

SPACE CRUISERS

MARS Car Club
Newsletter
April 2021

Car Club Events

- May 1 - Cars and Coffee. Cornerstone Church. 8:00a – noon - 9941 Lone Tree Parkway, Lone Tree, CO
- June 23 – Track Day – High Plains Speedway – Byers (POC) Bob Maples scca_fp2002@hotmail.com
- May 12 - Restart Meeting

MARS Events with Car Club Participation

- July 7 – Senior Luncheon – Manor House (reserved parking for club cars)
- Sept. 8 – Annual Picnic and Car Show – Clement Park
- Dec. 1 – Holiday Event - Wilshire Inn. (TBD car club tables)

Misc. Events

- April 23 - Freddy's Cruise Highlands Ranch (6-9 pm) every Friday
- April 24 – Highlands Ranch Hot Rodders cruise (4-9 pm)
- June 12 – Classic Car Show - Cherry Hills Community Church, Highlands Ranch
- June 13 - Colorado Concours d'Elegance – Arapahoe Community College
- July 16-18 – Mile High Nationals Bandimere Speedway
- Sept. 10-12 – Goodguys Rod & Custom Show - The Ranch Events Complex – Loveland

Hello Car Clubbers! Has everyone gotten their shots yet? First one was a breeze for me, second one felt like I'd been hit by the proverbial truck! For us personally, getting our immunization was the trigger to the resumption of normal life. Now all we have to do is figure out what the new normal is!



Bill Wise - 1973 Mercedes 450SL

With all the uncertainty revolving around the virus, 2020 was a 'lost' year for the club as far as organized events and functions, but it's time to get this party started! Several of us club members have gotten together recently (on zoom) and have formulated a strategy for going forward resuming club functions. I'd like to share them with you and solicit your inputs and thoughts.

Club participation at Cars and Coffee: For those interested several members of the club are going to participate in the Cars and Coffee at Cornerstone Church on May 1 from 8-noon. Come out with your cars and look for fellow club members, we'll be parked near our club banner!



Leroy and Judy Nielsen - 2017 Corvette Grand Sport

Mark your calendar for Wed, May 12, 3pm at Living the Dream Brewery. They have a nice outdoor beer garden where we can socially meet. Please come with ideas, suggestions, and your volunteer spirit as we discuss what club members are interested in and comfortable doing.

MARS Club events: Our annual Club car show will be held in conjunction with the annual MARS picnic on Wednesday, 8 September at Clement Park. Also, for those car club members who are participating in the MARS Senior Recognition Luncheon (14 July at Ken Caryl Manor House) bring your cars and we will park in the lower parking lot area.

Car Club events: These plans and specifics are still being formulated, but include such things as a visit to the Forney Museum of Transportation; "behind the scenes" at Bandimere Speedway; a visit to High Plains Raceway, an organized club drive, and ad hoc participation



Bo Rodriguez - 1994 BMW 325i convertible

at the various Cars and Coffees' and Cruises that happen throughout the year here in Denver. If you have thoughts and ideas of things we could add to this list I'd love to hear them!

One of our new members, Bob Maples, has volunteered to be our Competition Chairperson. Bob has extensive experience racing at various tracks in the region, and is also a certified SCCA technical inspector. You may have seen his email recently soliciting the interest of any MARS car club members in running their car on a race track or at an autocross. If you have interest in this please contact Bob (scca_fp2002@hotmail.com).

We are a volunteer organization and it only works if club members step forward and volunteer! If there are things club related that is of interest to you and you think would be interesting to other club members, please STEP UP! Stay tuned as we resume normal and hope to see you on the first of May!

Roger Rieger

Road Racing Adventures

Bob Maples

I grew up outside Detroit in a car industry family. Both my grandfathers worked for General Motors and my father attended General Motors Institute (now Kettering University) in Flint. Even my wife's family was part of the industry with her grandfather and father both long time GM employees. Despite this (or because of it) cars were seen mostly as a commodity and not a hobby. One of our friends (a GM employee) had an interest in racing and my wife and I attended a few oval races before leaving Michigan for Colorado in 1981.

I developed an interest in cars around the time I finished high school but my interest increased greatly after moving to Colorado. I competed in my first autocross at the CSU Moby Arena parking lot in 1983 using the 1981 VW Scirocco S we had purchased just before leaving Michigan.



VW Scirocco S at Bayfield, Colorado

Autocross is a relatively slow speed event where a course is set up with cones in a large parking lot and cars compete one at a time. Cars are classed by perceived capability and the fastest time in each class is used to determine the winner of each class. I knew no one there and had no real idea of what I was doing but quickly developed friendships and started learning.

