

# STRAIGHT SIX

Official Newsletter of the Jaguar Society of South  
Carolina

An Affiliate of Jaguar Clubs of North America

Volume 2, 5

Oct/Nov 2002

Read about the last Cannonball Run and the car that  
won !!

Vote for upcoming Club events!!



Jaguar Society's Annual General Meeting to be held in December in  
Columbia  
Help us plan!

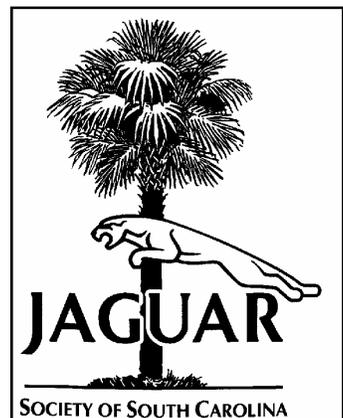
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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Car Stories!!
- JSSC Merchandise
- New Classifieds
- Pictures! Pictures!

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IN  
THE  
STRAIGHT SIX  
DETAILS INSIDE!



**Editor's Notes**

OK, so this issue is a little late. I try to get the newsletters out on the first week of the month every other month (in case you were trying to figure out the regularity!). I feel I have a good excuse for this issue being late. I am finally in the ranks of Jaguar owners again! I had been Jag-less for almost a year. Thanks to one of our Club members, I have ended the streak of having been the only President and Editor of the JSSC that didn't own a Jaguar. Thank goodness! And my official excuse is: I have been working on the new Jag. And you know how time flies when your working on your Jag!! It was a priority thing. Work on Jag or Do newsletter? Duh!!



Wearing my Editor Hat (pictured above), I have to remind everyone that as the weather cools and your motoring around, please take the camera and snap pictures we can use in the newsletter. A few words to go with the pictures would be nice, too!

I'm still waiting for volunteers to write an article about Jaguar racing. Remember, it's only seasonal so it would only be a couple times a year. If you'd like to write an article for a tech tip or a project you just completed we can publish that, too.

Also, check out our website. You'll find previous newsletters in color!! It don't get much better! Hope to hear from you, soon.

Kerry L. Vickers, Editor at Large

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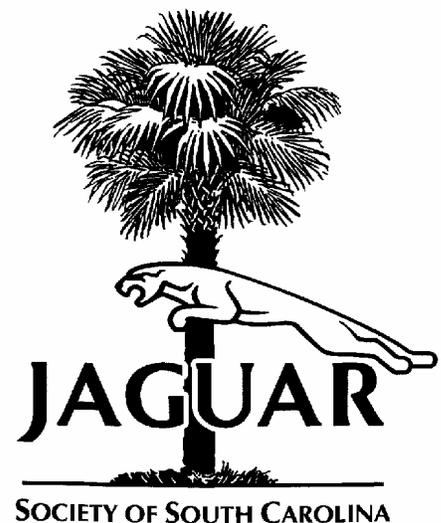
**COVER: Randy Smedley's E-Type being used as a demo for "how to maintain your Jag" at George Camp's last tech session.**

Not only do newsletters take lots of time to produce, but they cost \$\$\$ for printing and mailing. So, like the big guys, we sell advertising space.

	Prices:
Business card size Ad	\$ 5.00 per publication
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1/2 Page Ad	\$ 25.00 per publication
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	Classifieds:
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 Make checks payable to: JSSC, 3170-A Stanton Ct,  
 N. Charleston SC 29418



## And Now A Word From the Prez .....

### Club Membership Participation

#### Or Lack Thereof

Can you say, "Club participation"? I hope so. All kidding aside, your Club Board of Directors needs help in planning events for the upcoming year that will interest the members enough that they will want to participate. We all lead busy lives but since we also all own Jaguars that we love to drive, it would seem reasonable that this common bond of Jaguar interest would get the membership together. This hasn't been the case.

Understanding that South Carolina is a big State, we have encouraged groups around the State to get together and do something Jag related locally instead of waiting for some big State-wide event to happen only once or twice a year. These turnouts have been very light. In 2001, a committee put together an event for every month. Membership turn out was dismal.

From this, I can only surmise that we, the Board of Directors, are planning the wrong events, or making it too difficult for the members to participate. From there, it is only a short thought from deducting that we need direct membership input to what the members would like to do.

Since we had a record number of votes for officers in our last election by including a self addressed, stamped envelop in the newsletter, we will try the same thing to gather ideas for events for the membership. It doesn't get much easier!! Please help. Fill out your enclosed form and return it today.

Thanks!

Kerry L. Vickers, President

### North Georgia Jaguar Club holds first Concours d'Elegance!!

A note from attending participant, Randy Smedley

Hi Darryl,

How did you know that I just got back from GA? I'm beat to say the least but glad to be back in FL. I drove up to ATL Fri. & met "Hanna" the tropical depression while passing thru Macon. Pretty "depressing" is all that I can say. That entire area needed the rain so badly but why...oh why did it have to be this past weekend. Woke up early for the 100 mile drive up to the Gainesville, GA area on Sunday & the rain was still coming down steady. Finally got my courage up at 9am & told myself..."look stupid...you drove 500 miles just to get to ATL & if you don't head on up for the concours you will be really sorry". Stupid is as stupid does... so off up thru the bowels of ATL highways & byways in a steady downpour. Well the weather man stated that the "heavy stuff" was all east of where the concours was to be held. Guess what? What other profession can one make a living at & yet be wrong for the majority of time?

