



# PIT SIGNALS



LATE BRAKING NEWS FOR VARAC VINTAGE RACERS - AUGUST 2020 - JEREMY SALE



All the news that fits-with photos by Richard Coburn, the Samila's, and more! New cars in the pipeline, Virtual Garage Tour and more!







# VARAC First Annual Virtual Garage Tour



Interested to see what others have cooking in their Garages?

While we might not all be able to get our cars out to the track this year, why not share with our membership the current state of your car and garage? All done safely via videochat!

Details will be published via the Varac chatline, stay tuned!

[www.varac.ca](http://www.varac.ca)

# Canadian Touring Trophy Races

*By Ted Michalos*

VARAC's third event of this most unusual year was held July 25 and 26 on the Mosport Grand Prix track at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park. The forecast called for heat and the forecast was right...

Before the event began the schedule was changed and cars moved about two or three times. This impacted our Formula Classic and F1200 members the most. Eventually, the Radicals purchased their own grid (with all of four cars) and all seven of the VARAC open wheeled cars ran together with three F4s on the Formula Classic/Formula Libre grid.

The VH practice session started with 14 cars, but was cut short when Anselmo Beretta suffered a mechanical failure at the bottom of Turn 2 and hit the wall hard. Anselmo wasn't hurt, but the car was done for the weekend. Classic had 15 cars go out, Formula Classic 7 (+3 the 3 F4s).

It was a busy weekend for break-outs on the Classic grid. Del Bruce moved up to CL A, as did Steve Hummell and Mike Murillo. We badly miss guessed how well Stephen di Cesar would run his Miata – he



Stephen di Cesar

started the weekend in CL 5 and ended up in CL 2 by Sunday. (I don't understand why we don't have more Miatas on the Classic grid!).



# Canadian Touring Trophy Races...

"I mentioned that Del Bruce moved from CL to CLA. He also managed to spin in 5A in both the Saturday and Sunday afternoon races. No harm done to the car (although he picked up a lot of gravel Saturday) – I think the driver may need to have his suit cleaned...



Del Bruce

A GT Sprint driver blew an engine Sunday morning and one of the clean-up crew got knocked out by the heat. Did I mention that it was hot? So at that point the organizers decided to shorten all of the remaining sessions by 5 minutes. If they'd asked most of us, we would have agreed to 10...

There was a certain amount of attrition, only seven V/H cars finished Sunday's final race, 10 for Classic, and five for Formula Classic (+ two F4s). I think the heat was declared the overall winner for the weekend.

## NEXT ON THE CALENDAR...

Our next event is at Shannonville on August 15-16. We have a run group for V/H + 1200, and one for Classic.

Following that we have a Sportsmens' Grid (VH, FC and Classic cars under 2500 pounds together in one group) August 29 – 30 at Calabogie. See you at the track!" *Ted Michalos.*



Ivan Samila

“As usual the gathering at Mosport was superb! The rain which appeared to be coming all week held off! It was a tad hot but the nice breeze around the track made it a great two days. Racing all day Saturday everyone’s cars were in tiptop shape-until Sunday afternoon, when everyone appeared to have some minor problems – three cars on the final grid for the VH group had to be bump started! Everyone was very accommodating and patient considering the heat waiting on the grid. I do wish more racers would come out and have fun! Social distancing is a real thing, everyone is so courteous and respectful of space and we all seem to have a mask in our pockets if you had to lean in a little closer for whatever reason. The grids were small, but the racing was as much fun as ever. Many thanks to all the great track workers!”

*Colleen Samilla.*



Thanks to all the great track workers!



John Hawkes  
BARC Report...



When I think of the 2020 BARC weekend I'll always think of Carlos Santana.. no.. he wasn't there, although there might have been some half decent renditions from Ian Crerar and Emily Atkins on Saturday night. Nope its the opening lines.. "Man it's a hot one, like seven inches from the midday sun".

Well that's about how it felt. I got out there Thursday night at 5:29 pm to run the test day, to see if we had sorted the engine problem on the Merlyn and it was still hot then. Friday a.m. started hot and then got "Hot Hot Hot" another great song; "me mind on fire, me soul on fire...."

