



FJ PITSTOP

Newsletter & Advertiser

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AUSTRALIAN FORMULA JUNIOR ASSOCIATION

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Editorial



Apparently I made a rash statement to Roger before departing O/S last year that I would help out where possible with the work load, resulting from the retirement of our long time dedicated Secretary, Editor, Point Scorer and Registrar, Kelvin Prior. So I have landed this job. It's taking 3 people to do Kelvin's work, and now very obvious to me the time he put in to keeping this Association together. Kelvin has received a well earned Life Membership.

Now it is up to all of us to not only keep the Association intact, but to progress our favourite sporting activity to new heights and enthusiasm.

I am feeling my way with short notice on this edition, but with all your expected help with photographs, race reports and news items both of a sporting and social nature, I hope we can build this quarterly Newsletter into something worthy of our growing Association – growing both in stature and membership.

We are all part of a successful worldwide organisation which is the envy of every other Historic Racing Group.

Don Thallon January 2014

PS: I believe we need a new fresh logo in line with the "Head Office" in the UK. David is working on this. I also believe all professional sporting organisations have a well worded motto to express their activities – e.g. Goodwood has "A Magical Step Back in Time" and SVRA has "Some people collect art ... we race it".

A suggestion by me "The Global Formula for Competitive Camaraderie". Please send all suggestions to the Secretary. Ed.

Disclaimer

The statements and opinions expressed in all FJ Pitstop Newsletters are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Association.

WAKEFIELD PARK - SEPTEMBER 2013





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

All the best for your 2014!

I notice policeman are getting younger and it seems only yesterday that we were starting 2013! Just possible that it's an age thing.! No time to waste. It is a time of stocktake and resolutions.

Last year was a big year for our association. A new leadership team taking over from our founder Kelvin and Bunny Prior. That is never easy, finding our way and working out systems - a big thanks to David Reid for doing a lot of that. Noel Bryen has the registrar's role fully sorted, so thanks to him and the State Reps and committee.

This is the first "Pitstop" prepared and presented by Don (Jeanette does most of the work) Thallon. The Thallons hosted us to a wonderful Sunday Roast - he will tell you the red made him volunteer ! Communication is what we are all about (Don's mantra). And I would have to agree.

This year of course is what we make it! What I can tell you is that we, as a group, are in the strongest possible position . We have some exciting new keen drivers, an excellent program of events, strong support from our "parent" the FJHRA, and an existing group of bloody good guys and girls, where the camaraderie and sheer fun are the hallmark! Oh and don't forget our association is built around maintaining and racing some of the most beautiful little racing cars ever built

So all is in place for a great 2014. All we have to do is do it, before the police look even younger!

WE DON'T JUST COLLECT ART. WE DRIVE IT

Invitation to Formula Junior BBQ at Phillip Island Friday 7th March.

The Formula junior Association will be having a BBQ at 43 Hobsons Parade, Cowes on the Friday of the Phillip Island weekend. You and your family and crew are invited and we very much hope you can join us. This will take place in our rental property (so I can tell you it won't be very smart). The AFJA will supply the food, all you will need to bring is some drink and good cheer!

The BBQ will follow the AGM ,to be held at the same venue. David Reid will send formal notice of the AGM in due course, but I suspect we will have the hot plates on and sizzling by 6pm

Hope to see you then
Roger Ealand

The Bad Santa photo



Our Leaders relaxing over the Christmas break – Bad Santa on the left

**Our President at Lime Rock, USA
2013**



The eBay Lotus

Old Photo



1962 Australian Formula Junior Championship - Catalina Park, Katoomba NSW - 28.10.1962. On the grid with Frank Match in Elfin # 4 are Leo Geoghegan in the Lotus 22 # 8, Gavin Youl in his BT2 Brabham # 2, Clive Nolan in his Lotus 20 # 16 and the nose of Glynn Scott's Lotus 20 just visible behind Frank.

Who knows where these cars are now and the current owners?

TORQUE AROUND THE PITS

Mike Gosbell has been invited to show his beautifully presented Cooper 52 at the Australian GP at Albert Park. It is a credit to Mikes preparation and presentation of his Formula Junior, that it has been selected to be part of the Shannon's Historic demonstration this year. It will be a good opportunity to promote FJ racing to the race spectators.

All our intrepid European competitors are home now after experiencing Formula Junior racing overseas. Don Thallon, Kim Shearn, Peter Boel, Neil McCrudden, Marty Bullock.

Kim is returning to the UK this year to enter the Lurani championship again. After sorting out the gearbox problems, he is ready to give it a real shot.

Bruce Edgar has sent his Elfin to New Zealand to compete at Hampton Downs this year. Bruce has put a lot of effort into getting his car in working order, so he now deserves some fun with his car.

Peter Johnson is doing a fabulous job restoring his Elfin. Looking at the progress pictures on Facebook, it is going to be a credit to him and the FJ grid. We should be seeing it for the first time this year.

Geoff Fry has had a miserable experience with an engine builder, which delayed his appearance last year. He tells me he has that sorted now, so it will be good to welcome the Jolus to the grid again.

Another welcome return will be Allan Conway. Allan has spent some time stripping the chassis on his Gemini and repairing some cracks etc, the work is nearing completion and he is keen to have a full season with the car.

We are hoping that two Lotus 27 Formula Juniors will be on the grid at Phillip Island this year. Andrew Fellowes from Qld and Marty Bullock from WA will have to travel roughly the same distance to meet at the circuit with their cars, so hopefully we can make it happen.

I hear a whisper that our new super fast competitor to Formula Junior, Grant Craft, is expecting a small baby Craft to the family in July. Wonderful news, they will both be able to grow up together!

The Gemini Mk2, which has been campaigned by Roger Ealand for a number of years, here and NZ and Europe, has been sold. The car was bought by Rob Tweedie, who had it for one race meeting, and then sold it to its new owner. Max Pegram now owns this beautiful front engined Junior. Many of you may know Max. He has raced a Sprite for many years. Max will be a great asset to Formula Junior. He obviously loves the car, and we welcome him to our ranks.



