



Gateway Relay

Vol XI, No. 9

St Louis Sports Car Council

November-December 2023

Council News & Notes



- Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all!
- Yeah, we're running late (again), finishing up 2023 with a combined issue. Our apologies; the editor retired from his full-time job about a month ago and between that, holiday preps at the homestead and a drop-what-you're-doing trip up to the Pacific Northwest, we pretty much lost the bubble.
- This is the catchup issue; hopefully, with all of the new free (?) time, 2024 will bring 12 issues of the *Relay*.
- In the meantime, again, our best to all of our member clubs and their members. Have a safe New Year.

Up & Coming

- 6 Jan 24**—Gateway Miata **Ugly Sweater Breakfast**. Wear your goofiest and ugliest sweater outfit...or come as you are. See <https://gatewaymmiataclub.clubexpress.com>.
- 6 Jan 24**—Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri **Visit to Creve Coeur Airport/Dauster Flying Field**, vintage planes and lunch, 10 AM. Tour and lunch \$25, for info/reservations call John at (314)313-0305.
- 13 Jan 24**—Annual Jaguar Association of Greater St Louis **Awards Dinner**, at the Deer Creek Club, 9861 Deer Creek Hill, St Louis, 6:30 PM-9 PM. Info at <https://www.jagstl.com/events/general/annual-awards-dinner-2024>.
- 15 Jan 24**—MG Club of St Louis **Tech Session – Carbs and Tuning**. At It's Alive Automotive, 11714 Saint Charles Rock Road, 6-8 PM.
- 18-21 Jan 24** – Greater St Louis Auto Dealers annual **St Louis Auto Show**, at America's Center and The Dome downtown. General admission \$12, children 12 and under free, group discounts available. Info at <https://saintlouisautoshow.com>.
- 26 Jan 24**—St Louis Region SCCA **Wolf Moon 2024 Road Rally**. Monte Carlo-style touring format using Richta GPS scoring. Start at the Troy Park & Ride, 809 S Main St, Troy, IL, 5 PM check-in, first car departs at 6:01 PM. Finish at the DeCamp Station Roadhouse on old US 66 in Staunton. \$20 for SCCA teams, \$40 for non-SCCA teams. Registration open at <http://msreg.com/STLWolfMoon24>.
- 11 Feb 24**—Gateway Miata **Valentines Miata Breakfast**. See <https://gatewaymmiataclub.clubexpress.com>.
- 18 Feb 23**—**Polar Bear Run**, SLTOA's traditional first drive of the season, followed by lunch. Open to all cars and drivers. Planning underway, more to follow.
- 16 Mar 24**—MG Club of St Louis **Annual Terry Fanning Rally**. Details TBA, monitor <https://stlouismclub.com/>.

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Note: Some club events restrict participation to club members only, primarily for national/chapter insurance reasons. If interested in joining in on a drive or other event, we recommend you contact the club's event coordinator in advance for details.

In Print

We'll start with November's *Classic & Sports Car*, which marks the magazine's 500th issue and celebrates 70 years of the **Corvette**. The editors drove and picked their favorites from each generation, C1 to C8; the overall favorite was the C2, represented in a separate road test article of a 1963 "split window" coupe and 1965 convertible.

The October/November edition of *Vintage Motorsport* presents an extensive cover feature on the SCCA's open-wheel For-

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- 17 Mar 24**—Gateway Miata **St Patrick's Day Breakfast**. Wear your luckiest, bestest and greenest costume. See <https://gatewaymmiataclub.clubexpress.com>.
- 31 Mar 24**—Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri annual **Easter Concours**, Forest Park. Details to follow, monitor <https://hccmo.com>.
- 17-19 May 24**—Heartland Vintage Racing/NASA MidAmerica inaugural **race/vintage weekend** at Hedge Hollow Raceway, Adrian, Missouri (~one hour southeast of Kansas City). First vintage event at this brand new track, info at <https://members.drivenasa.com/events/4519> and <https://www.hearlandvintageracing.com/event-info/>.
- 10-11 May 2024**—**WWTR Speedtour**, at World Wide Technology Raceway, Madison, Illinois, hosted by Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. Info at <https://svra.com/events/2024-wwtr-speedtour/>.
- 16-19 May 2024**—**Road America Speedtour**, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, hosted by Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. Info at <https://svra.com/events/2024-road-america-speedtour/>.
- 30 May-1 Jun 24**—**A Confluence of Triumphs: South Central VTR '24**. Hosted by SLTOA at the Sheraton Westport Chalet hotel. See www.sltoa.org for details, events and registration information.
- 10-13 Oct 24**—Annual **Lake Garnett Grand Prix Revival**, Garnett, Kansas. Multi-day event including vintage race car exhibition, autocross, car show, rides for charity, driving tour/cruise and track sessions. Registration opens 1 May, info at <https://www.lggpr.org>.
- 18-20 Oct 24**—**Ozarks Grand Prix**, at Ozarks International Raceway, hosted by NASA MidAmerica and HVRA. Info at <https://members.drivenasa.com/events/4523> and <https://www.hearlandvintageracing.com/event-info/>.

