

WHY

Stories That Define Us as Drivers



Ross Bentley (& drivers like you!)

SPEED SECRETS



INTRO

I stood against the fence, watching car after car zip past me in the brake zone for Turn 7 at Sebring, and wondered, “Why are these people doing this?” Of course, by this time, I’d been doing the same thing, driving around race tracks all over the world for decades. But why? Why did I do it? And because I know that I’m not “normal,” why would anyone else want to do it?!

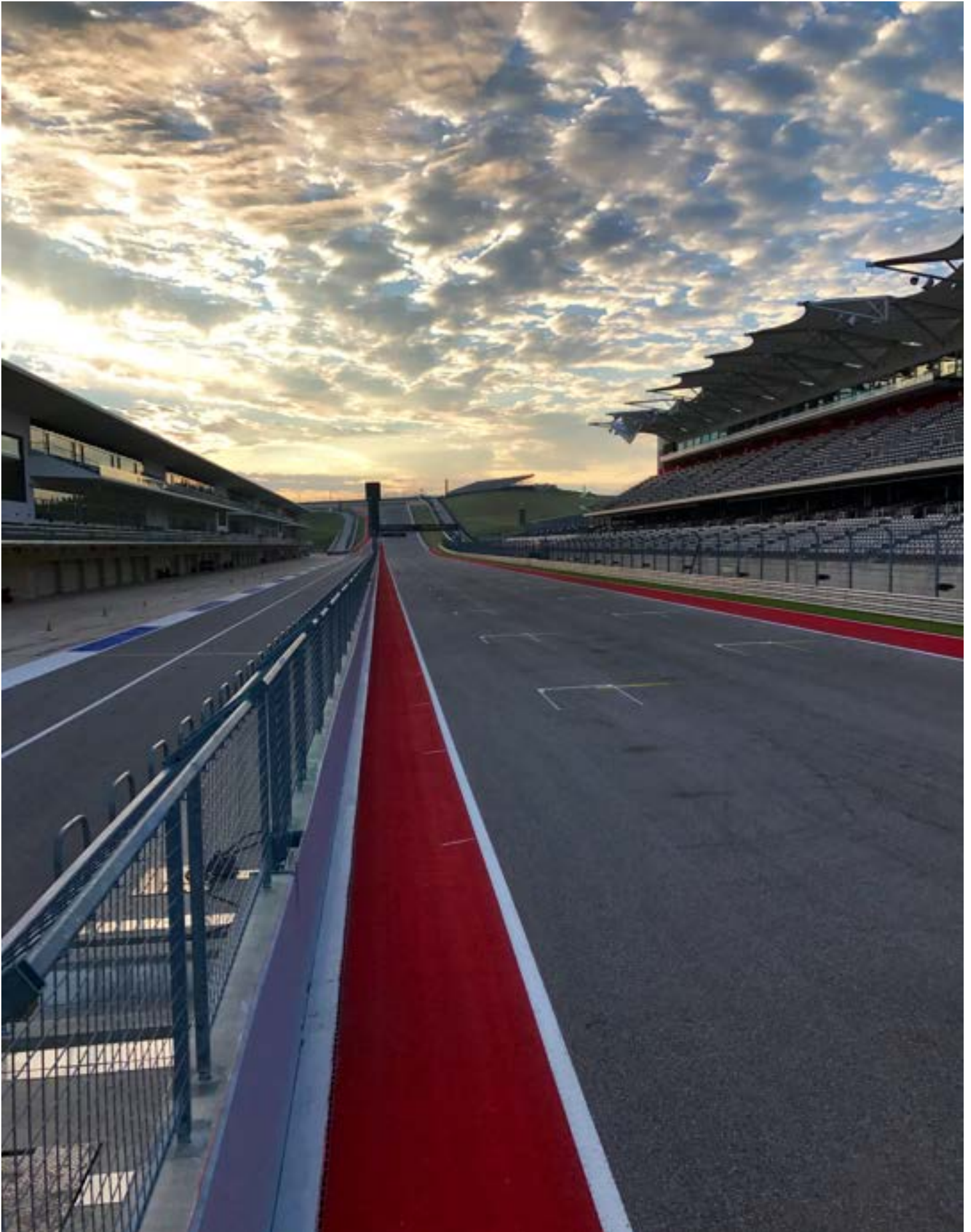
That’s when my fascination really began; the curious search for why some people become car people, driving enthusiasts, or racers... and why some don’t. On the one hand, I can’t understand why everyone in the world is not turned on by the way a BMW M3 turns into a corner, the sound of a Ferrari engine, the shape of a Porsche 911, or the silly grin one gets when tossing a Mazda MX-5 around. What’s wrong with those people?! Why don’t they get it?! And on the other hand, why are some people addicted to the sport?

I thought more about this, and dug into my own mind to try to understand what triggered “it” for me. I thought this might lead to why others do what they do with their cars and their driving. But I also found out that the reason I’m passionate about our sport might not be the same reason other drivers — like you! — are into it.

So I thought I’d just come right out and ask. At first, I had random conversations at the various car club events at which I was speaking. Then, I poked at racers and tried to find out what drove them to where they were. Finally, I reached out to drivers who follow me and Speed Secrets on social media. “Why do you do what you do?”

The response was both fun and inspiring — just what I’d hoped for. In the pages that follow there are dozens of stories – some are almost mini history lessons about what someone did to end up where they are today, and others dig deeper into the “why” they do what they do. What was it that triggered their passion; that made them the car-lover and driver they are today? That’s the question that’s answered in many different, fun, and inspiring ways in this eBook.

Enjoy! Then, go drive!



STORIES



My first word was “car.” I grew up near Chicago in that kind of household where my dad would buy me a new Hot Wheels every time we went to the grocery store. I remember spending weekend nights at Great Lakes Dragway, watching cars make tons of noise, occasionally blow up, and blast as fast as possible.

Every year, we would go to the Indy races at Milwaukee Mile. We took a road trip to Indianapolis Motor Speedway and hit every single car-related thing on the way down. When I was 5, my dad got a brand new ‘91 Mercury Capri, and buzzing around with the top down further solidified my love of driving. He still drives convertibles to this day — granted the tops have a bit more insulation and don’t leak nearly as much (technology, man).

I remember being one of the few kids I knew who was just chomping at the bit to get that license and a car. When I was nearing that age, almost everyone I knew was terrified of it. Hell, most people I know now still remember being terrified of driving... but my instructor had to constantly remind me that the road-test-people tend to frown upon hitting apexes and 0-60 times.

To this day, driving is a release, something so relaxing that nothing else can touch it. Dropping the windows and opening the sunroof on a warm summer night is about the best feeling there is. I’ll never get tired of driving, and I will always be a car guy at heart.

Michael Long

My parents weren't ever hugely mechanical, though my dad was an electrician and was generally pretty handy. But both my mum and dad loved the V8 Supercars in Australia, in particular, the Bathurst 1000.

Some of my earliest and happiest memories are of the Bathurst weekend — not going to it (I've actually never been to the race), but setting up at home as a family to watch. My mum absolutely loved spoiling us for that; she wouldn't watch all that much of the race, but she'd make us up a monstrous assortment of munchies throughout the day. It always made her feel so great putting that together for us and seeing my dad and I enjoy what she made so much, while he and I bonded over the race. Maybe it was an odd way for Mum and I to make a connection, and it's some of the best time I've spent with my dad.

Anyway, motorsport still evokes those memories for me, and it's continuing as a bonding moment for me and my kids. From those early days, I started getting really into cars, but actually doing the driving on a track came much later for me. That was kicked off by me being able to afford my dream car (a 911), and wondering what it could do. The progression went from backroad drives, to autocross, to HPDE, and now to racing.

But I still think of Bathurst with my folks every time I'm at the track.

Brad Kellett



It all started for me in 1960 at the age of 10 when my dad bought a new 1960 Corvette. He joined NCCA and SCCA. My dad, mom, and I started going to the tracks in Northern California (we lived 30 minutes from Cotati Speedway). Then in 1961, we went to the big ones for me: Laguna Seca and Riverside. For me, going to Laguna for three days twice a year was like going to Disneyland. The sights, the sounds, and the smells of racing became something that will always stay with me.

In the early years, I personally knew most of the greats: Carroll Shelby, Jim Hall, Dave MacDonald, Paul Reinhart, and on and on. I was hooked on racing. I still see Paul Reinhart from time to time and enjoy reminiscing with him.

In 2005, I bought my own Corvette C6 Z51 and shortly after that I found Hooked On Driving. For me, it was like finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. David and the gang are great. I always attend and enjoy Ross Bentley's classroom talks, as well as *Speed Secrets Weekly*.

Ron Piombo



The process of car control and the outcomes of racing explain why I do what I do. Precise execution with extreme focus to detail describes the process. Exhilaration and incremental improvement are the outcomes. Nothing else explains why I spend 50 hours in preparation for every hour of racing.

Most of my life can be lived on autopilot without dire consequences. My attention can wander while I am doing any number of activities without a risk more grave than spilling my mocha on a clean shirt. Wrapped in my Sparco race seat, Stilo helmet, and HANS device, piloting a Porsche Cup car through turn 17 at Sebring, trying to safely pass a faster car on the inside despite abrupt changes in surface, I am absolutely focused. I am unaware of a separation between my brain, my hands, the steering wheel, and the contact patch of the tires. The seconds click over on the Motec unnoticed. I see millions of pixels of information on the track and its immediate periphery. I hear my crew chief over the race radio utter brief declarations. I feel the accelerations and decelerations, the response of the seat to the forces of physics. I smell the aroma of race fuel, rubber smoking. I process all of these constantly-evolving sensations while making continuous marginal adjustments to drive the perfect corner, execute the perfect pass, connect turns to complete a faster lap, connect laps to finish the race; my mind never once drifts to an incomplete to-do list, a lost item, an email awaiting a response.

This feeling of obligatory intense focus is fleeting for me. I only achieve this concentration in the race car. I cannot replicate it outside of the race car. That feeling of absorption and concentration is a big part of my racing addiction. But the thrill of racing is in my DNA. In the 1950s, my father fabricated, raced, and sold Ambro - a two-piece fiberglass body intended for a TR3 chassis and a TR4 motor. My mother quieted my crying in the nursery with an unusual bedtime story, "The Sounds of Sebring," an LP with forty-five minutes of whining race engines. Repairing and cobbling together cars and driving illegally during my adolescence fed my addiction to cars. But my real gateway drug for racing was the Ambro that I inherited from my father. During the spring of 1998, I attended Rocky Mountain Vintage Racing school at Second Creek Raceway. I crossed three 10,000 foot snowy passes with an open trailer. By lap three, I was hooked. The checkered flag came way too soon.

The thrill of racing is its own intense lure. However, the gradual improvements in performance; the rebound from the inevitable breakdowns and mistakes; the challenge of adjusting to variables such as a different car, track, or weather; and the enduring friendships keep me looking forward to the next 20 years of a crackling speaker beckoning "Group 1 to the grid. Group 1 to the grid."

Robert Ames

An unknown gentleman at the time walks past me at my friend's shop where I was getting my new-to-me GT3 and says, "Nice car, kid. Bet you don't know how to drive it properly, though. Are you a PCA member?" The beginning of it all!

Jerome Cloutier



Hot Wheels..... LOL

Michael Shanes



The intro scene to *Cannonball Run* was the starting point for me.

Jason Gudgen



Ongais, Rutherford, Unser (Jr. & Sr.), Mears, Andretti, Stewart... well, you get the idea. These were the names of my youth, watching ABC's *Wide World of Sports* on TV. Watching those guys drive at 200 MPH and sometimes not living to tell about it totally fascinated me. Why? What possesses people to purposely risk everything to go fast? I must admit that fast was not fast enough on my bike and jumping through the air just because I wanted to see how far I could jump. Laying down the longest skid mark to see if I could do it without putting my foot down really did appeal to me, so I guess I was a bit of a daredevil? But growing up, my family (8 people) was poor, so poor that even poor people looked at us with pity. We were homeless not once (my 6th-7th grades in school) but thought it was such a crappy idea, we did it a second time for 6 months, finishing out my sophomore year! Showing up to school everyday in a 1968 Coupe de Ville Cadillac (that is a 2-door car, for the record) with my entire family in it leaves an impression on everybody including those inside of the car, I can assure you of that. At the beginning of every month, my dad would get his government-mandated poverty money (he had been forced onto long term disability due to back and knee surgeries), and we would get a slight reprieve from our seemingly never-ending homeless ordeal. That meant we would get to sleep in a hotel on a real bed (well, some of us anyways, as we had to get only double bed rooms because that was all we could afford) and get to watch TV and the aforementioned heroes of the day. It was a short break from reality to see those guys drive their race machines to glory. I wanted to do that!