A small gathering at Newmarket Brisbane to discuss the secrets of growing old gracefully whilst still moving at great speed

2013 EU Reports from Kim Shearn who has the O/S bug in a big way

Third Time Lucky – 3rd Edition?? (Lost count)

A late report, but the last two meetings were only The Goodwood Revival and Spa! If Goodwood is the Mecca then Spa is the Holy Grail.

Everything you read about Goodwood is magnified and a true assault on the senses when you arrive. The attention to detail is astounding. Whilst disappointment was large when my Lotus 18 wasn't accepted due to there being 5 others (!), Duncan Rabagliati arranged for me to drive Vernon Williamson's Ausper in the FJ race. A fantastic gesture from both men and extremely kind of Vern to trust me with his car.

The only downer on the whole event at Goodwood is the camp site - it is way below what you would expect, no power, poor facilities and crowded - though that's to be expected, I guess. You need a good motor home and "Joyce" was up to the task. Princess Marie wasn't impressed nevertheless and booked endless beauty treatments etc. in the nearby town. Things didn't improve for me when I casually asked after one session why she hadn't been served. To stay in a local hotel is all well and good, but the traffic is so heavy, getting to and from the track is difficult, at best. We enjoyed a terrific evening at Penny and Grant Wilson's home and that was the start of a weekend to remember.

Nigel Russell from NZ camped next to us along with his mate and his son too. It Rained now and then but laughs a-plenty along the way. Even on the Friday, there were about 40,000 people in attendance, mostly in period dress - it is truly an amazing site and along with the cars.... well let your imagination run wild. What with the Thursday cricket match on Lord March's oval, then drinks at the "house", followed by the formal night on Saturday; it is a weekend to savour for a long time to come.

Thanks again must go to the FJHRA supremo, Duncan Rabagliati for ensuring Formula Junior continues to be a much favoured event at Goodwood. His inclusive enthusiasm and professionalism is amazing and a universal benchmark for those wishing to grow a category. The FJHRA he leads, goes out of its way to HELP you race. Through his (and Sarah's) efforts our class is now starting to flourish in the USA as well. The upcoming, global anniversary race series will be something really special and everyone is welcome to take part - a unique international event that can only be coordinated with foresight and regulations that allow ALL competitors from ALL countries to compete on an even footing.

Tony Gaze was afforded many mentions over the Goodwood weekend and they held a memorial dedication for him, along with a pride of place headstone in the pits near the drivers club - a fitting and worthy tribute for a great Australian who figured large in the history of Goodwood.

Don Thallon received a late entry for his Cooper so we were both thrilled to once again be a part of this fabulous event. Scotty Taylor had an "interesting" practice session when another car clipped his back wheel and cart-wheeled over the top of him - he walked away, but bugger me, it was a close run thing, let me tell you. Noel Woodford (accompanied by the lovely wife, Sharon), from NZ also had good run in his immaculate Gemini, though he suffered gearbox problems (Renault again!!) during the weekend. The weather was kind and stayed dry for the FJ race where I qualified mid-field and finished the same - kept out of trouble and thoroughly enjoyed the little Ausper - a handy FJ car in the drum brake class for sure. No mechanical issues, what with the luxury of a Hewland gearbox! Noel finished much higher up (5th I think - fantastic!) and acquitted himself well.

SPA

Departed Goodwood Sunday night and headed straight to Spa for the race the following weekend. Following Zandvoort, I had left the trailer, with race car inside, at Spa so didn't need to tow it all the way and this made things easier. It was directly under a security camera inside at the Blanchimont gate and quite safe to park there while we toured up to Scandinavia in Joyce. That part of the world demands a return visit from us as it was most enjoyable, even if there isn't much car racing going on.

Spa, (Marie's ears prick up at the very mention of the word!) was a mixed field with FJ's racing with F2's and F3's and, to my surprise, even some F Fords. My better judgement was defeated by my desire to drive Spa once more, so we got on with it and significantly improved on last year's lap times, even though I was only in the 18. Don once again ran his Cooper and had 2 really good 7th places, both in big fields, so he was well pleased with his efforts. I managed a 4th and 3rd in the FJ class, among 8 or 9 cars and, as you can imagine, well down overall, considering the competition of later model, bigger engined cars with wings and slicks! I was pleased, however, not to have had any mechanical problems and was able to enjoy things to the max, a pleasing change. To drive this place is a huge thrill, let me say. It is fast, mostly flowing and long - though the little FJ cars suit it well, unlike say, Silverstone, where you eternally feel "lost".

The atmosphere is always fantastic here and this time particularly so as this is the 6 hour race meeting. It starts at 1600 on Saturday and runs into the night - great spectacle with numerous different types of cars taking place and the result not certain until close to the end. Dinner in the cafe above the pits affords a great view of Eau Rouge and the last Chicane as well as the start/finish, so it is a relaxed way to view the action. For the record, a GT40 won.

We now move on to Spain and Portugal for Jerez the Portimao. Marie and I are flying down and having the car transported by way of a change and a chance for some sunshine, which has been scarce were we have been this year. We continually seem to

have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. No matter, the Spanish hotel has a SPA, so at least someone is happy there's no racing.

About 30 entries for these 2 races so the competition is, as usual, strong. They come from all over Europe, the USA, Canada for these 2 events and they always produce good racing, so here's hoping....

I've left a gearbox with the UK guru on Renault boxes, Bob Hicks and he going to "dog" it. This means we can use Hewland gear ratios when it is finished. The CWP will remain the weak link, but at least the car will be far nicer to drive with a slick change and a first gear that you can actually use - not just for starts! Bit of a worry now as I only have one spare box!

More soon, meanwhile,

Cheers,

Kim Shearn

Kim's Final EU Report for 2013

On our way to Jerez for the second last meeting of the season we took some R & R near Malaga in Spain for 10 days. Whilst on Skype, I discovered that an old mate of mine, who has lived in Chile for 15 years or so was also in Europe. You guessed it, he was 3 K's up the road from us - so that was terrific to catch up with him - even if he doesn't race. He is French, when all is said and done (apologies Thierry).

