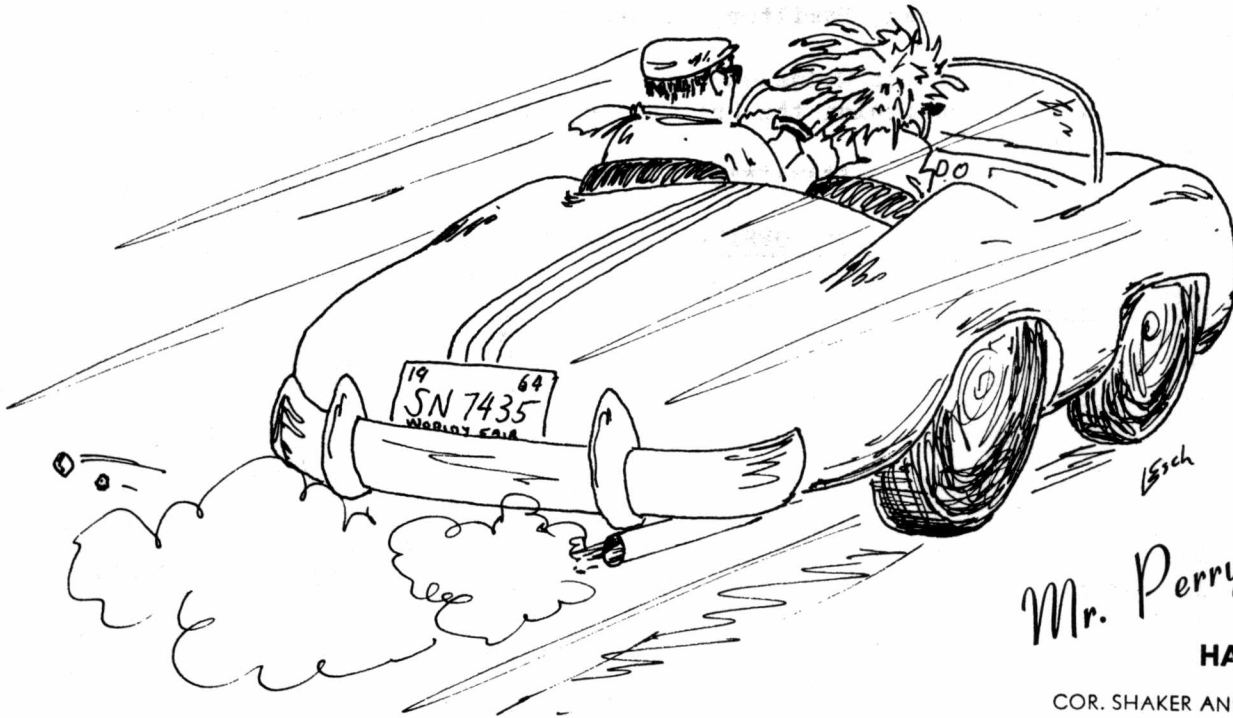
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## THE COVER

Led by Pied Piper Jim Haynes, student drivers walk the course at the INEC Driver's School at Lime Rock Park. Mohawk-Hudson's own trio of student drivers is in the foreground - Dave MacClumpha in the light jacket, Howard Hayes and Bob Birke, with the stripe on his arm. The spot is just opposite Flag Station 5, the platform at 6 is just visible on the left, and the right hander up the hill marks Station 7. Who'd ever have thought a road racing circuit could be so scenic? We love this picture.

THIS MONTH

All photos are by Joe Corbett, who also served as pit crew for Howie Hayes and Bob Birk. Joe and Marge took lots of movie film, too, which will make for some interesting looking at a meeting sometime soon.

John Coons tells us about the Auto Show, and he apparently fell victim to the charms of LeChanteclair.

Mac Townsend exhibits another of his talents - as a cartoonist. Phil Schatz recopies his work and added a couple more.

We finally coaxed Phil Raeder into letting us "tell all" about the "Beast," and the Knock Off runs a real live road test.

The editor didn't get her article on Sebring finished so it isn't in this issue.

NEXT MONTH

The race. The race. May 14 is the day and the June issue will tell us all about it - if somebody will write -

Speaking of writing, the editors heartily concur with the letter submitted by the Corbetts in this issue. We try to temper some of the more spectacular verbs used by motor sports writers, but missed the one which implied that one of our members was driving beyond the road conditions at the time.

We'd like all contributors to take heed of this - and while we like exciting writing, we also want reliable reporting.

INEC Gymkhana Rules will be printed next month.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dan Gurney wasn't the only driver at Sebring who didn't know the rules. More than one "guest" in the sand banks at Corner 3 asked for assistance, which, if given, would have disqualified his car.

# REGIONAL RAMBLINGS *by GENE BIRDSEY*

Most everyone knows what a tremendous success the Driver's School was because just about everyone was there. Jim Haynes (President of Lime Rock Park) said it was one of the best schools ever held at his track. Just about everyone did double duty, that is, 2 jobs. We had an exceptionally fine group of students but a lot of this quality can be attributed to the good group of instructors. Jim Haynes' lecture and course walk was one of the high lights of the school. All drivers, old and new, certainly benefited from Jim's words of wisdom.

Our race is only about 3 weeks away. That means lots of work for every one again. We had approximately 50 cars at the school and expect about 150 at the race. In simple arithmetic that means 3 times the work. We need 20-25 technical inspectors, girls for registration and workers in all fields - scorers, timers, etc., etc. Please volunteer. We need you to make this a success.

We will soon have log books for licensing scrutineers, pit, paddock, scorers, and timers. If you worked the last event get your log book and I will be happy to sign it and give you credit for working on the driver's school. Working is fun.

Orchids to Pisto. (See last month's Knock Off). We should have 50 members like you. We sincerely hope that each member is getting what he wants from the Club. We know we have members with varied interests but because they are capable of doing an excellent job when they do volunteer, they are a valuable asset. Sometimes it may seem to these members that we over-do the urging to participate, but we're afraid to have even one person feel left out - and sometimes just one little push can get a shy one going. If we tend to forget that members have a right to do as much or as little as they choose, because of desire or other obligations, we're sorry, but we have a lot of fun - and tend to judge others similarly.

Participation is fun, even if you don't do it full time - eh, Pisto? See you at Lime Rock May 14 - early!

\* \* \* \* \*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MAY

- 1 - MG Car Club Annual Gymkhana  
Montgomery Wards Parking Lot
- Autocross - Airborne Park, Rte 22,  
South of Plattsburgh
- 8 - AMEC Autocross, Whites Beach
- 14 - Mohawk Hudson Regional Race, Lime Rock Park
- 15 - Empire Economy Run, Contact Hunter Currin  
Autocross - South of Plattsburgh
- 22 - BMSC Gymkhana, Pittsfield, Mass.

