

# The Allard Register

No. 54

WINTER, 2010

FREE



**Bob Lytle, Cottonwood, AZ, 1925-2009**

Ardent Allard enthusiast, archivist, historian, ambassador, and accomplished racer – and my good friend – Bob died on December 13<sup>th</sup> with his family by his side.

I first met Bob several years ago at the *Monterey Historic Races*. It did not start as a face-to-face meeting, because my first view of Bob was his long legs sticking out from under his J2X. “Hi Bob. It’s Andy.” I said. “What’s going on?”

“Damn diff is coming loose. Pass me the nine-sixteenths, will you?” Greasy fingernails were followed by several beers and a long chat.

Awaiting an invitation to race at the *Monterey Historics* was a nail-biter for many, but not for Bob. With only one exception, Bob and his iconic black Allard were Laguna Seca fixtures for every running of the *MHAR* from 1984 to 2008. Despite the growing prevalence of big-timers with their 18 wheelers, paid crews and lavish service facilities, Bob was perfectly comfortable showing up with his well-used “Unpretentious Racing Team” camper, towing #65. Bob did all of his driving, along with being the Allard’s sole pit-crew. The camper had enough space for him, his tools and some beer. He seldom failed to finish, and typically finished well up in the pack, at that.

Bob bought his 1953 J2X, #3162, in December of 1982, sight unseen, from a party in Florida. It had had seven previous owners, and a long racing history. He flew to Tampa on a one-way ticket and solo drove the well-worn Allard 3000 miles back home to Los Angeles. Much of this travel was in sub-freezing temperatures. Once home, he stripped the car down to the frame and completely rebuilt it. No boulevard cruiser, he seriously raced it at every opportunity.

I have memory of the 2003 Allard event in Texas, where Bob dispatched an armadillo that strayed on to the track. That finished him for that race. While he was bashing out the damaged front fender, one of the track crew presented him with the cleaned corpse of his victim, and an offer to barbeque it for his dinner. With good grace and much humor, Bob declined the offer. Not so with the beers offered afterwards.

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Bob was born September 21, 1925, in Ontario, California. Soon afterwards, the Great Depression arrived, and with it economic hard times for Bob's family. He was placed in an orphanage because there was not enough food at home to feed him. After graduating from Hollywood High, he served in the US Navy until 1947. There he was a motor machinist mate on the USS LSM-396, in the South Pacific Theater. After discharge, he then started work at his father's garage in Hollywood, progressing through jobs of increasing responsibility at Buick, Packard, Chrysler-DeSoto, Cadillac and Chevrolet dealerships, before establishing a career at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, as their fleet manager. He retired from there in July of 1986.

The most common trait of this wonderful pastime of owning, fixing and racing old cars, is the passion for machinery. Bob had this passion. He had owned or built an eclectic array of cars in his lifetime, from Baja Bugs to #65. In recent years he 'hot rodded' a 1935 New Zealand Ford by installing a modified flathead V8 Sixty, and in his spare time machined and built four *running* miniature engines from aluminum alloy billets.

Once, I had set up a time to meet him at his home in Cottonwood, but Bob had to cancel because of a court summons. As he explained it, the throttle-spring broke on his Baja Bug, causing him to blow through a stop-light. Inconveniently, a sheriff's deputy was a witness. I believed his story, and I hope the judge did. I never asked so I never found out.

Bob estimated that he put more than 10,000 race miles on #65 as he ran at more than a dozen race tracks and road courses across the US and Mexico during the past 25 years. During those endeavors he claimed to have consumed only one set of Sears radial tires, but no fewer than *four* Buick nail-head engines. Some folks say that his log manifold topped with the six Stromberg 97's was the culprit.

Over the years I never ever witnessed anything other than determination and enjoyment in his demeanor at the race track. He truly loved every minute of it. This can't be said for most of the vintage racers that I know.

More than his cars or his racing accomplishments, Bob will be remembered for his vast knowledge of Allards and his records of virtually every Allard in North America. Bob served as the technical advisor to the *Allard Register*. Whenever I had a question about or where an Allard was, or its history, I asked Bob. It was very seldom that an answer was not forthcoming, and most of this from memory. All of Bob's files have been passed on to the *Allard Register*, where they will be made available as part of their developing Allard data base.

When I last spoke to Bob he was not doing well, but we still managed to have a few laughs. He finished with "I've had quite a life, enough to fill a book, and maybe *more* than just one. I've done pretty much what I wanted to do, and enjoyed most all of it." Bob is survived by his wife, Elaine; daughters Deborah (David) Greenlee and Diane (Andy) Anderson, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

I guess it's best to let this finish with that.

