

Flywheel

February 2026 Vol. 7 No 2



Fire and Ice

Photo Jim Martin

From the Driver's Seat

February is the month for lovers. There are different stories about St. Valentine but I like this one. Apparently, Emperor Claudius believed that Roman soldiers should be completely devoted to Rome and therefore, passed a law preventing them from marrying. St. Valentine began to marry these soldiers in secret Christian ceremonies. This was the beginning of his reputation for believing in the importance of love. I believe his transportation was the original one-horse power.



This is an edition with some love stories. **Norm Pilsworth** writes about his first British car and the fun places he and **June**, as newly weds, traveled in it. **Pete Moffett** takes his Jag for a spa day! **Jim Martin** contributed an article about the Michelin restaurant guide – an opportunity for you to take your sweetie out for a special meal. Enjoy the stories.

Happy Valentine's Day

Leslie

PS to the January Edition



David and Laurie Triggs delivered 165 pounds of food to Community Care of St. Catharines & Thorold. Thank you for your generosity at the Christmas party.

The President's Corner

Hello club members!

I am writing this while looking at a rather grim weather forecast. At least February is a short month! One could even say that February's shortness makes it the Lynda Moffett of months. (One COULD say that, but I certainly never would.)

The MG and Jeep are both sleeping soundly in the garage, their tanks full of gas and fuel stabilizer. I did remember to put fuel stabilizer in, right? I myself have been hibernating, coming up with lists of things I need to do to the car and the garage this summer. I find it a lot easier to spend money on parts in my imagination than in real life. While I have been day-dreaming of the summer, our lovely events committee has been hard at work planning our various runs and parties for the year. If you have any ideas for an event or would like to help plan a run, please reach out to Lynda Moffett.

We're thinking of you...

Russ and Bonnie Kwiatkowski on the passing of Russ' brother, Robert, on Saturday, December 20, 2025.

New Members



Please welcome Rick Smith. Rick worked for Woolco in several location across Canada. As a young man, he owned an MGA and an MGB. Then he restored a TR6 that unfortunately developed a broken frame.

Most recently, Rick purchased a Triumph TR8 and is looking forward to getting it on the road.

January 13th General Meeting Highlights

President Tom Metcalf called the first meeting of the club's 25th year to order.

Pete Moffett reported that we have 65 paid members with 12 renewals pending. He also presented a strong treasurer's report.

Pete noted that there is one black ¼ zip sweat shirt, size large available for \$44. Check

https://www.sanmarcanada.com/f2042.html?colour=Black%20Heather* for a description.

Lynda Moffett presented the Events Committee report. See details under the Events Committee subhead. Lynda hopes for a full schedule of monthly Meet, Go 'n Eat events. She is looking for volunteers to put together a short run to one of their favourite eating spots. Let Lynda know if you would like to do one.



Car and photo, John Lehnен

John Lehnен presented information on the Valve Cover Race to be held May 24 between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. at a Niagara-on-the-Lake location. Following the racing, we will assemble at Dave and Irene's community room for the Canadian Grand Prix Watch Party.

Pete Moffett presented a short video of the "discovery and restoration" of a Bugatti historic vehicle.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtbNCL18t00&t=2s>

Herb McKay won the 50/50 draw of \$55.

What We Did Meet, Go 'n Eat – January 23

Twenty-four hearty souls braved the bitter cold and blowing snow for a delicious lunch at Newark Brewing. Thanks to **Pete Moffett** for organizing this.



Events Committee/Club Calendar:

Events Committee Coordinator: Lynda Moffett; Club Runs: Norm Pilsworth; Social/Parties: Leslie Moulson and Vicki Mowers; Long-term Care Homes: Harriet Lehnen; Car Shows: David Harrison

Events in bold are NBCC club-developed events. Not all events are necessarily finalized and could be subject to change. Watch for specifics as each event approaches. **Frequently check the club calendar on our website.**

Pop-Up Runs: These are spontaneous or short-notice runs by individual club members. Such runs are not necessarily club affiliated.

From January to April, **Meet, Go 'n Eat** will alternate between breakfast and lunch.

Friday, January 23 – 12:10 p.m. lunch at Newark Brewery

Brave Souls – Saturday, April 11 – organized by Norm Pilsworth and Brian Facey

Static Car Show – Ancaster British Car Show and Swap Meet, Sunday, April 19

Valve Cover Race – May 24, 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Check out the rules on our website

<https://niagarabritishcarclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/VCR-Rules.pdf>

Canadian Grand Prix Watch Party – May 24 following the races

25th Anniversary Party – Saturday, July 18

From Our Members...The Michelin Guide Puts a Local Restaurant and Niagara on the Map: Tires, Haute Cuisine and a Jordan Station Success Story

adapted by Jim Martin

The famous Michelin dining guidebooks are now in their 126th year, and right in the centre of our favourite cruising area sits the Pearl Morissette, judged by Michelin to be Canada's finest restaurant, one built on hard work and dedication to a dream.