I pulled into the parking lot of a beautiful country club right on Lake Lanier. Trouble was that there was more water coming from the sky than water in the drought ridden lake. Could things be any better?

Fortunately yes because sitting out there on the grounds were 15 very wet but beautiful Jags of various models & I was ceremoniously greeted by the president, Terry Halsey & several other members of the club to welcome my arrival. Terry asked me if I was prepared to launch my e-type( did I forget to mention that "ole purrrn" does not know in fact what rain is?) from the enclosed trailer & I tried very hard not to be the anal individual this car has made me & I explained that I would prefer to wait for the weather to improve. Terry, the very sincere purist that he is was kind enough not to make any remarks regarding this anal individual

& I thank him for that. I'm not sure I could have resisted had I been Terry. HA!

A very wonderful buffet brunch was waiting for all of us at the club & it proved to be a wonderful opportunity for

*(Continued on page 9)*



## THE CAT BOX

[ a compilation of Jaguar related ramblings ]



Here is an article about the last Cannonball Run in 1979 which is published in this months Car and Driver. In the true spirit of the Cannonball, it has been re-printed here WITHOUT permission....

### The Last Cannonball

A new book by our Mr. Yates recounts the madcap exploits of the world's funniest cross-country automobile race.

BY FRED M.H. GREGORY

Photography By VARIOUS FROM CAR AND DRIVER ARCHIVES

NOVEMBER 2002

Editor's note: This fall, Brock Yates's new book, *Cannonball! World's Greatest Outlaw Road Race*, will appear in bookstores across the country.

It's a collection of funny and bizarre real-life experiences written by Yates and the drivers who competed in the five high-speed, high-jinks cross-country races known as the Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash. Here is an account of the final race, of 1979, written by Car and Driver contributing editor Fred M.H. Gregory.



At the starting line in mid-town Manhattan, Gurney watches pre-race activities as Yates mounts up. Circa 1971

She was tall, beautiful, and more than a little drunk. Soft, round parts of her swayed back and forth under a loose white dress. She looked up with big, unfocused eyes and pleaded: "Please, take me with you . . . I wanna go." "There's no room," I told her, and then edged my way through the bodies packed at the bar. I couldn't really blame her for wanting to come along. She'd been exposed to the high-voltage madness radiating through the place.

The Lock, Stock & Barrel, a pubby sort of joint in the swank New York suburb of Darien, Connecticut, is usually frequented by tweedy sports-car enthusiasts. On this night it was packed with speed freaks who'd been getting cranked up for hours. The crowd oozed through the bar into the huge, covered bay out back where a tuxedoed five-piece band played and couples danced on an oil-soaked floor. Everywhere there was talk of cars, cops, speed . . . thrills to come.

It was nearly midnight, and most of the crowd at the Barrel had come to witness the start of the fifth and, as it would turn out, final Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash?2800 miles of madness across the country to the Portofino Inn in Redondo Beach, California. The 46 gathered teams had been taking off at 10-minute intervals since dusk. Bob Koveleski and his "Polish Racing Drivers" pulled out first in > a Camaro Z28. By tradition, they always got the pole position. Then, as each crew and car pulled up to the start, a card was punched on the bar's time clock, and the vehicle sped off into the drizzly night.

>  
 > Parties often preceded a Cannonball. Brad Niemcek gets attention at the Auto Pub in the GM Building in midtown Manhattan. Watching these killer cars roar off must have worked like an aphrodisiac on the tipsy good-looker. She was hot for 35 hours of red-eyed, raw-nerved, high-revving speed through the great flat middle of the United States. The Cannonball quickens your pulse like the prospect of sex.

I was trying to fight the adrenaline pounding through my veins: Stay calm, stay sober. So the looker took her case to my driving partner, > Peter Brennan. "Maybe we could strap her onto the hood?" he ventured. "It would screw up the aerodynamics," I replied.

### Club Nametags Available

If you would like a JSSC nametag, please contact Darryl Beech at (843) 552-6555 or [BritishMechanic@att.net](mailto:BritishMechanic@att.net) . Provide your name exactly the way you want it to appear on the badge. There is also room for a second line of about 20 characters for possibly car type, town, etc. The cost is \$7.00 and checks can be made payable to the "JSSC" and sent to:

JSSC Membership  
 3170-A Stanton Ct  
 N. Charleston, SC 29418

We will try to amass names and order tags quarterly.

To win the Cannonball, you need a car that can cruise at 110, 120, 130, all day and all night for 2800 miles. And we had the monster for the job: a 1979 Pontiac "Fire-Am" built by automotive genius Herb Adams. He had outfitted it with a 425-hp engine, a full roll cage, a 32-gallon fuel cell, and a racing suspension that kept it stuck to the ground like a barnacle. Herb had run the car in the grueling 24-hour race at

(Continued on page 6)



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*(Continued from page 4)*

Daytona, where it had hung in for 19 hours, running the high banks of the speedway at more than 150 mph. Then it broke down. But it was an impressive showing considering the car had been driven to the race from Michigan. Before giving us the car, Herb had installed a new motor, a powerful CB radio, and an Escort radar detector. And even though he removed the Daytona racing numbers, the Fire-Am still looked like a race car. Its nose nearly touched the ground, and the sound from its three-inch > straight pipes could be heard into the next dimension. It was one of the fastest street cars in the country, and a match for any car in the Cannonball.

