



TR TIMES

SPECIAL EDITION

Volume 41—Number 1SE March 2019

The GAMRR 2018 and Other Such Craziiness!

By Jeffery N. Givens

The Great American Mountain Rally Revival 2018 (12-14 October) or GAMRR 2018 is a “remake” of the Great American Mountain Road Rally of 1954. The original American rally was designed after a great number of European competitive road rally events that showcased a wide variety of race, sports, and mild mannered cars of the period. Dependability of the car in all environments was key, as the rally’s ranged in distance from a few hundred miles to several thousand miles. In our case, the GAMRR 2018 was advertised to be completed in a single weekend with just a tick over 750 Rally miles throughout several of the New England states. In addition, I was combining the GAMRR 2018 with a business trip that took me to Indianapolis, IN, Cleveland, OH, Washington, DC, Morgantown, PA, & West Point, NY, and then back to Leavenworth, KS.

My car is a 1959 Triumph TR3a that I have owned since 1969, and before this lengthy trip had accumulated approximately 384,000 miles on the odometer. It is a well used, but well maintained car. In September 2016, with accumulated mileage of 367,000, I sent the car to Macy’s Garage in Tipp City, Ohio for an engine, transmission, overdrive, and rear-end rebuild. Although major components of my car had been rebuilt/restored over the many years of driving, this is the first time that all driveline components had been rebuilt at the same time. So, it is with great comfort that I can depart on long road trips in my 1959 TR3a to participate in events that are some distance away. Macy’s put the 87 mm pistons (9.1 compression) in the engine, an upgrade from the standard 83 mm 8.5.1 compression. So, the engine went from the standard 1991 cc’s (the 2.0 liter motor) to 2188 cc’s for 2.2 liters (in effect the TR3B/TR4 motor). The extra power is quite noticeable and needed!

I departed for GAMRR 2018 on **3 OCTOBER 2018** taking Missouri Hwy 36 East toward Indianapolis as my first stop. I stayed the evening with my brother-in-law Dan Taylor, who will be my navigator for the GAMRR 2018. A GAMRR 2018 planning session took a short time, as we realized the Stevens Rally Indicator I purchased MAY NOT come in very handy during the rally. The Stevens Rally Indicator is like a circular slide rule for cars, and greatly depends on the accuracy of the speedometer/odometer/brain-housing group of car, driver, and navigator. The instruments in my car have not been rebuilt yet, and so display a semi accurate “view” at all times (especially the speedometer)! More about that bit of excitement later.

October 12-14 2018



For more information contact: GAMRR2018@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 3/23 Tech Session: Preparing for Long Drives At “Fort Givens”, 15080
Prairie Crossings, Leavenworth, KS 66048—9:00 AM**

**Saturday 3/30 S.A.E. Jayhawk Motorsports Tour on KU Campus. Meet at
McDonald’s 15920 W. 87th St. Pkwy Lenexa, KS 66219– 8:30 AM**

4 OCTOBER had me on I-70 East for a short time, stopping at Macy's Garage in Tipp City, Ohio for a coffee, fuel stop, and car vitals check. Back on I-70 East again with my sights on Columbus, Ohio, then north to Medina, just South of Cleveland, to stay with an old Army buddy and business associate. Shortly before Columbus there was a terrible accident on I-70 East with a tanker truck, several tractor trailers, and cars wrecked and on fire, stopping all traffic. I was able to jump off the Interstate and found my way to Ohio State Hwy 42 North, and all the way to Medina. Of course it started raining (cats and dogs would be the word on that rain!), and that rain stayed with me until I arrived in Medina. And yes, it got wet inside my Triumph, and yes, I got a little wet as well. Such is life in my old Triumph!

5 OCTOBER, with Medina in my rearview mirror, I headed southeast on Hwy 83 with a bit of drizzle and outside ambient temps of 48 degrees. Hwy 83 is a scenic byway that goes all the way to Hwy 50 East on the West Virginia border, is very well done, and beautiful in its own right. I highly recommend this road! I got on Hwy 50 East near Parkersburg, WV, and continued motoring through the state. If you are in a hurry, this is not a route I could recommend, but if a steady 60 MPH and beautiful scenery, small towns, and crooked roads is your style, this is the road to take. Not a lot of traffic, no big trucks to speak of, and best of all it had stopped raining. I had planned to stay the evening near the WV/VA border, but everything was full along Hwy 50. At 9:30 PM I finally pulled into the outskirts of Winchester VA, after having found the last place to stay in a 50 mile search (every place was full). I believe it was a motel 2 1/2 or some such, rated at 12 stars (on a scale of 300 or so stars), with steel bars on every lower floor window, a full time security guard, and a conveniently located liquor store right on the premises. But, it was a place to stay! Before going to sleep, I made the "fortunate" mistake of checking my emails. Another Army buddy had sent me a note encouraging me to attend a "coffee & chrome" event near Washington DC that started at 5:30 AM on 6 October. The event goes from 5:30 AM to 9:00 AM and normally has around 400 cars in attendance! I decided to attend.