However, two things conspired against me back then. One was money and the other was the fact that as a poor guy, I had to stay with poor sports and my sport was baseball (only needed a glove and sometimes cleats) and somehow my mom and dad found a way to get me those. Low and behold, I had a talent for that and to make a long story short, let's just say I took advantage of the opportunities that came my way from having above-grade talent in a sport. Though I never got to play in the US as a pro baseball player, I did get the chance to play professionally on the international stage, and a short six years after living in a car, I found myself playing in Canada as a pro! In total, I played 11 seasons professionally in Canada, Australia, and Europe (Holland - actually

did the Dutch Racing School and was driver of the event), and one of my two dreams had come true, even if in an unconventional way. I got to play pro-ball. But at each stop, I would always dream of my other fascination and watch the international racing events. Formula One, Australian Supercars, European racing of all varieties, eventually getting hooked on World Rally Racing (WRC) and the flying antics of those lunatics. I fancied myself to be a decent driver and did all the stupid things I thought I could do with a car. As a rule, I never ended up ugly side down, though some episodes were close. Watching all forms of racing got me to appreciate the skill sets needed (the absolute pinpoint focus and concentration) to do each one, the similarities among them, and quite honestly the absolute belief in oneself needed to be a really good racecar driver. As a shall-we-say “achieving athlete,” I knew a thing or two about being so focused to the point you do not know what is going on around you, in the stands, etc. I read articles, listened to TV interviews, and just watched the races (this was before the internet, so I had to dig for stuff to read). But those dang WRC drivers beat all, and once back in the US, I began a career in real estate and by the end of my second year, I was making okay money... and still watching those flying lunatics on WRC. Well, talk about divine intervention. At my full lust for going racing, lo and behold, Subaru was about to unleash a beast of a car (for the time) in the form of the Impreza WRX STI! I was now hooked, I had to get one, so I ordered one of the first ones ever to enter the US. In 2018, I sold my STI with slightly over 160,000 miles on it with about 20,000+ of those miles being on the racetrack and the rest being driven like I was on a race track!!! It had a tough life, but man, I loved that car!

In September 2003, I picked up my drug of choice - my white '04 STI. A mere two months later (after engine break-in of course...), I did my first track day on the wettest day possible at Thunderhill, and let's just say I was the fastest by a large margin. Now that is not a talent comment, but an all-wheel drive comment. There were five of us that day and four were high horse-powered rear wheel drive cars and they could not lay down power without spinning their wheels into oblivion, thus I was the fastest. I had found my nirvana. My holy grail. It was lust at first event and the second of my childhood passions was coming to fruition again... albeit in an unconventional way - HPDE events. The smell of the brakes (or lack thereof on more than one occasion...); the sound of 400, 500, 600 horsepower going full tilt down the straightaway (and not putzing on a freeway at 65); and seeing cars hitting 140 mph just deepened my love of this sport. It was in my fourth year as a paying schmuck that I was given an opportunity that has taken me to an all new driving level in the last 12 years. I got asked to be a driving coach and help others go as fast as they and their cars could go. What could go wrong?

Well let's see, I now have tens of thousands of miles in the right seat at venues like legendary Laguna, Sears Point (forget all of the sponsorship hoopla, it will always be Sears Point), and Thunderhill, to name a few. I have been hired or coached for Lamborghini, AMG Mercedes, Porsche Club of America, Corvette clubs, BMW drivers, and numerous private track day events. I have made zero and I have been handsomely paid for my efforts, and even today, writing this still blows my mind. People actually want to listen to me on how to go fast, who woulda thunk it possible? All I wanted was to go racing, but lacking the resources as a young kid I never thought I would be around, much less driving, on racetracks and considered a pretty decent driving coach. It still has me scratching my head.

How I went from sleeping in a car with all of my siblings to driving \$300,000 exotics on racetracks is still not fully fathomable. I once wanted to go fast and drive the Indy 500 and though I will never get there, I think my path to get here has been pretty cool. My passion for baseball led me around the world. My passion for this driving-fast thing has led me to this: trying to explain the unexplainable because in those dark nights sleeping on the side of the road, I would not, could not have envisioned that someday I would actually be driving fast on race tracks. The money thing still keeps me grounded in the HPDE arena and that is fine with me. David Ray of Hooked on Driving gave me an opportunity to become a coach and boy howdy, how grateful I am to him for letting me do this. I wanted to keep this short as possible, but as a kid, my heroes had names like Ripkin, Rose, Bench, Jackson (as in Reggie), Unser Jr., Andretti Jr., Mario, Sullivan, Fittipaldi, et all, and in my own way, I got

to be about as close to them as one could be, I guess. Still today, I get to explore, learn, teach others and enjoy this sport of high performance driving on a very regular basis. Wow, have I been lucky or what?

Doug Juenke



I am a very reluctant car/driving/racing enthusiast. I actually despise popular car culture from Formula One all the way down to traffic light drag racing. Why? There are so many reasons. It's fun at the expense of the environment. It's dominated by people with big egos and big pocketbooks who can't actually drive for shit. Cheating is rampant and expected at all levels of the sport. From stance to donks to whatever the next stupid thing is coming, car fashion is a silly, wasteful pursuit. Motorsports is entrenched in toxic masculinity. Driving a supercar to work is like buttering your toast with a samurai sword, and let's be real, it's a form of socio-economic bullying. I could go on and on... but this was supposed to be a few words about why I *am* a car person. THE DRIVING. That's it. The only thing better than driving the limit is a brief trespass and safe return from well beyond.

How does one become obsessed with and love an activity one doesn't really approve of? There is a much darker and angrier side about needing to be better than other people. Oddly, the angry side was probably the more motivating force, although today it's about the love of driving. I think maybe deep down all racers have to be a little angry. Maybe they need enemies to squash. Apparently, I do, and I don't necessarily approve of that side of me. I can be as competitive and nasty as the next guy. Likely more so. I take great pride in taking FTOD from a pro driver. I don't want to need that affirmation. So, I'm pretty conflicted on a lot of levels. One day, when I make peace with driving, I'll stop blogging and racing, and just enjoy the occasional track day. I have a feeling that day isn't too far off.

Ian Korf



This is the piece of my motivation to drive sports cars that I rarely share in detail. Here's my story:

My passion for piloting powerful speeding automobiles was a birthright. My dad was the guy who drove a 1969 Cale Yarborough Mercury Cyclone and thought it appropriate to teach me the fun of speed from a young age. It was always spine-tickling enjoyment to be in any car with him, especially in those Northern Michigan winters when he taught me how to do donuts and drive on the edge through the massive snow drifts on the side of the road. My mom was the lady who was speeding around the winding roads of Northern Michigan in her own 1968 Oldsmobile Cutlass S before she married my dad. It only makes sense that the union of those two resulted in me! Classic American Muscle, the cars they drove, and a metaphorical motto of our household.

I wanted to be a race car driver for as long as I can remember, but it was the one thing I thought just wasn't an option for me. I had no idea how to get into an organized version of speeding on winding roads, until two years ago when my buddy posted a picture of a yellow Corvette that he had driven on the track! I was so excited and curious! "How did you get to drive on a real track??" was my question that flew into his messages. He explained, and being that I was already driving an Infiniti Q60 Red Sport, we immediately made plans to go to the track at Thompson for an HPDE. From my first hot lap, I was in love. I immediately set my goal to learn everything I could about car control and performance driving. It also promoted my purchase of a more appropriate track car. Now, with a couple of seasons of autocross and about 15 track days under my belt, my commitment to learning to drive more skillfully and with more speed is firmly cemented. Every time I get out on the track, I know my dad is smiling down on me proudly from his driver's seat in heaven!

Amanda Moore

In short, Gran Turismo. Played religiously and wanted to do more.

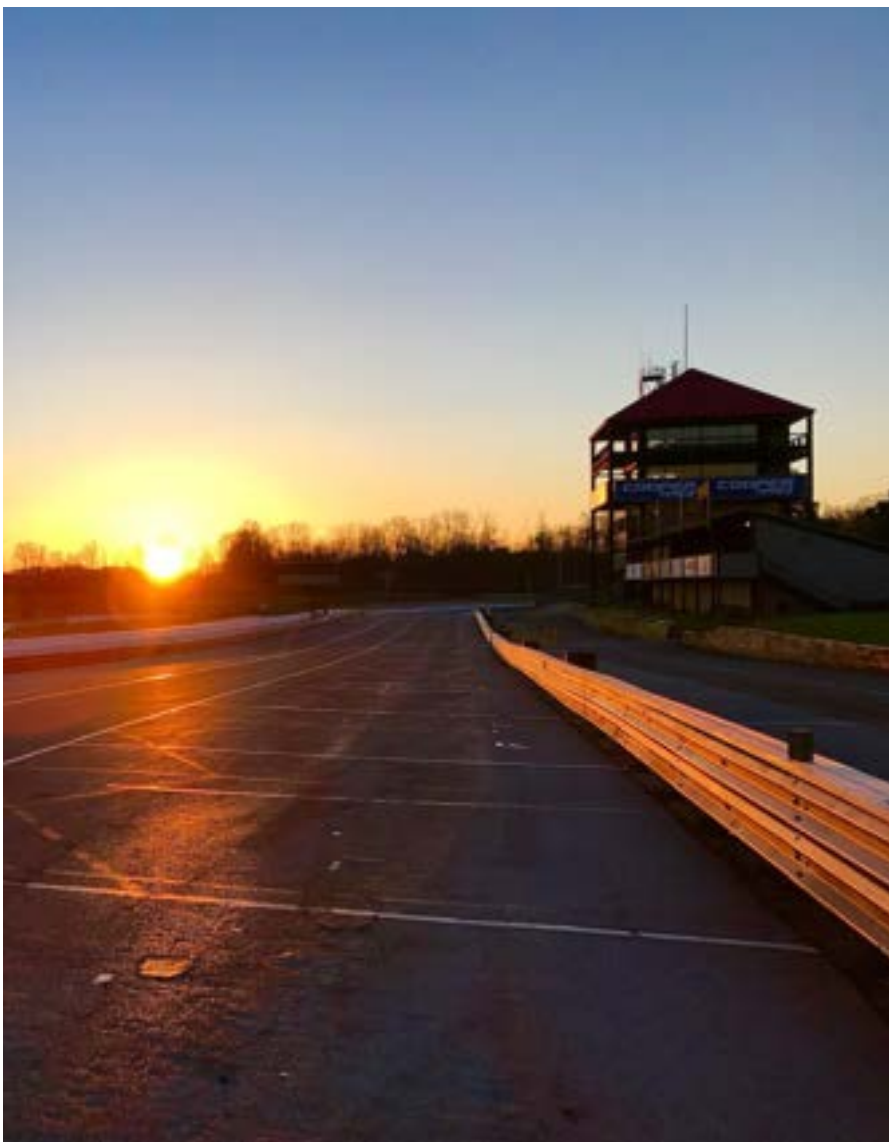
Ilya Bluestein

The fever lay dormant for many years. I attended my first F1 race, the next year bought the first Porsche, the next year first time on the track in a Drivers Ed event. Fever is still going strong.

Stan Ratajczak

Damn... I don't know. From the earliest I can remember, I've been interested in racing. Watching it on TV, reading about it, road rallying when I got my license, attending races, karting, and finally getting my SCCA license... it has been a life-long interest.

