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THE BULLETIN

April/June, 1981

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Extracts from Members' letters:

"...My best wishes to you and all Register members. Keep up the good work on the Bulletin..."  
Dr. Dave Cavicke, Lyme, Connecticut, U.S.A.

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"...I wish a good motoring year to all Register members. My very best regards..."  
Tor Hultberg, Laholm, SWEDEN.

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"...Best wishes to you and all Register members..." M. Saunders, Devon ENGLAND.

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"...Good luck and happy motoring to all in 1981..." A. Nagelhout, Baarn, HOLLAND.

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"...I do enjoy the Bulletin immensely, and the contacts it has brought..."  
Bob Rehfeld, Alameda, California, U.S.A.

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SEBRING, 1950. Part II. By the late J. Davidson.

My mechanic, who was to co-drive, arrived by plane, but club members suggested they did not want a former professional dirt-track driver in this race; it was decided that one George Weaver of Boston, Mass. would be the co-pilot.

Weaver's right hand was covered with nicotine, he smoked cigarettes straight on and drank straight gin, but he drove a straighter line, while the engine would scream its guts out. He was more experienced and knew the track a lot better than I did. He immediately clocked an excellent time. Exhausted by the 15 hour drive, most owners had come down by plane, my time was foul - about 15 seconds slower than the fastest - although the machine was well among the very fastest!

I knew little about veering amid gasoline drums on long cement airplane runways and considered quitting. A bum grip and a fever topped my disgust. But Weaver loved racing and would not allow me to drop out. Finally, I told my mechanic:

"Huey, you put this car together, what do we do?"

"Don't worry, when the flag drops it will do something to you and that J2 will be right up there."

The trouble was that the flag only dropped once before for me. At Watkins Glen in upper New York State. In the excitement, I sprang out of a 30 car pack to chase after Erwin Goldschmidt, the fastest Allard then and here at Sebring, and also after this fellow George Weaver, now my team-mate. So bizarre were American Sports Car racing rules in the 1950's that Weaver at the Glen was running a rebuilt blown Grand Prix three litre Maserati that churned at about 7,000 rpm. Goldschmidt and he had shot up front from the start, while I clung for dear life a few dozen yards behind. I soon found myself on the very first lap looking at their goggles while driving abreast in a long radius curve. Maybe I should have looked at the road, because I soon let it go by, like an airplane, jumping into hay bales and a tall tree (in which the car remained stuck for the entire race) without much harm to man or machine. I had plenty of time to unbuckle my safety belt and slide down the tree on to the road before the fellow in number 4 position came chugging along the bend.

But Rout and Weaver convinced me to try again. Rout was insistent that I drive the first two hours.

"If somebody has to break this bus on which I laboured, Jean, I'd much rather you'd take first chance once and if it's still in there after two hours, George will then do his best and we might win, who knows?"

So, the cars were hauled to the starting ground. Angry at having been rejected as a driver, Rout tore out of the SAC hangar at full throttle, aimed at a gasoline drum, skidded cleanly around it twice, to stop the car at the proper angle and in perfect position. By now the crowd packing the stands as well as race officials were well-acquainted with number 79.

They gave us the starting flag and all ran in Le Mans fashion to the cars. Then and there I made the wisest decision I ever made in my short racing career. Let 'em run. I walked calmly to the car and peeled off last! I would build up my confidence by gobbling the smaller machines one by one, until I reached the bigger fellows or they started nibbling at my tail pipe from the rear!

It would be impossible for me to tell you the precise nature of the curves or describe my technique, but I immediately overtook a dozen smaller machines, hitting a

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right angle so fast, I barely made it. Any car in front of me exerted a powerful attraction, a sort of surrealist suction, that made up for technique. I was literally sucked into the rear of preceding cars, like a pin attracted by a magnet, but unlike a pin, I'd shoot past and keep going - this was exciting.

The Jags offered no resistance, the Porsches faded away, the Aston Martins barely managed to work themselves up to 115 mph on the one mile straightaway; they were pushed far behind.

But none of the big boys were to be seen. Goldschmidt, Wacker and Walters had jumped up front, hell-bent for leather at the flag, as if this was a 10 mile sprint and someone would have to let go. Someone did and it was not an Allard. Walter's Cadillac-Healey's radiator proved far too small.

It was boiling like mad at the pits, this encouraged me considerably. As I went by the vapour, Hubert Rout and the French press attache, Jean Beaubé, gave me a big S sign. It meant: you are doing well, go a bit slower.