# LIME ROCK *as seen by...*



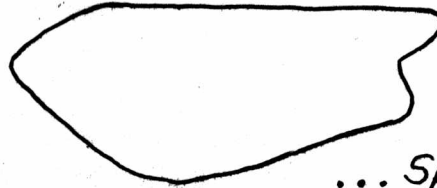
... local residents



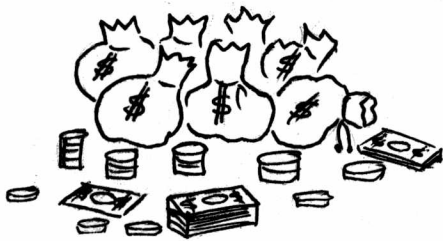
... hairy car drivers



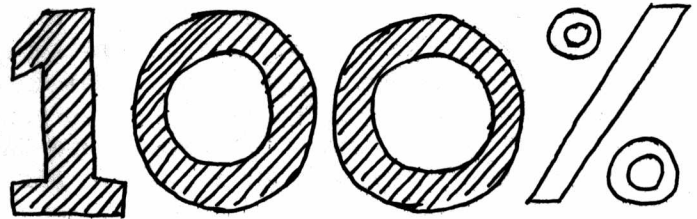
... Elan drivers



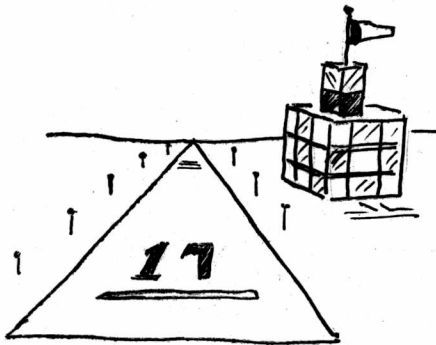
... Sprite drivers



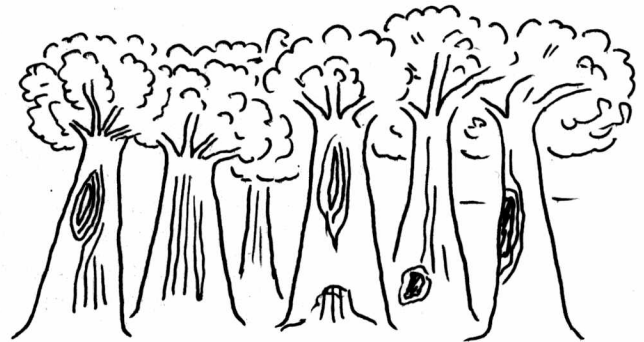
... Jim Haynes



... local enthusiasts



... airplane pilots



... beavers

idea by "Mac" Townsend

# TUNED EXHAUST

New job, travel, other editorial commitments and a thousand and one other details account for the disorganization of this column this month.

We are very pleased and grateful for the help which has been volunteered from all sides and which is getting the Knock Off organized in superior fashion. A new mast head page will be set up for the next issue giving proper credit to all special slaves and title-holders. We can't pay anything for the help, but we CAN give you an impressive sounding and official title. Special orchids this month to Marcia Merrill for getting our mailing list in shape.

The use of the editorial "we" has been bandied about in several other publications recently and we are at a loss to know whether it is IN or OUT these days. Perhaps it may even be camp, but where in the out is that? At any rate, we have resolved the question here in the Knock Off office (that's Terri's dining room table) by writing in the first person plural where club affairs are concerned. The personal pronoun "I" is used for personal experiences or when an opinion not necessarily that of Mohawk Hudson Region is expressed. And we must remember to post this column lest I forget and the pronouncements become inconsistent.

The Sebring story is written and printed separately from this column because it was a very personal experience.

## SAFETY

We fulfill our penchant for preaching this month by reproducing - again, elsewhere in this issue, several of the more enlightened campaigns which have been instituted by governmental and commercial interests. The NYS Department of Motor Vehicles "Learn and Live Program" refutes some myths about driving statistics. We have become quite fond of the Mobil "We Want You to Live" series. Have you seen the TV one in which a car is driven off a 10 story building? Very graphic.

## SCCA Officials Licensing

The Divisional licensing program for SCCA officials should provide a system of checks and balances, introduce a more personal element into the licensing concept and should result in the establishment of a group of competent and qualified license holders. The choice of the Divisional officer responsible for the issuance of licenses for a particular specialty is a critical one. He must know his RE's and must be able to check up on any questionable applicants. He must be cognizant of the kind of experience and training given by the various clubs and if necessary, he must be brave enough to turn down license applications submitted by groups which are condemned and ridiculed in private and barely tolerated in public. Only in this way will they be forced to improve their programs and come within sight of the SCCA standards for performance and safety.

## THE AUTO SHOW

It's really true. If you've seen one, you've seen 'em all. I've finally been to an Auto Show and I don't much care if I get to another. The displays all look



## TUNED EXHAUST (Cont'd)

better in photographs, the models (except for the lovely negro girl displaying the Pasha) were all tired and deadly, and except for the talking MGB-GT, the showmanship was totally unimaginative.

Yep, you read correctly. The talking MGB-GT. Got into the car and mumbled something about what a nice machine it seemed to be, and the car said "Thank You" in a very proper British voice. I addressed another comment to it, and it replied again. Threw some loaded questions at it, and it fielded them quite well. It sent greetings along to Gordy Morris (the car had heard us mention him earlier) and then we left - and never did find where the embodiment of the voice was ensconced. Jolly good sport, talking with a friendly MGB-GT.

FLAGGING

The battle rages. With all due respect to the history of the organization, its pioneering in the flagging and communications specialties, we - (I mean I) must join with others of the Area I trained flaggers in taking exception to the "techniques and concepts" promoted by RCA and insisted upon at a driver's school for people who will be driving the SCCA circuit. While the "Rules of the Road" as expressed in GCR appendix R may be considered open to interpretation, I have talked these points over with drivers. So here I go, sticking my neck out and joining the fray in opposing certain RCA practices and defending the NER and NYR flag discipline - which except for the use of green flag, is compatible to the FIA flag rules specified for such events as Sebring.

I first quote from the GCR.

"1. Flags - The following flag signals shall be obeyed WITHOUT QUESTION:

GREEN - A race is under way at the instant the green flag falls. This flag shall normally be in possession of the Chief Starter only, and will not ordinarily be shown at the flag stations around the course. When displayed, the green flag indicates that the course is clear.

YELLOW - Motionless - Take care, Danger, NO PASSING, until past emergency area.

Waved - Great Danger, be prepared to stop - NO PASSING, until past emergency area.