Jeff Peters



Like many of us car and driving enthusiasts, mine stems from my dad. Before I came around, he raced regionally and frequented autocross and HPDEs (when they were in their infancy!) with the local SCCA and PCA clubs. He was also a huge racing fan. He grew up in the era of iconic stockcar and sportscar racing, and therefore most of our weekends were spent watching NASCAR to F1, and everything in between. When Tivo came around, he would record every race on TV and then we would try to watch everything we could together throughout the week.

I was born in 1993, just past the glory days of IMSA and Trans-Am, but in a great era for F1. Of course, I grew up as a huge Schumacher fan. How couldn't you be?

That was my exposure which awakened whatever motorsports gene lied dormant in my DNA. But, I would strongly proclaim that being a Driving Enthusiast lead me to be a Car Enthusiast.

My dad was a professional pilot, so he also exposed me to flying at an early age. We had a Microsoft Flight Simulator from day one, and that fueled my passion for "driving" things. I think around the age of 6-7 (late 1990s) was when I realized that all I wanted to spend my time doing was controlling a machine. Didn't matter if it was a back-hoe, a fighter jet, racecar, or a dump truck. I felt compelled to be guiding a mechanical object. Growing up in the age of video games was a godsend for exorcising this desire.

Need for Speed was first, then a series of Formula One games on PC. By early middle-school age, my younger brother and I had conquered all of the motocross, NASCAR, and off-road racing games on PlayStation. By the time I was 15, and driving real cars, I pretty much dropped the video games all together for the real thing!

We did not have a local kart track near Birmingham, Alabama. At least not one that I was aware of, but in 2003, when I was 10 years old, a little place called Barber Motorsports Park was built less than 5 miles from my parents' house. No more driving to Road Atlanta to see sports cars race!

From '03 on, my desire was to drive on that race track. Whatever it took.

My high school days were mostly filled with off-road adventures. Alabama has plenty of nearby rural areas with interesting geography and my high school escape was riding dirt bikes. Then, I got a Jeep. I found the limits of the Jeep pretty quickly...

The desire to get on a road course never died. My dirt bike riding and off-roading adventures just fueled my understanding and made me want it more. Sitting right seat in a plane with my dad did the same thing: I wanted to get on the race track above all else.

Spoiler alert: I would eventually accomplish that goal in spades, and the rest of the story is too lengthy to provide all the details. My junior year in high school I took Home Ec. A classmate of mine autocrossed a Honda Civic. I got invited to co-drive it with him. After getting the fastest "novice" time, I quickly struck a deal with my dad to procure a sports car. By my 18th birthday, I was on track at Barber, and by my 19th, a licensed SCCA racer.

When I reflect on ten years of 4-wheeled, asphalt-based motorsports involvement (technically 9, as I was 17 when I first autocrossed; I'm 26 now), I find that the desire was deeply rooted in driving, flying, or riding SOMETHING at its limit. Barber Motorsports Park was my motivation. It was almost serendipitous that George Barber built the track where it is. It was the pinnacle of motorsports for me as a 10-year-old. Without it, I likely would have turned to something else. I would likely be a pilot at this juncture in my life, had it not been for that race track. That wouldn't be bad at all, just different.

In college at Auburn University, I participated heavily on the Formula SAE Team (way more fun than class...). I do not think I became a fully-fledged “car enthusiast” until then. FSAE taught me to appreciate the design process and the mechanics under the skin of an automobile.

At heart, I am a driving, flying, riding enthusiast. Thanks to Barber Motorsports Park, I’m a road racer, driving coach, and have a business built around the community I’ve come to love.

Andrew Rains



Cars and driving are in my blood. I have had a relative dearth of exposure to cars and driving through the majority of my life. My parents and friends have had little care about cars or racing beyond the casual love of a beautiful car. Being from a geographically isolated small town in North Florida, there are no tracks anywhere around my community. Sports cars or anything remotely exotic are things that were never around for anyone to see in the place I have spent the majority of my life. Yet somehow, I had the love of fast cars and the idea of driving from a young age.

I remember riding with my mother in the back of her brown, boxy, and unappealing station wagon as a young child, peering through the windows at the cars around us. I loved searching the roads for the occasional Corvette or other seemingly fast car. The mere appearance of speed drew me in... I was mesmerized and enticed by the wonderful shapes of cars.

My mother and I would often venture off to the grocery store where I would tear off in the direction of the magazine rack. I would ogle the glossy pages of various car magazines for as long as time allowed. Eventually, I would have my own magazine subscriptions that allowed me to salivate for hours, digesting the descriptions of how the cars performed. Over my teen years, I built a digest of memorized statistics and a list of cars I wanted to own based on those statistics. I could regurgitate the 0 to 60 times and horsepower numbers of a plethora of cars

from the Vector to the VW GTI of the day.

Unlike many teenagers today, getting my driver's license was paramount and happened on my 16th birthday. I have a picture of me on that very day, with my bleach blonde surfer hair, license in hand, posed next to my dad's atrocity of a car... a 1981 Mercury Cougar XR7 with bright red paint and a white vinyl top. I didn't care... I was licensed and ready to take down the streets in that red and white brick of a car. I was probably like that recent State Farm TV commercial where a red headed actor pulls up to a stoplight in his green Hellcat and yells, "You wanna go? You wanna go, Bro?" at the innocent guy in an econobox that is only interested in his perfect driving record and insurance discount.



I absolutely loved driving, but I was a horrible driver as a teenager. All those years of reading magazines and studying car statistics didn't teach me a thing about driving any of them. All I knew about was mashing the accelerator as hard, as fast, and as long as possible. Handling, steering, and braking were inconveniences that would ultimately cost me a totaled car or two.

Fast forward through college, medical school, internship, fellowship, and enough ramen noodles and nickel beer to feed the homeless of the world for a year.... Finally, it was time for me to buy or build my own dream car. After finishing school, I bought a brand new Nissan 350Z and began building an 800 HP twin turbo monster. It was a long drawn-out process; I spent endless hours online looking at parts produced all over the planet.

After all those years, I still had learned nothing about driving. I was still fixated on the car... the car... the car. It was all I could think about.

The car was eventually finished, but during that build process, I learned about the availability of track driving through organizations such as Chin Motorsports (now Chin Track Days). I actually bought a used Nissan 300Z twin turbo just so that I could participate in a lead-follow school provided through Panoz. The car blew off hoses and had horrible brakes, but I loved every second of the experience. I was still a horrible driver, but I loved driving nonetheless.

I eventually took that 800 HP 350z to the track after participating in a three-day race school with Skip Barber. Amazingly, I was able to keep me, my car, and the instructor from becoming intimately acquainted with any stationary or other moving objects around the track. My first solo qualification at Barber Motorsports Park transpired in a beast of a car that was hardly suited for anything other than mind-bending straight line excursions, but at that point... the addiction was taking full effect.

From that point on, the car would become less and less important and the driving became the focus. In the end, I have realized that it is the speed and the mastery of control, that seamless integration of mind and speed that keeps pulling me back to learn more, with the "zone" being my happy place.

After being "lost" for the majority of my life, I can now give an evangelical, "Hallelujah, I've been found," because of people like Ross Bentley that preach the gospel of speed and driving. Thank all of you that have contributed to the sport and made driving a reality for people like me.

Lloyd Logue



Hard to say the exact moment that I knew I would go racing. But here are some defining moments that I continue to remember to this day.

When I was a young kid in school, we had a special field trip one year where we went to the Australian F1 Grand Prix, then held in Adelaide; we spent the Friday watching, listening, and feeling the cars as they roared past. I will always remember that day — the sights, the smells, the sounds. I remember watching Formula One every year on the old television in my room (which didn't have a remote and I had to get up to push the buttons to change the channel), building my own Formula One cars out of Lego, and racing them across my bedroom floor as I watched practice, qualifying, and the racing on TV.

In high school, I worked at a fast food joint to earn money and pay for things. I often worked after school and that meant I was on the night shift that would include cleaning up the store at the end of the night. Often I wouldn't get home till late, around 11pm or midnight, but the great thing was that I would get home and the broadcast or replay of the most recent CART race would be on. I would stay up late doing homework or, more often, just watch the entire race. Watching racers Alex Zanardi, Montoya, Gil De Ferran, Paul Tracy, Jimmy Vasser, Dario Franchitti, and many more great names. In those years, they came to Australia, then went to Japan, so that's how I knew about it. I fondly remember the pop-off valves and the fantastic racing. Back then, there were multiple chassis and engine combos with everyone talking about which was the right combo to have for each race. I was always exhausted the next day at school, but it was totally worth it to watch those races.

In my final year of undergraduate university, I found out we could do the Formula SAE as a final-year project. I signed up and was ready to go. I loved cars and looked forward to building my own. I was suspension team leader and didn't know what I was doing, but learned a lot as we designed all the suspension components, uprights, and a lot of geometry of the car. I remember being exhausted and struggling in my other classes, but really loved working with the team to build the car and see it compete. I also learned about raising money from companies and networking to bring in sponsorship dollars to build the car.

I remember seeing a Datsun 240z as a young kid and I was determined to buy one at some point in my life. The car just looked fast and amazing with the iconic sugar scoop borrowed from the Jaguar E-type. It could not be mistaken - and then there was the unique silhouette with the rear quarter of the car.

Those are some of the memories I carry around with me that made me want to be a race car driver and car guy.

James Chartres



Like a lot of guys, I have always had an interest in fast cars and racing. I am a plastic surgeon. When I got a job and moved to a small town 20 minutes away from Watkins Glen, it didn't take me long to buy a performance street car, and take it to "Track Days" at the track. I moved on to a BMW M3, joined the BMWCCA, and continued to gain experience on the track. There was a bit of a set back that led to me being out of it for a while. It turns out that having a 16-year-old son and an M3 is not a good combination. Fast forward a few years. During an IMSA race at the Glen, one of the crew members sustained a significant face injury that I took care of. Talking with him and the other team members rekindled my interest in racing. They took me behind the scenes and let me see them in action from an insider's perspective. I started doing track days again, now with a Honda Civic Si.

The Honda was a fun little car, but understeers significantly. Going into Turn 7 (toe of the boot) at WGI in a low power car that understeers is the definition of frustration. Try going into the turn at speed, and the car won't turn. Slow down enough to turn, and the car can barely make it up the hill! So, I started playing with the car's suspension to improve the handling. Somewhere along the line, it occurred to me that I needed to stop trying to make my daily ride a track car, and just buy a dedicated track car.

Once that decision was made, the next one, obviously, was what track car to buy. Another M3? Honda? Porsche 944? Google "race car, cheap, rear wheel drive," and the first 20 pages are all about Spec Miata. My first reaction was, "No, way!" but the more I thought about it, the more sense it made. After all, Spec Miata offered exactly what I was looking for: cheap fun, big fields, easy to work on, etc., etc.

The other decision was whether to continue with track days or go to wheel-to-wheel racing. I had dabbled in karts for a bit and really liked the wheel-to-wheel stuff. So, I decided to become a Race Car Driver! I went to the track during a Majors race and asked around the paddock. It didn't take long to find a team that would rent me a race car for the upcoming SCCA License school. I got my novice permit and raced in a rented Spec Miata for the first year. Eventually, I bought my own car, a 1.6 liter NA Miata. Then, I had to buy a trailer. And a truck to pull the trailer. And tires. And tools. And parts. And... and... and. I know my wife loves me, but nothing gives her the opportunity to show it as much as racing does!

The best part of this story is this: I can tell you the exact moment when I knew I was hooked! It was the first time I slid into the seat of my Spec Miata rental, turned the key, and heard the engine start. I had been on the track many times, but always in a street car. This was my first time strapping into a real race car, and I knew right away it was the Real Deal. I have been in many races since that day, but I still get a tinge of excitement every time I light it up.

Mark Anthony



Remembering back to my very early single-digit youth, I was attracted to cars. Dad always drove Fords, so I liked Fords. Once while Dad was looking to buy a new car, we went to a dealer that also handled BMC autos.

While passing through the shop, I spotted a Bugeye Sprite and it was love at first sight. What were these small sporty autos?