On the next lap, I saw a big 3.02 which meant I was lapping 12 seconds slower than the absolute record on a deserted track! This was an encouragement, it relaxed me, but far from slowing me down it pumped more speed into me. The next time round I was pleased to read 3.01 and in front of me there was a red two-seater that looked like nothing I had overtaken yet. I could have gobbled it up in the one mile straight of the strategic airport, but tagged behind it a bit to see if I could deal with it in the big S bend in front of the stands. Maybe I wanted to show off, maybe I wanted to encourage my supporters. This, I did, the Allard was tremendous on the broad curves, you could melt your tyres like cheese in a frying pan, cock the steering, push the throttle, and you were driving a combination outboard, car and motorcycle - good enough to shoot past gentleman Jim Kimberley, in his flaming red drivers suit and redder Ferrari. Maybe he blushed too. It made me feel good because there was another Ferrari up front, which I overtook in the straightaway, half airborne in a cross wind, the front wheels lifting a bit in wonderful and characteristic J2 fashion (the subsequent J2X was more evenly distributed and less fun). So Spears disappeared in turn and by the time I reached the stands, I caught sight of a blue flash that made quite a roar for a 2.5 litre, this was Luigi Chinetti in the rebored 2.7 litre as good a time as ever to demonstrate my front axle was doing alright. I literally flew past him in the straight. By now, I was getting proud, there were only two cars in front, Erwin Goldschmidt and Fred Wacker's, one hour or so had gone by, and three Cad-Allards were up front, 1, 2, 3; far superior to anything on that 1950 track. Magnificent machines with big deep breaching American engines, barely tricky enough to make you feel good when you had tamed them... For the first time, I felt we had a reasonable chance of winning.

I was not being too hard on the machine, sliding the tyres rather than hitting the brakes and avoiding all unnecessary over-revs. The Allard was running like compressed oil in a silken duct.

However, most of my blood drained from me, when despite this performance and with only two cars ahead of me in a 60-car field, Hubert Rout waved frantically at me for the second time around. My tongue glued to the roof of my mouth, Fangio chewed gum to avoid this but I did not know this trick at the time. Although drenched in sweat, my feet got cold, the sign they were waving at me said: 3.01.F. This meant, you are within two seconds of the training lap record BUT THIS IS NOT FAST ENOUGH. I nearly missed a curve, ugly telegraph poles came for a close call, I managed to zig-zag by. Who was going faster than I was for my pit to give me the goose. Some guy must be revving in 2.58 maybe. I strained my eyes but saw nothing in the rear-view mirror. It was time to brake and serve right, and just then, less than a mile off, in the sun, I saw a tiny red spot - Erwin Goldschmidt's Allard. He had shaken off Wacker and was trying to do to me what I had done to 57 others! Despite two hours of thunderous work, he was intent on gobbling me up and I could feel my car pulling him towards me. I overshot nervously slower machines in the no-passing zone, a picture was taken of me in the process and I was nearly disqualified later. But for four laps the Goldschmidt Allard did not gain a single yard - it was the same red spot at the same self-spot.

My pit gave me no further orders, I regained composure on the next lap around, I bounced by a burning car. A red car enveloped in smoke. It was Erwin's machine. The driver had got out safely and it would be sheer hypocrisy to claim I felt sorry for him or for Tom Cole his brilliant co-pilot, one of the best on any Cad or Chrysler-Allard. To our regret he killed himself later at Le Mans, in a Ferrari.

So, two of the main threats had disappeared, Fred Wacker alone was leading us. By then, I was exhausted and so were the tyres and I stopped for refuelling and to hand over the wheel to this devilish fox-terrier from Boston, George Weaver.

Weaver pulled out on Wacker's trail going considerably faster than an elephant's foot on wet oilcloth. We were afraid he'd bust the machine, and two hours later on exhausted Weaver handed me back the machine, at night, in first spot.

At the first curve, I nearly spun off, I pressed on the brakes before hitting the curve, but the pedal kept going down and nothing happened. George had left no brakes. I just double-declutched in time to avoid a catastrophe. This was not easy either. George is a powerful fox-terrier in a racing car, he had bent out of shape the relatively

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tough steel lever - it was difficult readjusting to the new position of the gear knob. The engine then started sputtering - I had closed the electric gas pump while jumping in. I switched it back on and the motor purred again. Readjusted to what remained of the brakes and to the new position of the gear lever, I was still ahead of Wacker, but was soon pulled back into the pit because white streaks showed on the rear tyres which we had omitted to change in order to keep our lead. The change was barely completed when Wacker overtook us. Weaver chased him for the last hour without quite closing the gap. The two Cad-Allards, that of Wacker and ours had lapped the entire field for a conclusive team victory.

