

The Preservationist

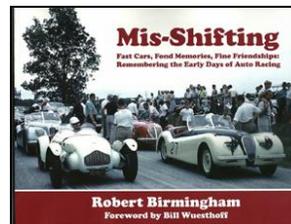
The Member Newsletter of the Historic Race Circuits of Elkhart Lake Preservation Society
Volume 25 Winter 2015

2015 Membership Program Features Spousal Memberships

Many members who regularly attend HRC Events do so accompanied by a non-member spouse who shares their commitment to the preservation of the Historic Circuits. To make the Society more inclusive, the 2015 Membership Program, announced in January, featured a new Spousal Membership that allows for the enrollment of a spouse as a society member for just \$20 over the Individual Member price. Both members will receive membership pins and discounts for HRC events. Premium Members (Supporting, Patron and Lifetime) may also enroll a spouse at no increase in the membership fee. We look forward to seeing membership pins on every spouse who attends HRC Events in the future.

Venue and Program for Spring Dinner

The Spring Dinner Event will be held at Siebkens Resort on Thursday, May 14th. The usual cash bar will open at 5:30 with dinner served at 7:00. The guest speaker will be Bob Birmingham historian and author whose topic will be the early-day history of motor racing in Wisconsin; the men, the tracks and the cars.



Bob will be signing his latest book “Mis-Shifting” at the dinner and copies will be available for sale at \$49.95. The book is a “must have” for any Wisconsin motor sports enthusiast.

“Vintage Racing” in the 1950’s

Today vintage sports cars racing refers primarily to the racing of cars that ran from the late 1940’s through the 1970’s with the support of organization such as SVRA and VSCDA. However, in the 1950’s and ‘60’s vintage sports cars were nearly all prewar cars. To sponsor and promote actual racing of these magnificent cars the Vintage Sportscar Club (VSC) was organized in the 1950’s. A British Car Club Directory once called VSC the most

exclusive car club in the world with only 30 members (*a new member could only join if an existing member died*). It is now much larger but remains very exclusive. The early VSC membership list included names well known to HRC supporters; Fred Wacker, Bayard Sheldon, Corwith “Corky” Hamill and Carl Mueller among others. What follows is a recent article authored by HRC member Fred Egloff for the VSC newsletter.

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“Vintage” Vintage Racing

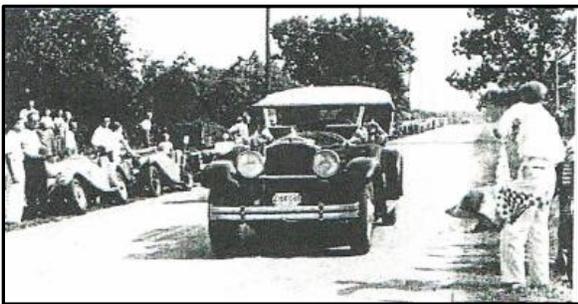
Extracted from an article by Fred Egloff
VSC Tejas Chapter

Today vintage sports car racing has arguably become the major attraction at courses around the country. Its early days, however, are all but forgotten. After World War II, one of the first, if not *the* first, such race (not a parade) took place on Sunday, July 3, 1950 in conjunction with the very first SCCA Elkhart Lake Road Race event. Chairman and chief organizer was future VSC member C. Bayard Sheldon.

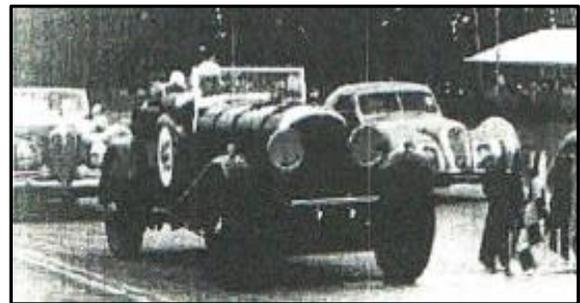
The course consisted of open roads northwest of the town. It was a 3.3 mile course with hay bales for safety at the corners. Drivers were required to wear helmets, either crash or football. First place was captured by George Campbell in his 1929 Packard. Less than a car length behind was Brooks Stevens on a 1911 Mercer. Third place was snatched at the finish line by future VSCer Carl Mueller with his 1930 Speed Six Bentley.