St Louis Car Shows and Cruises: www.stlouiscoachmen.com/car-shows-special-events

In Print (Continued from page 1)

mula 5000 series of the late 1960s-1970s, when a substantial number of teams ran cars built by Lola, AAR Eagle, Shadow, etc, driven by a lot of famous drivers. The series ended in 1977, when the SCCA shifted the cars to full envelope bodies as part of an effort to resurrect the Can Am series. The December issue of includes articles on the BMW 1M coupe plus a saluted to the dear departed Volvo wagons/estates ("departed" as in Volvo will no longer export the wagons to the British Isles). The primary feature is a road test of a 1989 **245 GLT**. Later in the magazine, an update by one of the editors on the rebuilding/restoration of his 1965 **Triumph 2000/2.5PI**.

December's *Thoroughbred & Classic Car* covers the life story of a 1991 **Morgan 4/4**, along with a buyer's guide for the Volvo 1800 series. *Car & Driver* for November features a cover article on the **Corvette E-Ray** hybrid, "...quickest Corvette to 60 MPH...a hybrid juiced up to go faster – not farther – on a gallon of gas." In December's *C&D* the editors compared a number of vehicles in acceleration and braking, ie, 0 to 150 to 0. The test took place at the former Strategic Air Command Wurtsmith AFB in Oscoda, Michigan, with its 10,000-plus-foot runway and the cars included a Chevrolet **Corvette Z06**. At the back of the magazine, a road test of the 2024 **BMW i5**, which was rated as "...every bit as compelling as its bigger brother, the i7."

Finally, for those of the of the **MG** persuasion, December's *Octane* has a book review (pg 172) of *Kim: A Biography of MG Founder Cecil Kimber* (author Jon Presnell, £130.50/\$167.00) while the December *Classic & Sports Car* reviews Goldie, a bio of MG record-setter LtCol Alfred Thomas "Goldie" Gardner (author John Mayhead, £20/\$25.60).

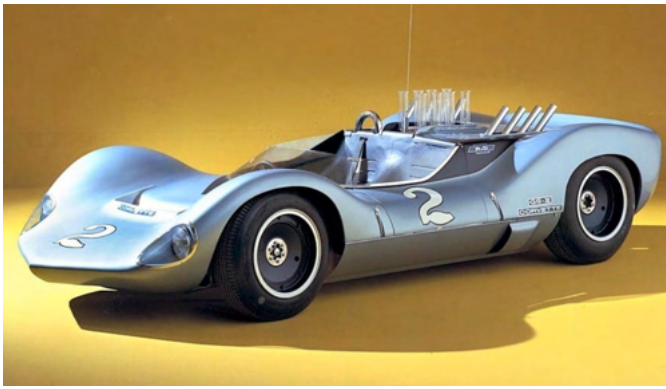
*StLSCC Music Appreciation
Corner*

And you may find yourself behind
the wheel of a large automobile.

And you may find yourself in a
beautiful house, with a beautiful
wife.

And you may ask yourself, "well,
how did I get here?"





Above, Corvette GS-IIb (photo via Amelia Island Concours). Below, Jim Hall on his way to victory in the Chaparral 2A at Bridgehampton, 23 May 1965 (photo by Robert Bohl via *Racing Sports Cars*).



