

# The Preservationist

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The Member Newsletter of the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits Preservation Society  
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## Annual Board Report

2016 was an eventful year for HRC and 2017 promises to be even more so.

First, the entire Board was saddened to hear that HRC director and friend of many HRC members, Carl Jensen, passed away on January 5, 2017. A memorial service will occur at Road America during the July Vintage weekend. Details will be announced when they are available.

Second, Spencer Chapple, a founder of HRC and a Director from its inception retired from the Board at the end of 2016, In recognition of his stellar service the Board designated Spencer as Director Emeritus and awarded him and his daughter, diligent aide and hard-working volunteer, Julie Morter, honorary Lifetime Memberships in HRC

In 2016 HRC continued to monitor actions and proposed actions by Sheboygan County and the Village of Elkhart Lake and their possible effects on the characteristics of the roads and streets that comprise the historic race circuits. The section of the Historic Circuits comprised of Lake Street from its intersection with Rhine Street to the Osthoff Walkway was resurfaced by the Sheboygan County Highway Department under contract from the Village of Elkhart Lake under whose jurisdiction the street lies. We are glad to report that the resurfacing was an improvement of the street and was done in full compliance with historic preservation requirements.

HRC members enjoyed three dinner programs. The public debut of the new biography of legendary Wisconsin racer Augie Pabst occurred at the May dinner at Siebkens. Author Bob Birmingham presented highlights with interspersed commentary from Augie and special guest, Meister Brauser team owner/driver Harry Heuer and drivers Bill Wuesthoff and Don Devine. The summer event at the Victorian Village Resort featured author, racer and early

mid-west SCCA historian, Fred Egloff. The September event at Siebkens centered around the extraordinarily successful Nascar and Carrera Panamericana racing efforts of the Wisconsin-based Kiekhaefer Mercury racing team in the 1950s

As it has for the last several years, HRC continued to cooperate with the Elkhart Lake Tourism Commission. Presentations were made to several groups of travel writers from around North America. Over the years these programs have resulted in favorable articles promoting Elkhart Lake as a tourist destination, usually with mention of the early open-road races and their importance to the present-day culture of the community.

### Looking ahead to 2017

The Sheboygan County Highway Department told HRC last year that it is planning to grind and resurface CTH P from Kimberley's Korner to the Marsh Turn, CTH J from the Marsh Turn to Rhine Street and CTH JP that runs between the two from the Hard Right to Ted's Turn.

These roads comprise major portions of the Historic Circuits. The work has not yet been scheduled, but the County Highway Commissioner recently told HRC that it is likely to occur this summer. HRC will continue to follow up and to monitor compliance of the project with the Resource Management Plan agreed between the Highway Department and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

HRC will again have events in Elkhart Lake in connection with each vintage racing weekend. Programs are being planned and will be announced when they are confirmed.

Members will continue to receive discounted pricing for HRC events.

HRC has become an important community and motorsport preservation organization. We sincerely thank you for supporting HRC through your membership. If you have comments or suggestions for how HRC can better accomplish its mission or serve its members or if you would like to become more involved in HRC matters we will be glad to hear from you. We look forward to seeing you at HRC events in 2017.

Sincerely,

Tom Hollfelder, President

*Tom*

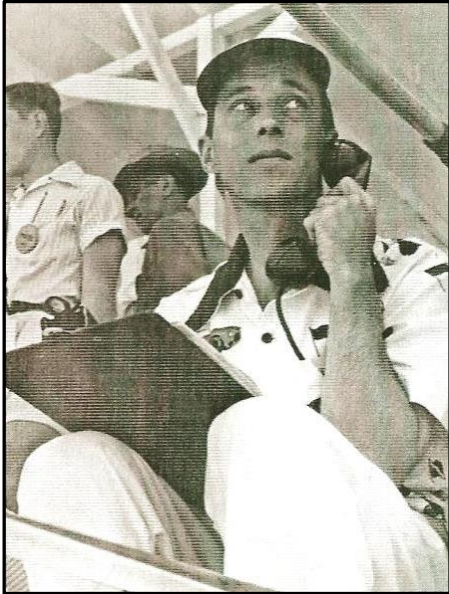
John Calhoun, Chairman

*John*

LeRoy Kramer Jr.  
1915 – 2004  
“The Last of the Noble  
Gentlemen”

(SCCA driver Bob Gary)

A profile by Fred Egloff



*“Roy” Kramer Jr. strikes a familiar pose timing a race.*

LeRoy Kramer Jr. (known to his friends as “Roy”) played a major role in the early sports car movement but is often overlooked. He was born in Chicago and raised in Chicago’s “Roaring Twenties” area. As a fourteen year old teenager he was in a park when he heard gun shots fired nearby and scampered for home. The gun shots came from gangland’s Valentine’s Day Massacre and you can’t get any closer to Chicago in the “Roaring Twenties” than that. As a young man he graduated from Princeton and mastered at Purdue University.

“Roy” purchased his first sports car, an Alvis L4 that had been driven to second in class and ninth overall by S.C.H. (Sammy) Davis and William Urquhart-Dykes in the 1928 Le Mans race, from the Studebaker Proving Ground.



*The Alvis L4 on the track at the 1928 Le Mans race that later became “Roy’s” first sports car.*

He became a very close friend of Miles Collier who was one of the founding members of ARCA (Automobile Racing Club of America). “Roy” was an early active member of ARCA and eventually served as its Midwestern Regional Executive. In 1939 he was co-driver with Miles at the Le Mans 24 hour race driving Mile’s “Leonidis” MG (see the article on page 5).