RED - Stop IMMEDIATELY. Clear the circuit as well as circumstances permit. The race has been stopped.

BLUE WITH DIAGONAL YELLOW STRIPE - Motionless - Another competitor is following you very closely.

Waved - A faster competitor is trying to overtake you. Give way.

YELLOW WITH VERTICAL RED STRIPES - take care. Oil has been spilled or a slippery condition exists somewhere on the road.

WHITE - An ambulance or service vehicle is on the circuit. Take care."

## TUNED EXHAUST (Cont'd)

Whereas the GCR states that the green flag "will not ordinarily be shown at the flag stations around the course" it does not preclude its display. Drivers I've talked to prefer the display of green around the course because, to quote one, "in this case management by exception is not desirable. We realize that flag people are human, too, and we'd prefer some overt assurance that the course is clear, rather than wonder about it." In addition, the communications problems can be pretty tricky concerning the display of green only at start-finish to indicate a clear course (especially on a large circuit, when conditions change frequently and quickly).

Yellow means no passing. It means possible danger soon ahead. It is a course condition flag, and therefore most significant to the driver. The white flag is an information flag and does not imply that the service vehicle may not be passed - especially if the course is otherwise clear. The display of both yellow and white to cover a service vehicle abuses the intent of the yellow flag warning and imposes unfair and unwarranted restrictions upon the drivers - especially when the yellow is displayed half the circuit away from the danger incident, and its display is continued until ordered stricken by control - with attendant delays. A certain element of discretion and responsibility should be entrusted to the flag station - after all, the flag people are out where the action is and in a better position to evaluate yellow flag requirements than the "tower people."

A group of sincere, hard working, first time out flag students manned (and womanned) station 2 at the Lime Rock INEC driver's school with two SCCA licensed flaggers to train, guide and cover them. Hopefully, these are people who will flag with us at Lime Rock and Thompson and Bridgehampton, too, and so we licensed people attempted to point out the differences in flag techniques, but emphasized that when you work at the Glen, you play it the RCA way. We had several incidents of real action at station 2 - the Fairthorpe fire, cars down the escape road, a spin or two, which kept the two experienced people hopping. The flaggers, beginners all, looked to the flag display at start-finish to guide them. It rattled my cage to be censured for the "mistakes" of my beginning students when they were emulating the starter. When I posed this in their defense, I was told by Control (I mean Abel ... able?) that "everybody knows that starters are exempt from flag procedure regulations and develop their own techniques." Well, I don't know that - nobody ever told me before. I wonder tho', how the drivers to whom a starter is conveying the orders of the Chief Steward (as specified under GCR Appendix S, instruction 2) can possibly know what he's trying to say if he is exempt from standard flag procedure.

I think a flamboyant start is great - with cars driving under a starter who has just executed a grandejette ten feet in the air. A pas de deux with the checker is magnifique. But during an event - c'mon!

We may not care how we look on the job, with our non-standard coveralls and funny hats, but by golly, we do care about maintaining timely, valid and standard communications with the drivers via the SCCA specified communications medium - the flags.

Continued

TUNED EXHAUST (Cont'd)

MISCELLANY

The Mill Street gang drove to Lime Rock in a Mini-Moke and George wore her red sweater.

The spectacular demise of the PA system (complete with UFO type noises) had something to do with "fried mice." Poor harassed Jim Haynes changed all the tubes before he found the dead duo.

The BSCOA phones won't work if you don't have batteries in them.

Coco Chinetti wheeling a Lancia around the circuit very handily. Inside rear wheel up a good 18 inches all the way around the hairpin. Look for good things from him.

Keep you eye on a gold Corvette coupe. Another excellent first-time-out.

Who was the ringer in Ray Gaul's car during one session?

Bob Birke is finding out that it's impossible to achieve unique status when your car is everybody's pet. But do get the heck out of the car when it's on fire, Bob. You can help put the fire out just as well from the outside!

Dave MacClumpha doing very well in his Mini. Smooth, quick, but never too close to the edge. We'd like to remind Dave, tho, that when flag people keep getting down on their hands and knees to peek under you when you go by, make a quick pit stop. You might lose a position, but save your car.

Many, many thanks to all of our New England and Northern New Jersey and New York friends who came out to help. Thanks for the use of the New England flags and the BSCOA phones.

And lets see all those flag students out again.

*Terri*  
Terri

\*\*\*\*\*

When you see a single headlight approaching you at night, always assume that the entire car is on your side - and leave room for it. Might spare you a close shave some night.

\*\*\*\*\*

FOR SALE - 1965 Sprite Mk III. 2 tops, 2 Pirelli snow tires. British racing green. Very good condition. Call Jack Merrill 465-4956.

As "on-the-spot" observers during the unfortunate incident on the last leg of the Rallye O' the Snowflake, we would like to add a thought to the well-written article which appeared in the April issue of the Knock Off -- in fairness to all concerned.

Almost everyone rounding "that corner" will admit, we're sure, that they were surprised by the fact that not only did it develop into an icy, downhill, right-hander, but also that the crown of the road sloped down to the left, without a warning of the dropoff to the intersecting road.

The first two cars (one a fwd, the other a rear-engine) rounded that corner with no trouble as far as we could determine; their design undoubtedly being in their favor. When Barney Galinsky came up and around -- in the Mustang -- it was, as a matter of fact, at a much slower pace than the preceding two. We're not making a point of defense for Barney, however, we do feel that the words, "over-cooked" were, perhaps, jotted down a little quickly (the Knock Off deadline kind of creeps up on a person), and unfortunately were a poor choice. We feel qualified to say that by no means did Barney "over-cook it." Besides the fact that the Mustang is a relatively heavy car, road conditions also were a major factor. Not to make a federal case of it, but just to clarify any doubts in any minds as to Barney's driving skills. Little "snowflakes" sometimes become giant "snowballs." (No puns intended.) Our choices of words to one another may be clearly defined in our own minds, but why take the chance of having to defend ourselves to "non-motor sport types" should an actual misjudgment occur and someone cynically murmur, "Well, remember those guys on that Rallye?"