The meeting at Jerez wasn't that well subscribed with entries - except for Formula Juniors who had the biggest and most competitive field at the track. The organisers put us up in a 4 star hotel and provided pit garages and catering hospitality for everyone. Great circuit too. Don Thallon ran double entries with his Cooper and, from memory, got 2 x 5th places in what was, though mixed, a big field. He also did well in the FJ, nearly keeping up with the guns and finished very credibly around 6th or 7th.

Our car ran well and we managed a class win over the two Lurani races, our best effort to date. The downside was, wait for it, yes, gearbox problems in the second race meant I did the last 8 laps with no 3rd gear and lost around 3.5 seconds a lap. Still managed to keep a small lead to get the result. It also gave us a tenth overall - pleasing really in a field of 30 cars. Without the help of many people, this year's effort would have been disastrous, but everyone is only too keen to assist and that makes it all worthwhile. Dave Methley won both races comfortably - he is super quick. He left last year's series winner, Pierro Tonnetti, who is also damn fast (he won 22 races on the trot in NZ this year!), in his wake.

Amazingly, Marie didn't quite make it to the track this time - mumbled something about "what for - the sun is out..."

We moved on to Portimao for the season's finale, in the Algarve, Southern Portugal where the organisers also pick up the 5 star hotel tab for 4 nights and spoil you with pits at the track as well. Iain Rowley, along with his boys, Martin and Josh, efficiently transported my car down south. They then changed the trans axle that broke in Jerez to get me going - you reckon I wasn't grateful for that! Things didn't go quite so well for me here as I only managed qualifying then one lap in the first race using my LAST gearbox before disaster struck again. The blocker bars in the 3rd/4th gear hub popped out this time. Tried fixing it, to no avail. Loved the cocktail party at Vern Williamson's place though (Thanks Vern!) then a superb dinner locally.

Another pal, James Owen, though he drove superbly, sadly slipped down the league table for the FIA Lurani Series and got pipped for the win by Andrew Tart, who drove really well, as usual. He campaigns his interesting "Bond", a front engine, front wheel drive unit that looks fantastic. He had the advantage of being in an unusual sub-class and he took the required number of points to do the job - congratulations to him. Thanks must go to to Duncan and Sarah for organising another successful season of racing.

I've decided to bite the bullet and have ordered a brand new box that has complete Hewland internals, along with ratio selection capability and it is "dogged" instead of the usual Renault synchros which are often a source of the problems we have. All of this keeps it "legal" as it is still encased inside the original Renault housing - lots of custom machining a fettling required though, so its not cheap - but neither is travelling a long way from home and not being able to race! On the strength of this, I've left the car in England for next year and will run it with the new bits - here's hoping. And, Oh yes, the sun was also out in Portimao so Marie was again too busy to make it to the races. It's a nice part of the world on the Algarve coast.

Planning has commenced for the upcoming Formula Junior WORLDWIDE ANNIVERSARY SERIES, that will include RSA, the USA, Europe along with Australia and New Zealand and Scandinavia too. It will include the Goodwood Revival, possibly over two seasons and Monaco is also muted for a race! These are rare and, admittedly, hard to achieve entries for, but possibilities with a suitable car, of course. What a fantastic concept - being able to race against similar cars, with packed grids and see that much, or even some parts, of the world. If that's not a Bucket list item, then I don't know what is! Can any other class of racing in Australia even come close? FJ in Australia, indeed, around the globe is flourishing thanks to the enthusiasm of guys like Roger Ealand and Duncan and will only grow even stronger in the next few years. Think about it, it is do-able if you plan ahead! I would be happy to provide what information is available to anyone considering the programme.

See you at Sandown, or Eastern Creek in the coming weeks, meanwhile,

Cheers, Kim Shearn

WARM in Europe 2013 (Part 2)

Middle June had the whole team heading over to Northern Ireland to compete at Kirkistown, just outside Belfast. This meeting hadn't been on our original schedule but we came across Paul McMorran at the 2013 Denny Hulme Festival in NZ where he was competing in his Crossle Historic Formula Ford with other Europeans over for the Festival. Paul is the present owner of the Crossle factory just outside Belfast and he didn't have much trouble persuading us to add the venue to our itinerary. This year the circuit was celebrating the 60th anniversary of its founding and the local club was keen to turn on an extra special event. With this in mind we were the special guests of the Ministers of Sport and Tourism at a cocktail party at Stormont, the Northern Ireland parliament buildings, prior to the weekend event. A tour of the buildings had us sitting in the seats of Gerry Adams and the Rev Paisley etc trading abuse in the usual parliamentary style. A memorable evening indeed including some fast passes in front of the parliament buildings by Paul in his F2 Crossle, all captured live on the local BBC channel. I can't imagine this ever happening in Australia somehow. Paul also took us on a tour of the Crossle factory, which was the proverbial step back in time to the sixties. The factory is still in its original buildings, a warren of corridors, stairs, and workshops on various levels that leave you lost amidst the spares for all the cars they built over the years. They claim to be able to provide spares for all their models from stock. They're also continuing to build run-on versions of the beautiful Crossle 9S Sports Race Car that can be raced in Historic events.

The Kirkistown circuit itself is small (similar size to Wakefield or Lakeside) but in a beautiful setting and has an interesting layout for good racing. We were allowed to 'camp' our motorhomes in the paddock prior to the event with free power and hot showers provided. The track was also freely available for practice in the days leading up to the weekend event so unlike at other circuits with limited practice, here we felt truly competitive by the time the racing started. Marty Bullock (Chevron B17C) won all his races whilst Neil McCrudden (Macon) shared the twincam honours with Lance Carwardine (Jane Brabham) while I managed to claim the Formula Junior/F3 class.

I left my Lola FJ at the circuit after the event and with wife, Bev, did some touring south of the border in the Republic. Many of us who visit the UK sadly leave out Ireland which is a shame because the people are incredibly friendly, the country full of interest and the Guinness spectacular. And a 'must visit' is the 5000 year old site of Newgrange which has got to be one of the most intriguing ancient sites anywhere.