*Miles on the right and “Roy” on the left with the LeMans “Leonidis” MG.*

During WWII “Roy” taught aircraft engine mechanics, retiring as a Navy Reserve Lt. Commander. Following the war he thought he was finished with “that sports car racing stuff” and wasn’t overly enthused when his wife Betty told him that Fred Wacker proposed starting a Chicago Region of the SCCA. He attended the founding meeting anyway, became an extremely active founding member and eventually a life member. “Roy” handled registration, timing and scoring for the early Elkhart Lake Road Races and was among the founders of Road America.



*“Roy” registers entries at the 1951 Elkhart Lake races. Karl Brocken is on the far right and Phil Hill is on the far left.*



*“Roy”, on the far left with (left to right) Everett Nametz, George Wallerich, Chicago Region RE, and Cliff Tufte inspects the RA track site during the initial grading in early 1955.*

He served as the Region’s third Regional Executive and second editor of Piston Patter. He also served as chairman of SCCA’s National Contest Board.

”Roy” was manager of the Arnolt-Bristol Racing Team at the Sebring twelve hour race, winning the team prize in 1955 with Rene Dryfus, among others, as driver.



*The Arnolt-Bristol team at Sebring in 1955.*

“Roy” and Betty were active rally participants in the family Jaguar with Betty as driver and “Roy” as navigator. They made their home in Highland Park, Illinois and filled a room with their trophies. “Roy” retired from the rail car leasing firm, General American Transportation Corporation. Upon retirement they moved to Harbor Springs, Michigan on Grand Traverse Bay where he had spent summers growing up. In addition to sports cars, “Roy” had a lifetime interest in boats and sailing. He was an outstanding compass expert whose services were employed by yachtsmen worldwide. Having sailed in more than twenty-five Chicago to Mackinac races, he received the honor of being named

an "Old Goat" by the Island Goats Sailing Society. (*The society derived its name from the claim that the yachtsmen smell like goats by the time they reached Mackinac Island*).



*The start of the Chicago to Mackinac race.*

In addition to the SCCA he was a member of the Great lakes Cruising Club, the Society of Small Craft Designers, the Chicago Club, the Union League and the Society of Cincinnati (*Descendants of George Washington's Officers*). "Roy" and Betty, married for 62 years, had one daughter (Margaret) and two sons (LeRoy III and Frederick). "Roy" can truly be said to have been one of the sports cars world's "last noble gentlemen" and he lived a life that was a great example for all.

## Miles Collier's 1935 MG Named "Leonidis"

SN#PA-PB 1667

The Collier "Leonidis" began as one of three factory prepared MG-PA's (847cc) that won their class at the 1935 Le Mans races. In July the cars were factory converted to MG-PB's (939cc) for the Brooklands high speed trials.



*The 1935 MG-PA in original configuration with cream and brown factory livery.*

In October the factory decided to sell the cars and American Miles Collier becoming the owner of chassis 1667. Before taking delivery, Collier had the factory competition department make a few modifications that included installation of a Marshall supercharger. Collier naming the MG "Leonidis" (the origins of this name remain uncertain to this day), and raced the car in Automobile Racing Club of America's (ARCA) events that took place primarily in the New England area.

Collier and "Leonidis" were regulars in ARCA racing until an event in 1937 changed "Leonidis" from an interesting prewar sports car to a vintage one-of-a-kind iconic

collector's car. Early in the year Collier collided with a NYC taxi effectively destroying the car's body. Seizing the opportunity to upgrade the MG, Collier called upon his friend and fellow ARCA member John Oliveau to design and construct a new body.

Working for Grumman Aircraft Company at the time, Oliveau used the industry's current construction techniques and aerodynamic practices to redesign the MG creating the iconic aircraft-influenced body the car still wears to this today.



*The rebodied "Leonidis".*

Back on the ARCA circuit Collier and the redesigned MG won the third running of Alexandria Bay's "Round the Houses" race in 1938. MG PA-PB #1667 returned to Le Mans in 1939 with Collier and LeRoy Kramer Jr. as drivers. A ruptured fuel tank ended their bid while leading their class late in the seventh hour.

Returning from France, Collier sold "Leonidis" to recover expenses. The car had multiple owners and was raced both before and after the war. In 1950 then owner Don Millager, asked Collier to drive "Leonidis" at

Bridgehampton. Collier who started last won the race but he would never drive the car again. He passed away just four years later a victim of polio.

During the 50's and 60's the car was raced and rebuilt multiple times. Finally in 1984 Collier's wife regained ownership of "Leonidis" and underwrote a major restoration project to return the car to its former pre-war glory. Her son, Miles C. Collier, oversaw the lengthy and exacting process.

The bodywork was entrusted to Dick Troutman of Costa Mesa, Calif., with Jim Toensing, also of Costa Mesa and the person responsible for the mechanical health of the Cunningham Collection, handling the restoration of the MG's working parts. Meanwhile, son Miles conducted exhaustive research to ensure every detail of his father's car was faithfully restored to its 1937 configuration. The restoration was completed early in 1987 and the car was then taken to Moroso Motorsports Park to run at the SVRA's "Spring Fling." With his mother present, the second generation Miles returned "Leonidis" to the race track... its proper home.

"Leonidis" was displayed in the 2001 Concours d'Elegance at Pebble Beach. It now resides in the Collier Museum in Naples, Florida



*The fully restored MG "Leonidis" on the lawn at Pebble Beach.*