Again, at an early age, I started looking at car magazines, then later on, watching dirt track racing and on to a stock car race, watching Fireball Roberts, among others.

Auto racing was where it was at for me. My 1/25 scale cars started having number decals and advertising on them, while they were raced along the hallway of my house.

Then slot cars of numerous shapes and sizes were added. My 1954 Ford was the vehicle in which I taught myself how to heel and toe. At 17, I drove my first autocross in a 1962 Mercury Comet with my “high performance” \$15 glass pack, followed by an MGA, MGB’s, a Mustang, then a Corvette.

Boom! Kids, a family, a job, etc. and the track stuff was just what I could only read about in magazines.

Eventually, I bought a new 1993 Porsche RS America and participated in my first HPDE. I was really hooked, then. (After a period as a student, I started instructing more than 20 years ago and I really enjoy that.) About eight years later, I started SCCA and Porsche Club racing, then Porsche 924S, Spec Racer Ford, then on to LeMons, Chump Car, and finally found my favorite with World Racing League endurance racing, in a Miata. It’s a very enjoyable and humbling sport. Lots of hard work to race, but worth the investment in time and money.

At 71 years old, I can still hold my own on the track and hope to have many more years ahead of me, burning up tires and gasoline.

P.S. I screwed up one of my sons, who also races, and it would not surprise me if a grandson may also be affected.

Jim Fiss



I'm 23, and my story started back when I was a kid. I didn't grow up in a racing family. I had never been to the racetrack or anything. So, all of my racing kind of came together bit by bit. My earliest memories are of playing with Hot Wheels cars and I remember when the first *The Fast and The Furious* came out. That movie kind of sparked my interest in cars while I was a kid. And growing up, I played Gran Turismo religiously and never paid attention to driving lines or anything until I turned about 13 or 14.

At that time in my life, I was almost losing interest in cars, but then I started to watch *Initial D* (an anime about drifting). So that fueled my interest big time and I was obsessed with drifting (and the Scion FR-S mainly because it was a new version of the original AE86). I watched Hot Version International with Keiichi Tsuchiya and dreamed of racing on the mountain passes and racetracks. I started a part-time job and started saving money to buy one. I saved about \$2,000 and a friend of mine told me to buy a Mazda Miata. I loved the idea, mainly because it's rear-wheel drive and you can drift with it. I bought this car when I was 18 and have slowly brought it up to being a really good track car, but financially, I'm still struggling to afford seat time. I have stayed away from street racing because I believe real racing is done on the track.

I currently have four cars. My '94 Miata (that I bought first) is the only one that runs currently. And I have big plans to get into Spec Miata with another Miata I have and Time Trials with the 94. I plan to get into vintage racing at some point, too, with my '72 Datsun 240Z and more time trials — and even hill climbs! — with my '91 Eagle Talon.

John Moore



I was literally “born” into the car business and, by default, into motorsports. My dad, Jack Robbins, was selling Pontiacs at his uncle Jack Hall’s dealership in Oklahoma City in 1955 when he married my mom. I was born in 1958 and when Uncle Jack sold the dealership, dad went to work for R.T. Scott at Scott Chevrolet at 10th and N Broadway in downtown OKC.



Dad was always into cars, but gravitated more to sports cars and road racing than the typical drag racing and hot rod scene. In my formative years, he owned three Corvette Stingray coupes: a silver '63 “split window” and a yellow '65, both 327ci 4-speeds, and a '67 white 427ci/435hp 4-speed. There was a road below the dam on the North side of Lake Hefner in NW OKC we called our “test track” where dad would take me and my younger brother to drive FAST along the twisty portions in his ‘Vettes. I was in LOVE. He also took us to the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) Ponca City Grand Prix, a race on the natural road course alongside the lake in Ponca City, Oklahoma. We got to stand in the pits and alongside the water barrel barrier between grid and the “track” (road) and watch the water vibrate in the barrels as the SCCA A Production big-block Corvettes and 427 S/C Cobras and the B Production small-block Mustangs and Camaros fired up (also raced in the SCCA Trans-Am professional race series). We were also enamored with the SCCA A Sports Racers from McLaren and Lola and Chaparral (also raced in the SCCA Can Am series).

In 1968, Dad moved just a few blocks North to Eckhardt Volkswagen at 14th and N Broadway in downtown OKC. Chevy to VW?!? I was 10 years old and totally devastated! But one night, he drove home in a new '68 Porsche 911T Targa (one of 282 produced). He took me and my brother for a ride — I was completely in love! We went back to the SCCA Ponca City Grand Prix, but we were now focused on the C Production Porsche 911s, Alfa GTAs, Triumph TR6s, D and E Production Porsche 914s and 356s, Triumph Spitfires, MG Sprites, and Midgets.

We also fell in love with the Porsche 906 and 908 racing in the B and C Sports Racing classes. This was also the time when Porsche began winning in European endurance racing in their 917K and in the SCCA Can Am series in America in their 917/10 and 917/30, and in the first International Race of Champions (IROC) Porsche RSRs.

The road racing bug had hit HARD.

When VW and Porsche split in 1972, Dad became the General Manager for the Porsche+Audi store. My first car in '73 was a rusted-out junkyard '63 Porsche 356C that we fixed up and repainted the original color. Not a great first car for a 16-year-old, but we made money on it when we sold it!



My dad took us up to Kansas that year for the first-ever SCCA Solo II (autocross) National Championships. I started autocrossing with the Oklahoma Region of the SCCA almost immediately in my Audi Fox! SCCA legend John Saucier was my mentor and early instructor/coach at those first Solo events in OKC. As the GM of the dealership, Dad convinced owner Charlie Eckhardt they needed something a little less expensive to sell, and he brought in Mazda – not widely known in the early '70s. I became an instant fan of the performance attributes of the rotary engine and racing capabilities of the RX-2 and RX-3. In 1976, Dad became the proud owner of Jack Robbins Imports, Ltd. (Porsche, Audi, & Mazda) in Oklahoma City. I worked there for many years, in various capacities. My dad drove Porsche 911s almost exclusively. One of my favorites was a '74 Carrera. It was white with black sport seats. It was light, had right around 180-hp, and was quick, agile, and immensely fun to drive! My other favorite was his '76 Turbo Carrera (930), with around 225-hp. In my first experience with turbo power, we rocketed up to 155 mph on 185/70- and 215/60VR15 Pirelli CN36s – pretty scary, huh?

Consequently, I have owned or driven just about every VW, Audi, Porsche, and Mazda model ever built. One of my favorites was a 1983 VW GTI (Cashmere White with red cloth – the first U.S. GTI) my dad bought as a service “loaner.” I loved the car right off the showroom floor but, having driven Porsches, I wanted more. I modified it with ABT springs, Bilstein struts, a 14” RaceMark steering wheel, and 15 x 7” anthracite MSW wheels with 195/50-HR15 Goodyear Wingfoot radials. I did quite well racing it in the (then new) CSP class of SCCA Solo II, even with the stock engine. And our customers were in for a treat when they drove it home!



I got married and started a family, and like many do, stopped autocrossing with the SCCA and didn't attend races for a while. Much later, I got a 2001 VW Mk4 Jetta, and tweaked it a LOT. The Jetta was not a Porsche 911, and it wasn't an autocross car no matter how it's been tweaked, but just before he died from cancer in May 2003, I took Dad for a ride in the highly-modded Jetta. His comments included, "Holy crap — what size engine does this have? It pulls like the 930!" and, "It feels firm and toss-able like the Carrera," and, "This is one of the best driving cars I've ever been in." Pretty good stuff.



Fast forward many years. I raised two kids and now have grandkids and my mid-life crisis consisted of a 2004 Buell XB12S sports bike. My wife was happy when I sold it and bought a 2006 Mazda MX-5 as my daily driver and, missing my days with the SCCA, my weekend autocross toy. I was an SCCA member again and doing 20 - 25 autocross days a year, including the SCCA Solo National Championships! My car won the CSPL title in 2009 with Julian Pokorny, and I trophied (4th) in CSP in 2011, having led Day 1 of competition. The MX-5 eventually became too much to drive every day, so I got a new F-150 and a trailer, which is where my car lives now. I had worked for nearly a quarter century and retired from Southwest Airlines, and when my good friend Mike Cobb became President/CEO of the SCCA, he asked me to come and work with him at the SCCA headquarters in Topeka!

My car is now almost strictly a SCCA Time Trials car and I've finished on the podium the past two years.



But wait...there's more. Remember my dad's 1976 Porsche 911 Turbo Carrera? A guy called me in late 2015 asking about my dad and his former car. Jamie Kutch, a wine maker in Sonoma (Kutch Wines), had bought the 930 at auction and found my name in an online article I wrote about me and my dad! He wanted to know if I could provide some background info on the car, and I told him I had a box of Dad's stuff and some things from this car. I packaged up the stuff and sent it to him. He was getting the car restored and hoped to increase the value with some extras! Three years later, I'm working for the SCCA, and our annual Runoffs (road racing) National Championships is being held at Sonoma Raceway. Though we had talked for years, I finally met Jamie and got to not only see the Turbo, but drive it again after 43 years! I was 17 or 18 the last time I drove this car. It was surreal and Dad would've loved it.

Funny how things happen.

Chris Robbins

My parents met at an SCCA event in the '70s; my dad raced an Elva Courier in the '60s and my mom was from a small town in Ohio with a dirt track just outside of it. Grew up at the race track and among my "racing family," started racing Quarter Midgets at age eight, worked SCCA events before I was of age. When it came time to be a grown-up and get a job, I wanted to do something with race cars. As times change and evolve, I've had a few non-racing jobs, but always did what I had to do to get back to it. This past year was 25 years of racing; next year is my 30th year of SCCA membership, and I don't see myself stopping any time soon!

Chris Taylor



My mom taught me to make a set of tires last ten years, so when a friend asked me to come to the track, I resisted for two years. When I got there, I told myself I would be very careful and gentle with my precious 5-year-old 2002 Audi TT. That all went away the second they waved us onto the track. I love the learning, I love the technical aspects of driving at speed, I love the sensation of speed and a four wheel drift at 100 mph and the counterintuitive steering towards the wall in order not to hit it. I love reading words of wisdom by drivers like Ross Bentley (and others), and then applying that (or trying to) in my mind and on track. I love working on my Elan NP01 and all the different adjustments including, for example, adding 1mm toe-in at the rear to see if that helps stabilize the car under extreme braking (T7 at Sebring).

At the track, I love the humor everyone brings, the discussions about how to find another second, the tension of keeping safe, the Zen meditation that comes with the necessary focus to drive at speed. I love the competition with myself and the track (and someone who's running one second per lap faster than me). I love the few minutes when I'm settling into "my office" and switching on the machine and switching off all the problems and distractions of the world, clipping in and tightening the belts, checking the mirrors, lighting the fire that propels this incredible machine forward, and wondering if I will know what I need to do to go fast and keep us safe. I love the sensation of complete immersion and focus that comes with being released onto the playing "field" and the wonderful interaction between myself, this machine, the track, and the others out there enjoying this amazing sport. I love trying to rotate the car at apex and then watching to see if the earlier turn-in or the later turn-in causes the predictive lap timer to move forward or backwards. And on and on and on.

A dedicated race car is without equal for the brilliant responsiveness, surgeon-like precision, and visceral experience you'll never get from even a track-dedicated street car. Last but not least, I absolutely love the challenge and the reward that comes from sitting in the right seat and introducing others to this wonderful world. At the end of the day, I wonder what the rest of the world does to appreciate life.

Roger Wilson

Entered and won my first autocross event. Hooked!

David Smith



Watching Senna in F1 as a young kid triggered it. The speed, the danger, giving it all you and the machine have, on the edge.... Later on, went rental karting and it all seemed a far dream. Around the age of 24, I started sim racing. Years later, I started going to races and when I quit my job as a cook, a new world came alive. Rented a race car from time to time to drive it on track days, and after a few talent scouting events, I took the chance to race for real. Still an avid sim racer, even at the age of 46.