In following years occasional vintage races were added to contemporary SCCA races such as those in the mid- '50s at Milwaukee's State Fair Park and the Janesville airport. At about this time the Inland Region of the Vintage Sports Car Club of America morphed into the VSC. Starting in 1952, VSC began holding regular events each year at Road America before thousands of spectators.

Ralph Loucks was chairman of the first VSC race at R/A. Rollin Weary led the car field off the grid in his 8 liter Bentley followed by John Caperton's Bugatti Type 43. Bill Victor in his Railton seized the lead in the early stages. Vale Faro in his Alfa-Romeo 8c 2300 Monza and the Ed Wachs Mercedes-Benz had their own separate dice. Weary threw a rod in his Bentley and Augie Pabst surged ahead of Victor to capture first overall.



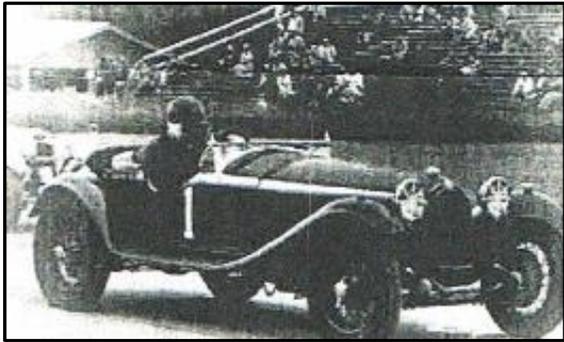
George Campbell's 1929 Packard crosses the finish line in first place at the 1950 Elkhart Lake event.



Sam Insull's Bentley 8 liter followed by Caperton's Delahaye (left) and Mashek's Talbot Lago (right) at the first Road America event.

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By 1960 the Vintage Grand Prix at Road America brought out a completely different field of cars. Rollin Weary (future VSC member) was race chairman. It provided a tremendous race at hair-raising speed. Vojta Mashek in his 1937 Talbot SS was able to edge out Ed Wachs in his 1927 Mercedes to win. Ralph Loucks drove his beautiful Alfa 6c 1750 into third place.



Ralph Loucks at the wheel of his Alfa 6c 1750

John Clemetsen was Chief Steward and Event Chairman in 1961. The same two cars that won the previous year staged an even more competitive duel this time. Entrants came from Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky and Iowa. The vehicles ranged in age from a 1909 ONLY to a 1954 HRG, and were divided into several classes.

For a variety of reasons the directors of the Inland Region decided to hold the next series at the Wilmot Hills circuit. The location afforded the opportunity

for privacy and greater control. For the first time, 1962 offered a full day of track events devoted solely to vintage sports cars. The event was conducted with Richard Stitt as Chief Steward, with 200 members and guests in attendance. Mashek in his Talbot Lago SS won but was pushed hard by Fleming Brown in the 1934 Frazer Nash who was followed by Loucks in his Alfa Romeo. Other fun times were to be held at this course. Remember the PRAY sign on Corner One, and the great clubhouse.

As time went on, exclusive VSC races were held at Wilmot, Meadowdale, Lynndale, Blackhawk and O'Hare as well as back at Road America.

In 1970, on the 20th anniversary of the first race on the open roads at Elkhart Lake member Cliff Tifte loaned Road America to the VSC for a weekend. As part of the race weekend and for the first time since 1952, an event was held on the old historic road courses, a timed lap event. Since then, police escorted tour laps of the old course have become a tradition for the modern events of other clubs.

Thanks to Fred Egloff of Kerrville, TX for sharing this fascinating piece of history that most of us have completely overlooked.