On Monday, I drove the J2 all the way back to Washington, D.C. and was only fined in Georgia for going 80 mph - this took care of the extra money sent by my office.

CONCLUSION.

FOR SALE

1951 ALLARD J2. No. J 1690. Cadillac engine - Ford 3-speed gearbox and De Dion rear. Some restoration still to be done. Offers to: Jan Bellander, Thun-Ollev. 59. S 13400 Gustavsberg. SWEDEN.

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ALLARD CHASSIS PLATES, original aluminium as per J1, K1 and L types up to Chassis 1500, when brass ones were introduced. These are unstamped and suitable for cars being re-built, re-placements, concours, or even for use as mounting on a plaque as a reminder of a past car. £3 each (U.K.) or US\$8.- overseas including postage. 18 only available so hurry. M. J. Patterson, 23, Hawthorn Way, Royston, Herts. SG8 7JS. ENGLAND.

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FORD 10 SPECIAL requiring restoration. Very nice twin tube chassis with Ford side valve 10 h.p. engine and running gear with split axle front suspension. A bit like a little Allard. Price £350 o.n.o.

AND

An EXCALIBUR J.A.P. 500 c.c. racer. 12 wins in 13 hill-climbs in 1980. Price £1,950 ono. Contact: John Peskett, 22 Wakerley Road, Evington, Leicester. LE5 6AQ (Tel:Leicester 737802)

New Book. "Sixty Years of Motoring Competitions in Belgium: 1896-1956." by Jacques Kupelian and Jacques Sirtaine. Price B.Fcs. 1,300. from Kupelian & De Boeck, 20B Avenue Franklin Roosevelt, 1330 - Rixensart. BELGIUM.

Our members are invited to the following events:-

The Great Thanet/Shell Super Oil Run and Concours d'Elegance, starting from London (The Great South Thames Show on Blackheath) to Margate on Sunday, 14th June, 1981. Veteran and Vintage cars with a special class for 'Post War Classic Cars' to 1958. Organised by Shell Oil U.K., Thanet District Council and the Lord Cranworth Motor Museum. Entries from D. F. Little, C/o Marketing Division Thanet District Council, P.O.Box 9, Margate, Kent. Telephone Thanet (0843) 65356 or 20241.

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Wings & Wheels, Concours d'Elegance and Rally, Royal Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, Sunday, 28th June, 1981. Entry fee: £1.50 includes free entrance to the show with one passenger. Entry forms from Martin Heal, 11, Waterloo Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Telephone (0749) 2755.

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The Huddersfield Conservative Association are holding their annual Concours d'Elegance on Saturday, 15th August at the Y.M.C.A. Sports Ground, Salendine Nook, Huddersfield. Free refreshments and event mementos are offered to all entrants. Entry forms available from Tony McInnes, 31 Broadgate Crescent, Almondbury, Huddersfield, Yorks. (Huddersfield 35284)

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:-

Wayne A. Gray	of Kansas City, Kansas, U.S.A.	J2X 3047 (Olds.)
Wilson H. Rider	" Granville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.	-
Alan S. Harvey	" Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.	Palm Beach 21Z
G. F. Dickson	" Guildford, Surrey, ENGLAND.	-

According to Champion Spark Plug Company, after 10,000 miles an electrode gap wear of .005" to .008" has taken place. The plugs are no longer firing efficiently and gasoline is being wasted. The remedy is installing a new set of plugs.

However, at intervals of 5,000 miles of use, you'll be gaining in fuel economy by servicing the plugs. Champion recommends the following services and procedures:-

- Remove any oily deposits with a solvent and dry plugs thoroughly.
- Open the electrode gap wide enough to permit cleaning and filing.
- Using a good quality abrasive cleaner, remove combustion depots. Then with clean air, blast away all abrasive material remaining on the plug thread and bore surfaces.
- File the electrode surfaces vigorously to restore clean, sharp edges.
- Reset gap to specifications by bending the side electrode only.

N.B. See next issue for particulars of new J2X-2 ALLARD to be made in CANADA