Steve Claeys



For me, it started by being curious about what made things work, I was always taking stuff apart (clocks, film projectors, kitchen tools). Then came the lawnmower. So I borrowed some of Dad's tools and took it apart. I got in trouble when he got home, but it was almost back together. Shortly after that, I bought a moped to do my paper route and promptly proceeded to figure out how big a piston I could stuff in it. Then when it was time to get my first car, I had planned to buy a '71 Challenger (the 383 Magnum Hurst pistol grip shifter, canary yellow, black vinyl top, center lines) from one of the guys around the corner. My dad got wind of that and said he didn't want me to have a hot rod for my first car, so he took my money and came back home with a 1978 Ford Courier pickup. I called Grandma to tell her what her son had done, so now he got in trouble! Then I proceeded to look into doing an engine swap. I built the motor and transmission in my buddy's garage while acquiring all the parts to swap a 289 into it. I then blew the motor on purpose and stuffed in the 289, complete with fenderwell headers.

Jim Davis

I can't say there was an event, a single moment, that made me into a car guy, but I can say that from my earliest memories, I have been attracted to the sounds, the smells, the speed, and the grit and grim of racing and working on cars. As a young child, when I heard car engines revving, I would follow the sound. I had neighbors who raced go karts — I wanted to help them work on their karts. The limited TV coverage of racing I had to watch at the time was the Indy 500, a few NASCAR events, and the Monaco GP, but that was enough for me to know I wanted to be part of racing. As I became old enough to actually work on cars, I found older teens who had cars and I helped them work on their cars. At 12 years of age, I got my first go-kart and loved that thing; I remember the pure joy of working on it as much as the pleasure of driving it. My first engine rebuild was that tiny two-stroke engine. My first car in high school was an Olds F-85. I pulled the engine right away and rebuilt it, but with a lot more horsepower, so much it scared the heck out of my parents.

All has progressed from there with so many different sports and race cars. Heck, my first car I purchased out of college was a Lotus Europa. I have had, and still have, so many wonderful sports cars some with permanent status in my garage. I taught my son to drive a manual at 12 years old: he learned in an E30 M3 that we still have.

And at 66 years old, my current motorsport resume includes being a pit lane and corner marshal at F1, WEC Indy car, and vintage races; winning SCCA division championships as a driver (as well as SCCA Mechanic and Corner Worker of the Year award); and instructing high-performance and teen driving.

Jim Robertson



I picked up a flyer for an indoor racing school at the World of Wheels show when I was, like, 13, and my dad and I did it. Then I started doing high-speed autocross and track days.

Mike Tognetti

My dad won tickets to an IMSA TWS race circa '94 from a radio show and we got into karting almost immediately.

Drew Cleaver

Parents met each other through racing, grew up at a race track in a racing family. Grew up watching Molson Indy Vancouver, and getting to go hang out in the pits and sit in Ross Bentley's Indy car. :)

Kevin Wall

For me, it started in the early 1990s. I was about 12 years old and my dad took me to University Ave. in St. Paul, MN. This was the spot to see the fastest muscle cars cruising around on a Saturday night.

It was a little more wild, then, too. I even saw a St. Paul police cruiser do a burn-out on a public street.

I can remember the specific moment a car created an emotional reaction for me. It was a late '60s Chevelle with an amazing sound as it idled by me and my father (think of a choppy cam and open exhaust). At the time, I had no idea why it sounded like that; I just knew I loved the sound it made. That day was the start of my passion for cars.

After many years and various cars, I had to take a break from my automotive passion in an effort to build my resume and a career in the town of Pacific Beach, CA. Parking was challenging and having a garage was a luxury. My Trans-Am GTA in Minnesota was sold to a cop in Iowa while I lived there.

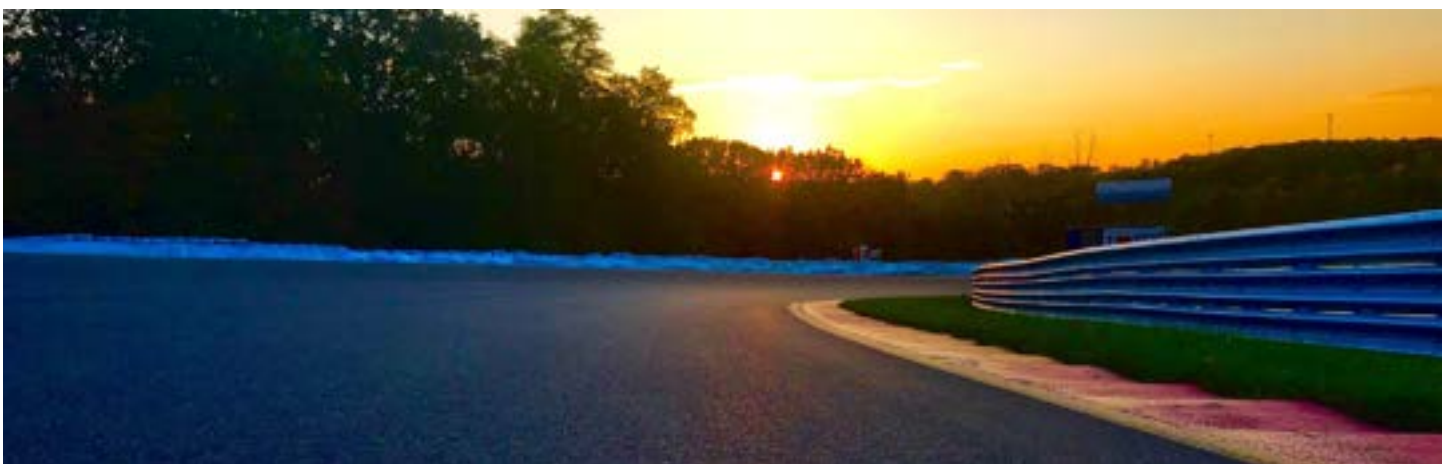
My life changed in this period, focusing on other things in life: motorcycles, camping, hunting, jeeping in the mountains and desert. But I knew eventually I would go back to cars when the time was right.

So, I got married, built a home, had a baby (now 2 babies) and started planning my next purchase of a car. After two years of planning, saving, and watching YouTube videos (which my poor wife often had to watch from time to time), I was getting ready to make a purchase. A new Mustang or Camaro were in sight. Then I came across a video of a C6 ZR1 on the Nurburgring (Jim Mero) and my mind was blown. I couldn't afford a ZR1 or Z06. So Grand Sport it was. I bought the first GS I looked at. Sucker. LOL. It was a pristine 2011 Corvette Grand Sport which I started to track 7 months after purchasing. After completing my first DE weekend with the Nord Stern PCA, I was hooked, addicted, and lusting for my next DE. This is when I transitioned into being a driver.

I have no emotions when driving, none. I'm just trying to process all the input from the car and track. It doesn't register in my mind until the session is done. That's when I start to think too much. By the last track session of the day, my mind is saying, "Ok, just one more session, make it out in one piece." But when the session starts again, I'm numb to all previous concerns. Then I drive home in the car I tracked all day, just thankful I didn't wreck or get hurt. After two weeks, I'm needing the track again!

Reading *Ultimate Speed Secrets* and listening to Ross Bentley's podcast has been incredibly valuable to my success in HPDE. Success for me is safety, reliability, and speed (sound familiar?).

Ross Wegge



I am a sim racer, and have been one for the past three years.

I am from Singapore, a nation afflicted by not only a miniscule motorsports scene, but also prohibitively high car ownership costs. Well, prohibitive enough to bar the majority of the populace from a life of motoring — the majority that my household is a part of. Even karting, the de facto stepping stone for any aspiring driver, is priced out of my reach. Our family is fortunate enough to provide ourselves with 3 meals a day, but a karting career, or even a car within the context of this country, is indisputably deemed a luxury too far beyond our monetary means. Outside of sim racing, the nearest I was able to get myself into the driver seat were the times I went across the border (to where everything is relatively more affordable) for fun karting. And even a 30-minute stint is enough to rip out a gaping financial hole. Not to mention, it was solely a hedonistic indulgence, during an absolute nadir in the way of paving a prospective racing career.

My love for cars was not cultivated from fixing up my parents' car, or by riding along during spirited drives. Neither was it from being brought to spectate at a race, simply because we never had a car, and my parents weren't car people in the slightest. Honestly, I could not recall what kicked off my general liking for cars at the age of two, only that it has kept rolling ever since, albeit subdued and dormant. I was aware of this interest, but wasn't able to lay my finger on where it stemmed from.

Only during the past couple of years, however, did I see myself increasingly dabbling in all things cars.

16-year-old me browsed through a Steam sale and came across a physics simulator with a focus on automotive content, named BeamNG.drive. Intrigued by what it had to offer, I handed over the money and received what would be my first sim among the plethora of arcade racing titles I had laid my hands on over the previous 14 years.

With no hesitation, I picked a time trial event, impartial to the other events aimed at showcasing the intrinsic crash deformation physics. This time trial entailed roaring up one side of a hill, then dashing down the other in the shortest time possible, all through harrowing roads littered with potholes, sometimes lined by thick vegetation concealing the deadly rocks and trees awaiting those who so wished to challenge the track limits, and at other times running adjacent to hundred foot drops down a cliff face. Needless to say, I took more tries than I would like to count to get to the finish line in one piece for the first time (which didn't matter, for in the virtual world, the reset button is always there for you). And then I would do it again in the consuming darkness of night, my vision of the road ahead limited by as far and as brightly as my headlights would shine. And then try a faster car, or simply up my pace.

I pondered over how much later I could brake for a turn. What other lines I could take to avoid that huge bump that's been making me slow down to a snail's pace as I go over it, lest it launch my car into a tree? I read up on trail and threshold braking, then practised them until they became second nature. For the first time, I wasn't driving to grind for in-game credits, or to unlock new cars. I was driving because I enjoyed putting down good laps, and then pushing myself harder to set even better ones.

A few months passed, and I chanced upon a small competition held by a (now closed) simulation racing club. Participants would head down to their venue to compete on 16 identical sim rigs connected via LAN. Concluding that I had a substantial chance of a good finish, based on the amount of seat time I'd invested in BeamNG, I signed up and paid the entry fee. In the days leading up to the race, I fussed over everything that could impact my performance on the day itself, ensuring that I would be in the best form to secure my spot on the highest step in the podium. I had never won, or tried to win a competition my whole life, be it in sports or anywhere else. But now with my revived love for cars and racing, I found myself fervently yearning for nothing less than victory.

Race day came. I put everything I had in my bag into those ten laps of Nordschleife + Nürburgring GP, fighting my ever-increasing weariness and my progressively-sore arms. Yes, it was an endurance race. As I crossed the line in first place after 1 hour and 50 minutes of racing, I was completely drained. In the fancy Recaro seat, I rested for a good 5 minutes, staring blankly at the AI taking control of my Evo 6. A tingling sensation crept up my back. Ineffably invigorating and indescribably gratifying, it felt. Maybe, I thought, this is what winning feels like.

Yet, the spoils of victory were just the cherry atop the cake. Practising Nordschleife at home, I memorized every turn and every intricacy the track threw at me. I studied my car choices, evaluating the potential and ease of use of each and every car. I prepared my means of hydration and energy replenishment midrace. (I settled on 500ml of plain water and 500ml of energy drink. Both are contained in water bottles with lids that could be flipped open with just one hand, so I could drink with one hand on the wheel while storming down Döttinger Höhe). And I proceeded to enjoy the fruits of all this preparatory work while I chased the wind for 10 laps, blasting past those who faltered because they didn't go the extra mile to hammer in every nail that sticks out, to orchestrate a perfect race for themselves. In those 140 minutes of dancing a car right at its very limits in an unrelenting hurtle towards the podium, I felt more alive than I ever had in years. Before I knew it, I was hooked. I wanted to do this over and over, to feel the same way again and again.