Anyway, Friday I hit the Trifecta, but not in a lucky way: first was a rather repetitive brake bias problem, then a spark problem due to inconsistent distributor cap location and my first hello to Robin and the big tow truck... and then finally time to say goodbye to the old Avons...so by the time Friday night rolled around I felt quite unwell and decided to buzz off home for a decent night sleep rather than join the trailer park kids and stay over.

Saturday was a lot better. Practice and qualifying went off well and Russ Bond, Steve Gidman and I were having some good laps together. I took off to get some supplies at the end of the day and came back to find some b@\$t@rd had taken off with my race suit, which I had left hanging in my tent. What is this place coming to I thought?? Then, I thought about the kind of people we have in VARAC and was making a beeline first for the Samila camp and then the Bond camp, when doesn't a smiling Russ Bond roll up with my race suit, about to hang it on my tent. Rather distastefully I later discovered a Facebook picture of Russ in my race suit seemingly with nothing else on.! I can only assume that he thought it would make him

faster on the Sunday and in fact it didn't he get down in the 38's. Fortunately I have access to an ultrasonic cleaning tank and the suit will be wearable again after one final going over with acetone.

Entries were getting down there by Sunday afternoon, the heat and mechanical woes had taken their toll but the diehards were there to the bitter end. Del managed to keep the 914 and the Vette running for the whole weekend and Ted did almost likewise with his Seven and the 993. I had the spark problem repeat so could not finish the Sunday p.m. race.



For those who didn't make it please try and do the Shannonville Event. More entries to the classes makes the racing more enjoyable for all the drivers and the freshly renovated Shannonville facilities will make for a more enjoyable weekend.



Ted Michalos



# B.A.R.C.

Unfortunately Nick Pratt's gearbox "blew up big time half way through the Sunday morning race."



Jim Middleton in his Shelby Mustang, above,  
Anthony Polito's son Jack races in F1600, below.







Brian Thomas's BARC event was a family affair with left to right; Maureen's son William, wife Holly, Maureen and Brian.



Above, happy selfie in the sun; Ivan and Colleen Samila.  
Left, two cool dudes; Ted Michalos and John Hawkes.



## JIM BISCOE's COVID-19 Story.

"I took the Covid test on Friday, May 8th. I had no fever, no other symptoms, no stomach problems, just short of breath. On the Monday, May 11 Service Ontario called me at 8:30 am to tell me I had tested positive for Covid. No idea where I got it. None of my employees got it, neither did my girlfriend.

They told me to isolate for 14 days so I stayed home. By Wednesday, when my girlfriend Paula came home, I was really gasping for breath. She called the ambulance and they came immediately. I remember seeing the overhead garage door opening at the emergency entrance and then I passed out. I was put on a ventilator immediately and was in an induced coma for four weeks. The nurses have to turn you over every six hours. I was strapped down as, even though I was unconscious, I kept trying to take off the IV and various things attached to me. I remember having all kinds of strange and frightening nightmares.

I woke up from the coma on June 25<sup>th</sup>. It was very emotional to realize that I was alive after spending several weeks unconscious. I couldn't talk; there was a tracheostomy tube in my throat pumping in oxygen. I had to communicate by writing things down.

On July 9th I was transferred to the Yonge Cumber Rehabilitation centre in Toronto. They tested me again and I was negative. I was there until July, no visitors allowed. The rehab staff were great.

I am currently rehabbing, relaxing and taking meds at home. I lost 40% of my muscle mass. I have a blood clot in my lung. I have to wait 60 days for another x-ray. But I am still here!"

*Jim is president of J.B. Finishing Inc, an oven and powder booth manufacturer. He races the ex-Tom Burge Mini, above, and is pictured at left with Paddy Hopkirk.*



Get well soon, Jim!



# Random Racing Notes...

*Gary Allen:*

"Another car I had wanted in my callow youth was an Alfa GTV. Local advice was to talk to Joe Cannella with his vast stockpile of parts, so a few years back we kicked it around and eventually started a build. Life intruded on Joe-marriage, houses, etc- and I got older at an alarming rate, so decided it had to get built.

Managed to sweet talk John Dodd into taking it on and a local body man to perform the extensive restoration needed.

About a year later, we have a complete, running, very red 1750 model, which some nasty virus prevents me from testing and racing. I have plenty of time to complete the necessary VARAC paperwork-soon, Colleen!