The next meeting after Ireland was Brands Hatch on the full circuit. A local F3 team kindly made available their race-track simulator prior to the meeting so we arrived at Brands with some knowledge of the layout. Brands winds its way through forested countryside with lots of up and down that keeps you interested. I found it easier to learn than the other circuits we visited and was probably my favourite UK venue. This was by far our busiest period as the week following Brands we were at Spa and the weekend after at Silverstone for 'The Classic'.

Spa-Francorchamps was without doubt the most spectacular circuit we visited. I've always thought of Belgium being flat and boring but it has some serious mountains on its eastern border. The sign posting to the circuit is seriously deficient and with our GPS messing us about we spent several hours 'exploring' these mountains before finding our way in. Not easy on the narrow steep roads in a motorhome with trailer!!!! We got to know Spa town really well as no matter what road we took to Francorchamps we ended up back in the Spa main street where a festival had the traffic at a standstill. However it was worth the agro as this is some circuit. We were at the event as guests of the Dutch Formula Monoposto Association which organises events for open wheeler racecars all over Europe. Helena, the association 'boss', easily handled the many questions we ignorant Aussies fired at her by email prior to the event and greeted us warmly on arrival at the circuit and we quickly felt one of the family. There were participants from quite a few countries and with most competitors staying overnight at the track and despite the language difficulties it was a most convivial meeting. The bar-b-q on the Saturday night was a hoot – I don't think I've seen so much meat at one time and there was an endless supply of free Dutch beer. There were over 50 entries in our race group in cars varying from historic F2/3 to Formula Vee but the 7-kilometre track didn't feel 'congested' and was terrific fun to drive. It was without doubt the most interesting and challenging track on our itinerary. And yes I did have a go at Eau Rouge flat chat in my FJ but only once!!!

The Silverstone Classic followed and what a contrast to the hills of Spa. This was our second visit to Silverstone on the tour but even so I still didn't feel I knew the circuit well enough to race flat out. The featureless flat terrain makes

learning the long fast track difficult and I somehow always kept a bit in reserve. The meeting itself was however incredible. Huge displays of club cars, a serious sideshow, rock concerts at night and over 800 fascinating and valuable racecars entered meant there was always something of interest to view or do. This was also a championship round of the UK Formula Junior series so over 50 FJ cars lined up on the grid for the races. Saturday in the paddock saw a reunion of a number of original FJ drivers with their cars. 'Mister Formula Junior', Duncan Rabagliati, and daughter Sarah had managed to locate some of the 'originals' to be the clubs guests for the day. I felt really honoured to have the 1963 owner/driver of my Lola FJ, Bryan Berron-Johnson, reunite with the car. I'd been trying to find him for many years so it was great to see Bryan, now in his eighties, so chuffed to see his car again.

Developments back home meant bringing my tour to an early close after Silverstone. I had hoped to continue on the Croft, Oulton Park, and Zandvoort with some of the other team members before coming home but that will have to wait till next time. The European Tour has been a most amazing and memorable experience. The camaraderie, support, and fun we had as a team was exceptional and I can only thank Neil McCrudden, Marty Bullock and the rest of the WARM team for making it possible.

Peter Boel

Peter Boel's Race Report Wakefield Park 27 & 28 September 2013 Round 6

A fabulous 20 FJ/F3 cars presented for the meeting, the result no doubt of some gentle arm-twisting by President Roger Ealand. Having 'bought' our own race slot at the meeting it was no doubt a big relief to Secretary/Treasurer David Reid to be so well supported and not have to put his hand in pocket to make up any shortfall.

In previous visits to Wakefield Park I've had tarmac melting heat, been up to my ankles in water in the paddock sheds from heavy rain, and had a foot of hail in the tent from thunderstorms. This time it was knock you over winds and bitter cold. Do they ever have good weather there? The Ealands, Bill Hemming, David Reid and self were staying for the meeting at the track in 'Camp Ealand'. Some better prepared were warm as toast on their electric blankets at night but even with every item of bedding I had, I was still freezing in my trailer. And I'm sure I could hear David's teeth chattering in the tent next door. However Margaret kept us well fed and watered (thanks Margaret) and not unexpectedly in such company, the BS and banter flowed freely and spirits were high.

The race group had some new faces/combinations (well to me anyhow). Ex V8 Supercar driver Melinda Price in borrowed from Kim Shearn Lotus 20/22 added some glamour to the group in her first FJ appearance (hopefully more to come) but this was undone by Peter Barclay replacing Victoria leGallais (studying for exams) in her Brabham BT15. Peter had some mechanical problems with the car but managed to keep it going to the end. Andrew Fellowes brought out his recently restored gorgeous Lotus 27, Grant Craft brought the Brabham BT2 recently purchased from now retired FJ stalwart Graham Brown and Rob Tweedie appeared in the ex Roger Ealand Gemini MK 2. With my Lola was still on the high seas returning from the UK, Roger very generously loaned me the Rennmax from his extensive FJ fleet.

Melinda comfortably won the first race but male pride was restored in subsequent races with Peter Strauss, Tony Simmons, and Grant Craft contesting the lead positions with her in some fiercely contested racing. Good contests were taking place all down the field in some exciting FJ racing. The 10 lap feature race was hotly contested at the front until some decided to go farming leaving Roger and myself to pick up the minor placings behind a distant Tony Simmons. Full results on Natsoft.

A goodly crowd gathered for the annual AFJA dinner held on Saturday night in Goulburn 'Old Soldiers Club' in a room unfortunately, sans bar. By the time I'd walked back to the dining room from the bar downstairs my beer was already empty. Victoria leGallais joined us for the evening to receive the Nereo Dizane Memorial Trophy" for winning the Formula 3 class last year.

Another great FJ meeting enjoyed I think by all and the concept of buying our own race a proven success. Hopefully it will be repeated in future.