By Andy Picariello



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**A LOVE STORY** (Continued from AR53)

By Bill Bauder

The Bitch, like all J2X's, had a DeDion independent rear end with a torque tube. My new transmission was set up for an open driveshaft, so I was looking at a major project. But while searching on the Internet, I found a hot rod company that makes an adapter for an open drive shaft. This was the answer to my problem.

The rear end was completely dis-assembled and bearings checked for wear. The U-joints were still as new. While the rear end has a lot of life left in it, there is slop in the gears and it will eventually have to be rebuilt.

The new transmission arrived on schedule, but the engine was not ready until three weeks later. Meanwhile I installed a new Centerforce clutch and throw-out bearing. The throw-out bearing required some grinding to fit the Ford clutch fork.

I had been working on the car for about 12 hours when I quit for the day, had supper and went to bed. About midnight I woke up with chills and a fever of 104, and the next day I found myself in the hospital with pneumonia. This set me back a whole month, and I was not sure that I could complete the restoration by the October deadline. During this month I did do some light machine work and fabricated new door latches.

I soon started working seven days a week, 12-hour a day – hoping to complete the car on time. We installed the engine with the transmission attached by raising the frame to the full height of the truck jack stands. This allowed the engine to be lowered at a steep angle, finally resting it on the floor under the frame. The engine with transmission attached was then raised parallel to the frame, up and over the mounts, and secured in place. The transmission mounts required modification by fabricating an adapter to bring the mounts in alignment.

The new stainless steel brake lines had been installed previously and were fitted for dual master cylinders. The radiator was installed with the new fan attached to the front, as there is no room to mount it on the back. All the wiring was hooked up and the new Hurst gear-shift installed. It was at this point that I found that there was a clearance problem with the gear-shift rods to the transmission. By trial and error we bent them to provide clearance and still allow them to function properly.

It was now time to start installing the floorboards and the 45 gal. gas tank. A new copper gas line had to be run inside the frame, as the old one was damaged during removal,

I had previously ordered rebuild kits for the three carburetors from Holley. The old exhaust headers were cleaned and painted with high temperature paint, and then wrapped with insulation. This insulation has helped to lower the temperature in both the engine compartment and the cockpit. I still have painful memories of a blistered my foot from engine heat during a long race.

With less than a month to go it was now time to start the engine and test-drive the car without the body installed. With a fire extinguisher at hand I turned the key to 'on' and the gauges came alive. Then I pulled the 'petrol' switch to on. The electric fuel pump started its fast chattering, but it kept on and on without slowing as it normally would. That's when I noticed that gasoline was pouring out onto the manifold. One of the three carburetors floats was stuck so the start-up was aborted. We sopped up the gasoline, adjusted the floats, and began the starting sequence again. The engine fired with a loud bang, but was running rough – indicating that the carbs needed their slow speed jets adjusted. After adjustment it settled into the normal lope of a race engine. Gosh!! It sounded good to hear it again after almost 13 years of silence.

The gauges indicated that everything was normal, so I tried unsuccessfully to put it in reverse. The shifter and the clutch needed adjusting and the linkage was tight. After an hour's work I was able to shift properly, though it was very stiff. I drove it up to my son's house and back without incident.

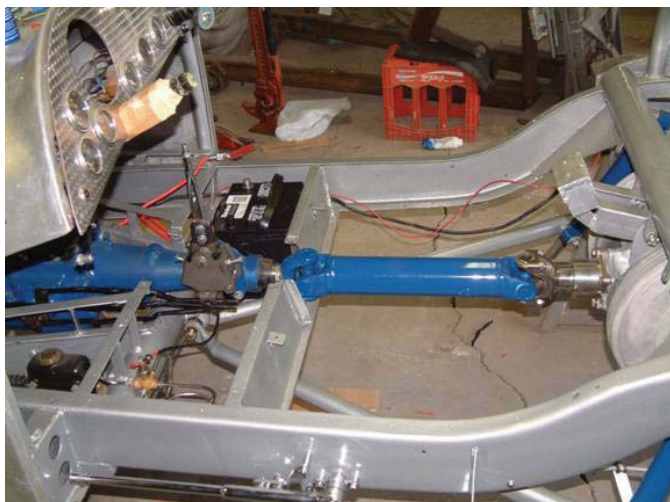
With the shakedown cruise complete, it was time to start cleaning and painting the body. I decided to do the upholstery later as there was no way that I could do it in the time left.