6 OCTOBER 3:00 AM came early as I packed the car, did my maintenance, and warm up (all under the "watchful eye" of the sleeping security guard), jumped on I-81 South for 15 miles, and then I-66 East to Washington, DC. Of course the sky was pitch black, traffic was non-existent (imagine that), no rain, and a cruise speed of 75 mph. Life was good, until "it" happened! An hour into the trip, with no warning at all, engine, lights, everything shutdown on the car, and I was coasting. Then, after just a few seconds, the engine, lights, and all came back on again, like nothing had happened. There was no exit or fuel stops, so I kept going to the Washington, DC area. Once I pulled into the coffee & chrome event at 5:00 AM (many cars were already there), I popped the hood, and thoroughly inspected the car. I found absolutely nothing wrong! Nothing burnt, loose or otherwise falling off. The car started, idled, ran, and charged normally. I had of course expected a battery cable had somehow come loose, but all was tight and well connected. With that information and inspection completed, I proceeded to enjoy the coffee and chrome show.

What a tremendous gathering of cars! From Ferrari's, Lamborghini's, Porsche's, Ford GT 40's, Mustang's new and old, a Lotus or two, Rolls Royce's to every flavor of antique, classic, modern, and the severely modified, all were present (the attendees



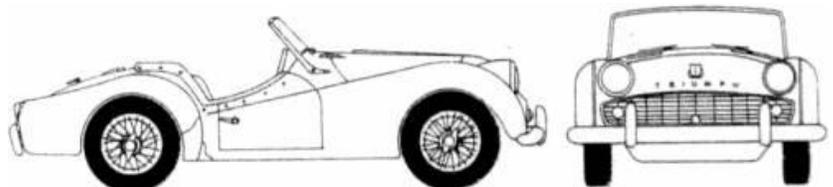
lamented the absence of the Stanley week). These pictures show the wide variety.

Steamer & Porsche 917 race car that

My car was the only Triumph, and the only dirty, bug encrusted car present, and of course with Kansas historic tags. Numerous small gatherings surrounded my car, with lots of questions, pictures, great comments, and a big welcome. It was really a stunning show.



While there, a new found friend mentioned an all British Car Show held the next day 60 miles west of Washington, DC in the horse country area of Virginia. I decided to attend, and took my sister-in-law Linda, who lives in the local



7 OCTOBER at 7:30 AM I was on the road again, and headed west on Hwy 50 to the “23rd Annual Hunt Country Classic” at Willoughby Farm on the outskirts of Middleburg, VA. The show was presented by the MG Club of Washington, DC. And the “Capitol Triumph Register LTD” was in full attendance.



The drive to Willoughby Farm was absolutely wonderful, with lots of great scenery, and of course plenty of old British cars moving along the byways. I have included some pictures of course. I parked next to a beautifully restored black TR3a, and in front of a “covey” of TR4’s. There was only three TR3’s present, and one left very early, and I could not stay to the end. My car was extremely dirty at this point from lots of travel. I could not find a hand wash facility anywhere in the local area. All were drive through! So, the car just had to stay dirty. I must have gotten the “sympathy” vote as I was informed later on that I took first place in class! A great show, with lots of British cars, friendly people, gorgeous scenery, and a wonderful host!

The trip back to Washington, DC that afternoon to Linda’s place was uneventful. The Triumph performed perfectly, and then I parked the car for three days while I attended an annual Army Convention.