I went on to attend more races and events, exploring the other then-undiscovered pockets of the sim racing scene here. I wound up meeting many more people, including some of the fastest drivers in the region. One of them qualified for and is competing in the global finals of the Logitech G Challenge at the time of me writing this. They would cement themselves as the ones for me to chase, maybe even strive to beat. I have lost count of how many times I was wholly, utterly humbled by their inexplicably flawless driving, polished over 10 years of seat time. And in that lay the seeds of the curiosity which I have held till now. The wall that separates me from them - what does it comprise? I knew I had to do much more than simply heed the often-regurgitated mantra entitled, "Never give up," to catch someone who has a skillset which seemingly extends to infinity, and perhaps even possesses a sliver of that unquantifiable ability we call "talent." Speed Secrets was one of the many things which came up in my search for answers on the net, and I, impressed by its rich content and profound topics, have incorporated it into the array of tools I use to find that which I seek. Despite not being targeted at sim racers, it has opened my eyes to a sea of knowledge and a plethora of advice I have yet to discover on my own. So useful it was, that I took the time to set up a filter in my email system for automatically marking each and every issue with a label as they arrive in my inbox, so that I can easily dig them up to read and reread whilst on the daily commute to and from my school.

It has been over 2 years since that endurance race at Nordschleife. The rekindled flame of passion still burns ever so brightly, and the arduous grind to hopefully be among the best one day has never halted, either.

I'm only 19 this year – the long road ahead abounds with opportunities, especially the 'sim to reality' programs which so many teams and companies are pushing out nowadays. Securing one of those could mean finally breaching the financial barriers locking me out of any form of career in real life racing. And when one of these eventually comes knocking, I can only hope that whatever I've thrown in will suffice; that I'll be in the best form to grasp it with all my might, with all the passion I have.

Chua Xing Han

Raised in a family that was stocked with one rusty sports car after another and an uncle who raced as well. Ran my first autocross as a senior in high school. It was all downhill after that....

Alan Smith



While I am sure that many other stories will involve going to a race with dad/grandpa as a child, or seeing a great race on TV, my story takes a more visceral approach. Don't get me wrong, I always loved watching the Indy 500 as a kid and seeing the winner drink milk.

I remember as a child, probably from the age of seven, riding my bike at breakneck speeds and jumping over homemade ramps of wood. Living in Florida, this transitioned into driving small outboard boats and jumping every wave and wake in order to catch air and hear the prop spin out of the water. Back then a driver's license wasn't required, so as an irresponsible 13-year-old, I could drive on the water with virtually no rules, lanes, or speed limits. I finally transitioned to cars at age 16 where my first car was a 1971 383 Cuda.

In between these activities, I went to Disney and rode every coaster more than once. Later, moving to Georgia, I enjoyed Six Flags on a regular basis.

So how do I connect all of these seemingly unrelated experiences? They all made me smile!

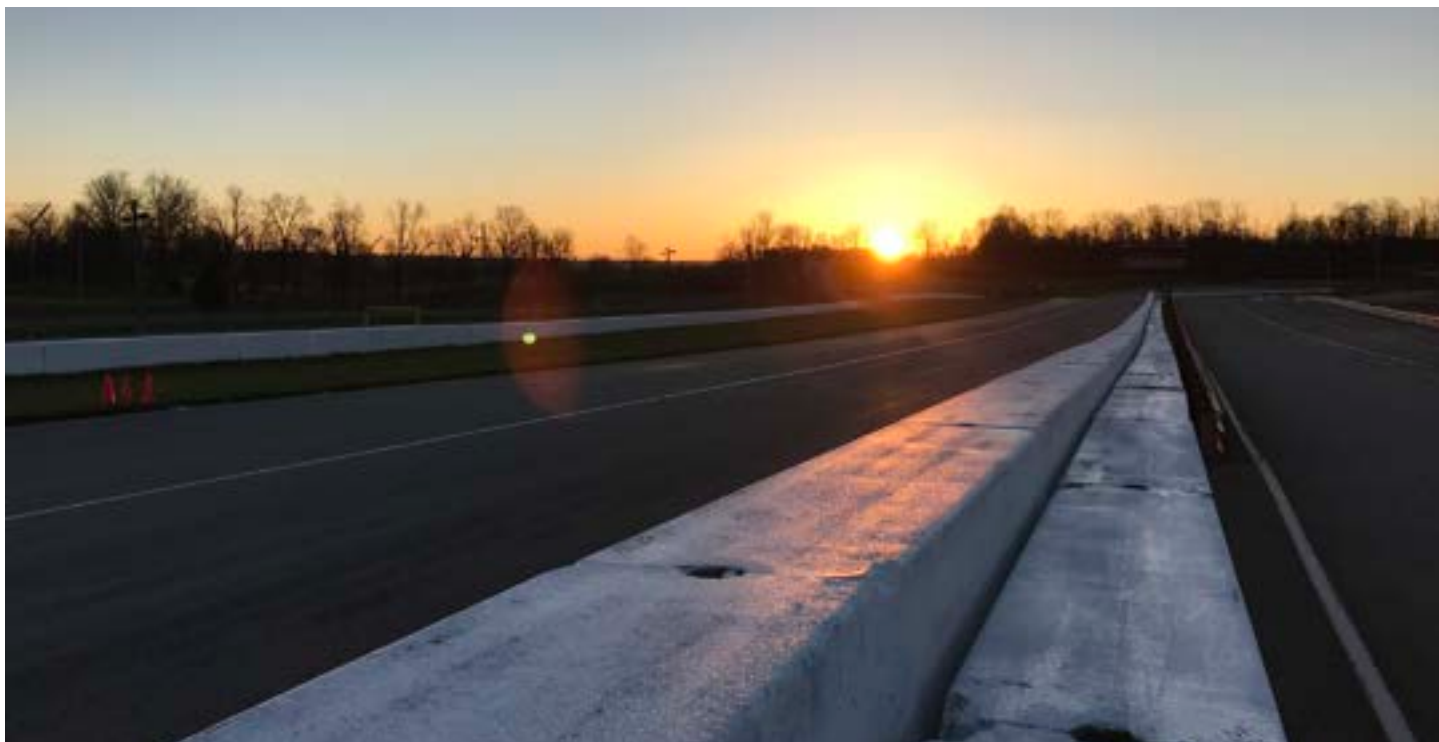
I remember the feeling of exhilaration and pure joy every time I felt speed or g forces... and I would laugh out loud. To this day, at almost 65 years old, I still find I have that 7-year-old kid's smile on my face when I am on track, a skip pad, autocross, etc.

I am very fortunate that I have never experienced motion sickness, even as a passenger, so I must conclude that at birth I was "wired" for thrills/speed.

So, even though I love the cars, the friends, the competition, and the cool factor, I do what I do because it brings me joy and makes me smile.

I just hope the smile is still there in my 80s!

Tom Tobin



Born into it, yes. There are pictures of my pregnant mother bending over my dad's race Spitfire. Prolific in my summer memories are weekends at the racetracks of Mid-Ohio and IRP. They were so ubiquitous that I took them for granted until college. I added Nelson Ledges to my Scrutineer repertoire and gained even more people in my racing family.

In college, it became my choice to attend race events. I finally realized that I love the look of cars, the smell of cars, and my racing family. I realized that I miss those in the off-season. Every winter, I watch racing movies to get my fix. When I finally met my partner, it was essential to me that he gain the approval of my racing family almost more than my biological family.

Zee Hardesty



In one word... Westwood. When my mother, Susan, started vintage racing a Bugeye (Frogeye, for those in the UK), it dawned on me, if she could do it, so could I. Driver training at Westwood, Formula Ford School at Laguna Seca, followed by a few years with Russell Racing, also at Laguna Seca. Then it was 14 or so races in a Formula Mazda, and testing & general messing about in the racing world. I saw Nigel Mansell break the track record testing his first Indy drive, Jacques Villeneuve testing a Player's Atlantic car when he first came over from Japan, all sorts of golden racing moments. Returning to Vancouver, simply put, racing was dead. Westwood had closed, Matsqui Motorsports Park was never realized. Sure we had the Indy race, but as a driver without deep pockets, opportunity was nowhere to be found. Do I wish I could have progressed in racing, sure, but I got to live the dream for a while and that was "dead cool," as my mentor, Bob Leflufy, would have said.

Jason Farrell

I was 6yrs old in 1974 (51yrs now) & I had one of those Playskool driver dashboard toys that you could sit on your lap and steer and shift gears while my Mom did the actual driving in our chocolate brown Mercury Capri. That sparked a passion for driving that has been with me for 45 years — waiting ten years to get my driver license was the longest ten years of my life! When I was 10 years old, I saw car racing somewhere and wanted to do that, too! I never lost the desire to race and never really had the opportunity until I was 48 years old and met my love, Bry Morris. He owns a hotrod build shop for CAM cars (mostly) & when he strapped me into his '71 Maverick for a little drive on one of our first dates, I was hooked for good. The power of the car and the skill of his driving reignited that sleeping passion to race and I have never looked back! Now I race Autocross in San Diego with SDR SCCA in the Legendary Slomaro (courtesy of Tom Kamman & Bry Morris). I am in my happy place behind the wheel, whether daily driving or on race weekends. Our CAM group is family.

Stephanie Seidensticker



I seem to have been “born into it.” I was born in 1952, and cars used to change EVERY YEAR in major, visible ways. By the time I was 5 years old, I could stand up in the back seat of our car (no seat belts back then, and definitely no car seats!) behind my dad, and tell you the year and model name of every car we passed on the road. I got a pedal-car — a fire truck — for Christmas when I was 6 or 7 years old and figured out that if I put bigger wheels on the back, I could go faster!

One of my cousins had a different pedal car, that he crashed and “totaled out,” so I took his wheels and put them on my fire truck. We moved to a new neighborhood, and my younger brother and I became the neighborhood bicycle repair shop - from changing tires and ‘re-building’ pedal cylinders to fixing brakes, straightening bent handlebars, and eventually, even sanding and repainting, adding banana seats and high bars to create “spyder bikes” that made old bikes look new!

By 12 years old, I had a Serious Car Bug... and started cutting grass, and doing several other jobs over the next few years, saving everything for my first car. In my senior year of high school, I bought a ‘64 GTO. That Black GTO — “The Black Widow” — became known county-wide and in much of Metro Atlanta! While in the Marines, I bought my first motorcycle. Since then, I have driven almost 2 million miles — much of it as a professional — with everything from my variety of motorcycles (Dirt, Enduro, SJMs, Cruisers and Sport-Bikes) to Corvettes, racing a 280Z, Trans-Am, Z/28, to FedEx delivery & commercial semi’s including tankers, to driving church buses up to 72 passenger ‘pushers’... all with zero accidents.

Give me a steering wheel, or handle bars, and an open country highway or twisty mountain road... and I am grinning from ear to ear. Throw in some ‘70s & ‘80s music and I don’t even want to stop for food and fuel — a 5-minute pit stop and I’m back on the road! I am now 67 years young, and ride a 170 mph Sport Bike (including track days), and an ‘altered’ Mustang. I’m making plans to buy a new C8 Corvette (complete with the Ron Fellows Extreme Driving Course).

I was BORN loving cars... and will DIE still loyal to my first love...

Floyd Richard Burdett



One of my earliest memories is of pointing out all of the cute, little (especially red) sports cars to my parents when we'd be driving around. I was probably 5. I thought they were all looking at me, with their headlight eyes, some framed by chrome eyebrows, and so many expressions on their grill mouths.

Fast forward to the late '70s, I was living in the Belmont Shore area of Long Beach, working at McDonnell Douglas, and a couple of weekends in April I could hear this strange sound of screaming engines coming from a few miles away. Long Beach Grand Prix, of course! Somehow, I finagled a ticket. Then sitting in the grandstand along the Shoreline Drive straight, I remember looking down as these amazing machines flew by, and saying out loud, "Someday, I'm going to learn how to do that." I also clearly remember rooting for the (Ken) Tyrell team because my dad was Ken Terrell.

Some 20+ years later, I drove my first autocross and at the end of the day declared, "This isn't doing it for me... I want to be on a race track with other cars." Less than thirty days later, I was at my first SCCA driver school. I raced regularly from 2003 to 2014. I instructed at HPDEs and racing schools. I've had a goal since getting involved with motorsports to introduce and encourage other women to get involved in the sport. I still love to drive on tracks and I'm more of a car nut than ever, attending as many different types of events as I can, every year.