## T-Shirt For Sale?

Last year, while visiting a neighbour's to watch the F1 race, a well-dressed Max Verstappen T-shirt salesman appeared as if from nowhere. He claimed that the T-shirt he was selling was once worn by Max's fifth cousin once removed and was well worth the \$100.00 asking price. Being a quick study of these manoeuvres I suggested that as it had a VARAC logo he was letting it go at too low a price. He was not seen again.

Brian Thomas.



# A Lotus Cortina Story by John Hawkes

Caution; This story may contain references to canine appendages, Editor.



As it seems to be the policy du jour to have one working and one as back up I thought I might start investigating project cars to occupy my time over the winter and then during the COVID era. After all Ted, Brian, Gary and Russ had gone down that trail...just how expensive and time consuming could it be?

Returning to my heritage roots had been a successful and fulfilling journey with the Merlyn, so I thought I might take the same route for number two. Took a good look at a few Lotus 7s and, as Jeremy knows, I had been pestering him for some while but he's pretty crusty and resistant to any charm and bribery I might have put in his direction, so I slunk off in other directions.

Being an avid Goodwood video follower I had been amazed by Andy and Mike Jordan's FIA Lotus Cortinas "blowing the bloody doors off" (*Michael Caine-The Italian Job*) Mustangs and Galaxies with alacrity.

There aren't very many of these cars running in North America, a couple in Florida and one out of NY state. Then there was the Attrell car, Baker's car and that elusive car that Steve O'Connell had built back in the mid-nineties. Steve had decided he didn't like that iconic rear wing and goofy front teeth look of the Mark One and decided to round it off and make it look a bit more like a 544 Volvo in his first event at Shannonville, corner four if I recall correctly. There were one or two very loud exchanges between the builder: Peter Howe of Howe Motorworks, and Steve at the track. But it did get put back into the correct shape and subsequently,



some years later, when Steve flipped over to a Porsche 924 In Classic, the car went to Richard Sharpe.

After reaching out to Gordie Ballantyne I found Richard was in the U.K, the car was in a barn in Acton and the spares were somewhere else. The car had not run for 6 or 7 years and it was pretty cold when I first went to take a look, tramping through two foot of snow with a couple of bags of tools to facilitate a decent look at it.

We discovered the usual results of long term storage: some corrosion dead tires and battery and oh-oh, frozen top and bottom hoses So left to buy a heater from the local HH and left it on for a few days. I also thought to buy a pressure tester for the water system.

When I came back the hoses were somewhat flexible and the pressure test held for about five minutes, Hallelujah brother, I might have dodged a bullet.

The snow cleared that following week and it got cold again, so a very kindly Russ Bond volunteered to let me use his heated garage space for a month or so to work on some of the rest of the car before an engine and tranny check up at Britain West, sometime in the spring

He even went out to Clubines, got my trailer and fetched the car back to Uxbridge from Acton, what a gem! (I should really let him pass me in "Reg" in Corner 2 next race, LOL. Seriously though, Russ is the spirit, if not the age, of what we want to see in VARAC racers.)

The Lotus is an original Mk 1 LHD drive car sold in Canada, and FIA regs

permit a 1600 twin cam steel block and a four speed gearbox with LSD and a minimum homologated weight of 750kG. Not a lot for a 170 HP car. The shocks were pretty old and very stiff so they went; to be replaced by a set of Konis from Alan Henderson Racing in the UK. While we were trying to figure out why the engine would not



disconnect from the driveshaft Russ and I pulled the tranny, to discover the clutch plate was in backwards, so essentially two inches too far forward which didn't do a lot of good for the flywheel or gearbox mainshaft and guide bearing so some more new bits; this time from Burton Power.



Then it was time to get the Cortina out of Russ's garage to make way for some noisy bugger called "Reg". So now back to my garage (now accessible as it was spring time) to sort out seat , instruments and suspension . Next, a trip out to David Clubine for engine tuning and start-up. Aside from very gummed up pumps and carbs we had no further sign of any head leaks from the freezing and she started fairly easily.