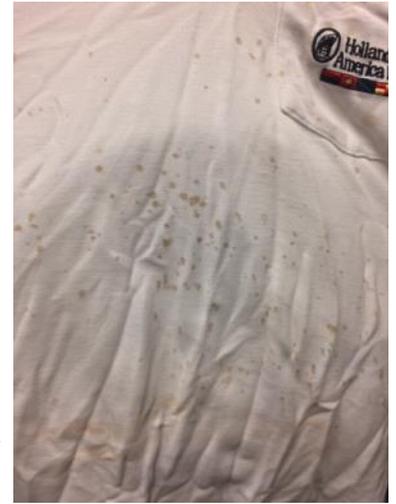
10 OCTOBER at 6:00 AM found me on the road again, and headed to the Baltimore Washington International Airport to pickup Dan Taylor (my brother in law and navigator for the GAMRR 2018). Battling Washington, DC traffic for 2.5 hours was exciting, but uneventful with no lengthy stops along the way to the airport. I parked the Triumph in short-term parking, and hunted down my brother in law. The reason I parked in short-term parking was so Dan and I could pack the car properly for our long trip north, and then back to Indianapolis after that. We found each other quickly, and started unloading the car, so it could be re-packed properly for the Rally. Storage space was at a premium to say the least, and once the “cramming” of all baggage was completed 30 minutes later, we were on the road. We had just passed through the Baltimore/Washington tunnel on I-95 north, when I hit a small pothole, and the engine started to misfire. I made it to the next exit, and the engine quit in the parking lot right in front of a Five Guys Hamburger place. It was quite obvious that the TR3 knew it was time to stop for lunch! I popped the hood, and the first thing I noticed was that the white power wire going to the coil had ripped loose from its connector. One half of the trunk had to be unloaded to get to the electric kit. The end of the wire was stripped, a new connector was installed, and the engine started immediately. Time for lunch!! Next stop, Morgantown, PA (just west of Philly), and the Classic Auto Mall, Inc.

We arrived at Classic Auto shortly after lunch, and found it was located in a closed down shopping mall. A little over 800 classic cars were on display (and for sale) within all of the storefronts inside the mall! From 1904 Buicks to Model T’s & A’s, all the way up to 50’s/60’s muscle cars, and everything in between. Most had been restored partly or completely. Nonetheless, an amazing display. Two TR6’s were on display and no MG’s at all. The VP for sales said they have another 1200 or so cars getting shipped in over the next 6 months. I truly agonized over one car in particular (it really did want to follow me home), a ground up fully restored 1964 Ford Falcon Sprint convertible, with a number of very subtle improvements for the low low price of \$24,990.00. Truly, it was a well done investor grade restoration. We spent the night just outside of Allentown, PA, and I did not buy the Falcon. Deep sadness!



11 OCTOBER found us traveling east on I-78 for a short period, and then exiting at Easton, NJ to get on Hwy 57 Northeast. As we travelled through Washington, NJ we stopped to have coffee and a well-deserved sweet roll with a wonderful sister in law, Karen Wiessler. And of course, it was raining again!! An hour later, we were on the road again, but had to stop, due to a “mishap”. The car went into a large mud hole, and a stream of mud came up and under the passenger side curtain, across my Danny’s white shirt, and finally landed on the instrument panel. A short “wipe down” pit stop was in order! The “mishap” recovery behind us, we headed towards the US Army Military Academy at West Point, NY. My niece, Cadet CeCe Givens, is now a member of the “Long Grey Line”, and is in her last year at West Point. She will join the active Army component in the spring of 2019 as a Quartermaster Officer. Dan and I toured the Academy grounds for a couple of hours (in the rain of course), and then met CeCe for dinner at a downtown West Point café. It was getting dark, and still raining by the time we got back on the road to our final destination that evening 38 miles to the east, Brewster, NY. The crooked roads, at night, in the rain, made the trip twice as exciting as it normally would have been!

12 OCTOBER, the rain had stopped, and by 7:30 AM we were enroute to the New Salem Golf Club (10 miles away) to get checked in for the GAMRR 2018. A variety of competitors and their cars were showing up at the same time. A 1937 Cadillac, 1948 Hudson, 1967 Porsche 912, 1964 Volvo, 1981 Mercedes, 1967 Dodge police cruiser, just to name a few! Yep, we were in the right place. Check in was painless; as we were already prepaid, were issued the first day of instructions, map sheets, car identifiers, stickers, and then finally our OFFICIAL RALLY JACKETS (that was an exciting part!). Once that was done we attended the voluntary two hour driver’s brief and navigator school. It was our very first rally (along with several other competitors) and we had a lot of questions. The GAMRR 2018 would begin at precisely 11:00 AM, and as we were car number 5, our departure time would be 11:05 AM. All rally cars departed at one-minute intervals on a 191.02 mile first leg.



