

# the OILY RAG

## September - October 2007

### The Newsletter of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary



World's Fastest Caucasians? Ed Winters and Jeff Derkuch with Triumphs at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats.  
See story inside.

For those who don't get Wayne's punning caption it's a play on the movie "The World's Fastest Indian" which was popular a couple of years ago. Maybe you don't live under a rock like your editor!

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## We're Off to See the (Triumph) Wizard

Among Triumph sports car aficionados in North America, Kas Kastner is something of a legend, long recognized as the guru of Triumph performance.

Kas managed Triumph's U.S. competition department in the 1960's, which was arguably the high water mark for production sports car racing in North America. And he did it well, carrying the Triumph torch and leading the charge. Triumph was a force to be reckoned with in Sports Car Club of America (including affiliated organizations in Canada) sanctioned events. These robust sports cars were serious contenders and frequent winners in classes such as D, E and F Production, despite formidable competition from the likes of MG, Austin-Healey, Morgan and Porsche, to name but a few. In short, Kas was Triumph's performance improvement wizard.

I recall attending my first race in 1967 at the Westwood racetrack in the greater Vancouver area. Although just a youngster, I vividly remember watching the TR3s and TR4s slide through the Carousel and Clubhouse turns, their distinctive exhaust rasp echoing through and against the surrounding trees and mountains. At that time I formed a strong attraction to the Michelotti-styled TR4, which has never abated, and in large measure I have Kas to thank for it.

Living in the San Diego area of California, over four decades later Kas still provides advice and support to Triumph sports car enthusiasts seeking additional performance.

This past Spring, I was talking to friend and fellow club member Ed Winters, and he mentioned that, along with his daughter Suzanne Winters, he was planning to drive his Triumph to Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah, near Salt Lake City, during the July 1st long weekend. Apparently, there would be a full vintage racing program including a race devoted entirely to vintage Triumph racecars. It was called the Kastner Cup and the trophy would be presented by none other than Kas himself. My ears perked up.

Rather than wait for an invite, I suggested to Ed that it might be good to have a modern car, like a BMW for instance, along on the trip just in case. Club member Jeff Derkuch was also interested in making the trip. I had briefly considered driving my recently restored TR4-A, but decided it was a little too ambitious a trip for a car whose teething bugs weren't fully sorted.

We left for Salt Lake City on Friday, June 29. My son, Wes, accompanied me in our BMW 330 cabriolet. Travelling with us were Ed and Suzanne in Ed's TR4 and Jeff in his TR6. Tooele is about fourteen hours driving time from Calgary, so the first day we drove as far as Helena, Montana. Helena is the capital of Montana and the downtown area is quaint and pleasing to the eye. After a few cold beers to wash down the trail dust and a heaping helping of barbecued ribs at the Montana City Bar and Grill, we slept well.



Presentation of Kastner Cup to Chuck Gee

When we arrived at our hotel in Tooele the next afternoon, we had the pleasure of meeting Kas and his wife, Peggy. Suzanne had lived in San Diego for a number of years and got to know Kas and Peggy while she was there. For Suzanne it was a chance to renew old friendships, while for the rest of us it was an opportunity to meet the wizard in person. Moreover, Suzanne is the webmaster for Kas' site, which can be found at "kaskastner.com". If you're interested, go to the website and click on "Gallery" and then on "5th Annual Kastner Cup photo gallery". There you'll find photos of the July 1st weekend including shots of the "Canadian Triumph enthusiasts", as we came to be known. Thanks to Suzanne for taking those terrific photos and for sharing them

on Kas' website.

We spent Saturday morning at Miller Motorsports Park watching some excellent vintage racing and touring the facilities. While I'm no expert on racetracks, I've seen a few and the Miller facility rates right up there with the best of them. The paddock garages are numerous, well equipped and certainly the finest I've ever seen. Staff were friendly and well informed. At noon we were able to take our BMW onto the track for some "touring" laps around the 3.04 mile perimeter road course. We pretty much had the track to ourselves except for the Mustang GT Pace Car, which did a reasonable job of staying out of our way.

After lunch we watched the Kastner Cup Triumph race. The Kastner Cup was won by Chuck Gee in a well-prepared and very quick Triumph Spitfire.

Mid-Saturday afternoon we said our goodbyes to the Triumph racing contingent and drove one hour west of Tooele to check out the Bonneville Salt Flats. Aside from a couple of road signs and a historic marker to identify the specific location, there wasn't much there but salt. Moist, white salt. Speedweek at the Bonneville speedway occurs in late summer for a reason; it's hoped by then the salt will be more or less dry. But the damp salt didn't stop Jeff from motoring onto the salt bed and spinning a few high speed doughnuts in his TR6. When he was done, the salt was caked up in his Triumph's wheelwells looking somewhat like the slush you might find in your vehicle's wheelwells following a late March snowstorm in Calgary. Thankfully Jeff was able to wash out the salt at a nearby gas station before its corrosive properties could cause any damage.

While we were at Bonneville, I was reminded of an article in an old edition of Road & Track magazine (December 1966) that had chronicled a trip by Kas Kastner to Bonneville that year. He put a near-stock TR4-A on the Salt Flats and registered a fastest timed run of 128.2 mph, setting a class record in the process. Not bad for a TR4-A, especially at the "horsepower robbing" elevation of the Salt Flats.

Possibly inspired by the weekend's events, including the Kastner Cup racing festivities, Ed and Jeff ran their Triumph's up to 100 mph on the drive back from Bonneville to Tooele. Impressive. Wes also joined the "Century Club" driving the BMW, which was necessary in order to keep up with the high-spirited Triumphs.

On Sunday we departed Tooele for the two-day return trip to Calgary. My memory has been etched with a long weekend of good times with friends, both old and new, and some excellent vintage racing at a world class racing venue. Perhaps most of all, it was an opportunity to meet the wizard. And that's definitely something that doesn't happen every day.

August, 2007  
Wayne Shalagan

Kas Kastner 'signs' Ed Winters' TR4.



Left to right, Ed Winters, Wes Shalagan, Kas and Peggy Kastner