After three seasons of autocross, I decided I wanted to go faster and move to road racing. Road racing is contested on closed courses throughout the US and the rest of the world. All the cars compete together on the track and the first car in each class to complete the prescribed number of laps is declared the winner. As



BMW 2002 in original configuration at Second Creek

everyone is jockeying for position on the track together and trying to be the first one to finish, it can be quite intense mentally and there are a number of driving rules in place. Yes, collisions do occur.

In 1986 we purchased a 1971 BMW model 2002, stripped out the seats, put in a roll cage and went to the required racing school.



BMW 2002 in updated configuration at Pueblo Motorsports Park

I competed in a class with relatively few allowed modifications and at first drove the car to all of the events. Engines and drivetrains were essentially stock, but springs, shocks, sway bars and brake pads could be changed.

In 2000 we updated the BMW to race in a class that allowed more modifications. The interior was completely gutted, the engine was modified for more power, the suspension and brakes were further modified and fenders flares went on along with bigger wheels and stickier tires.



Audi A4 at Miller Motorsports Park

In 2010 the BMW was retired and replaced with an Audi A4 quattro. It had been converted to a race car for the previous owner by a company in Ohio and we picked it up at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum one wintery day. It was quite a change from the BMW with all-wheel drive versus rear wheel, fuel injection versus carburation, turbocharged versus naturally aspirated and a slippery body versus a boxy body. Despite supposedly being a race ready car, the Audi required a number of fixes before I was satisfied with it, including better brakes, revised springs and sway bars and more power (turn up the boost!!).

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The increased power and cornering ability resulted in failures rarely seen in street cars, such as exploded turbos and destroyed center differentials. Eventually I figured out how long they lasted and planned accordingly.



Spec Racer Ford at Second Creek

In addition to the cars I owned and built, I competed in a couple of other cars. I raced a Spec Miata in a long race (referred to as an enduro) which required pit stops and driver changes with 2 other co-drivers. I also raced a mid-engine open cockpit car in a couple of races.



Corvette at Miller Motorsports Park

The most unexpected drive I had was when a complete stranger at a race in Utah asked me to drive his Corvette in qualifying. How could I say no?

I last competed in wheel-to-wheel competition in 2018 after winning many races and a number of regional championships. The BMW is gone but the Audi gets out to the track for lapping days with my son and I. Eventually I plan to compete in track events where drivers compete against the clock for lap times as opposed to who gets to the finish line first.

People always wonder about wrecks. In the hundreds of races in which I competed I only had one serious wreck, and it wasn't too bad. I had a brake failure on the first lap of a race at Pueblo and left the track at high speed. Video of the incident is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zodS5yB2AQY>

Colorado had a number of tracks we raced at; Second Creek near DIA, Woody Creek in Aspen, Pueblo Motorsports Park, LaJunta

Raceway, Mead, Pikes Peak International Raceway and Stapleton. Second Creek was closed due to the housing built around DIA, Woody Creek became a private club that is only open to members, Mead closed many years ago due to lack of use and Stapleton only operated between the time the airport closed and when the runways were removed for development. High Plains Raceway east of Byers was built to replace Second Creek after it was closed. Pueblo Motorsports Park and LaJunta Raceway continue to operate essentially as they did 40 or more years ago, and Pikes Peak is still open.

We also raced at many tracks outside of Colorado over the years; Sears Point (now Sonoma Raceway) in California, Hallett Motor Racing Circuit in Oklahoma, Mid-Ohio in Ohio, Road America in Wisconsin, Heartland Park Topeka (now Heartland Motorsports Park) in Kansas, Texas Motor Speedway and Miller Motorsports Park (now Utah Motorsports Campus) in Utah.

Racing has provided a great number of memories over the years. In addition to honing my skills as a driver and learning new tracks, I learned a great deal about how to build a car and how to make it faster and more reliable.

From the Altar to the Altered

Co-written by
Eric and Cindy Georges

For those who do not know, my "hobby" for 40+ years was drag racing. I was bit by the racing bug in 1972 while an altar boy at our local parish in Illinois. You can imagine how as a young person I admired our new priest who built a Dodge Demon race car while in the seminary. We became good friends so Sundays after mass he would come to our house for breakfast with my family and afterward, he and I would spend the afternoons racing at the local tracks.



1976 Dodge Aspen R/T – Ran 15.2 in the 1/4 mile at 90 mph at Bandimere, Denver, CO – Dodge 360 CID

The racing bug hit again in 1976 after I bought a new 1976 Dodge Aspen R/T. I was officially hooked after winning 1st place in the first two races I entered. When Cindy asked if I liked racing, I said it was okay but I didn't think I wanted to do it again. Oh, how she probably wished she had a recording of those words over the years!! The wins in this car inspired me to increase my racing locations to several other tracks in Illinois and a track in Iowa. In 1979 we moved to Colorado and I continued to race this car at Bandimere until I sold it in 1981 to buy our first house.