LATEST FJ RACING CALENDAR FOR 2014

AFJA CHAMPIONSHIP 2014

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| #1 MAR 07- 09 Phillip Island | Vic |
| #2 APR 18 - 20 Mallala | SA |
| #3 MAY 03 - 04 Eastern Creek | NSW |
| #4 MAY 31 - JUNE 01 Lakeside | Qld |
| #5 JUL 12 - 13 Morgan Park | Qld |
| #6 AUG 08 - 09 Winton Long Track | Vic |
| #7 SEP 27- 28 Wakefield Park | NSW |
| #8 OCT 31 - 01 Barbagello | WA |

IF we can get FJ only races, each such race will carry double points, regardless of which of the above rounds, and we are endeavouring to negotiate Feature Events at the FJ friendly tracks of Lakeside, Morgan Park and Wakefield Park.

The following pages 11 – 16 cover the COTA Races for Formula junior in Austin, Texas. -

Very well written by Art Herbert of California, it depicts what FJ Racing and camaraderie is all about. Big report but well worth reading.

Ed

Formula Junior – The 2013 National Championships @ COTA
January 10, 2014 by [SVRA](#)

Story by Art Hebert & Friends – Photos by George McClure



I think I heard about the SVRA National Championship sometime around the early part of 2013. Friend and fellow Formula Jr. racer Dan Chapman (Cooper T-56) called to say there was going to be a vintage National Championship race at the new Circuit of the Americas Formula One track the following fall. He said if we came, he and wife Brenda would put us up at their place in New Braunfels, Texas. He also threw down a challenge that he didn't think the west coast Juniors could beat the fast east coast, or quick central U.S. Juniors. Finally, he guaranteed lots of margaritas, parties, and good fun for those who dared come. It was too delicious an offer, and challenge, to turn down. So, father-in-law Don Sandy, brother-in-law Jim Sirois and I decided we would figure out a way and go.

As the race date neared, Karol Andrews kept us, and many other FJ, drivers informed and organized about what we were supposed to do, and where to go. God bless her. She made it very easy. Without someone leading us by the nose, we usually cannot get out the door, let alone all the way to Texas with the proper registration in place. Larry Reyburn's reminder e-mails were also a great help in helping us anticipate what we would find when we got to COTA, and what to bring for the trip. The Formula Junior tent that he organized turned out to be just great. We had enough room, yet were close enough to all feel like a tight knit group, sharing tools, chairs, food, drink, and a great camaraderie.

Well, Jim and I pulled out from my house just north of San Francisco at midnight, on October 20th to head to Austin. We had my wife's 2004 Ford Expedition and our 1963 Lola Mk.5A in tow on our open trailer. As soon as we pulled away from the house "poof!" all the lights went out on the trailer. For the next hour and a half we kept looking for shorts with a flashlight, and stealing other fuses out of the Expedition's fuse box to keep the trailer lights on. Finally, on the side of the road somewhere in Berkeley, we found a burnt wire, taped it up, and we were on our way. The only problem was that we had robbed so many fuses out of the fuse box that we no longer had a radio, heater, air conditioner, gauge lights, power windows, interior lights, door locks, windshield wipers, etc. However, what we did have was a running truck and a trailer with most, not all, lights working. Good enough. On we went.

We drove straight through to Texas in 36 hours, stopping only for fuel, and to visit son Matt, who was starting his freshman year at the University of Arizona in Tucson. As we crested a rolling hill in Austin, the Circuit of the Americas came into view. It was huge, sprawling, and magnificent. We could not believe we were really going to get to race there. Wow.

We were among the first Juniors to arrive that Tuesday afternoon. Fellow Californians Karol Andrews and Jimmy Domingos were already there with their very fast 1962 Cooper T-59. Texan Jim Yule was also there with his Cooper T-56. We were slotted in between Jim Sharp, driving his father's original Cooper T-56 (how cool is that?!), and Dan Chapman's Cooper. John Breidenbach and his Lotus 18 were next to Dan.

Receiving my vote for the craziest, most adventurous, guy under the FJ circus tent was Roger Ealand. Roger, along with his charming wife Margaret, came all the way from Australia to race a Lotus 18. The crazy part was that Roger had just purchased the car, sight unseen, straight off eBay!

Next to Roger was Nick Grewal and his gleaming Lotus 27. Nick also brought a Lotus 18 for FJHRA leader, Duncan Rabagliati to drive. That is one of the things I most admire about our group; the people. Nick's generosity made it possible for yet another person to take part in this very special event. I would later learn that Jim Yule also brought a second car, a front engine Elva 100, for Bill Haga to drive. Great cars, even greater people.

I must say that Duncan Rabagliati is one of the bravest driver's I know. More than once I have seen him at a Formula Junior event behind the wheel of an unknown car. He straps his helmet on, grits his teeth, and heads off into the wild unknown, hoping most of the nuts are tight, and the wheels are pointed in a remotely correct direction. Mair, Duncan's wife, was there too, not only supporting Duncan's run at the National Championships, but also rallying the troops for photo ops, and spreading good cheer to all throughout the week. Cheers to you, Mair!

After unloading and greeting friends, we headed to Dan and Brenda Chapman's. They were already putting up Jim Sharp, and the Chapmans were soon putting up with me and brother-in-law Jim. As promised, storytelling and laughter flowed as freely as did the libations. Ask Dan sometime about being a Golden Gloves boxer at Madison Square Garden in New York, or "The Gates of Heaven" story. Or ask Brenda about "The Greatest Story Ever!" I knew we were in Texas for sure when Jim Sharp grilled up some nearly two inch steaks on the outdoor grill. Wow! The Honorable Judge Brenda Chapman was presiding at this party and all were ordered to have a great time!

Wednesday arrived and we rolled our Juniors onto the course. COTA has so many turns I could not remember which one I was in and what was coming next. With Ford GT 40's and production cars running by my side, I felt pretty small out there but I slowly started to find a way around the track. When we came in, we were all wide-eyed about how cool it all was, and how clueless we all were. There was much to be learned.

"Professor" Jimmy Domingos, and a few others, had signed up for a short drivers school to learn the course. I call Jimmy "The Professor" because he is a real student of race car driving. If you want to know how to get around a track, ask, or follow if you can, Jimmy. He taught me more about driving Laguna Seca in 10 minutes than I could have learned in 10 years. When I heard Jimmy was "going to school" I knew anyone who wanted to win overall was in trouble. However, I also knew we had a great teammate in our west coast vs. the rest of the country FJ battle. Sure enough, pretty quickly Jimmy started turning some fast laps.