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The cowl was painted first then the nose, tail and other parts. After cleaning the aluminum with an aircraft cleaner, the aluminum was primed with PPG epoxy primer followed by a sanding primer. I used enamel for the finish coat so I could polish out any defects. Once done, I installed the nose section first so I could install the lights – then the tail, fenders and doors.

With two days left before I had to leave for the reunion I enlisted the help of my son and his wife in polishing out the paint. Using the old seats 'The Bitch' was ready to travel one day before the reunion. We drove to Bryan, Texas the next day to the Texas World Speedway without any problems whatsoever. We even completed two short races without the wheels falling off. The only problem we encountered was that the clutch required adjustment before our return home.

A few months later I finished the new upholstery matching the original. There still remains fixing the defects in the paint and some stone bruises. I will try to do this shortly, but I do have an MGTD that I want to finish also.



*The open drive shaft installed— the new adapter is on the rear end*



*The shakedown at my Son's house.*

## Allard Dragster Update December 2009

*By Colin Warnes*

A lot of progress has been made since we last reported on the Allard Dragster restoration project that is being carried out by the Allard Chrysler Action Group (ACAG) in association with the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu in the UK.

Below is an overview of the progress that has been made:

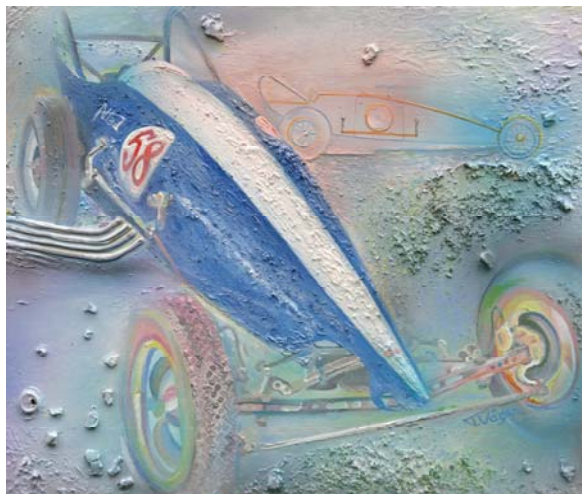
- The ACAG has partnered with [www.project1320.com](http://www.project1320.com) which is an online community focused on vintage drag racing and history. This group has helped to create a network of supporters for the project from all over the world. Project 1320 Chairman Traci Hrudka has joined Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason as a patron of the ACAG
- The engine and blower have been sent to renowned hemi engine builder Booth-Arons in Michigan for rebuilding.
- The group received the 'Non-Standard Award' from insurance company [www.PerformanceDirect.co.uk](http://www.PerformanceDirect.co.uk) in recognition of the hard work that is being done to restore the unique dragster. The award includes a matching grant of up to £2,500 from now through the end of May, 2010.
- The unofficial queen of drag racing, Linda Vaughn (Miss Hurst Shifter) has joined the cause to help promote the restoration project. Linda is helping to persuade suppliers to donate parts to complete the project.
- The SEMA Trophy for the winner of the 1963 Dragster Challenge has been reunited with the Allard Dragster after disappearing from public view for many years. The trophy was awarded to Sidney Allard after the completion of the Dragster Challenge that took place Silverstone, Brighton, Church Lawford and Debden. The

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race pitted Allards first drag racer against Dante Duces' 600 bhp 350ci Chevy V8 engined Mooneyes gas dragster. The challenge was instrumental in creating enthusiasm for drag racing in the UK and Europe.

- The Dragster has been getting some sun lately, being displayed at the Silverstone Classic and Goodwood Revival.
- Two paintings of the Allard Dragster by artists Tommy Vågen and Paul Whitehouse were created and sold to raise funds for the Dragster restoration. Prints of these paintings are available at [www.allardchrysler.org](http://www.allardchrysler.org) and all funds raised benefit the restoration project.

The ACAG is still in need of financial support, if you would like to help, please email ACAG chairman Brian Taylor at [brian@allardchrysler.org](mailto:brian@allardchrysler.org) or visit the web site [www.allardchrysler.org](http://www.allardchrysler.org) to buy merchandise.



Prints of Tommy Vågen and Paul Whitehouse's paintings are available for purchase at [www.allardchrysler.org](http://www.allardchrysler.org)



The ACAG supporters gathered for a reception at the Beaulieu's National Motor Museum on November 25<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the progress they've made in the past year.

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## Allard Saloon and Touring Car?