I had picked up the car in Detroit a few days before the race, intending to work out the bugs on the 600-mile run to New York. Brennan, who was the managing editor of *Oui* magazine, for which I was writing the story of the race, was flying in from Los Angeles to meet me in New York the day before the start.

One of the gates was the Red Ball Garage in N.Y.C. Here the hot-rodded Studey of Harris/Cannata/Feiner gets under way in the '75 race. Heading east on Interstate 80 through Pennsylvania, the Fire-Am ran fast and true, gliding along at 80 and 90 like a shark through water. I ran it up to 140 a few times, and even in a light rain it hugged the road. I was cruising effortlessly through the Pocono Mountains at about 80. It was Thursday night, and there was plenty of time before the race. Suddenly, I hit a pothole. The wheel jerked in my hands, the Fire-Am's nose dipped, and the car jumped off the road. I fought to keep the car on the gravel shoulder. The horrible sounds of ripping metal were coming from the front end.

There was a truck stop just ahead, and I nursed the car there. The right front wheel had broken off and was tucked under the fender at a sickening angle. It took all the next day to get it fixed. By Saturday morning, I was on the road again. I was thinking the broken wheel was as bad as things could get . . . when the engine caught fire. Suddenly, I was seeing flames snake up the windshield from the car's shaker hood scoop. I pulled over, leapt out, and smothered the fire with my jacket. I got back in and drove off slowly. The carburetor had gone bad, and every 20 miles the car caught fire.

With the help of some hot rodders in Summit, New Jersey, the Fire-Am was fitted with a new carburetor and a couple of strong fire extinguishers. On the short ride to Manhattan, it purred like a contented tiger. Coming through the Holland Tunnel, its pipes sounded like feedback from an atomic guitar. The bugs were worked out, I thought. It's running fine, and we're going to make it. Then I made a wrong turn and wound up on the East Side of Manhattan instead of the West Side. The bombed-out streets of Fun City began to take more out of the Fire-Am than Daytona had. Navigating between potholes and pedestrians, the car overheated and quit. The engine gave off a huge cloud of steam on a particularly unappealing corner of the Lower East Side that was packed with cruising hookers. I called Brennan from a phone booth, keeping my eye on some pimps who were taking a keen interest in the Fire-Am's wheels and tires.

When Brennan arrived in a Checker cab with a cooler full of provisions, he was wearing a pair of eyes that definitely did not look normal. "Jesus," he said, "this car is an animal."

I was only hoping it would start. It did. I gave it some gas, and a sound like sheetmetal being torn in half ripped through the neighborhood. Junkies nodding in doorways must have thought the city had been hit by an earthquake. I smiled. Brennan smiled. We were on our way.

We arrived at the Barrel very late, just before midnight. We'd missed the drivers' meeting and most of the party. We got a starting time of 1:32 a.m. As we fiddled with last-minute packing and planning, the crowd continued to mill around the Fire-Am. We were the center of attention, and it felt good. It cranked up our energy and made us forget, for the moment, the car's recent temperamental treachery.

The go-for-broke girl in the white dress pushed her way through the crowd and gave it one more try. "Listen," she said, "I got a couple grams of fantastic speed." "Forget it," I said. "We got all we need."

And indeed we did. Brennan's chemical pit crew had supplied us with a combination of ingredients that would have kept an army on the move for a week. Benzedrine for driving, Quaaludes for sleeping. The drugs were mixed in bottles of natural juice and stashed in the cooler with other drinks. The only problem was how to tell all the stuff apart. "Don't worry," said Brennan. "Anything that looks too healthy has drugs in it."

At 1:32 Brennan punched our time card and made a running dash for the Fire-Am. I gunned it out of the Barrel and headed for the Connecticut Turnpike. Since the Fire-Am was as conspicuous as an anarchist at a Rotary

*(Continued on page 12)*

# TWO BECOME No 1,

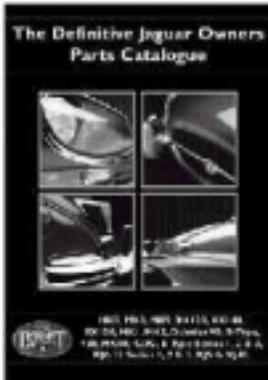
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To celebrate our change of name we are launching our brand new catalogue, which is arguably the best catalogue available from an independent Jaguar parts specialist anywhere in the world...

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**JSSC Merchandise !!!**

We can now offer club members excellent quality merchandise at unbelievable prices. All merchandise comes with the multi-colored JSSC Logo. JSSC merchandise can be purchased from Charleston Import Auto, 3170-A Stanton Ct, N Charleston SC, 29418. Telephone (843) 552-6555. Mailing charges will be added to orders requiring shipping. Please inquire about special sizes, colors, or items.

**WATCH FOR NEW ITEMS IN THE FUTURE!!**

**Golf Shirt**—100% cotton pique, 7 oz. Matching knit collar and cuffs with raised tonal welt trim, three button placket with woodtone buttons, double needle stitching, drop tail, contoured collar.  
**Colors:** Red , White. Looks sharp with JSSC Logo.  
**Sizes:** Medium

Only \$20.00 each!



**Optimum Driving Cap**—100% cotton, pigment dyed garment washed twill, double washed for softness on that sunburned head!. One size fits all.

**Colors:** Forest Green (we'd call it, Jag Green!)

Only \$8.00 each or 2 for \$15.00!

**Classic Jacket**—Dupont Supplex with nylon lining, washable, water repellent. Great for driving with the top down. A great gift idea!