The Corbetts

\* \* \* \* \*

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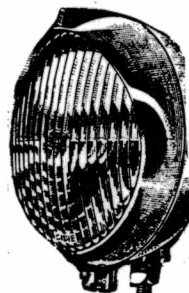
JOHN BULL PLUS MANY OTHERS



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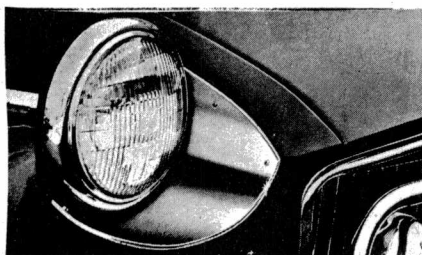
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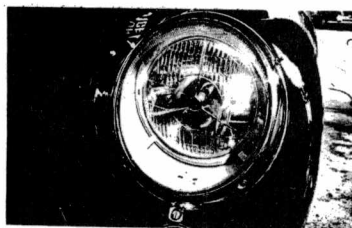


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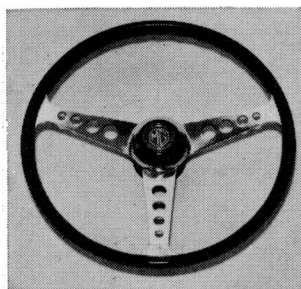
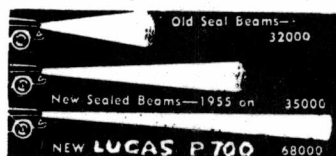
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PICTURE PAGES

A Driver's School is an interesting place. First they talk at you.

1. John Tuit, from Northern New Jersey, served as Chief Tech Inspector for us at Lime Rock, too.

Then they take you for a walk.

2. The group, led by Jim Haynes, heads into the hook, and walks the line.

And then they look at your car.

3. Tech inspection line has Carl Scharl and Bill Turner in action.

Then they talk at you some more.

4. Mo-Hud RE Gene Birdsey has the bull horn for a few words of wisdom.

After a while you get to put your suit on and sit in your car.

5. David MacClumpha, suited and boxed, waits his turn. Ray Gaul dares to walk in front.

Some cars do funny things.

6. "Coco" Chinetti's Lancia kept that rear wheel up most all the way around the hook.

And you get to see some exotic machinery.

7. Tech inspector looks at one of the most exotic of them all, Gene Birdsey's .....oops, we mean Bob Birk's Fairthorpe.

8. That's the Fairthorpe actually in motion.

Besides cars doing funny things, there are people doing funny things.

9. Editor, Terri, displaying yellow flag during practise session. No passing, fellas.

Then they talk at you some more.

10. Jim Haynes directs the student's attention back down the main straight from Station 2.

11. That's Bob Birk in costume.

12. And David MacClumpha putting his wheel back down.

13. Carl Foster on the phones.



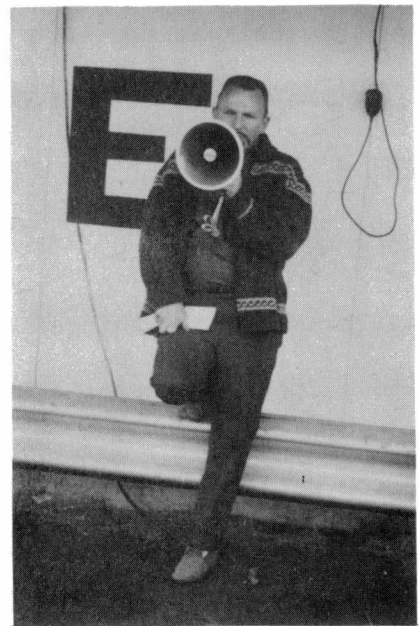
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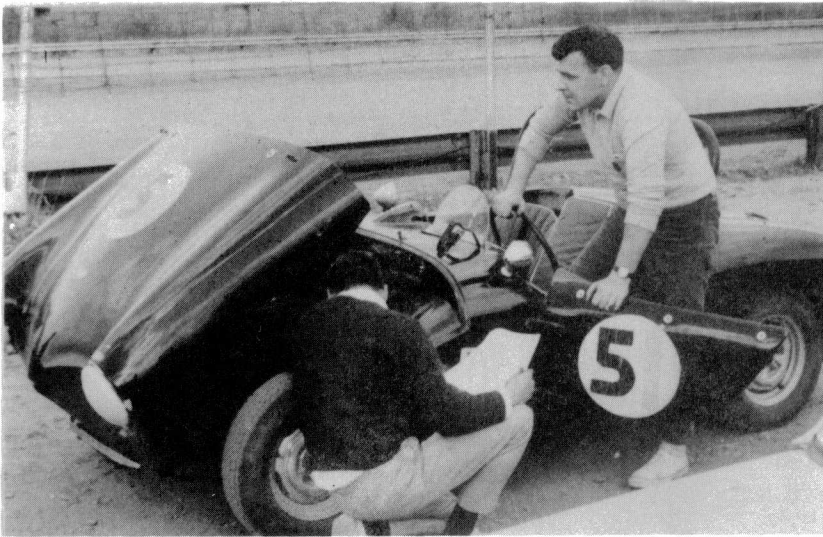


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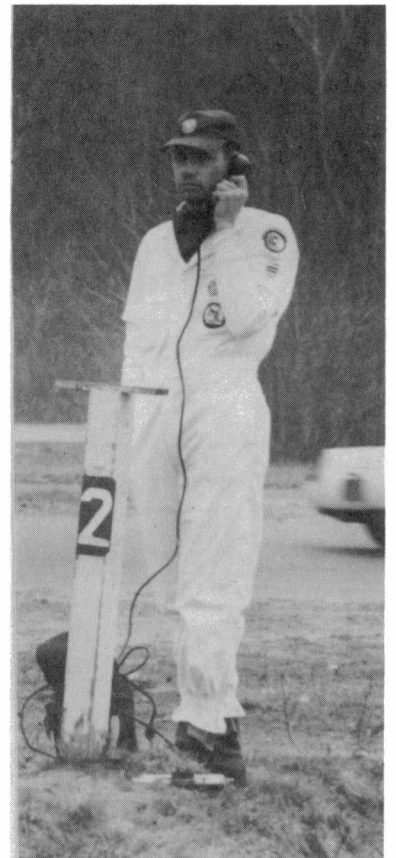
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12



13

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TEEN-AGE DRIVING FABLES  
(a Learn and Live safety message)

Talking things over is a common way of learning, especially for teen-agers. It's a good way to learn, but sometimes fact and fable get mixed up in the process.

Some of the stories that teen-agers exchange about driving are more fables than facts. They are based upon misinformation or misconceptions. These fables can be dangerous, because young drivers may believe them and act accordingly.

Here are some of the popular "Teen-Age Driving Fables" that are false or only partly true, and the reasons why they shouldn't be taken seriously.

Fable -- "Most teen-agers are good drivers. It's only a few that cause the trouble" Is this true? No! Each year, 40 per cent of our young drivers are involved in traffic accidents. Is this "a few" bad drivers? Of course not, it's a substantial percentage, and the accident group includes honor students, as well as those who are not doing well in school.