By Colin Warnes

Little is known about the Dolphin-Allard, a retractable hardtop designed by Dolphin Industrial Development. Based on an Allard L-Type, it appears as though work started in late 1947. The finished car was ready for **Autocar** to feature in April of 1948, which describes the retractable roof as:

*"...consisting of two metal panels hinged together and interconnected by a loaded steel cable which results in the main roof panel assuming a more or less horizontal position when the panels are extracted from the boot to convert the open car into a two-door coupe'. The top section of the boot is hinged so that it can be opened to allow the head panels to swing down and lie snugly in the boot, the lid of the boot then being folded down again so that an open sports car with a clean top line results. The quarter panels hinge down to lie against the sides of the car and the quarter lights also hinge into the boot sides.*

*Operation of the roof is quite easy since the actuating arms and cable are spring-loaded, but they can also be operated electronically or hydraulically if preferred. Waterproofing has been carefully studied and when the roof is up, rain is carried away by a drainage system in the boot. The boot provides a very large luggage space when the car is being used as a coupe', but when the head is down the luggage space is, of course, occupied by the roof. "*

It's known that at least two Dolphin-Allard cars were built, however neither is known to have survived. Apparently the weight of the retractable roof systems were too much for the chassis to bear and they soon collapsed. It is not known if the Dolphin retractable roof system was fitted to any other cars. The Dolphin-Allards were priced at £1,525 and were sold exclusively by Stormont Engineering in Tunbridge WellsPricing.

From a historical perspective, the Dolphin retractable roof was not the first, however it appears to be the first system designed and built in the UK. Earlier production cars with a retractable hardtops were pre-WWII Peugeots, and the Chrysler Thunderbolt concept car in 1942.

Mr. Dolphin was an accomplished engineer and inventor. Among his accomplishments included his invention of a parachutable folding motor cycle and a mini one-man submarine. Upon leaving the SOE, Dolphin founded the Corgi motorcycle company and created the Allard based Dolphin among countless other inventions before moving on to serve as Engineer-in-Chief of the UK's Atomic Energy Authority.



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## The Glen Again in Ten!



Plans are underway for an Allard Gathering at Watkins Glen this September to celebrate Erwin Goldschmidt's win 60 years earlier. His car, along with many other Allard's will be there to celebrate the event. Andy Picariello is organizing the event which will take place during the SVRA's U.S. Vintage Grand Prix Festival this September 10-12. Many Allard related special events will take place throughout the weekend, including a drive on the Old Course and a special display at the track. All Allard owners are encouraged to attend with their cars, whether racing or not. If you are interested in attending, please email Andy at [afpic@cape.com](mailto:afpic@cape.com) with your contact information and if you intend to bring your car for race or show. Andy needs to get the SVRA an initial head count soon (for lodging and track space), so if you are interested, please contact him now (this is not a formal commitment!). Organizing an event like this takes a lot of work, so if you'd like to help Andy, please let him know. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you are interested in attending, please fill out the enclosed entry form or email Andy at [afpic@cape.com](mailto:afpic@cape.com).

Andy Picariello

AOC America

P.O. Box 1378

Marstons Mills, MA 02648

Tel: 508-420-2914

Email: [afpic@cape.com](mailto:afpic@cape.com)

This event will be open to all Allard owners, both to race and/or display their Allards. A prompt response would be appreciated. Once I get an idea of attendance, I can reserve lodging

Yes, I would like more information on the September, 2010 Allard Event

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE OR PROVINCE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ALLARD(S):

Model	Year	Engine	Chassis #	Condition

PLEASE CIRCLE:

I intend to race my Allard(s)

I intend to display my Allard(s)

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## Web Site of the Month – [www.jalopyjournal.com](http://www.jalopyjournal.com)

The internet is full of interesting web sites that can be helpful to Allard owners. One of my favorite web sites is the Jalopy Journal ([www.jalopyjournal.com](http://www.jalopyjournal.com)) and its' user forum, the H.A.M.B. (Hockey Ass Message Forum). This site is dedicated to 'real' hot rods and their powertrains. If you're looking for help with your 331 or La Salle transmission, you're bound to find some help – they even discuss Allards from time to time!

*By Colin Warnes*

## The Allard Register

### Sponsor:

Syd Silverman  
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### President:

Dudley Hume  
[dudleyhume2006@yahoo.com](mailto:dudleyhume2006@yahoo.com)

### Editor:

J P Donick  
Tel: 845/635-2373  
[whimsey1@earthlink.net](mailto:whimsey1@earthlink.net)

### Publisher/Advertising

Chuck Warnes  
Tel: 559/436-1588  
[chas.warnes@gmail.com](mailto:chas.warnes@gmail.com)

### Tech Advisor/Archives/Web Site

Colin Warnes  
[cwarnes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cwarnes@sbcglobal.net)

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## The Last Checkered Flag

Bob Lytle, 1925 - 2009