**Colors:** Forest Green (hence forth known as Jag Green)

**Sizes:** M-2X

Only \$50.00 (sizes M-XL)

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**Tees**—100% combed ring-spun cotton, 6 oz pre-shrunk, rib collar, cover seaming on neck, armholes and shoulders, two needle hemmed sleeves and bottom.

**Colors:** Natural

**Sizes:** M-2X

Only \$12.00 each !!

How Dooo we do it??

*(Continued from page 16)*

**November 9th - Jaguar Society of South Carolina Breakfast Meeting, Spartanburg**

Informal meeting of Up-State JSSC members at The Beacon Restaurant on Reidville Road in Spartanburg, SC. Contact John or Shiela Dusky for info or directions at 864.949.1206 or e-mail: fhvp@jaguarsocietysc.com

**November 30th - Jaguar Society of South Carolina Lowcountry Brunch Gathering, Charleston.**

The Lowcountry members of the JSSC will be having brunch in Charleston, SC at Round Holiday Inn on Hwy 17 south in downtown Charleston. Scheduled arrival time is 10:00am. All JSSC and JCNA members are invited to attend. For more information contact the JSSC Membership Darryl Beech by e-mail at: membership@jaguarsocietysc.com, or just show up!

Know of an event?? Contact the JSSC Membership Darryl Beech by email at: membership@jaguarsocietysc.com

*(Continued from page 3)*

renewing old friendships & making new friends as well. The rain however continued to serenade the proceed

ings.

Around 1:30 pm weather appeared to be improving slightly so I took a couple of "brave pills" & proceeded to unstrap "purrrn".

It was now or never for the purpose we all were there for & after a quick meeting it was decided to "go for it"! Purrrn slid out of her cage...judging began in earnest for all of the cars and I learned that at least that e-type of mine didn't melt in the heat of battle.

The only casualty of the entire day's effort was of a member's XK type that had died on the way to the event earlier in the day.

If there was a day for Lucas to be a "player" this was the day.

A total of 15+ Jags made it...unfortunately this was about half of the number that were expected but anyone who was there could readily understand why the turnout was reduced in number. The enthusiasm however of those present fully made up for the down-out conditions.

Among the very nice cars present was the 1938 SS Salon of Mike & Diane Fulton..."Peaches" that many of you should remember from the May Charleston event earlier this year. Also Mark Lovello & his wonderful wife Barbara were there with their gorgeous Silver XJS in the driven division & won first place. The hard work, planning, and dedicated efforts of Roy Cleveland & his lovely wife Linda and the many others of this newest club joining the JCNA was truly appreciated. Their membership is growing rapidly and Terry Halsey personally expressed the club's desire to work for a combined club effort with the SCJS in the future.

As a closing aside I drove up from FL several weeks ago to attend a JCNA tech session in ATL that was graciously hosted by the Hennessy Jaguar dealership. It was conducted by George Camp, Kerry Vickers, and Dick Deibel. The tech session was on JCNA judging and without the outstanding help of these SCJS members imparting lots of need to know info, etc. this very wet and soggy concours event would not have met that challenge. Gentlemen...thank you again for your interest and personal time in helping the North GA Jaguar Club get off the ground.

RAIN GOD'S...Just wait till next year!!!

Darryl...feel free to use, edit, etc any of the enclosed info if you find it of interest. You did not miss anything over the weekend because all of the events at the races must have been under water! I'm "all wore out" with 4 concours under my belt at this time & will probably retire for the rest of the year. Purrrn scored very well...99.98 so I will take those 3 firsts & a second and head to the barn. Will probably put the car in the auction at Amelia next March.

Thanks for your help once again Darryl & all the rest

Randy

## CLASSIFIEDS

**1971 SIII E-Type V12 2+2** - Primrose with black interior. Interior like new, exterior paint in good condition with minor cracking. No rust. 48,000 original miles. Sat in dealer showroom in Salisbury NC for 10 years (documented). Renovated to road condition with new tires, hoses, radiator, thermostats, carbs overhauled, steering rack resealed, fuel tank flushed, new fuel sending unit, and all new filters. A/C system works, but has slow leak. Selection of spares come with car. \$20,000.00 . Contact Thomas or Ute Reeves 843.835.2045 or email thomasute@lowcountry.com. Cottageville SC.

**1938 Rolls Royce "WRAITH"** - Good older restoration. Everything works well except self jacking system which needs pump rebuild. Solid car good runner without excuses. Only addition is two modern (c1950) rear brake lights. Pictures available on request. Asking 50k. Contact George Camp Restorations in Columbia SC, (803) 798-6770 or email to scjag@juno.com..

**1974 E-Type Roadster**—This car is in superb condition and has had a bare metal restoration performed by XK's Unlimited in San Luis Obispo CA. Equipped with 5 speed transmission, S-type fuel injection, stainless exhaust throughout, air conditioning, original leather interior, removeable hardtop, trunk mounted CD, and all records. Red w/black interior. for more information and pictures. please visit [www.gazellefengshui.com/jaguar](http://www.gazellefengshui.com/jaguar). Contact Tracy Miller 404.320.7107, or email [tracymiller@gazellefengshui.com](mailto:tracymiller@gazellefengshui.com). Atlanta GA.

**1971 Jaguar XKE Series II Roadster**—Silver with dark blue interior. Blue Stayfast canvas top. A/C, chrome wire wheels, stainless steel exhaust. Complete driveline and cosmetic restoration 4 years ago to new standards. Contact George Camp Restorations in Columbia SC, (803) 798-6770 or email to scjag@juno.com.