Fable -- "Insurance companies pick on young drivers by setting higher rates for people under 25 years of age" -- Believe this one? Here are some of the statistics that are used in setting insurance rates. In New York State, only 14 per cent of our licensed drivers are under 25. This 14 per cent of our drivers has 27 per cent of our fatal accidents, 21 per cent of our injury accidents, and 22 per cent of our property damage accidents. The rates are higher because the risks are higher.

Fable -- "Teen-agers are good drivers because they have fast reactions" -- Think about this one for a moment. Are fast reactions and good driving equal? Not unless the person having the fast reaction has the experience and knowledge needed to make the correct reaction. Many of the fast reactions of teen-agers are the wrong reactions -- they move before they think. The result is often tragic. So quick reactions can be, and often are, more dangerous than slow reactions where the driver thinks before he acts.

Fable -- "Being interested in the mechanics of cars helps you to be a better driver" -- This is partly true, but only partly. The "little old lady" who doesn't know a spark plug from a lug wrench may be able to handle a car more expertly than a teen-ager who can repair an engine. Mechanical knowledge can be helpful, but it isn't as important as good judgment and experience.

These are some of the commonest "Teen-Age Fables." Most of them ignore the primary requirement for good driving - good judgement and extensive experience.

The only way to get driving experience is by driving. And the best advice that any teen-ager can take -- and this is no fable -- is to take it easy, and take the time to learn to drive well while you are obtaining your driving experience. Forget about the fancy stops and starts, the playing with speed, and the reckless showing off.

Concentrate on becoming a good driver, one that drives by the rules and is respected by other drivers. If you don't you may not live long enough to become a really good driver.

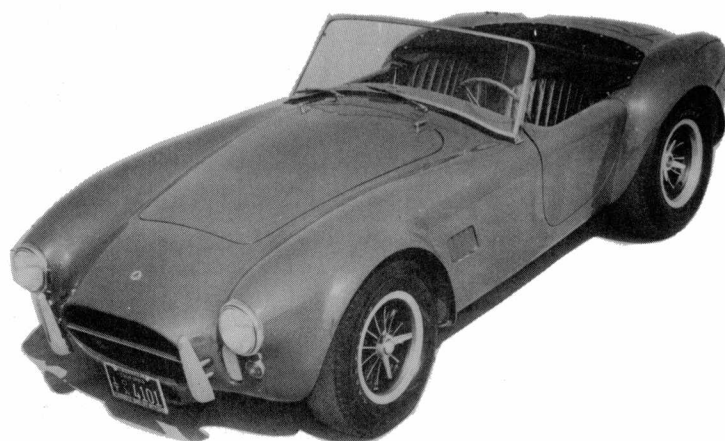
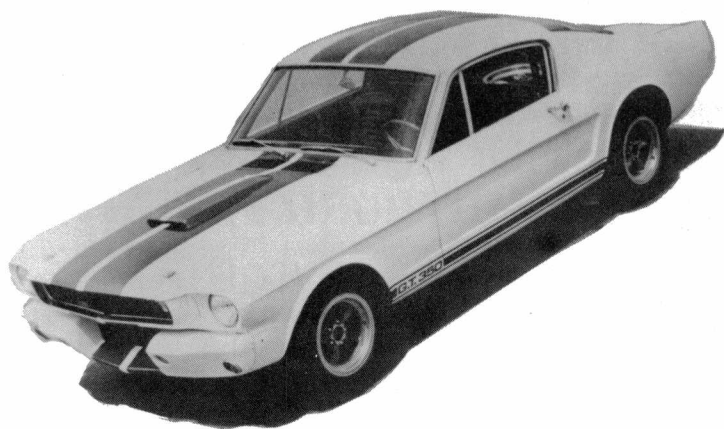
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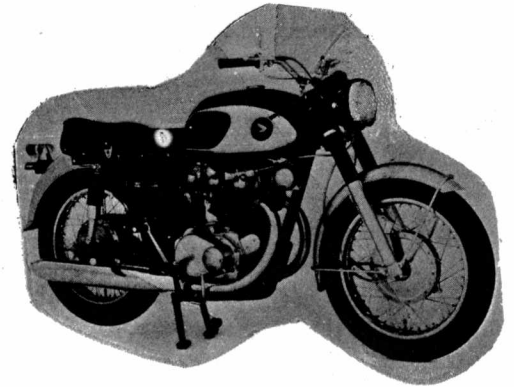
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## ROADTESTS

The Knock Off is herewith presenting, to the best of its knowledge, its first roadtest of a REAL car. We don't propose to do this as a regular thing, since we propose to test only "special interest" cars - cars our members have in some way modified, improved, and made just a little different than just stock. We'd appreciate receiving tips on the existence of any other such cars in the region. Tests of the readily available type cars can be found in your nearest national magazine, and these tests are probably more accurate and comprehensive than anything we might undertake.

As you can imagine, these tests are and will be done under less than ideal conditions. First, we don't have a great gang of stop watches, Tapley meters, etc. Also, we don't have a racetrack at our disposal, so top speed runs are out of the question for obvious reasons. We do our times with hand held stop watches, and where performance times cannot be taken, and we feel they might be instructive, we will estimate them, and show that it's an educated guess. Driving will typically be done by the owner, and we will rely heavily on him or her for driving impressions, although some brave soul from the editorial staff will spend some time at least as a passenger, to verify and comment on the results. In this particular test the owner had taken the car to the South Glens Falls Dragway (!) so the SS $\frac{1}{4}$  time is very likely extremely accurate.

And away we go .....

\* \* \* \* \*

They've done it again! Last year was bad enough, but two years running is a bit too much. SCCA has pre-punched the GCR and the Production car specs just enough differently that they will not go into the same binder.

CAR: MG Midget Twin Cam  
OWNER: Phil Raeder

DATA SECTION

Engine

Make - Alfa Romeo - 4 Cylinder - 1570 cc (95.8 ci)

Compression Ratio - 9.7 : 1

Power output - 115 bhp (est)

Carburetor - 35mm Solex twin choke compound

Chassis, Frame, etc.