1966 Dodge Charger – Ran 13.2 in the 1/4 mile at 106 mph at Famoso Dragway, Bakersfield, California – Dodge 440 single 4 Barrel

After we moved to California in 1982, I purchased a 1966 Dodge Charger and refurbished the interior, exterior and drive train with significant help from our neighbor/coworker Tom Sweeney. While I enjoyed racing this car at Bakersfield from 1982-1985 it proved to be too heavy to be competitive and, as you know, racers always need to be competitive!!



1970 Dodge Challenger – Ran 10.8 at 118 mph in the 1/4 mile at KCIR, Kansas City, MO – Dodge 440 - Two 4 Barrels

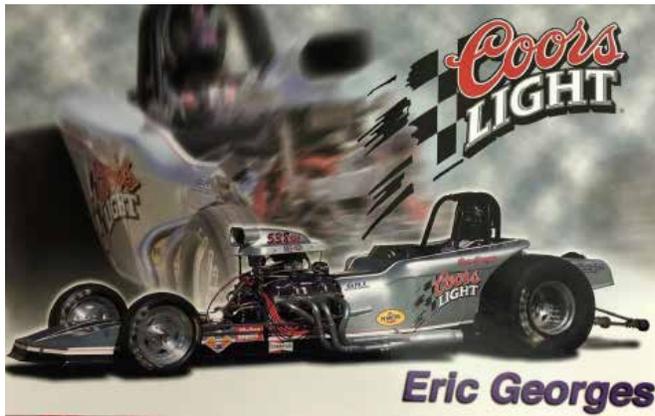
My next purchase in the pursuit of a great race car was the shell of this 70's Challenger in 1985. Tom Sweeney and I restored this car and I raced it from 1986 to 1992 at tracks in California, Missouri and at Bandimere. This was exciting for me as it was my first real non street legal car that had to be trailered to and from the race-track. Finally, I had a car that was competitive in one of the fastest classes at the track and I was crowned the Kansas City International Raceway (KCIR) Track Champion in 1987!



1981 Dodge Mirada Ran 10.20 in the 1/4 mile at 130 mph at KCIR, Kansas City, MO – Dodge 440 4 Barrel

But, as you know being car enthusiasts, there is always something better out there. In 1988 and 1989 when we lived in Kansas City, I decided to partner with another racer. My contribution was the motor, and I was the sole driver. While it was fun to go down the track faster, our partnership did not work out due to typical partnership disagreements – this one was differing opinions regarding increasing the car's performance (imagine that). We went our separate ways and I continued to race the Challenger with support from our son who was a teenager way back then. Sadly, the week after our partnership dissolved my engine sponsor's son crashed and totaled this car (driver was unharmed).

continued



23T Altered – Ran 8.70 in the 1/4 mile at 155 mph at Bandimere, Denver, CO – Dodge 452 Single 4 Barrel 750 hp weighing 1900 lbs. including driver

In 1992 I again decided to pursue a lighter, faster race car so sold the Challenger and jumped into an open wheel altered which was a totally different type and class of racing. After being a part time crew chief for many years, Cindy decided this racing thing must not be going away anytime soon so became the full-time crew chief and Georges Race Team (GRT) was formed. We traveled to 7 tracks in 6 different states with this car and even though throughout the years maintained many associate sponsors who provided product, in 2000 picked up a major paying sponsor— Coors Light. They paid for half of our racing season expenses and provided 450 cases of beer per season. You never know how many friends you have until you pull into your pit spot with everyone’s favorite beer – gold, cold and free!

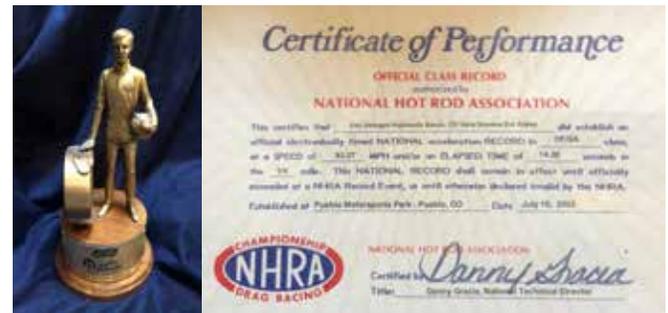
Since this altered was built in the 1980’s by a custom race car manufacturer in Colorado, it only had brakes on the rear axle. This made for an exciting ride during shut down and stopping due to the car bouncing, even when the parachute was deployed. At several tracks, the Safety Safari team was notified to be on alert when I headed down the track and, more than once, I bounced side to side so hard I scraped Goodyear off the sidewalls of the slicks. This naturally made Cindy a little concerned so we decided to upgrade to a new, improved altered but back surgery put those plans on hold for a racing season.