**1967 Jaguar XKE Series 1 Roadster**—Carmen red, black interior and top. Complete professional restoration completed last fall. This Jaguar is ready for the JCNA concours circuit. Shown at the May 11 2002 Jaguar Society of SC JCNA Concours, recieved 1st place in the championship catagory with a score of 99.99. More pictures are available in the Event Archives. Comes with 4 extra wheels and new tires for driving. 2001 20 foot enclosed Pace trailer can be part of the package as well. \$ 88, 900.00 for the XKE. Randy Smedley, 321.952.0781 or email [hiflyte@bellsouth.net](mailto:hiflyte@bellsouth.net)

**1978 XJ6 SII**—Show winning car, hit hard in rear. Great interior, new in 1999. New windshield 2001. Undamaged, newer left fuel tank, Good trans and suspension. All front sheetmetal in good condition. Moving up to a SIII. Contact with desired parts. Darryl Beech (843) 552-6555, e-mail: [BritishMechanic@att.net](mailto:BritishMechanic@att.net).

### Parts Parts Parts

**Mk II's & XJ6 SIII**—Parts cars. Call George Camp (803) 798-6770 or email to scjag@juno.com. or see at GCR.

### Placing an Ad

- *JSSC Members*: Use our online form in the Members Only Section to place a **free** ad.
- *Non-Members*: Visit our classified ad placement page for instructions on how you can place an ad.

## How to get the most from this new-fangled internet stuff

I know that our club members range in age from those that grew up without electricity, to those that can't even imagine a time without television and telephones. The common thread technology-wise is that all of our members have witnessed the fantastic growth of personal computer use and the birth of the internet. As a club we are trying to harness these emerging technologies to provide a faster and more responsive organization for our members.

The Jaguar Society of South Carolina's website ( [www.jaguarsocietysc.com](http://www.jaguarsocietysc.com)) is fast becoming the club's primary point of contact with the outside world. The maintenance of that website requires the attention and care of people with a variety of skills and backgrounds. From the club members who send in articles and pictures, to the skilled programmers who turn scripts and code into what you see on screen, keeping a website running is truly a collaborative effort. Our website is in its second generation. Our new website was designed by club member John Richardson to be faster and cleaner than most, while allowing for easy changing of content. You will find it is feature-rich, with online handling of membership applications, classified ads, event registrations, and purchases of club regalia. John is currently working on the new members only area which will allow for viewing of the club roster, financial reports, meeting minutes, and verification of individual member's JSSC registration information.

Email is another major force in our club. Over 70% of our club members have email accounts. Email is used heavily by the club's administration to keep this statewide organization running. It allows easy transmission of information and submissions for newsletters and photo galleries. We rely on email to get out the word about last minute changes in scheduling and locations. A large number of participants in our events use email as a method for receiving information, and submitting entries to events.

There is a dark side to our use of technology. The club is aware of the need to protect the privacy of its members. We make every effort to ensure that all information presented on our website, or transmitted in email dispatches, has been screened for personal information and virus content. One of the biggest problems facing our use of computers is the damaging effects that computer viruses have had on users' (your) willingness to use the technology. As a club we ask for your help in ensuring the continued use of email and all of its advantages. Please be sure to keep your computer's anti-virus software up to date. Most anti-virus software will need to be updated weekly. If your software is too old to update, it is imperative that it be replaced. Don't allow your use of the internet, and all of its advantages, to slip away due to fear. We can and will assist any member who would like our assistance keeping up with these changes. Just ask. Our club has persons throughout the state at the cutting edge of computer technologies. Most will be willing to donate a little time to make your life easier.

Darryl Beech  
[membership@jaguarsocietysc.com](mailto:membership@jaguarsocietysc.com)

### JSSC Board Members

	Name	Telephone	Fax	Email
<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	Kerry L. Vickers	(843)572.6736	(843)764-7360	<a href="mailto:President@JaguarSocietySC.com">President@JaguarSocietySC.com</a>
<b>VP Up Country:</b>	John Dusky	(864)949-1206		<a href="mailto:FHVP@JaguarSocietySC.com">FHVP@JaguarSocietySC.com</a>
<b>VP Low Country:</b>	Dick Deibel	(843) 886-5880	(843) 886-0262	<a href="mailto:LCVP@JaguarSocietySC.com">LCVP@JaguarSocietySC.com</a>
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meeting, we kept the speed down to 55. We wanted to at least get out of Connecticut before we got busted.

Other Cannonballers took the light-brigade approach and charged into the traffic with sabers drawn. Dennis "Mad Dog" Menesini found a shortcut to the interstate. He simply bashed through a rickety fence with his huge Chevy crew-cab dualie pickup. It had the extra ballast of 165 gallons of gas and jumped onto the Connecticut Turnpike, sideways. Darien would not soon forget Dennis. He's built like a forklift: short and wide with a big, bearded face. He announced his arrival at the local Howard Johnson's by slamming a grizzly paw on the check-in counter and bellowing, "Where's the hookers in this place?" The clerk, visibly shaken, could only stutter, "We don't-don't-don't . . ." Dennis glared at him with disbelief. "You mean all the money you charge is just for handing people keys?"

Other departures were less dramatic, but nonetheless notable. Paul Fassler and Robert Ziegel made a clean, flying start in a bright-red Porsche 930 Turbo. They ate up the miles like junk food and were well into New Jersey before realizing they were headed south toward Atlantic City instead of west to Pittsburgh. By the time they changed course, they had lost four hours.