1964 MG Midget (Red), wire wheels

Drive Train

Gear Ratios,	5th	.....	3.4:1
	4th	.....	4.2:1
	3rd	.....	5.7:1
	2nd	.....	8.2:1
	1st	....	13.8:1

General

Weight	1580 lbs (est)	
Wheelbase	80.5 inches	
Tire size	165 x 13 rear )	Pirelli
	155 x 13 front)	Cinturatoes

Road Test Results

Acceleration, standing start to

30 mph	.....	3.5 sec
40 mph	.....	4.9 sec
50 mph	.....	6.9 sec
60 mph	.....	8.5 sec
70 mph	.....	12.1 sec
80 mph	.....	15.3 sec
90 mph	.....	19.7 sec
100 mph	.....	27.0 sec est.
SS $\frac{1}{4}$ mi	.....	16.5 @ 84 mph
Top Speed Estimate	- 107 mph, 7000 rpm in 4th, or	
(not tested)	- 120 mph, 6000 rpm in 5th	

Fuel Consumption - 25 to 36 mpg, super premium only  
Oil Consumption - 250 miles/quart

MG MIDGET  
TWIN CAM  
  
ROAD TEST

## ROAD TEST - MG MIDGET TWIN CAM - "My word! - cams and things!"

Ever since the first Sprite (and its alter ego, the MG Midget) has appeared on the scene it has been the beneficiary - or victim - of an immense variety of souping. Indeed, we wonder sometimes if there are any unmolested cars at all, other than those still on dealer's floors. A few have been engine swapped. On the west coast it has usually been a big vee 8, and for a time Jack Brabham Motors offered a Midget with a CovCli 1150 put in. Now Mohawk-Hudson Region can boast its own engine swapped "Spridget."

Some of you have seen and/or heard of the red "MG Midget Twin Cam" in this area. We mentioned it in an earlier issue of the Knock Off and revealed that it is a 1964 MG Midget belonging to Phil Raeder, and into which he has put an Alfa Romeo 1570cc engine with 5 speed gearbox. This is, by the way, the same car that went so fast last year, with the original engine, and on which Phil wrote a technical article for last year's September Knock Off. As a winter project, he decided to do the swap, after having "lucked on" to the engine/gearbox.

In terms of appearance, the car is virtually stock. From outside there is no obvious evidence of the molestation, though the perceptive observer may notice a rather large exhaust pipe lurking under the left side. The lack of bumpers may also give the more astute a slight clue. The car has a larger and somewhat more squarish gearbox tunnel, finished in a black leather which matches the rest of the interior. There are Alfa tach and speedo in the original Midget dash holes, and these, with the shortened Alfa shift handle, are noticed only by the more experienced Spridget people. To the casual observer, the interior modifications look "store bought." In all, the detail, finish, workmanship and quality are at least the equal of the average show room stock sports car. It required some originality to keep the stock defrosters in place and operative with the MG heater control grafted to the Alfa control valve under the hood (bonnet).

Now, what's it like to drive the Beast? Easy quick, and ~~smo-o-o-th~~. It is not a car that comes on like a jungle cat or a big fish - (if the driver is adept) - but is rather a much more sophisticated car which must be driven a while before one realizes just how fast it can be.

For a number of reasons, getting started requires a little finesse. The car has not yet been fitted with any kind of locking differential, so when fast take offs are done there is a bit of fuss with wheelspin - even with the big Pirellis. The car has a light flywheel, so starting from rest requires a little care. Once underway, the car is very much like a Spridget with suspension options (which this car has and which were described in an earlier KO). The engine is only slightly heavier, so no handling vices have been introduced. The combination of the added "instant Power" and the big radial ply tyres does, however, cause the car to be more power sensitive in any given corner. A change in power setting in a turn will produce an immediate reaction and, as long as the power is held on (and the driver has had his daily ration of brave pills), the car can be put through a corner very fast, and with far less

ROAD TEST

MG MIDGET  
TWIN CAM

# LOTUS

● It is an incredibly safe car, forgiving and vice-free and so obviously comes from a parent-hood of racing knowledge; it is essentially a sports car, and as Colin Chapman says, it is a fun car. It is not cheap, but then nothing that is good is cheap, but to anyone contemplating buying a cheaper 2-seater sports car, and there are many of them, I would say "Sell the television set, the washing machine, the wife's car, give up smoking, even give up drinking, but scrimp and save and buy an Elan, you won't be disappointed." It is a car that every young man should strive his utmost to acquire, and a lot of old men too. ●

*Denis Jenkinson  
MOTOR SPORT  
MAY 1965*

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## ROAD TEST - MG MIDGET TWIN CAM (Cont'd)

talent than would be required by any of our popular swing axle cars. If the gear gets away there's plenty of suds to get things sorted out, but look out for the typical Spridget sensitivity to rough pavement. Handling in the wet is exemplary, due in large measure to the really superb tyres, but wheelspin does come on earlier.

After all of this, it is a surprise to find the car an excellent and docile street machine. The fifth gear is great and makes 70 mph cruising a matter of 3500 rpm (and about 36 mpg).

Phil told us that the engine is the 1570 cc unit, to which he has added TI super pistons (9.7:1), TI super cams, a light flywheel, careful balance job, and some extra clearance on the pistons. The Super (or GT) valve springs and distributor (Bosch) are used, and while the engine will run freely and without fuss right up to 8000, the owner does not normally go beyond 7000. Carburetion is minimum, which adds smoothness, and Phil has a rather complete selection of jets and venturis, so he can emphasize performance in any range. Venturi changes do not produce dramatic changes, just definite and observable ones. (At gymkhanas while everybody else is changing tyre pressures, Phil swaps Venturis. Kinda shakes people up.) The gearbox is stock, though the clutch has been beefed up. The wildest set of exhaust pipes curl both over and under the steering column and have an on-off option at the output end. Engine accessibility is at least as good as either of the original installations and for many aspects of maintenance, much better. Workmanship under the hood is as good as the interior of the car - immaculate with all weld spots repainted, and so on. The stock radiator (MG) is used, but the Alfa engine is so cold-blooded that a 160 degree thermostat is required, even in the summer. A ground clearance of 5 inches has been maintained as a result of careful design. Engine removal presents no problems and takes only about two hours. All in all, the Beast is as well designed as any car, and better than a great many.

Road testing was fun though the acceleration times varied some as a result of wheelspin. The times given are typical averages of several runs to each speed. The car has been run at the South Glens Falls Dragway, where the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile time was taken - after considerable tuning, timing and switching venturis brought the car to its peak. (Phil chuckles when he tells us that while there, one of the locals came over to the Beast, while the hood was down, and said casually "this one goes better than any I've seen before; got a cam in it, or something?") The car was also run at Keene Hillclimb, but the results were inconclusive, due to a sick fuel pump (a faulty new one, right out of the box). At Keene the car was getting about 7500 in third coming out of the lower section and then it would drop dead till the fuel pump did a little ineffectual pumping. Fitting a double pickup, larger diameter line, and Bendix Blue Gap has solved all the problems. Took second place after having been moved up a class, even while sick.

So, what have we learned? Not much, except that a member has a bastard car that's jolly fun to drive. There are many cars that would give equal performance, and for a lot less work, and maybe even a lot less money. (We asked Phil what it all cost, but he wouldn't say, except to remark that it was a good deal less than most would expect.)