Then we had to get the Merlyn ready, so we are a bit stalled on getting brakes, set up and a few other things sorted. But hopeful for Celebration. So no, you don't really save any costs having two race cars rather than one, but once it's done it's going to be The Dog's Bollocks, trust me! *John Hawkes*



# How To Improve Your Lap Times!

*By Paul Subject*



## *Preparation:*

In our short sprint races, be sure to fuel only the minimum needed for the laps to be raced plus a small reserve. Correct tire pressures should allow for quick build-up to optimum settings. At the start be

aggressive into the first corners - speed is lower and some drivers will be hesitant - take advantage! Do not relax in a sprint race, stay on it to the end - others may fade back.

## *What is the most common misperception most drivers have?*

Most race drivers believe that they are driving their car at the limit. Your car is probably capable of producing more grip and better braking – the challenge is having the confidence to take the car beyond your personal comfort zone.

## *How do you gain that confidence?*

Quite simple. Seat time, coaching and pushing incrementally harder as you gain experience.

## *Where could the average racer make an improvement?*

Learn to use the whole track! Using the entire racetrack on entry and exit helps to ensure maximum corner entry and exit speeds.

## *What is the most common mistake the average race driver makes?*

Not keeping your eyes up. Staring intently at the car in front will encourage you to drive that car's line, duplicating its mistakes. Look *through* the car in front and drive *your* line. The bonus is you will see any trouble ahead of the car in front of you.

## *Improve Your Lap Times!*

*Is it true you should be either hard on the throttle or hard on the brakes?*

The fastest way around any racetrack relies on less brake and more throttle, the key is when you brake, use enough brake to slow the car quickly and in a straight line. As an example, corner 5A at CTMP requires the right combination of downshifting and brake application to slow the car just enough to maintain grip through the corner. Too much brake and you will get poor exit. Too little brake and you won't make the apex.

*What's your opinion of trail braking for "average" drivers?*

All race drivers need to learn how to trail brake and when to use it. The key is to know when to deploy this special cornering manoeuvre. First, let's recall the steps for trail braking: 1. Brake in a straight line at maximum force. 2. Slightly before the corner, turn in, begin to ease off the brakes. 3. Begin turning into the corner. 4. As you increase steering angle, reduce braking pressure. 5. Use appropriate amount of braking to keep the car well balanced through the corner entry.

The challenge with trail braking is maintaining the delicate balance of the car – the car may feel on the edge of control as the grip is rebalanced between all four tires. But once mastered, trail braking allows for much later braking with higher speed at corner entry and exit. It requires lots of practice and knowing when to use it. Namerow (corner 14) at CIRCUIT MONT TREMBLANT is an excellent place to use trail braking, once you have mastered the technique and feel comfortable deploying it. Trail braking is a valuable tool.

*How about the saying "Don't try to drive fast, drive smoothly"?*

Amateur race car drivers learn early on that smooth inputs mean good car control, which results in better lap times. However, at the very top echelons of professional racing, most race car drivers are constantly providing steering, braking and throttle inputs. Staying at the peak level of grip is a constant battle, which cannot be achieved while "being smooth." However these small inputs inside the car look smooth to a trackside observer – so smooth is fast!!



# Improve Your Lap Times!

*How about the saying "Slow in, fast out"?*

Another old adage, but it does apply to certain levels of amateur race car driving. This is a good approach when learning how to brake, down shift, turn in, hit the apex, and accelerate out of a corner. Focusing on a good exit is key to building the foundation to becoming a faster driver. But as the driver begins to develop more seat time, braking later (and harder), rolling more speed through the corner and getting on the throttle sooner will **always** be the faster way.



*In the paddock; be prepared!*

Make sure get all your tasks done early; gas, tire pressures, etc. Take care of everything, and then check your list again! Then relax and think about your race, visualize the track and your sight picture for each corner. The most important point, enjoy yourself, you are at the race track!!!!



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# Have you fondled your race car cage recently?