Take a look at the car at the top, then look at the car below it. Startling resemblance, eh? The lower vehicle is the Chaparral 2A, developed by Midland, Texas oilman Jim Hall, which debuted at the Los Angeles Times Grand Prix at Riverside on 13 October 1963. The car above? The one and only 1964 Grand Sport IIB, developed by Chevrolet R&D director Frank Winchell as part of the company's efforts to come up with a mid-engine 'Vette.

So, who copied who? Did Chevrolet copy Hall's basic design for a mid-engine sports-racer, or did Hall get advance notice of the development of the GS IIB? The answer is neither; the two, remarkably similar cars, were developed somewhat in parallel. Both Chevrolet and Hall benefited from the efforts.

Winchell, who headed R&D from 1959 through 1966, was a strong proponent of "research and development" at the Chevrolet Engineering Center, although the term served as a cover for continued Chevrolet engineering and design support of racing teams, thus working around Chevrolet's 1963 suspension of direct corporate involvement in racing. A major part of his effort involved the development of mid- and rear-engine variants of the Corvette, as logical follow-ons to the XP777 mid-engine Corvair Monza GT and rear engine XP797 Monza SS roadster.

Fully separate from Zora Arkus-Duntov's efforts with the Corvette (and to the maximum extent hidden from Duntov's purview), Winchell and his team came up with the Corvette GS-II. Jim Musser, who had developed the chassis for the two Monza show cars, did the engineering while Larry Shinoda came up with the glass

reinforced plastic (GRP) designed the body. The car employed a steel monocoque tub; a 327 V8 with four twin-throat Weber carbs and individual exhausts provided the power, which went to the rear wheels via a single-speed automatic transmission designed by Jerry Mrli.

With the car built, Winchell looked for a remote test facility that would allow his team to wring it out far from prying eyes, car spotters, the odd lawyer and the like.

Enter Jim Hall and his partner/fellow driver Hap Sharp. Hall had started racing an Allard in 1953 and over subsequent years ran Oscas, Corvettes, Ferraris, Maseratis, Lotus, Listers, Porsches, and at one point an MGA. In 1961, working with Dick Troutman and Tom Barnes, Hall debuted his first sports car, the Chaparral. The rather standard, front-engine Chevy V8-powered sports car first ran at Laguna Seca on 10 June 1961. Hall finished 2nd overall and 1st in B Modified. A year later, Hall established Chaparral Cars, specifically for the manufacturing of vehicles for SCCA and occasional international racing events.



Jim Hall and Hap Sharp drove Chaparral 1-003 at the March 1963 Sebring 12-hour race. The car went out on the 15th lap when the engine failed (Photo by Ed Watts via *Racing Sports Cars*).

In 1963, GM head of design Bill Mitchell invited Hall to Detroit to see several of the XP vehicles as well as the new Stingray; Hall had previously assisted Chevy with efforts to correct the, uh, "questionable" handling of the first generation Corvair. Much of the evaluation and testing took place at Hall's private track near Midland, Rattlesnake Raceway. Per Hemmings author Terry Shea,

Winchell, who had control over an extensive R&D budget, contracted with Chaparral to use the track for testing experimental vehicles as well. By testing in Texas, Winchell had a track he could use virtually any day of the year--and one that was far away from competitors' prying eyes.

After testing, Chevrolet had the GS II destroyed, but Winchell followed up with the GS-IIb, mechanically similar to the first car but with a riveted and bonded aluminum chassis, designed for the use of wider tires. The new car went to Midland and Chaparral Cars in January 1964 for track testing, with Hall doing most of the driving. During one test he GS-IIb hit 198 mph, reportedly with engineer Jim Musser at the wheel.

(Continued on page 4)



The GS-IIB heading out for a test run, most likely at Rattlesnake Raceway (photo via Corvette Forum).

Winchell liked what resulted and proposed a 500-car production run for a GS-IIB coupe...but it never happened. Again, officially, Chevrolet did not and would not support factory racing efforts, so production was out of the question and the single GS-IIB was the only example to ever turn a wheel. The car remained with Chaparral Cars until 1968 when it returned to CEC for upgrades and modifications. It came back to Midland in August 1969 and within short order went into storage.