The way he's peddling left-over MG parts and left-over Alfa parts, we suspect he made money! Anyone who builds a car like this has considerable assurance that

Continued

## ROAD TEST - MG MIDGET TWIN CAM (Cont'd)

while other cars may look the same, they aren't, really! Besides, (and with due respect to that, and other, marques) when Joe Hotshoe and his rump rump rump Mustang sidle up, look superior, and then get wiped out, it is all sort of worth it.

POSTLOG

We were surprised to hear recently that Phil was selling the engine out of the Beast and this had us confused - until we saw a large heavy box being carried into his garage. The box had a bunch of Italian writing on the side. Hey, gang, Keene is June 11 and I wouldn't miss it for the world this year .....

\* \* \* \* \*

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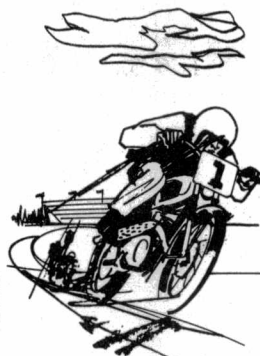
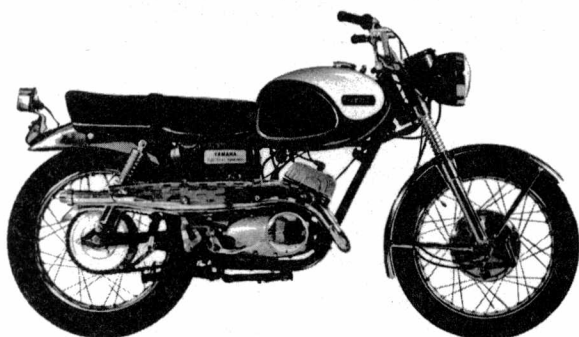
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## ONE EVENING IN THE CITY

by

John K. Coons

If you want to do things right, don't enter "Le Chanteclair" for dinner at 7PM and expect to see much of the N.Y. Auto Show afterwards. They just don't make evenings that big. This had been my first visit to the famed "Le Chanteclair," and a very enjoyable one it was. After flagging the waiter for a translation of the menu, then consuming appropriate drinks, appetizers, soup, etc, and finally the main course, dessert, and coffee, I remembered I still had a show to go to.

As I found afterwards, one can see the show in the period from 9 to 11 PM if he resolves to bypass certain cars, such as (in my case) full-size (oversize?) sedans.

As I entered the main lobby, I recognized the familiar shape and paint of Craig Breedlove's record machine. What must it be like to "drive" a lightly-disguised jet engine!

Coming back to reality and rounding a corner, I next came upon the late pininfarina's P.F. Sigma safety car. It obviously reflects much thought, and has the first operational chrome strip I've yet seen (on each side, the strip is actually a track in which the door slides backward to open).

Bumbling through the first floor, I came upon what was evidently an immaculately restored Alfa "Gran Sport" of 1930 vintage; except it was brand new. Alfa is building 100 copies of this beautiful classic at \$5000. Check your local Alfa dealer.

I spent the following 10 minutes admiring from as many angles as possible a Fiat-Abarth 2-litre. Its shape is in the current coupe-prototype vogue, and a top-end of 170 mph is claimed. I don't remember the price, but as I looked at the tag I remember deciding to buy not more than two or three of them.

I next wandered over to the Dunlop stand to pick up literature and found myself talking to a charming miss whose knowledge of tires shamed mine. As I wandered through subsequent exhibits, I was composing tire-type questions to ask my new pneumatic friend, but I was foiled by the rapid approach of closing time. Curses!

Upon entering the second floor, I came upon six impressive looking examples of a car named "Ferrari" or the like. Judging from its equestrian name plate, I presume the car to be another copy of the Mustang. But six Webers .....?

Porsche had on display one of their "Carrera Six's". Having watched this machine circulate Sebring for 12 hours, I can vouch for its potency. But will it wear down the dino at LeMans this year?

Moving over to the Jag stand, I voiced something less than contentment at my having waited seven weeks (so far) for an E-Type fender. (I know; I shouldn't have bashed it in the first place!) Trying to think of other things, I looked at the much-publicized XK-E "2+2", with its unfortunate "ambulance" appearance. I felt like having a heart-to-heart talk with Sir William Lyons about keeping the E-Type a purist's car. And what about my fender?

Continued

## ONE EVENING IN THE CITY (Cont'd)

The BMC stand was less depressing for me. For example, did you know that the Sprite prototypes which did so well at Sebring develop approx. 100 BHP at 7000 rpm from 1295 cc and an 11.9-to-1 compression ratio? They were a sight to warm the heart. Of course the pride of the BMC stand was the MGB-GT now available with optional chrome wheels and dunlop SP-41's.

I won't describe the big hit that the Rover 2000 TC made, as Car and Driver has monopolized all the favorable superlatives in its description. It is an impressive machine.

Within the price range most of us can afford, the car which impressed me most, hands down, was the new Saab Sonett. Pictures don't do it justice. It's a honey! Seriously, don't make another purchase 'til you've seen the Sonett at \$3,300. I'm not a salesman, but see me for more info, if interested.

One last observation: I hope, for the sake of A.M.C. that their "AMX" is a preview of that firm's future. With all doors and rumbler seat (!) open, I could not make a judgment as to the overall lines of the vehicle, but this is certain: A design such as this will reverse the unfortunate image conjured up at the mention of the name "Rambler" in the past.

Perhaps we'll meet at next year's show.

\* \* \* \* \*

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The vapor spreads with then times the rapidty of water, more quickly than one can walk. Being heavier than air, the vapor will flow downward readily into drains, tunnels, basements or lower floors, elevator or stair wells, or other areas where it may remain pocketed for an indefinite length of time. The flash point of gasoline extends to 45 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit; it follows that coldness is not a safeguard against ignition. As you know, in the summer a filled automobile tank will overflow if the car is parked where the hot sun shines on the car's metal.

So, even though gasoline is a bundle of energy that will work hard for you, in all seasons, it's like liquid dynamite. Treat it with the same degree of caution you would use in handling dynamite.

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## INDUSTRY REPORT

by

Flo T. Valves

Watch out, "Sperm Whale," the Scout "Sportop" is here. Featuring a "fastback," the new Scout option reduces the popular 4x4 to looking like a cross between a Freihoffer's bread van and a Marlin. Ford will stick the 289 (200 HP version) in their 4x4, the Bronco.

The Rambler American's new V-8 should prove to be a handfull, allowing acceleration to 60 in something less than 9 seconds. Now if they could only keep 'em on the road ..... Griffiths new beastie is a Plymouth powered bomb. Although the 273 doesn't push the car around as swiftly as the Ford did, or might have, it is still a way-over-the-ton automobile. "Selected" Plymouth dealers will handle the new car.