The worst start was made by the Cannonball's most devious entry, Car and Driver's Brock Yates and his sidekick, stuntman cum movie director Hal Needham. Yates hatched the first Cannonball in 1971 to prove that good drivers in good cars can go as fast as they want on interstate highways. "Speed is freedom, freedom is speed," sayeth Yates. He and race driver Dan Gurney won the first Cannonball in a Ferrari Daytona, crossing the continent in 35 hours and 54 minutes. Says Gurney of that trip, "At no time did we exceed 170 miles per hour." Yates named the race in honor of Erwin G. "Cannon Ball" Baker, a legendary racer and daredevil of the '20s and '30s. In 1933, driving alone, Baker pushed a supercharged Graham from New York to Los Angeles in 53 hours, 30 minutes. Yates calls it "the pinnacle of transcontinental driving."

In the previous Cannonball, run in 1975, two airline pilots driving a Ferrari Dino broke Yates's and Gurney's record by 60 seconds, a feat that inspired the movie Gumball Rally, which Yates still dismisses as a "commercial defilement." This time around, Yates wanted to write his own movie about what really happened with his friend Needham directing. He also wanted to get the record back. Instead of flat-out speed, Yates was banking on subterfuge. His vehicle was a Dodge ambulance, accurate in every detail, including a patient (his wife, Pamela, actually) on a gurney sprouting intravenous feeding tubes and a genuine medical doctor (a friend of Needham's). Unseen beneath the trappings of their Transcon Medi-Vac was a souped-up Magnum 440 engine and a special suspension that would let the ungainly hulk cruise at 130.

Like our Fire-Am, the ambulance looked good on paper. But no sooner did it leave the Barrel than a sputtering carburetor forced it into the first gas station for an hour's worth of repairs. Still, their ruse worked. Traffic on the Cross-Bronx Expressway parted in front of the ambulance like the Red Sea before Moses. It wasn't until they got into darkest New Jersey that the cops stopped them. Yates and Needham piled out of the ambulance dressed in meat-wagon white uniforms. "We gotta take this lady to UCLA Medical Center!" they told the trooper. "Plug her into that special heart-lung machine."

"Why doesn't she take a plane?" the cop asked.

"Cysts on the lungs," Yates replied with a we're-only-doing-our-job shrug. "She can't take the cabin pressure."

The trooper watched as the ambulance sped away. He couldn't hear the wild cackling inside. "They're the most fascist enforcers around," said Yates, "and we flat-out bamboozled them."

By the time Brennan and I got into New Jersey, we were averaging 70 mph, but we were still keeping the car under rein. Our plan was to run straight across Interstate 80, going slowly through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, and then race the Fire-Am across the plains at 130 mph to Salt Lake City, hang a left on I-15, and coast through the desert to L.A. We flew across the Garden State as if it weren't there.

Unfortunately, Rick Kopec and Bob Key did not. When the Jersey troopers stopped their Shelby Mustang, Kopec pulled out a New York State police badge and tried the I'm-an-off-duty-cop routine. He was on his way in no time? In handcuffs, to jail. Kopec made Cannonball history by becoming the first driver arrested for a felony: impersonating an officer. After two hours of trying to explain that it was all a mistake, Kopec finally confessed to being in the Cannonball. "I suspect the troopers all privately approved," he ventured, "because they turned me loose with nothing more than a speeding ticket."

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Other Cannonballers had better luck in tricking the authorities. Jim Sencenbaugh and his crew made the run in a Chevrolet Suburban. They wore yellow hard hats and coveralls. Their truck bristled with antennas and complicated-looking electronic gear. On the sides and back were signs reading:

Satellite Tracking Associates Recovery Team:

WARNING: STAY CLEAR

This vehicle contains radio-transmitting equipment which emits low-level RF energy. Contact with antennas or equipment may be dangerous to unauthorized personnel. Tampering with or stealing of radios, navigation equipment, or other electronic parts carried by this vehicle is, in most cases, a federal offense punishable by fines up to \$10,000 and imprisonment of up to 20 years.

All that meant was the van had a CB onboard. The deception proved particularly effective in Pennsylvania, where Three Mile Island had just begun to boil over. Every time Sencenbaugh and his men stopped at a gas station, they'd scan the attendants with Geiger counters just to watch them freak.

One of the cleverest covers was that of Lou Sellyei and Gary Arentz, both physicians from Reno. Packed into their Jaguar XJ-S was a medical cooler containing a pair of pig's eyes. "We're rushing to save a child's sight, officer." Their story must have worked: They made it in 39 hours, 10 minutes.

There was no point in our wasting time on tricks one look at the Fire-Am and any cop would know we were up to no good. We just had to count on the car's power and put our faith in the radar detector.

By the time we crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, my eyes were aching. We pulled over. Brennan took a hit of banana-pineapple-apricot nectar ("I'm sure I put the Benzedrine in this one," he said, "because it sounds so disgusting") and took the wheel. Brennan was intimidated by the Fire-Am, just as I had been at first. In a youth misspent on professional drag racing, and an adulthood spent writing about fast cars, I had never seen the Fire-Am's equal. Being strapped into a racing harness with a five-pound buckle on your belly and a fire extinguisher dangling in your face didn't do anything to lessen the tension. Brennan strapped himself in, lit a cigarette, and pulled onto the highway cautiously. "I'm gonna take it real easy," he said, "real slow."