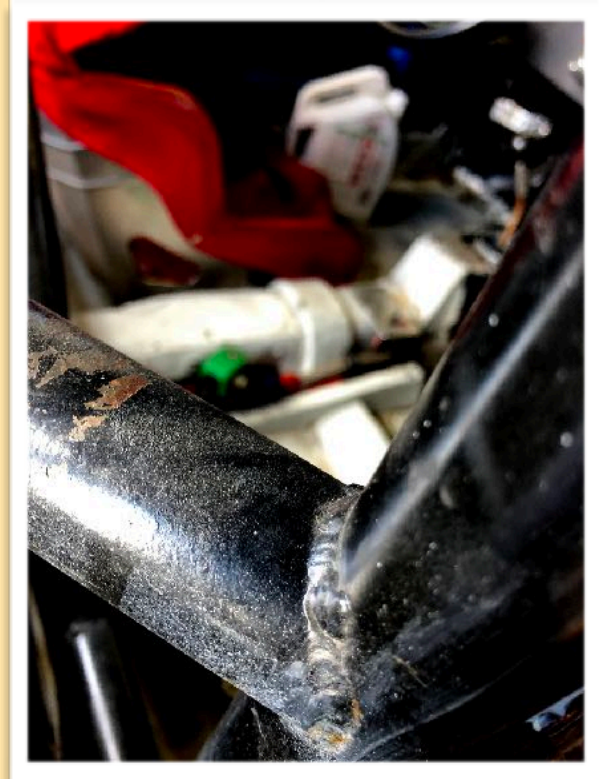
**CHRIS RUPNIK:** Normally technical articles are glossed over by our membership - but I bet this title caught your attention!

While prepping the car for Calabogie - I thought it would be a good idea to look over the welds that make up my safety cage in the Fiat. Our VARAC ruleset specifies the construction of the safety cages or roll bars, maybe now is a nice time to go over our ruleset Appendix A on our VARAC website?

Mounting plates - our ruleset specifies that the mounting plates must be at least 20 square inches - or for Fiat Technicians that's a minimum of 130 CM<sup>2</sup>. These mounting plates should be located as depicted on diagram #3. (*See next page*) There are figures showing the options for a production or a formula car.

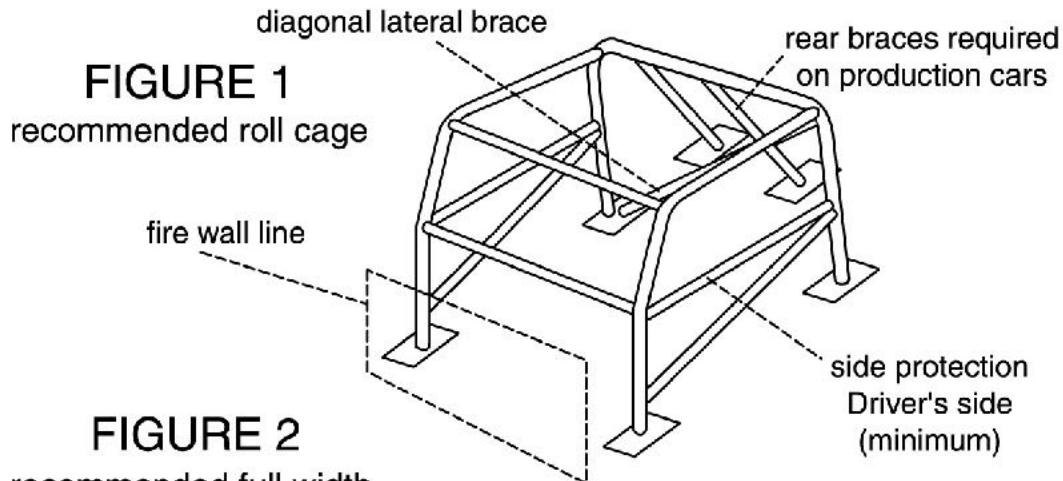
Maybe the title wasn't so far off. I am sure there are parts of the roll cage that are welded to either the mounting plate near a vertical section of the car or welded to other bars that are difficult to see. Why not take the time and gently rub a finger along the backside to endure that the weld goes all the way around - and doesn't have any sharp bits of metal where perhaps the weld has opened or spread?

Fortunately, in my case everything checked out ok. However I sometimes think of what Ted told me as he slid upside down into corner 5a (yes, Maverick was full inverted!); "I hope my cage builder knew what he was doing!" Turns out he did know what he was doing. Lets take this time to check it out now before you need it ok?