1987 Dodge Daytona – Ran 15.3 in the 1/4 mile at 87 mph at Bandimere, Denver, CO – Dodge 2.2L Throttle Body Injection 170 hp weighing 3050 lbs. including driver

In 2000 I had my first upper back surgery so was unable to pass the rigorous renewal physical for my NHRA Driver’s License. I needed a car that did not require this license but would still be competitive at the track. Luckily, I already owned a Daytona that met this criteria for the Stock Eliminator Class. I won the most Wally’s (one of

NHRA’s most prestigious trophies to win) with this car (5) and it also retains the National Class Title in D Front Stock Automatic. Some of you may have seen this car hanging around in one of the LMCO’s parking lots as it was also a daily driver for many years. This is the only car I raced that I still own.



NHRA Stock Class Wally and NHRA Class Record Certificate



23T Altered – Ran 7.72 in the 1/4 mile at 175 mph at Bandimere, Denver, CO – Dodge 572 Single 4 Barrel 1000 hp weighing 2100 lbs. including driver

This is my last official race car which was custom built in 2004 using my exact measurements and specifications (height, shoulder width, seat width, etc.) by a prominent race car builder in Arizona. The new altered had suspension and brakes on all 4 corners which made it exceptionally smooth both driving down the track and no worries stopping. We traveled almost every weekend from April to September racing in Nevada, Colorado, Kansas, or Missouri. While this totaled thousands of miles for us, it only averaged a total of 300-400 quarter mile passes on the car. We won many events with this car but decided to retire from semi-pro racing in 2015. I suppose once a racer always a racer as I continue to assist my friends at Bandimere and have been known to take my Chrysler Crossfire SRT6 down the track a few times.



2005 Chrysler Crossfire SRT6 – Ran 13.2 in the 1/4 mile at 108 mph at Bandimere, Denver, CO – AMG 3.2L Throttle Body Injection 3050 lbs. including driver

So, looking back, I really did go from the altar to the altered!

MISC...

FOR SALE/LOOKING FOR

Please send input to Carol at cyberbear51@comcast.net

RECOMMENDATIONS

Marin Automotive (off Titan Road)

I have had multiple jobs done by them with the recent being a paint correction on the M3. My son also worked there as a detailer.

303-791-3389

Submitted by: Dave Ernst

Cars Remember When (Englewood)

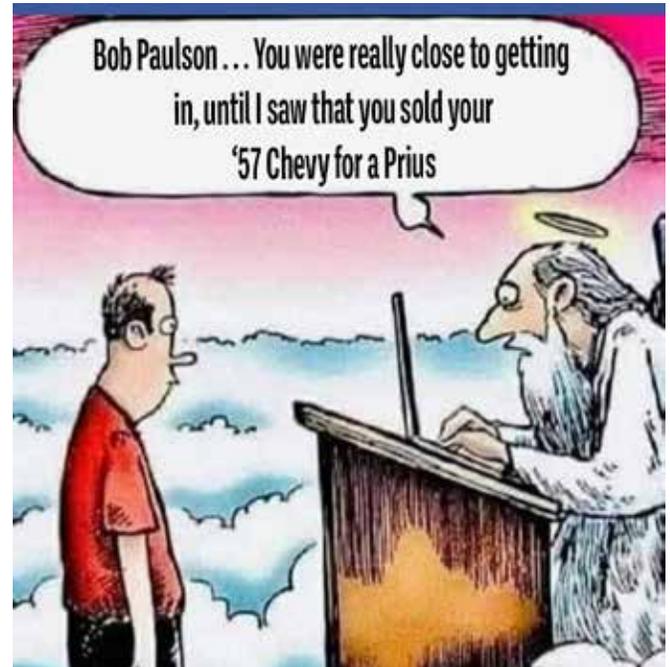
Install power steering – '68 Camaro

POC: Alan Shendleman 720-667-2602

Submitted by: Carol Lovelace

Enjoy the newsletter - a big shout out to Carol, Thom and Karen for their hard work in bringing this together. Enjoy the articles submitted by Bob Maples and his Road Racing Adventures, and Eric and Cindy Georges and their "love affair" with the need for speed.

- Roger



Space Cruisers is published on a quarterly basis. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact Carol Lovelace at cyberbear51@comcast.net