The sun was just coming up as we cruised through the morning mist in the Pennsylvania valleys. Brennan was adjusting to the car, concentrating, eyes moving, gearing his mind and body to the machine. "I think I'll bump it up a little," he informed. "Look at the speedometer," I said. We were already going 110. "Shit," he said, easing off. "I thought we were doing 65." We were moving fast and loose. Our average was inching up with every mile. Screw the game plan of going slow through the East? We decided to open this mother up and go.

I was just starting to settle back with a smile on my face when Brennan noticed the oil-pressure gauge was jumping up and down erratically. "We're down to 50 pounds," he said. "Now it's 40. Now it's 30." A sour ball was forming in my stomach. Either the engine was about to blow or we had a serious oil leak. "We got a problem," I said, "a big problem."

Up ahead, other Cannonballers were also having their problems.

Crossing the state line into Ohio, Mark Pritch and his Ferrari 308 flew right into the hands of the highway patrol. He was pulled over and ticketed for going 80 mph. Undaunted, he got back on the interstate and gunned the Ferrari again. Again he was busted for speeding. Now he had to make up for lost time, so he pushed the Ferrari up to 100. The cops nailed him again. In all, Pritch collected three tickets in the first five miles of Ohio.

Ohio proved to be costly for Charlie McCarthy as well. He's a well-known off-shore powerboat racer, but that didn't carry any weight with the cops when they clocked his turbo Mercedes-Benz doing 110. He had to post a \$900 bond before they'd let him out of the Buckeye State.

Meanwhile, Dennis Menesini turned the cops to his advantage. He and his crew were cruising through Jerome, Arizona, when some local kids pulled up tight on the back bumper and commenced flashing high-beams and getting on the horn like the small-town bozos they were.

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Menesini had rigged his truck with a switch to shut off the brake lights so that he could slow down in a hurry without tipping off a cop in hot pursuit. He pushed his truck on a straight stretch to 90 mph, hit the switch, and slammed on the brakes. The tailgating locals locked up all four wheels trying to stop, then slid off into the sagebrush. So much for those dweebs, Dennis thought. But a couple minutes later, the kids came roaring by and lofted a beer bottle at the truck. Now Menesini's blood was up. "Let's stand on it," he yelled to his crew. "I got a Gatorade bottle for 'em."

Right about then a cop joined the chase. Dennis spotted him and dialed into the emergency CB channel: "Officer, those kids in the Chevy just threw a bottle at our truck. We're trying to pursue them. Could you help us out?" Then he sat back and laughed as the cop wailed on by.

On the other hand, the Kendall-Lanes, Stephen and Fiona, came across the country with unruffled elegance. Their Cannonball entry was a 1948 Silver Wraith Rolls-Royce, which they had shipped from London. While the liveried chauffeur drove, Stephen and Fiona sat in the back seat munching biscuits, sipping tea, and watching the American countryside go by. Their only problem was trying to decipher the arcane CB lingo of the truckers. In frustration, Stephen finally took the mike and said, "Look here, you chaps, you really are going to have to talk more clearly if you expect me to converse with you." Ultimately, the gap between the queen's English and American redneck was

bridged. In fact, Stephen struck up something of a friendship with "a beavuh named the Flying Redhead." The Rolls moved at a leisurely pace (you can't rush when you have to change clothes for dinner), but it managed to make it across in 58 hours, 4 minutes.

Although the Rolls was something of a hit with truckers, other Cannonballers found the Teamsters more dangerous than the troopers. The highwaymen in the 18-wheelers didn't like the blinding quartz-halogen headlights most crews used, and they tended to get very pissed when you blew by them at 120.

Truckers called ahead to tip off the cops that the 1979 Trans Am of Mike Snyder and Jeff Pierce was headed west. As the black Pontiac flew into Arizona, the law was waiting. And even after Snyder and Pierce paid up, the truckers teamed against them, trying to wedge the Trans Am between two trucks on a twisty mountain road. "We just missed becoming a Mack sandwich," Mike said. "Next time we run the Cannonball, we ought to come equipped with M-16s."

As for Brennan and me, cops and convoys were the least of our problems. The Fire-Am was pumping a quart of oil onto the road every 10 minutes. The faster we tried to drive, the faster the oil pressure dropped. We limped across western Pennsylvania, stopping every 50 miles to oil up. Our average speed was sinking fast. We pulled off I-80 into Du Bois, Pennsylvania. It was early Sunday morning, and the little town was closed up tight. The noise from the Fire-Am alone would probably get us busted for disturbing the peace. We finally found an open gas station and paid the guy 20 bucks to let us use the lift. Eventually, every kid in town showed up to take a look at the furious Fire-Am. And we had them running all over the countryside chasing down parts and tools. The leak was caused by one goddamned little bolt on the oil pan that had come loose and broken the gasket. On most cars it would have been a snap to fix, but on the Fire-Am it meant taking off the whole racing exhaust system just to get at the problem. With the help of a little banana-pineapple-apricot nectar, I worked six or seven hours trying to fix the thing. When we let the car down off the lift and cranked up the engine, oil still sprayed all over, hitting the hot exhaust pipes and turning into ugly blue smoke. We were carrying 32 gallons of gas, and the fuel lines ran right next to the hot pipes. "If this thing goes up," Brennan said, "they won't even find our dental work." So we decided to pack it in.