Each time we went onto the track we all got a little better. I thought I was starting to get things a bit sorted out after a few practice sessions when I saw Jimmy closing in from behind. Now all over me, and ready to pounce, I noticed Jimmy's number had changed from 59, to 4. This wasn't Jimmy at all. It was local Texan, Robert Hoemke! Holy cow! Robert had brought both his T-59 Cooper Formula Junior and his Mini Cooper to the Nationals. He had signed up for all 8 practice sessions in a single day! His sprained wrist and broken blood vessels in three fingers attested to the effort he was putting in to learn the track and run at the front. Well, he drafted me down the front straight and we went wheel to wheel into turn one. We both went too deep, but thankfully stayed on the black stuff. Robert was by and took off. He was serving notice that Texas was up for a fight, and they had some gunslingers to prove it.

Meanwhile, the battle of the drum brake group was shaping up too. Roger in his eBay Lotus 18 was going well. After each session he would pop around chatting up everyone and spreading good Aussie/English cheer. However, if you looked closely into his eyes, you also saw that unmistakable "I really like you, but I will beat you" look in his eyes. All great fun. Game on! Breidenbach continued to take seconds off his laps each time out. Dan Chapman still wasn't even at the track yet, as he had committed to attend a reception in which his daughter, Janell, was going to receive an award. Quality guy. Formula Junior guy.

Even though we were all having a great time, not everything was perfect. Bob Goeldner had already suffered a broken ring & pinion in his very quick Brabham BT-6, and was out. In addition to fighting off his bumps and bruises, Robert Hoemke also had a warped front brake rotor, which was giving him fits under braking. He would have to pump his brake pedal several times just to get something of a pedal as he approached each corner. This was not for the faint of heart, especially at COTA!

Bob Mirabile, ran into engine trouble as well with his Lotus 18. However, being Bob, and being committed to making this one of the best Formula Junior races ever held, he dug deep and brought out a second Formula Junior to make the grid. This car was a 1961 Lola Mk.3, the first Lola Mk.3 constructed, and the only one with an alloy body. Not only was this was Lola's very first mid-engined car, it also introduced the world to the new Hewland gearbox. This Mk.3 began its racing career in the capable hands of future F1 star John Surtees, and was now rolling off the truck to race some 50 years later at one of the newest F1 circuits in the world. Thank you Bob, and everyone else, for bringing out all these great historic Juniors!

We were also starting to run into problems ourselves. Several things were starting to snap on our Lola, including both rear axle donuts. The throw out bearing was also squealing badly, and about to give up. Jim Sirois and I went to work. We went to Home Depot and bought a generator because we anticipated we might have some long nights and we did. Sometime between 10 and midnight, you can discover who your friends are. Scott Drnek, of Virtuoso Performance, came by to check on us and help with pulling the transmission out. Shortly thereafter we heard another voice in the dark, Jeff Weigert from Taylor Race Engineering, the Hewland gearbox folks from Plano, north of Dallas. Jeff had heard we were having clutch problems and came by to see what parts we needed. Without those guys we

would not have been on the grid for qualifying on Friday. It just would not have happened. Sometime after midnight, we killed the generator and glow of the lights faded out. Then all we could see were the moon and stars, and all we could hear were crickets. It was serene and peaceful. Awesome.

Qualifying was great. As a group, we had moved from toddlers tip-toeing around the track to purposeful racers trying to get a good starting spot on the grid. The best part was coming down the main straight and looking up at the timing tower. There on the tower you would see your car number, and what position you were in. How cool is that? For a moment I was Mario Andretti, racing at the Indianapolis 500 with my number up on the timing tower. Awesome!

The track, it seemed, had everything. It was super smooth and wide. Lots of opportunities to pass, and very forgiving if you made a mistake. There was lots of runoff room, and extra paved areas to help you save the car if your brilliant pass move turned out to not be so brilliant after all. It had up hills, down hills, on camber and off camber turns. There were fast sweepers and super tight slow corners. There were esses and long straights. It felt like you could drive there for many years and always find something new to challenge you.

After the Friday track session the drivers and spouses + crew and friends all gathered in the Formula Junior tent and the partying began in earnest. Organized by the FJ spouses, there was a big spread of delicious food, wine, deserts, etc., brought for everyone to share with still more provided compliments of FJHNA. Familiar faces could be seen including both of the Lady Formula Junior drivers– Sharon Adelman (Brabham BT6) & Karen Barry ('60 BMC-Huffaker). Also Bruce Revennaugh, Joseph DeLucia, & Phil Lamont (Lotus 18s), Jim Brown (Lotus 20), Jeffrey Carr (Cooper T52), Charles Bamford (Cooper T56), Tom O'Grady (Cooper T59), Tom Atlas ('62 Huffaker), and John Hertsgaard ('59 FJ Special), all were among many other FJ drivers and enthusiasts enjoying the festivities.

Our qualifying times set the grid for Saturday's race. Dan Chapman arrived just in time for the Saturday race. His first time on the new COTA track would be in the qualifying race. Pretty heady stuff. But, if you know hang-gliding/parachute jumping, and ultra-light pilot Dan Chapman, he relishes high risk adventure and was looking forward to it.

The Saturday race launched with the drop of the green flag. The full grid of Formula Juniors charged down the front straight. Some of the drum brake cars starting further back got spectacular starts, fanning out in wall-to-wall drama as they passed the starter. Fortunately for me, I got a good start and was able to hold the point up the hill and into turn one. Jimmy and Robert were all over the back of me, however, and right behind them all I could see was a sea of colors and tire smoke as the rest of the group bore down on us.

Lap after lap we continued to charge into the unknown, trying to figure out where best to brake, what gear to choose, and where best to attempt a pass. When the checkered flag came out, Robert, Jimmy, and I held onto the top three spots. Ed Moore finished fourth in his beautifully turned out, ex-European historic Formula Junior championship winning, Cooper T-59. Ed only recently got the car, and he has it going like a rocket! First in the drum brake class was Roger the crazy Aussie, followed by Jim Sharp in his Cooper T56. Dan Chapman? Well he got a top 10 finish in his very first time on the course. Amazing!