The first Regularity 1.1 (one of the graded rally routes) began at mile 3.57, where we zeroed our odometer again. We wrote down the time we started, at the minute, and had to maintain a Combined Average Speed, or CAS, of 30 mph for the next 9.03 miles. The Regularity could end at any time on or before 9.03 miles. So, I am going from a standing start, in first gear, shift to second, up a 4% grade, on a dirt road, with an approaching left turn that has a “hugemongous” 20 mph caution sign, that ends in a Tee, and I have to turn right, while downshifting, and then upshifting quickly! The brain-housing group was already working overtime on trying to figure out what speed I needed to be at to maintain a CAS of 30 mph while not flying off the road. My “jumpy” and slightly out of whack speedometer did not help at all! And then we had more turns, steeper grades, then a downhill, and a straight away, and I am thinking “ok, I can make up a little bit of time”. Out of the corner of my right eye I saw an SUV parked on the right, there was a Red sign, and a guy with a clip board and stop watch. Holy smokes – it was the end of the Regularity!!! I stopped, and the man with the stop sign, clipboard, and stopwatch said the words “welcome to the end of Regularity 1.1, what time did you start the Regularity”? And there it was, the beginning of the end of our finely tuned and well oiled “Team Givens/Taylor”. We gave the man our start time; he recorded it, and then stated the perfect time for Regularity 1.1, and our score. We had come in late by 1 minute and 19 seconds, which meant we had just accumulated that amount of time in penalties on our first Regularity. Your Team cannot make up the time or penalty by going faster on another Regularity, each one is stand-alone. A fact we did not know at the time, but one of our competitors in the 1937 Cadillac collected only .06 seconds in penalties, and the 1948 Hudson .13 seconds in penalties on Regularity 1.1. Team Givens/Taylor had just gotten their respective hind ends handed to them on the very first Regularity! There was no time to sulk, as the rally proceeded through incredibly beautiful countryside until we reached the next Regularity.



Regularity 1.2 began 12.51 miles later, and was potentially a 10.45 mile regularity. We were determined to pay a bit more attention, and get this one right. Odometer zeroed, CAS of 35 mph, car in 1st gear, time hack – GO! We were off – go straight on Route 39, change speed to 45 mph, upshift to third, then overdrive for the right hand turn, turn left .45 miles on Route 39, drop to second overdrive, then second for the sharp turn, now upshift to fourth, overdrive for 45 seconds, downshift all the way to second, stop, turn right 4.08 miles onto Route 55, turn left 1.02 miles on Route 7, cross bridge, turn right on first road, and so on, and so fourth. And suddenly, Regularity 1.2 ended. Team Givens/Taylor awaited our fate, as the man with the stop watch and clipboard checked our car number against his list and said the words “Welcome to the end of Regularity 1.2, what time did you start the Regularity?” We gave him our time, and then waited a few seconds, and he stated “you are 60 seconds late, and have added that amount in penalties”. Up and down shifting, back and forth in overdrive while paying close attention to the Combined Average Speed and the corners, and stops, truly take up an inordinate amount of the “brain housing groups” energy.

As we progressed through the day we started getting fewer penalties. Regularity 1.3 was a 25 second penalty, and Regularity 1.4 was only a 10 second penalty. So, a total of 2.54 minutes in penalties for the day and after traveling 191.02 miles through wildly beautiful countryside. We rolled into the Grand Summit Lodge on Mount Snow Vermont around 6:15 PM ready to stop driving, have an adult beverage, dinner, and lick our wounds. Our paperwork was turned into Rally Control, and then we checked into the hotel. We were about the middle of the pack finishing up for the day, surprisingly. The bar was where we found the other competitors gathering to brag (or not) on their exploits while waiting for dinner. There was great camaraderie amongst the Rally goers, and several who gave some helpful hints on how to do better, just not too many hints! We had dinner as a group, looked at our scores for the day, and checked the Rally Board for the next day’s instructions, drivers meeting, and navigators meeting. And then, mercifully, dragged ourselves to our room, and promptly “crashed” for the night dead tired.