A number of years ago, I did stop to ponder where this all came from. My three older brothers are all very cerebral: into music, movies, and deep philosophical discussions, not machinery. The "aha" moment came when someone asked, "Wasn't your dad a stunt man?" Well, yes, he was. I asked my brothers about it and lo and behold, he not only fell off of running horses, and second story saloon balconies, but he also performed driving stunts. Hello, so that's where it came from! Definitely in the DNA.

Unfortunately, my dad passed away when I was 8. I would have loved to share with him my love of speed, the smell of fuel, hot tires and brakes, and the camaraderie that is motorsports.

Denise Longwell



As a 15-year-old in 1959, I was intrigued when an older teenage neighbor bought a beat up 1955 Austin-Healey 100-4. My neighbor rebuilt his Healey and taught me about how the motor and transmission worked. After finishing his “restoration,” he offered me several rides, including joining him to go see a sports car race at the long-gone Vineland, NJ track. To say I was hooked is an understatement. I subsequently took my girlfriend to two races there, as well as a race at the Reading, PA airport in the early ‘60s. As a college freshman in upstate NY, I was thrilled to find out that the famous track at Watkins Glen was only 40 minutes away and I went to see the USGP F1 race every year I was in college. By my senior year, I had befriended a group of local residents who raced SCCA production cars and attended SCCA events with them. The racing “hook” was well set.

Like many younger people, my initial attraction to racing were the thrills generated by the combination of noise, smells, and excitement. Regardless of whether I was watching F1 cars at Watkins Glen, SCCA cars on the track at Vineland, NJ, or the USAC Midgets and Sprint Cars at Wall Stadium in Northern, NJ, I was completely enthralled by the action of racing. As a young adult, when I began working corners for SCCA races, I started learning about the “art” or technical skills of racing, which allowed me to “spectate” from the corner station with greater knowledge and enjoyment. I always thought I’d enjoy driving and was happy to finally go to an SCCA drivers’ school. I enjoyed the thrill of actually driving as much or more than expected and started finding every way possible to get seat time, including autocrossing my totally stock Honda Accord.

I ended up living in Chicago and volunteered as a corner worker (marshal) at a Chicago Region drivers’ school

in 1969. This led to a 14 year “career” as an SCCA corner marshal in the Midwest, Bay Area, and Colorado, followed by several years as a Starter.

I knew I lacked the skill to prepare and race a car myself, but discovered I could rent a Formula Ford from a friend in Colorado for drivers’ school at an affordable cost. I attended my two schools in 1987 at Aspen and Second Creek, plus a regional race at Pueblo in a rented Formula Vee. I absolutely loved being in the cockpit and knew I had to race whenever possible.

Divorce and a new job in St. Louis put my driving on hold, so I returned to the worker ranks (as a Steward). In 1990, I rented an MG Midget production car for a school and several regional races. I stayed in the prod car ranks through 1994, renting from the same friend, and managed to win the SCCA Midwest Division H Production regional title in 1994. I saw the value of being both a Steward and active driver and continued working as a volunteer when not actually driving.

Two children in college interrupted my racing efforts from 1995 to 1999, but I continued serving in the SCCA Stewards program. As soon as my budget allowed, I went to a Skip Barber school as a way to learn better car control and also regain my SCCA competition license. In 2000, I rented an AS Camaro, then switched to a rented Sports 2000 in 2001. I qualified and competed at the 2001 SCCA Runoffs at Mid-Ohio, then rented the same Swift DB2 through 2006.

My friend had to sell his S2000 in 2007 and I decided to finally get my own car, an SCCA Spec Racer Ford. I raced the SRF until my retirement in 2013 and was able to finish on a good note by qualifying for the 2013 SCCA Runoffs at Road America, definitely one of my favorite tracks. Although I had heart surgery in early 2014, I was able to get back on track later in the year in a rented SRF.

During the 2015 season, two friends and I bought a 1995 Miata and built it up to race in World Racing League. We raced once in 2015, then multiple times in 2016, 2017, and 2018. We’ve really enjoyed WRL and amateur endurance racing, particularly competing in the 24-hour race at High Plains in Colorado. In 2018, I got to check off a big item on my racing “bucket list” when I drove in an AER endurance race at Watkins Glen. During 2018, my two Miata partners decided they wanted to make multiple upgrades to our car (including motor work), which was going to strain my retirement budget. A mutual friend wanted to buy into our car and I simply sold him my share.

I knew I couldn’t stop racing entirely and was able to put together a rental agreement for a FV in vintage racing. I raced three times this year and have thoroughly enjoyed myself. The Vee demands ultimate smooth technique and using all of the advice from the weekly Speed Secrets. The vintage Vee community is very friendly and helps each other with advice and mechanical assistance. At 75, I appreciate my racing future is not infinite, but one of our best drivers is 81 and going strong.

My true enjoyment of racing has always been slightly tempered by both a limited budget and a little caution, which I attribute to seeing some fairly serious wrecks in my corner working days. However, I still find at age 75, I come off the track with a grin on my face and a good feeling of accomplishment (even if the car isn’t performing well or my driving hasn’t been my best). The shift to vintage Formula Vee racing has afforded me the ability to race with other “mature” drivers in a very affordable class. I accept that, as I work on my driving skills and race craft, and maintain a good fitness level; my mid-pack existence may only improve slightly, but my enjoyment of our sport will stay very strong.

Edward Smith



I'm more of a spectator for all things Internet. Your request for why we do what we do stories sounded kinda fun to actually be a participant on the Internet. So here are some ramblings of my story:

Matchbox, Hot Wheels, and model cars were the norm for me to play with until age 8. Then the first real smell of exhaust came in the form of a lawn mower engine-powered go-kart. Total fun. Completely wore it out.

Age 10, mini-bike. More fun. First real sign of addiction was taking my dad's lawn edger engine off to replace the blown-up one on my mini-bike. The reason it blew up was reaching down and holding the governor wide open most of the time. I just wanna go fast!

The Yamaha Mini Enduro was next along with two or three full-sized dirt bikes. Rode for hours and days out in the Florida Everglades. Learned a lot about balance. Going over the handle bars isn't fun. Four wheels arrived in the form of VW Bugs, Baja bugs, and rail buggies. Learned more about balance when I rolled my first VW Bug at age of 14 or so.

The big day when I got my driver license, the fumes really got to me. Car fumes and girls' perfumes. Having the ability to fix cars, I went through a fleet of them.

Moved to Colorado where downhill skiing taught me more about balance. Had to be careful to some extent. No helmet, seat belts, or roll cage. How I kept from breaking bones, I have no idea.

A bit of an intermission for family and being a responsible adult. Teaching kids how to ride bicycles meant that, unexpectedly, mountain bikes snuck into my life. Same story - hours and days riding some of the best trails in Colorado. More lessons of balance learned. Road bikes are boring compared to the challenge and adventure of mountain biking.

One day, a customer at the shop and I were chatting about having to drive over to Denver for the weekend. I was visiting relatives in east Denver and he was going to the new race track, High Plains Raceway. An invitation to come out and drive his E46 M3 for a few laps was too good to pass up. Never knew that such a thing as open track days existed.

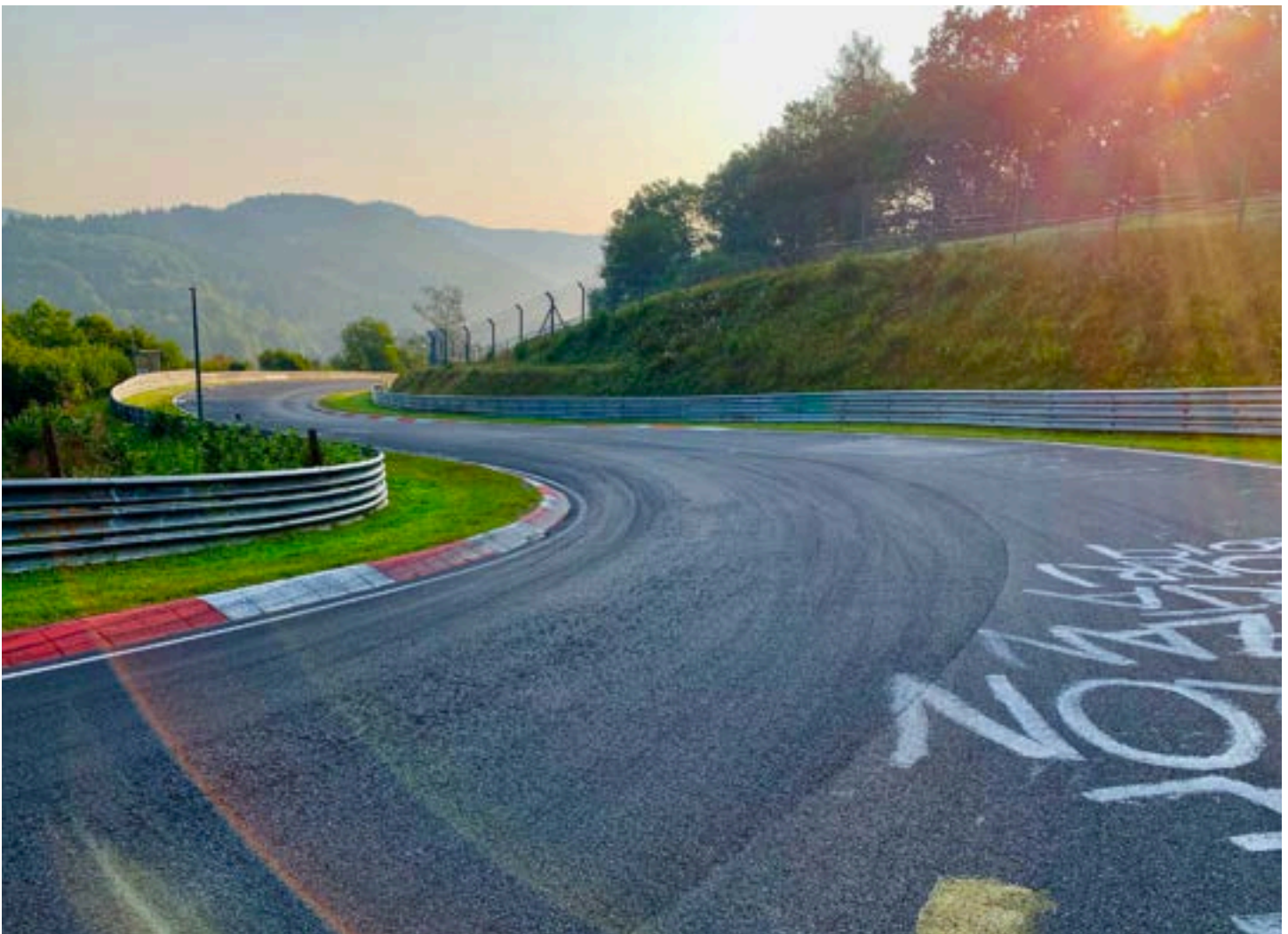
Addicted fast and hard. Bought an E36 M3. Went to every BMWCCA and NASA HPDE event I could. Bought an E30 to go racing with several new series called Crap Can Racing, 24 Hours of LeMons, and Chumpcar. Had my NASA competition license in about a year from that first open track day at HPR. Bought another E36 M3 to go racing wheel to wheel with NASA.

A little over ten years later, I'm still racing and addicted. Have done some instructing with NASA. Also became an MSF certified instructor. Unfortunately, due to moving and this thing called life, I've not been on the track or instructing as much as I would like. However, I have no plans of giving it up any time soon.

The topic of whether natural talent is something you're born with or not has been discussed by you and others. My thoughts on that are people do have some sort of natural tendency towards certain things. My son is a math whiz. My daughter is an artist: painting, drawing, photography are a breeze to her. I was delivered with so-called mechanical abilities. Whether it's a left brain/ right brain type of thing, who knows? I have serviced, repaired, and built everything from mini-bikes to cars for about 50 years. Knowing how to drive all of them is part of my job. Being on track is like the ultimate test drive. Analyzing, processing, then going 3-wide into a corner, coming out clean and in front puts a big smile on my face.