While all this was going on, Hall, Sharp and Chaparral Cars turned out their first mid-engine design, the Chaparral 2. The car featured a steel reinforced fiberglass monocoque tub with a 327 V8 and Chevy-designed two-speed automatic transmission. As mentioned previously, Jim Hall debuted the 2 at Riverside in October 1963 but regrettably the car only lasted five laps, DNF'ing due to an electrical fire. The team had better success at the 20 October Laguna Seca Monterey Pacific Grand Prix, when Hall finished third behind Dave MacDonald in a Shelby American Cooper King Cobra-Ford and AJ Foyt in the Mecom Scarab MkIV-Olds.



The Chaparral 2C (photo via race-car-models).

So the GS-II and GS-IIB never saw actual competition, but information derived from the testing of the latter

car – and presumably, also components – wound up in the Chaparral 2C. Chevrolet's R&D organization and

Hall continued to work very closely together as the Chaparral 2 went on to a number of victories, starting with a 3 May 1964 win at Laguna Seca in the third round of the SCCA's US Road Race of Champions. Roger Penske finished third in the other Chaparral 2. Work done on Winchell's mid-engine Corvette project also helped set the stage for subsequent Chaparral variants, culminating in the 2J Can Am "vacuum car" and the Lola/Chaparral 2K's 1980 victory at the Indianapolis 500, with Johnny Rutherford at the wheel.

In 2020, the fully restored GS-IIB made an appearance at the Amelia Island Concours, where it lined up in a special mid-engine Corvette class. There it took its rightful place alongside the CERV-I, CERV-II, CERV-III, XP-819 rear-engine 'Vette, XP-895 aluminum mid-engine, XP-897 rotary and the Aerovette. The GS-IIB is now on display in the Chaparral Gallery of the Petroleum Museum in Midland.



The GS-IIB at Amelia Island, 2020. The next Corvette in line is the 1965 XP-819 mid-engine proposal (photo via ConceptCarz).

Sources: *Racing Sports Cars*, www.racingsportscars.com; Daniel Strohl, "Rarely Seen Chevrolet GS-IIB to join mid-engine Corvette class at Amelia Island," *Hemmings*, 12 December 2019; Bob Golfan, "Experimental 1964 mid-engine Corvette set for Amelia Island special class," *ClassCars.com Journal*, 19 December 2019; Petroleum Museum, "GS IIB Experimental Corvette," n.d.; "1964 Chevrolet Corvette GS IIB," *ConceptCarz*, <https://www.conceptcarz.com>; Terry Shea, "Frank Winchell," *Hemmings*, 23 September 2018.

Featured Events



Annual Concours d'Elegance

Jaguar Association of Greater St Louis—7 Oct 23



Featured Events continued



Photos courtesy of the Jaguar Association of Greater St Louis



Featured Events continued

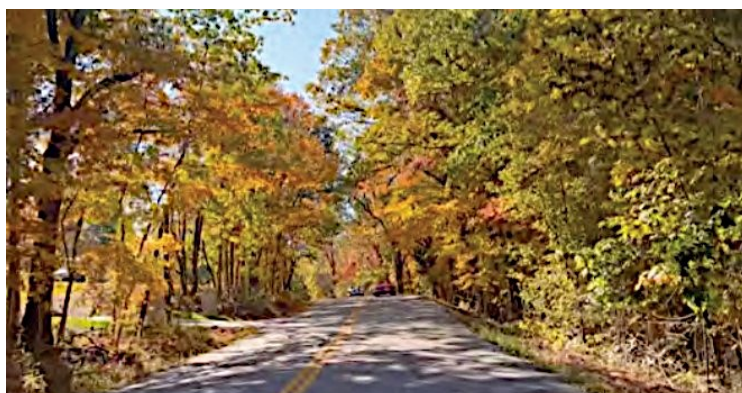
Thunder in the Ozarks Vintage Festival Vintage Sports Car Drivers Association—13-15 Oct 23



Photos courtesy of Phil Taxman/JAGSL

Colour & Wine Tour

MG Club of St Louis—22 Oct 23



Photos by Paul Summers, Steve Cross and Raheel Saghir





Photos by Andy Ackerman

← 14th Annual Clay Shoot
MGCSL—28 Oct 23

Photos by Andy Ackerman



Featured Events continued

Cars & Coffee-Daniel Schmitt & Co

4 Nov 23



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BMW Car Club of America
St. Louis Chapter