13 OCTOBER arrived far too early as my 4:30 AM wakeup call sounded like a bass drum going off or maybe the raising of the anchor of the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier. Ok, maybe not quite that bad, but I could have used another hour or so of sleep. Hot, then cold shower, shave, dressed, coffee, pack my stuff, kick my navigator out of bed, car maintenance, start the car, idle for 20 minutes, then get to the 7:00 AM breakfast, receive day 2 route instructions, drivers meeting, navigators meeting, and then the lineup. Start time was 8:00, we were car number five, and so our start time was 8:05 AM. GAMRR 2018 Day 2 had six Regularities spread out over 265.02 miles and the start of Regularity 2.1 was 55.84 miles away AND we had to plan that days Regularities while driving to the first Regularity! What could go wrong? Actually, we did pretty well and only accumulated 3.17 minutes for the six Regularities over 265.02 miles. We were quite proud of ourselves, and finally arrived at the Commodore’s Inn just outside of Stowe, Vermont at 6:37 PM. Other Rally goers were arriving as well, and we turned in our worksheets to Time Control in the lobby. Maintenance checks were done, the bags unloaded, checked into our rooms, quick shower, dry clothes, and back to the lobby/bar for drinks by 7:30 PM, ready for the group dinner. Rally Control posted everyone’s times. And there we were, Team Givens/Taylor with a 3.17 score. Our smiles dropped as we viewed our “competition”. The 1937 Cadillac had only accumulated 0.09 seconds, the 1964 Volvo 0.19 seconds, and the father son Team in the 1984 Mercedes 0.25 seconds! A dark feeling of doom descended on Team Givens/Taylor as we realized we’re not really IN the “competition” and knew for Day 3 we would have to step up our game to avoid complete public embarrassment and humiliation. That evening, after dinner, and drinks, we war-gamed all of the different scenarios we could think of to get back into the competition. Open and blatant cheating, bribery, misdirection, and even “personal Rally skill improvement” were all discussed, and then, completely discarded. We quickly realized that the best and most realistic game plan was going to rely heavily on sheer unadulterated LUCK! And so our new Rally Moto became, “We would rather be lucky, than good”, or words to that effect.



Early AM **14 OCTOBER** arrived – EARLY! Light frost was on the car as I loaded my bags, then proceeded to perform my pre-operational checks at 5:30 AM. The car started immediately and while idling, I scraped the light frost from the window as the outside temp hovered in the mid 30's. I also removed the top and side curtains for increased visibility and the “macho” aspect of our trip. I was betting that the temps would rise! Team Givens/Taylor were going to be competitors EVEN if it meant freezing our butts off for the next 171.14 miles of day 3. Not to be outdone, the 1937 Cadillac took their top down as well; the gloves were off for this last day of the competition!

At 0805 AM we departed for the 20.36 mile drive to Regularity 3.1.



Although it was brisk with the top down, we were dressed for the event, and quite comfortable. Day 3 was a 171.14 mile route, with four Regularities, ending in the parking lot of Hemming's Motor News in Bennington, Vermont. Lots of turns, one lane tree lined roads, absolutely stunning scenery, challenging roads (paved and unpaved), serious hill climbing, steep downgrades, and numerous coffee stops got us into the Hemming's Motor News parking lot at 1:15 PM. While we were having lunch at the Hemming's cafeteria, the Rally organizers were tabulating the data. Our dark feelings of doom were lifted, as it was announced that Team Givens/Taylor came in third place in our class, and were awarded a trophy! A podium finish after 627.59 Rally miles (750 plus by GPS). We could not have been happier with that outcome. Thank you Gary Hamilton (Rally Organizer) and Steve McKelvie (Rally Master)!



We repacked the car, put the top and side curtains on, as it was starting to rain a bit. Then mapped out a route from Bennington, VT to Medina, OH driving through buckets of rain and thunderstorms to stay the night at an Army buddies house. We arrived late evening, and spent quality time drying out the car, drinking some very fine scotch, and “retiring”.

15 OCTOBER was another full travel day to get to Indianapolis. A slight detour took us to Macy's Garage just outside of Dayton, OH. I just had to show Mark Macy our third place trophy and get some pictures. The mechanical rebuild that Macy's Garage performed withstood the test of time and distance. What a great little shop. We drove on to Indianapolis, dropped off Danny, another night stay, and on 16 October, after another long drive, I finally arrived back in Leavenworth, Kansas. My 1959 Triumph had just completed a 3,874.59 mile trip (I also included 200 plus miles for two car shows and a side trip) beginning 3 October and ending 16 October. No breakdowns, near misses, scratches, fabric tears, or other traumas to speak of. I averaged 26-30 miles per gallon depending on the roads, used two teaspoons of SU Carb dashpot oil, 1.75 quarts of VR1 40 weight racing oil, a half can of WD40, a couple pints of coolant, and one full bottle of Marvel Mystery Oil. Did not need any of my TR spares, and only pulled out the toolkit twice for the same problem with one wire!

So, the Great American Mountain Rally Revival 2018 was a tremendous success, and preparations are being made to do it again in 2019 the third week in October. I will be there in my Triumph, having a great time, where will you be? How much fun will your Triumph be having during that same time period? **Join us if you dare!!**