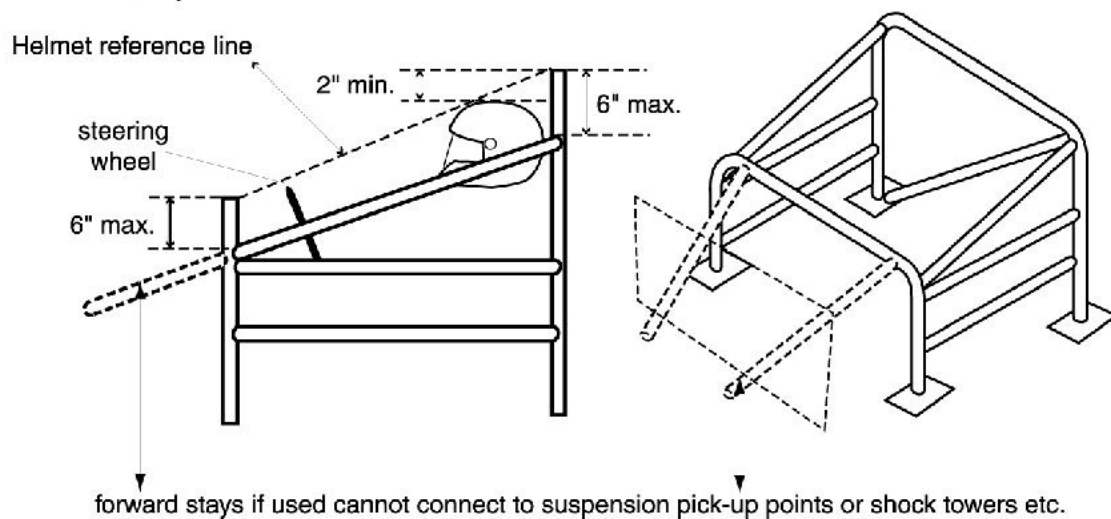




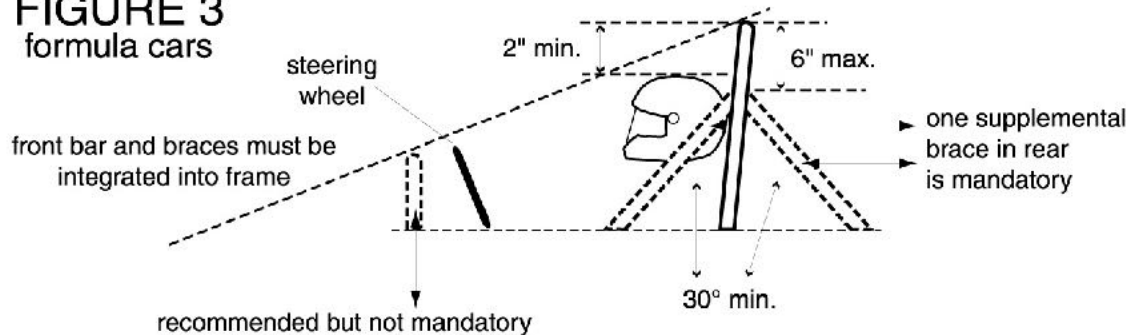
# Diagram #3



**FIGURE 2**  
recommended full width, low front hoop for two seat sports racer



**FIGURE 3**  
formula cars





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## Three Racing Minis For Sale!

Lifetime member Pete Christensen wishes to sell his three VARAC racing Minis to another VARAC member, if possible. His girls are finished racing - they raced from 1996 to 2012.

1963 Mini Cooper S with Longman engine (car 03) -1997 overall  
VARAC points champion

1964 Mini Cooper S with Longman engine (303)

1967 Mini Cooper S with Longman engine (30)

## Make an offer!

Trailer and many spare parts included.

Cars are stored in heated building in St. Catharines.

Contact Pete Christensen 905-834-7548.





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## 1958-59 Bugeye Sprite

948cc, straight car, solid body, floors professionally welded and replaced in steel. Needs seats re-upholstered and interior trim. No missing parts. Interior metalwork looks great.

In other words it's a decent little car that runs good and needs a good home. Good rip free soft top (with smokey plexiglass windows).