This past year was the 2nd best in history for the imported car market. A total of 569,415 were sold, compared to 484,131 in 1964. The record is 614,131 sold in 1959. The leader was ?! who sold 383,978 units. The rest of the top ten reads like this: 2) MG - 22,322; 3) Triumph - 20,347; 4) Volvo - 18,115; 5) Opel - 16,216; 6) Datsun - 13,201; 7) Simca - 12,994; 8) Mercedes - 11,994; 9) Renault - 11,431; 10) Fiat 8,194. This year is expected to beat 1959's record.

On the sedan racing front, the word is that Travers & Coon - spelled TRACO - are playing with the Opel engine. Another Mini challenger. More power to 'em (pun intended). It gets to be boring after a while watching the Mini's eat up everything in sight. There should be a few 1000 Abarths running in NER this year. Too bad there aren't any of those Japanese cars with the 998 cc and 2 LARGE webers around. Izuzu is the name, I think, and they go pretty darn good. Chrysler will enter the TransAmerican Sedan series, while Ford may or may not depending on what happens. Volvo is watching, as is Renault.

An engineer at Boeing has come up with a fatigue sensor which may have considerable use in racing. A short bit of special wire is attached to the part involved, and as the part becomes fatigued the wire's resistance varies by an easily measured amount (as opposed to the conventional strain gauge.) A batch of these stuck on structural members could play an important part in reducing chassis failures under competition conditions.

Illinois now requires all '61 and later cars to be equipped with seat belts for both driver and passenger. Barny Galinsky thinks that's an excellent idea. Legally, a person who fails to "buckle up" may not be able to recover damages in case of an injury which may have been prevented by the belts. Contributory negligence is the name of the game, and the idea being that its your own bloomin fault if you don't strap yourself in and you get hurt.

For only \$2599 you can buy a new Clayton chassis dyno. A synthetic horsehair "tail" is available for all you Mustang owners. The Lotus Cortina (or as Kambourian says, "Look out Minis, here's something meaner!") sells for \$3400 POE NY. In September, Albuquerque, N.M. will host the Model A Ford Club of America's annual convention - September 28-30 are the dates. Would you believe that the Batmobile is really an Austin-Healy Sprite with a 396 Chevy? Would you believe a 283? Actually, it's a Barris Kustom job on a \$250,000 1955 Lincoln Futura "Dream Car."

## CANADIAN AMERICAN CHALLENGE CUP NEWS

New York, April 14 -- The Johnson Wax Company of Racine, Wisconsin and its associate, Canadian Johnson, today announced their sponsorship of the trophy and championship fund for the Canadian-American Challenge Cup series of international road races in North America this fall. Johnson is commissioning a permanent trophy for presentation to the champion driver and will contribute \$25,000 to the championship fund.

At the same time, John M. Bishop, Executive Director of the Sports Car Club of America, which administers the series announced that a sixth race -- at Bridgehampton, L.I., New York -- has been added to the Canadian-American.

Bishop also announced that Stirling Moss, famed international racing figure, has been named Challenge Cup Commissioner for the two Canadian and four United States races in the series. Moss, who is serving as racing consultant to Johnson Wax, has continued to be active in road races affairs since his retirement as a driver.

Canadian races will be sanctioned by the Canadian Automobile Sport Clubs.

The total of the awards for the series, including purses at each of the races, now exceeds a quarter of a million dollars. The Johnson Wax trophy will be worth \$19,250 to the champion driver.

Four of the races will have guaranteed minimum purses of \$30,000 each, and two events will have \$20,000 purses. The top ten drivers in the series will split the total Challenge Cup fund of \$55,000 which includes \$5,000 already contributed by sponsors of each of the six races.

In addition, more than \$45,000 in awards by accessory firms has now been committed for the six races.

Bishop said, "The sanctioning organizations and the race promoters are delighted to be associated with Johnson Wax and Stirling Moss in this championship series. We know that the series will benefit from our combined efforts."

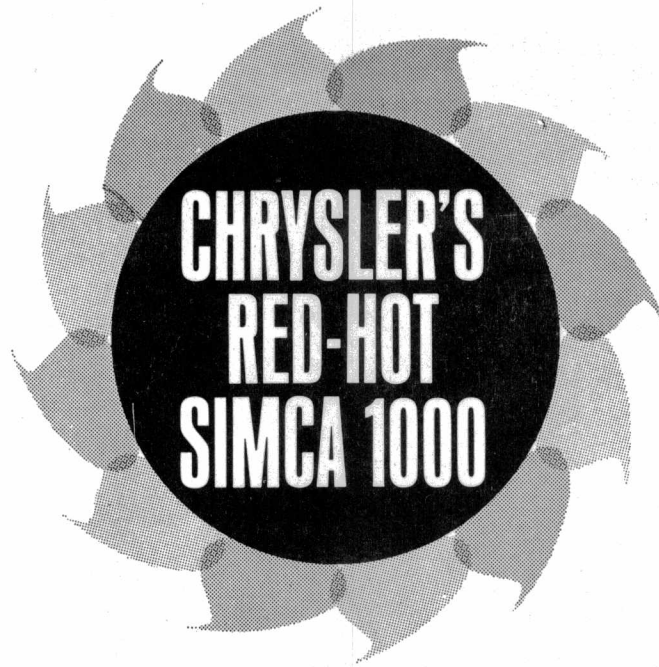
Johnson's entry into the racing car field coincides with a major marketing effort with the company's J-WAX line of auto waxes, polishes and cleaners. Stirling Moss will also serve as a spokesman for the J-WAX line in a series of national advertisements.

The Bridgehampton event, to be held September 18, already is listed as an international race on the calendar of the F.I.A., world auto sports authority. It will have a purse of \$20,000.

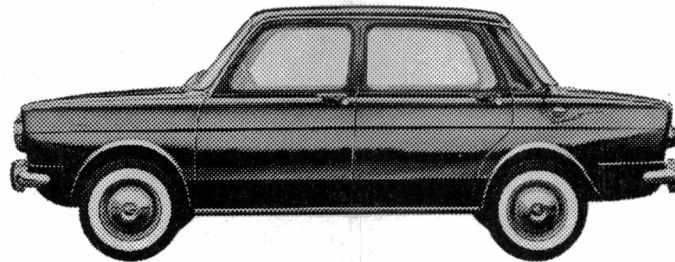
Bishop explained, "Each of these well-established races will be for the big sports-racing cars that have risen to international popularity in recent years, usually powered by American V-8 engines. The races, under a single set of rules, will each be about 200 miles in length."

\* \* \* \* \*

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