Well that's my story of why I do what I do.

Lee Bohning



I grew up in Bay Shore, New York, on the south shore of Long Island. It's not exactly a hotbed for motorsports, but it's where the addiction started for me. I don't come from a family of racers, but rather race fans who thankfully exposed me to many forms of motorsport. I know that I was one of the last attendees of a race at Islip Speedway, though I was too young to remember it. My first memories of racing happened at Riverhead Raceway, a very small paved oval on the east end of Long Island that hosted Saturday night stock car races. I always favored the junkyard classes, though the Northeast Modified Tour regularly came through. I remember seeing guys like Jimmy Spencer, Mike Stefanik, and Steve Park race there, then wind up in NASCAR. It served as great inspiration that anyone could make it "big time." Later on, I recall traveling to Pennsylvania (which seemed like another planet) to see the NASCAR races at Pocono. I still remember standing next to the race winner, Kyle Petty, on the top floor of the tower after my dad and neighbor snuck us in. The Champion Spark Plugs banner I "borrowed" that day still hangs in my garage.

Though stock car racing is what started it for me, it wasn't where I'd wind up. Sometime around 1992, I realized race cars could also turn right. This happened at the IMSA Grand Prix of Miami. I was blown away at the cars, most memorably the Nissan 300ZXs of Johnny O'Connell and Steve Millen. The poster they autographed for me is framed in my basement. A few years later, I attended my first Bonneville Speedweek and was further blown away by the engineering that goes into making a car go fast, and just how fast people managed to go in what seemed like the stone age. When I went to college (ironically in Pennsylvania), my friends brought me to a World of Outlaws race, which can only be described as insane. There was no wall on the back straight. I saw several cars go off at the exit of Turn Two into a cornfield, only to return to the track a minute later covered in corn stalks.

Fast forward a few years and I find myself living in Colorado (to ski, of course). Racing wasn't even on my mind, until I saw one of those beautiful Nissan 300ZXs sitting on a corner with a For Sale sign. I bought it, promptly discovered SCCA Solo racing, and it was all down (or up) hill from there. When I got bored with that, I discovered the World Rally Championship on Speed Channel, so I built a rally car. One year at the PRI show in Indianapolis, I ran into Johnny O'Connell (yes, the guy who autographed the poster for me when I was 11) and he worked at the Bondurant School. I attended a 4-day class and obtained my SCCA competition license. I've gone on to win countless races and several championships in Solo, Rally, Hillclimbs, SCCA touring classes, and most recently Formula Mazda, all in cars I've built or maintained myself. My wife and I competed in the Pikes Peak Hillclimb in our rally car. All of my good friends are racers, and it's a running joke how none of us have any non-racing friends left. One of the first words out of my 2-year-old's mouth was "racecar." Yet every year I feel like I'm just getting started.

Ryan McLaughlin

My dad, more than the races - spending hours working on the race car and the household cars.

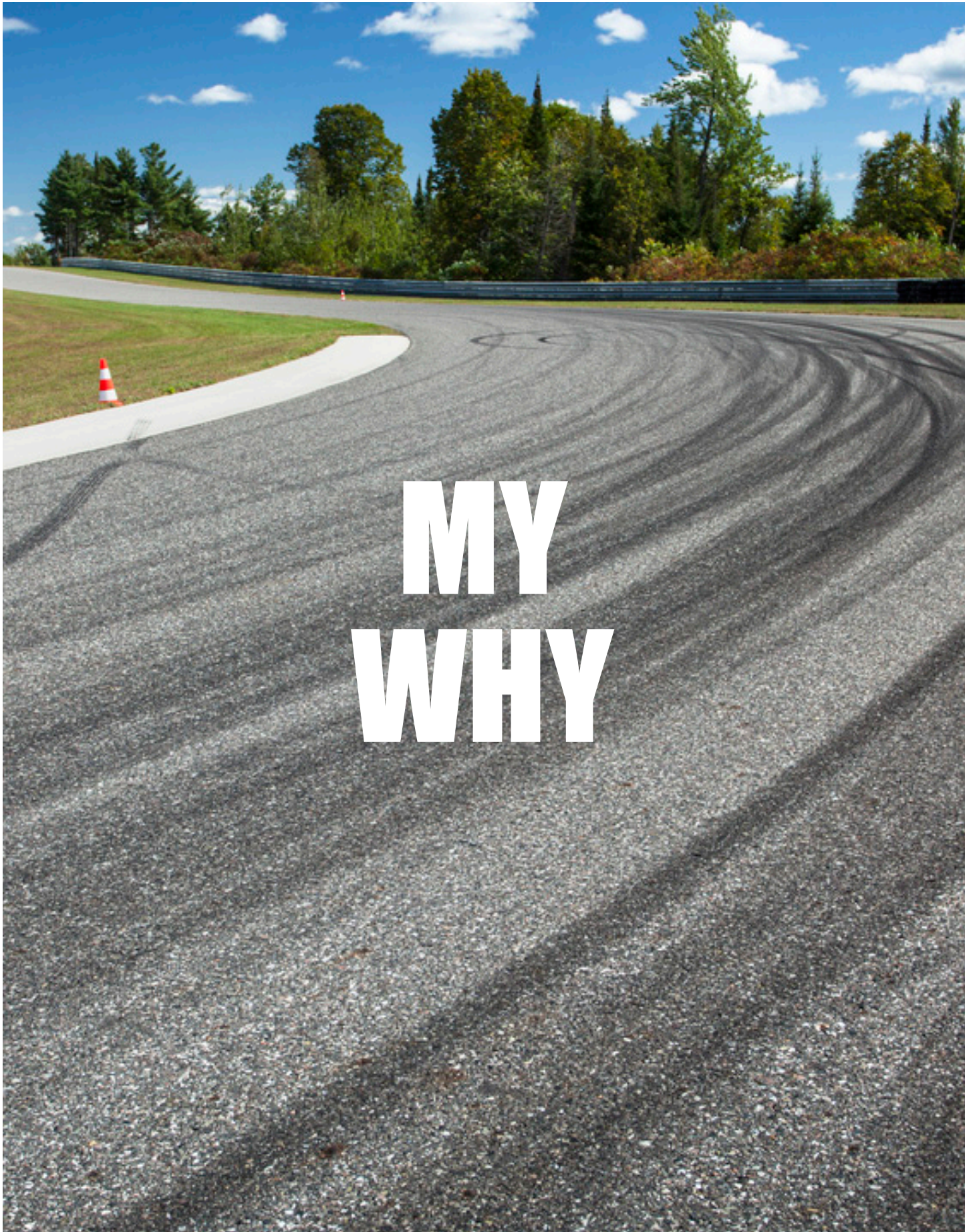
JC Chore

Dad is a doctor and workaholic. My interaction with him that I remember the most is him dropping off the new *Motor Trend / Road & Track* magazines on my desk, LOL. Made me fall in love with the M3.

Felippe Kimmer

My dad would take me to the drag strip and that was fun. Later on, a coworker told me about something called "autocross," so I stopped by an SCCA Solo event to check it out. OMG. I was hooked. Then someone at an autocross told me about an "open track day" held on a road course that I never knew existed until that moment. Wow! Next thing you know, I'm buying tires and brake pads on a regular basis and enrolling in driving schools to improve my skills which led to better lap times.

Eric Penn



Some people would say that driving around a race track is not the smartest thing to do. In fact, you may have had your sanity questioned more than once. Perhaps you've had someone give you THAT look when you tell them how much you spend on your passion. Or they questioned your concern for the environment, your safety, or your care for your family.

Maybe you've asked yourself why you do what you, what made you a car enthusiast, a driver.

For some, we do what we do because of things that happened at an early age. At about 6 years old I got a Dinky toy of a Jaguar D-type. The lines, the shape of that car had an effect on me like no other. A couple of years later a friend and I were walking alongside of a rural road, and something happened that imprinted itself in my memory: a lemon-colored Lotus Europa approached an intersection, and without slowing down one MPH — it may have even sped up — zipped around a corner as if on a slot car track. I literally stopped in my tracks, my eyes got bigger, my jaw dropped, and then my face melted into a huge smile.

Later that year, another friend's older brother gave me a stack of *Road & Track* magazines, dating from 1963 to 1968. I had recently become a teenager, but these were more attractive than a stack of *Playboys*. I read about Jimmy Clark and Grand Prix racing, and the Ford GT40s at Le Mans. Who needed centerfold models when I could gaze upon the gorgeous curves of a Lotus 49, and stare into the throttle trumpets of a Cosworth DFV? Then, thanks to ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, my study of the Indy 500 began.

I had been going to races with my dad since I was 5 years old, watching sprint cars on short oval tracks in the Pacific Northwest. I can still smell the burning gasoline, oil, and tires. I can still hear the thunder of two dozen sprint cars scrambling their way into Turn One, slipping and sliding sideways as the drivers struggled for control. I can still see the yellow, black, white, red, and blue of their minimalist bodies. Still. That drove my desire to race at Indy, and like some kids can name all the players on their favorite football team, I knew every Indy 500 winner from Ray Harroun to A.J. Foyt.

Mixed in with my all-consuming passion for Indy came the Gulf Porsche 917s, in magazines and ultimately in the movie *Le Mans*, further fueling my day (and night) dreams.

There are moments like this for everyone who drives on a track. A moment or series of moments that changed their lives, that triggered the burning desire to go back again and again. It may have been a certain car, an image, a smell, an event...

Yes, childhood experiences are often responsible for what some people think of as the irresponsible behavior of driving around race tracks at high speed. And perhaps that's part of why we do what we do: the sense of being irresponsible. Since we're expected to spend so much of our adult lives being responsible, driving on the track is a release, an escape. Maybe that's why some don't get addicted to driving until they're older — when they need an escape. Or maybe we're just lazy. Or at least, want to feel lazy, relaxed for awhile.

I'm sure you agree that performance driving or racing is the most relaxing thing you do. The average person — the person who has never driven on a track — has a hard time understanding how driving a car at or near the limit, sometimes wheel-to-wheel with another car, could be relaxing. But it requires such total focus, total commitment, that it is. It's that escape. Nothing else matters. Business, family, other commitments, all go out the window at speed. And that's an extremely attractive thing for so many people today. As our lives are inundated with technology and demands on our time, that escape is more and more important.

While it can be an escape, there's also a sense of belonging, of being at home. There are times on the track when

we can't help but think that it's just where we belong. With our track families.

As Steve McQueen famously said in the movie, *Le Mans*, "Racing is life. Anything that happens before or after is just waiting." Racing or performance driving is what some of us are meant to do.

My first time driving on a race track, other than the local go-kart track, was at Willow Springs, in the oven-like sun of the Mojave Desert. It was in a bright orange Formula Ford. And it was magic. The challenge of tying together the lines through the turns, the dance of the footwork on the pedals to adjust speed and weight transfer, the subtle but deliberate rotation of the steering wheel, and where my vision and attention was focused still gives me sweaty goose bumps just thinking about it. Oh, and that sound... the sound that can only come from a car at speed, full RPM, full throttle, wind whistling by.

Along with this flood of sensory input there's also a technical and intellectual challenge. Think about the thousands of movements, skills, and techniques you perform over the course of one single lap. Think of the variations in track conditions, and of your car and that of other drivers' cars. Then think how often, even with all those variables, you and another driver can be separated by fractions of a second, fractions of a percentage of lap time. It's mind-boggling. And thrilling to think we control those minute differences.

The reasons we drive are varied, personal, and many. Perhaps that's it. Perhaps it's because we can't put our finger on it. We work to make money to do other things. We eat to fuel our bodies and minds. We exercise to keep our bodies fit. We have relationships because they make us feel better, more complete. We take vacations to relax and re-energize. We have sex because... well, you know... sex.

The thing is, we know why we do all of those things. We have reasons for doing them. But the fact that it's difficult to define the exact reason why we drive may be the reason we do it. Maybe not being able to define the reason is the reason. It's the journey. It's not the destination that matters. Well, except for the destination of the finish line at the end of the next lap, just that fraction of a second sooner than ever before....

Ross Bentley



RESOURCES

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