At the end of the race we all received timing and scoring sheets that broke down each lap for each driver. We also had an app. for our phones that allowed us to watch, real time, who was turning which times, and what position they were in. Cool stuff! We were really at a big time track getting to use the latest in technology. I also happened to notice that although he had not crossed the finish line first, Jimmy Domingos, The Professor, had set the fastest lap. He now had the first official Formula Junior track record at the Circuit of the Americas! I was also beginning to think that maybe, just maybe, Jimmy didn't want to run at the front in the first race, saving something for the race on Sunday. Hmmm... Professors are smart like that, you know.

After the checkered flag, the top three cars in the disc brake and drum brake divisions were brought into tech to be weighed. All cars passing, we were taken to the Media Center and had a podium ceremony. I couldn't believe it. Hats, trophies, medals, press, photographers (flashbulbs and everythin'!), friends and family, etc. It was amazing! Smiles all around.

Meanwhile, back at the Formula Junior tent, all of the FJs were lined up so that photographer George McClure could memorialize this historic moment by taking some professional photos of the cars and people who were all part of this great happening. Soon a rather large group of fans began to amass around the cars, taking photos, and talking to the drivers and crews. Many, if not all of us, had the fans and their kids in and around the cars for photos. It was like Woodstock for Formula Juniors.





After the race, Jim Sirois and I became concerned about fuel. The Lola had a small fuel cell. Based upon our calculations, we might not make it to the end of the 30 minute main event race, plus two pace laps, on Sunday. Apparently this is how they race in the U.K. and Europe, but we were not ready for that type of distance.

It just so happened that right about this time the Formula B main event race ended, and we ran into our friend and Formula B driver John Delane. John has raced his ex-Jackie Stewart Tyrrell F1 car to multiple vintage World Championships. He is lightning fast in everything, including his Brabham BT-18 Formula B. When we saw John, a light bulb went off. John is fast, and must use a lot of fuel when he races. He also races a Formula B, which must consume more fuel than a Junior. He also just finished the same main event race that we will have to race tomorrow. His BT-18 Brabham is about the same size as our Lola. Could it be that we might “borrow” John’s cell and fit it to the Lola for the race on Sunday? John’s response? “Absolutely!”

So, Saturday night we were in Scott Drnek’s garage on pit lane (yes, the same one that in three weeks would be occupied by Fernando Alonso, Felipe Massa, and the Ferrari F1 team – so cool!), pulling the cell out of John’s car and fabricating it into our car. Kevin Molineaux and Ken Adolf of Virtuoso Performance stayed late to help with the install. The cell was a little too big when filled, so I kind of had to sit on top of it and roll around, but it was close enough. We got it done.

The next day, Scott towed the Lola to the grid with his golf cart so we did not burn even an ounce of extra fuel. We started the car with only 2 minutes to go, and then I drove the pace laps in high gears to save as much fuel as possible. I knew when the green flag flew there would be no saving fuel. Jimmy and Robert were ready to pounce. Ed would be right there too. It was going to be Coopers feasting on a Lola. It would have to be foot to the floor.

It had rained earlier that morning and we were under grey skies. The groove was dry but off line it looked dark, damp, and foreboding making an off line pass a very exciting proposition. When the green flag flew, I got another good start. I was leading into turn 1. However, The “Professor” was about to teach me yet another lesson. He braked early, let me go late and deep, and crossed under me coming out of turn 1 and took the lead. Argh! Robert got in the mix too, with Ed looking for a mistake to get by both of us. Somehow we all made it through. Now it was time for us to try and catch Jimmy.

I chased Jimmy through turns 2, 3, 4, and 5. By turn 6, I was in position to make a move. We went side by side through 7, then 8, and then 9. We gave each other just enough room, but not a centimeter more. Going side-by-side left the door open for Robert, who was lurking behind trying to figure out which one of us to follow through. He should have picked Jimmy. Jimmy shot ahead coming out of turn 9. I couldn’t keep up, and Robert was stuck behind me, the slower guy. If I was not in his way, Robert could have gone after Jimmy.

By mid lap, Jimmy had pulled out a good 10 car lead. But by the second half of the lap, the Lola’s tires were starting to heat up, and I was getting good grip. Jimmy, was probably driving better, but I think the Lola started working better. I had stemmed the bleeding. Jimmy was ahead, but not pulling away any more. Robert, however, was all over my mirrors. When he wasn’t in my mirrors, I could see him on the big “JumboTron” screens located around the course. Yes, they were filming our race! How cool is that?! The only problem

for me was Robert was now haunting me from behind in my mirrors, AND in front of me on the giant screens! It was the “All Robert Hoemke Show,” all the time from my seat. I seriously wanted to switch channels.

Meanwhile Robert and I started to track Jimmy down. Jimmy had his Cooper slipping and sliding. He was drifting and dancing that car side to side across the wide track. I would close in, he would pull away. I would get side by side, but he would find a way to come out ahead. It was thrust and parry, and parry and thrust. It was wheel to wheel. Sometimes I would be so close I could hear his engine screaming louder than my own. Finally I got a good tow from him down the long back straight. It was shaping up to be a game of high stakes chicken at turn 12 to see who would brake first. However, I had learned my earlier lesson from The Professor. I was not going to brake at the last instant, go too deep, and have Jimmy slip under and ahead of me again. We braked together, wheels locking, tires sliding, eyeballs bulging, hearts stopping. We slid into turn 12. This time I squeaked ahead, and held the point. Now it was Jimmy’s turn to watch me. We were both throwing down everything we had. Engines screaming, wheels sliding, game on!