We found a motel. That night Brennan and I consoled ourselves with a half-dozen pitchers of Genesee Ale and came up with a new plan. We wouldn't give up. The next morning we ripped the trunk lid off the Fire-Am, swallowed the remainder of our drugs, and caught a plane to Pittsburgh. From there we flew to Houston and grabbed another flight to Los Angeles. A chauffeur-driven limo picked us up at LAX, and we sped off to the Portofino Inn. Brennan ran in carrying the time card, 42 hours had elapsed since we left Darien and I carried the trunk lid. "Where's your car?" yelled the timekeeper. "The freaking thing went up in a ball of flame," we said, holding up the oil-smearing sheetmetal with the Fire-Am logo. "This is all that's left."

The winning car sat right in front of the Portofino Inn A shiny black Jaguar XJ-S with a victory wreath on the windshield. Dave Heinz and Dave Yarborough, a pair of seasoned racers and Jag dealers from Florida and South Carolina, respectively, had shattered the old record by making it cross-country in 32 hours, 51 minutes. That's an average of 87 mph.

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Only eight minutes behind the Jag was a \$50,000 Mercedes 6.9 sedan. Its crew was led by Tom Hickey, a teaching fellow and Ph.D. candidate at Harvard's School of Education. Being a properly dignified Ivy Leaguer, Hickey saw the race as an intellectual exercise. Perhaps if he had looked at it a bit more practically, he might have won. Instead of paying cash for gasoline, the Mercedes crew used credit cards and were forced to wait endlessly for receipts while dropout gas-station attendants struggled with the basics of arithmetic.

Dennis Menesini's truck came in fifth behind a pair of Pontiac Trans Ams, and a Mazda RX-7 finished sixth. Of the 46 starters, 42 cars finished. They collected 50-some speeding tickets, but there was only one minor accident: John Harrison's '78 Lotus Esprit tapped a guard rail coming down an off-ramp, and its suspension broke.

Despite our trunk lid ploy, Brennan and I were listed among the DNFs, the did-not-finishers. So were Yates and Needham.

Their Transcon Medi-Vac had been making great time until the transmission blew a seal in Illinois. They tried to nurse it (no pun intended) across the plains, pouring six gallons of transmission fluid and a couple quarts of 40-weight motor oil into the machine. But it finally died just outside Palm Springs. They had to winch the ambulance to the back of a flatbed truck and haul it to the Portofino.

At the Portofino's bar, Cannonballers were exchanging war stories. Sam Moses, from Sports Illustrated, and George Willig, the guy who climbed the outside of the World Trade Center's South Tower in 1977, lost the brakes on their Mustang outside St. Louis. But they still made it to Redondo Beach in less than 40 hours. Keith Patchett and Loyal Truesdale, two Hollywood stuntmen, were well on their way to setting a transcontinental motorcycle record on their BMW R90/6 when a snowstorm in the Rockies forced them to take refuge in a motel.

The next night, Cannonball awards were handed out at an appropriately bizarre and boozy banquet. Dennis Menesini got the Friends of OPEC award for averaging 5.4 mpg in his Chevy truck. The Kendall-Lanes walked away with the Diamond Jim Brady award for their moderation. Brennan and I got the DieHard trophy, a rusty pogo stick on a dead battery, for having suffered the most trials and tribulations. And Joan Mullen was given a special Night Owl award for having gone 28 hours without taking a pee while she and her husband, Jim, barreled across the U.S. in their Ferrari Berlinetta.

Brennan and I were already plotting for the next Cannonball. It was clear that the Fire-Am was too delicate a machine. But if we just took a '71 Camaro with a 454 engine, threw in a 50-gallon gas tank and a good set of tools, maybe we could . . .

SEE YOU IN ATHENS.....

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[www.Jaguarsocietysc.com](http://www.Jaguarsocietysc.com)

## FUTURE EVENTS

**October 26th** - Jaguar Society of South Carolina Lowcountry Brunch Gathering  
Charleston SC.

The Lowcountry members of the JSSC will be having brunch in Charleston SC at Round Holiday Inn on Hwy 17 south in downtown Charleston. Scheduled arrival time is 10:00am. All JSSC and JCNA members are invited to attend. For more information contact the JSSC Membership Darryl Beech by email at: [membership@jaguarsocietysc.com](mailto:membership@jaguarsocietysc.com), or just show up!

**Hilton Head Island Announces Its First Annual Concours D'Elegance & Significant Car Exhibit, November 2 & 3, 2002.**

Hilton Head Island will be hosting its first annual Concours d'Elegance on Sunday, November 3rd which will be preceded by a Significant Car Exhibit on Saturday, November 2, 2002. Our Sunday Concours will follow the Concours tradition of displaying and judging elegant and collectible automobiles of American and foreign manufacture, and the Saturday Car Exhibit will feature historically significant cars from the 20th century along with special interest, prototype and competition cars. For further information please contact the Hilton Head Island Concours office at 843.785.7469 (phone), 843.686.9799 (fax), or our Website at [www.hiltonheadislandconcours.com](http://www.hiltonheadislandconcours.com)

**November 2nd - Jaguar Society of South Carolina Midlands Lunch Gathering, Columbia SC.**

The Midlands membership of the JSSC will be having lunch in Columbia, SC at a place to be announced. Scheduled meeting time is 11:00 am. All JSSC and JCNA members are invited to attend. Following a lite meal, a fall tour to enjoy the changing colors will ensue. For more information contact the JSSC Midlands Representative, Sonya Stewart by e-mail at: [sssjag@sc.rr.com](mailto:sssjag@sc.rr.com), or just show up!

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