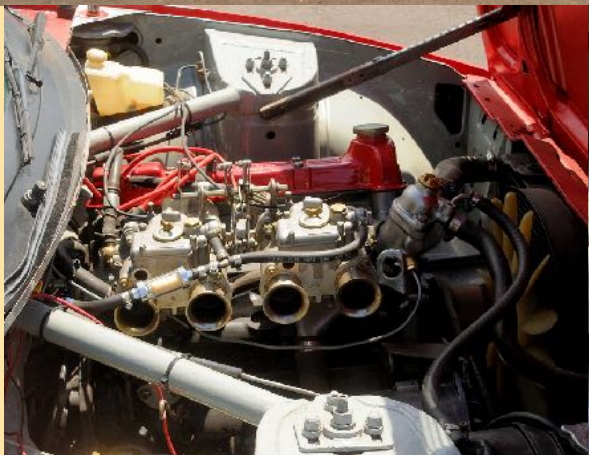
I can make this car available for sale as a race car candidate at \$9999.00 or I can refinish interior as a really neat little fun car, price on request. Or I have a nice REBUILT 1275 Midget motor with rib case trans available if needed, price on request.

John Greenwood. 905 723 9334  
[haggisbasherjohn@gmail.com](mailto:haggisbasherjohn@gmail.com) .





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## 1974 Triumph TR7

Documented race history. Raced successfully in the day by Cullingford Motors, a BL dealership in Barrie. Restored to near show condition. Tricked out with many rare competition parts. 5 sp close ratio, fully adjustable rear suspension, etc. My intent was to convert to TR8 but have lost interest. Two V8 engines, Holley 4 bbl, comp headers, comp engine parts. Many spares including body panels. Two comp wheel sets. Way too much to list. 90% finished. Custom tow bar to get home if you don't have a trailer.

\$8500 for everything. \$6500 if you only want TR7.

Price is firm. I live near Belleville, Ontario 613-478-1089

Greg Kerr gregsk@bell.net





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## SUPER SPRIDGET SALE!

Sprite/Midget used half shafts. Decent condition, never used in race car. If you have a Sprite/Midget you will someday need one of these! \$55 each, or \$85 for two.

BMC good used "Ribcase" style transmission. (required to fit 1275 motor into Bugeye Sprite! ) \$600.00

1275 cc Spridget motor (new rebuilt by Oshawa auto shop )  
\$1275 00

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MY LAST CHEQUER HAS FLOWN – ALL RACE GEAR FOR SALE @ ATTRACTIVE RATES!

- CRASH HAT – White 2015 (SA) Bell “M8” Series Helmet with “Hans” Posts. Brand new in box – never worn, Cost: \$ 1200. BO.
- DRIVER GEAR – “Dunlop Blue” Nomex Driving Suit, shirts, U-wear, socks, head socks, gloves and near-new shoes to fit a tall, large driver. (recent dry-clean. BO.
- “HANS” (Head and neck support) device with straps and accessories. The proper original by inventor Jim Downing – not one of the “El Cheapo” oriental re-pops. Cost: \$ 1200 – sell for \$ 700 or BO. **SOLD!**
- GO PRO “HERO 2” MOTORSPORT CAMERA SYSTEM – Extras include head, rollbar mounts, “BACPAC” angled LCD screen, etc. Like new. Cost: \$ 600 – sell at \$ 400 or BO.
- RACE CAR TRANSPONDER SCORING SYSTEM – was used on Chaparral, Lotus 9, etc in VSCCA events – BO **SOLD!**
- 1995 GOLDRUSH 33’ ALL-ALUMINUM 5<sup>TH</sup> WHEEL CAR TRAILER (Photo)  
In my opinion, the world’s best enclosed unit. Made in Ephrata, PA. Extras include interior removable ramps, folding work bench and vice, HD winch on central snatch-block with shelf units, 2 roof vents and a 20’ awning, recent new Michelin 10 ply 16” tires, 4-wheel brakes and wheel bearings. Suitable for 2 sports cars (i.e. Chaparral, Lotus) or large car and a golf cart. Like new condition. Cost was \$ 30,000+ US - sell for \$ 14,000 CDN or BO. (Today’s base cost is \$ 47,000!) **SOLD!**

CONTACT: JACK BOXSTROM

[jboxstrom@rmsothebys.com](mailto:jboxstrom@rmsothebys.com) (best for contact)

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New low price! \$12,500 Joe Lightfoot: 613 813 5401