Bit by bit I was able to pull out something of a lead. As the race continued we encountered traffic. It seemed nearly everyone else was having their own epic battles too! It was the same thing. Cars sliding. Thrust and parry, and parry and thrust. Front engine, rear engine, disc brake, drum brake, it didn’t matter. Everyone was going for it, and the wide smooth track invited it. At one point I remember coming across Dan Chapman and Jim Yule in the Battle of ’56 (T-56 Coopers that is). Dan was leading, but it was difficult to call it leading when Yule was pointed forward, but Chapman was completely sideways more of the time than not. The only I knew for sure is that both had Texas-wide grins on their faces as the battle raged on.

Unfortunately, all good things have to come to an end. While I was eagerly looking for the checkered flag on one hand (and sweating about the fuel level), on the other hand the whole week had been so magic, I didn’t want it to end. Racing down the main straight with the huge grandstands on one side, the F1 pits on the other side, and the big screens showing cars battling all over the circuit on the final lap, I saw the checkered flag. I drove to the left, under the flag, just like the F1 guys on TV. I waved to Jim Sirois and Don Sandy, my guys, my F1 team, standing at the pit wall, and threw my hands in the air. It was Unbelievable.

The cool off lap was amazing too. The corner workers waved their flags at us, just like In F1. The fans in the stands were waving too, for all of us. Unfortunately, in turn 12, I saw Jimmy’s car, parked to the side, out of fuel. His was not the only one. He had pushed the Cooper for all it was worth, and it had run dry just a few corners from the finish. He did, however, set the first Formula Junior track record, and served notice that any future National Championship winner will have to go through him to get it. Good luck!

We had a second podium ceremony. Fast Robert Hoemke was right there again, and his lovely wife Holly who helped all of us stay cool and hydrated during the week, was there taking photos and congratulating everyone. Robert told me after the race that he had to coast into the post-race tech inspection, as he too was completely out of fuel. Ed Moore joined the podium this time, taking up the third position with his Cooper T-59. Nick Grewal came fourth in his immaculate Lotus 27, and picked up the Vintage Motorsport magazine “Best in Show” award for the whole of the National Championships!

The drum brake group celebrated too. Roger won the class, followed by none other than fiercely determined, and constantly sideways Dan Chapman, and a brave Jim Yule, who actually turned a quicker lap than Chapman in their dogfight.

The front engine cars also put on a great show of original Formula Junior designs. Bill Gelles in his 1959 Stanguellini was first in class, followed by Bill Haga’s Elva 100. Hugh Ruthven II came next with Karen Barry close behind in her American made 1960 BMC-Huffaker Junior.

Mixed in between the rear and front engine group was Doug Elcomb in his Dreossi Special. This car certainly wins the most unique FJ design award for the event. If you have not yet seen this car, you must. It was designed by Cecil Simmons and built by Ray Dreossi in Canada in the early 1960s. The basis of the car is an F-86 Sabre Jet drop tank. Really! You have to see it to believe it. As such it must be one of the first “monocoque” designs in formula car racing, and certainly pre-dates Colin Chapman’s Lotus 27 for 1963. Hats off to Doug who did a fabulous job driving the car, and entertaining all of us.

After another great round of partying and storytelling, we packed our rigs and said our goodbyes. As we, quite literally, drove into the sunset we were already talking about next year.

For those who missed the trip, I cannot encourage you enough to come to Austin next fall. The track is fabulous. It is super safe, and very car friendly if you make a mistake. You will have the chance to meet Formula Junior folks from across the country, and around the world. You will leave with a lot of new friends, and a huge smile on your face. The photos of you racing on this world-class Formula One circuit alone are priceless. I think you will also find the people at COTA to be among the nicest, most accommodating, and helpful you will find at any track anywhere. The SVRA folks are not only organized and efficient; they are also a whole lot of fun. I think they were as excited as we were just to be there, and to be a part of this great happening. Even off the track there was plenty of entertainment and great food to enjoy after a day at the track.

So, mark it on your calendar. Apply now. Don’t miss this one.

Art Hebert

| NAME | STATE | Phillip Island Mallala | | | | | | | TOTAL |
|------------------|-------|------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| | | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 | R7 | |
| EALAND, Roger | NSW | 30 | 0 | 18 | 31 | 21 | 19 | 40 | 159 |
| HEMMING, Bill | VIC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 26 | 40 | 25 | 125 |
| REID, David | QLD | 38 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 4 | 21 | 82 |
| CRAFT, Grant | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 26 | 40 | 77 |
| SHEARN, Kim | VIC | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 27 | 71 |
| SIMMONS, Tony | NSW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 28 | 7 | 65 |
| BRYEN, Noel | NSW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 8 | 14 | 62 |
| GOSBELL, Mike | NSW | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 32 | 16 | 62 |
| BRYDEN, Murray | VIC | 0 | 0 | 18 | 23 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 55 |
| BUCKLEY, Robert | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 52 |
| MEDLEY John | NSW | 0 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 45 |
| PEGRAM, Max | ??? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 40 |
| BROWN, Graham | QLD | 20 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| LANE, Max | NSW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 28 |
| PRICE, Melinda | VIC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 22 |
| HOCKING, Wayne | SA | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| FELLOWES, Andrew | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 19 |
| TWEEDIE, Robert | NSW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| HENDERSON, Ian | VIC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 13 | 17 |
| STRAUSS, Peter | VIC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| MOODY, Stephen | VIC | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| TELFER, Alan | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| BOEL, Peter | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| KENT, David | NSW | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| GOODFELLOW, Mike | QLD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| BARCLAY, Peter | ACT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 40 |

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STOP PRESS

From Roger

Bill Norman (the saviour). Impossible to have those words in the same sentence! Here is why it makes sense!

Bill Norman, the well known racing personality, son of Eldred Norman, Australian GP driver and designer of the ground breaking Zephyr Special, is joining us as a Formula Junior owner and driver!

Bill has bought a complete wreck of a project. This is the last Lynx FJ made in 62/3.

He is a saviour because there are unfortunately more Lynx, FJs, racing in the UK now - 6 I believe!!! This will be the only Lynx FJ in regular competition in Australia. Bill is a man of action, and will embarrass us all how quickly he will attack the project, (and how quickly he will drive too). Expect to see this iconic Australian FJ in a matter of months!



This is Bill collecting his “new” Formula Junior Lynx