The first Michelin guides were printed and distributed in France in 1900 by Edouard and André Michelin, founders of the Michelin Tire Company. The guides were free and 35,000 were printed, far more than the 3,000 automobiles in the country at that time.

Those first guides listed not only places to eat and stay, but mechanics' services and petrol locations in various regions of the country. This gesture by the brothers Michelin was not an altruistic one. They wanted to encourage people to purchase automobiles, to drive them, to wear out their tires, so that they could sell more tires. Their tires. Michelins.

Scores of countries now have their guides, and pay Michelin to produce books for their regions. When the early driving public showed a greater interest in the places to eat, other services were removed from the guide. By the 1920s, anonymous inspectors were hired to taste and evaluate the quality of the meals in potential restaurants. To this day, the inspectors' identities are a closely held secret. Not even their families can know.

By the 1930s, the three-star evaluation system was in place...one star – a very good restaurant in its category; two stars – excellent cooking, worth a detour; and three stars – excellent cuisine worth a special journey.

A few interesting facts:

- Tunisia got its guide in 1908, the U.S. in 2005, but Canada did not get its own guide until 2022
- The guide was not printed during the two World Wars
- In 1944, Allied Forces in France requested a reprint of the 1939 guide because Michelin's maps were more highly detailed than the forces' ordinance maps
- In 2021, Michelin started switching from print to digital
- Michelin's 2025 Canadian guide lists 38 starred restaurants; of that number, only two have earned two stars, and one of them is Restaurant Pearl Morissette in Jordan Station, described in the Michelin guide as a “powerhouse”; credit its co-owners Eric Robertson and Daniel Hadida.

Hamilton Spectator

“Earning a two-star designation does not come without intense work and dedication to a dream. It comes at a high price in sweat, talent and emotion. That high price will show up on the menu, so before the server helps you with your chair, first you might want to pull up a chair in front of your bank's loan officer.”

A meal for two can climb toward the thousand-dollar mark. Beyond our pay scale? We can at least take pride in Eric and Daniel's accomplishments.



Co-owner Eric Robertson



Click the link below for an in depth look at Restaurant Pearl Morissette, a Niagara success story.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/pearl-morissette-second-michelin-star-1.7639668>

On Your Marque, Get Set...VAUXHALL VIVA HA (1964-1966) and HB (1967-1970) adapted by Norm Pilsworth



The Vauxhall Company has been in operation since 1857, originally an iron works company in central England. In 1903, the company first began manufacturing cars. In 1925, General Motors acquired the company.

Vauxhall Viva HA

The company changed hands in 2017 when Peugeot bought it from GM. In 2021, ownership changed again with the merger of Peugeot and Fiat-Chrysler, and is now under the umbrella of the Stellantis Corporation.

In spite of the longevity of the marque, Vauxhall did not export any of its vehicles to North America until 1948. This change of policy came about as the post-war British government enacted legislation that forced automotive manufacturers to export 75% of their production. The end result for Canadians was that a number of British manufacturers entered the market with small, gas-friendly automobiles. Moreover, the arrangement the British government had with the commonwealth countries at the time, meant that these British vehicles entered Canada tariff free.

Vauxhall exported a number of different models to Canada during the 1950s, but the arrival of Viva—sold at Pontiac dealers as a Viva and at Chevrolet dealers as the Envoy Epic—enjoyed tremendous popularity, at one point was a very close rival to the Volkswagen Beetle.



Vauxhall Viva HB

In 1966, I purchased an Envoy Epic in Burlington, my first new car and my first British car. It was a very basic car. Bucket seats in front and a bench rear seat, all in vinyl.

No power steering or power brakes, no power windows and not even radio. The only transmission available was a four-speed floor shift. It was also sold with one engine choice: a tiny 1057 cc. The price of my vehicle was \$1660 including tax. At this time, students were happy to earn \$1.00 an hour and unskilled factory workers were earning \$2.75-\$3.00 per hour.

In spite of the fact the car was under powered for Canadian roads at 54 bhp, the car served me well. While June and I were dating, we went to Stratford, Sauble Beach, multiple trips to Toronto and the beaches of Lake Erie in the Viva. After we were married, we continued to do longer trips, traveling to Kingston and Montreal.

This Viva was quite dependable, needing only routine maintenance... until the vehicle reached 60,000 miles. Shortly after, a piston failed and a quick fix on a student budget ended up making the car unreliable. Not to be deterred, I managed to trade the car in for a 1969 Vauxhall Viva SL at a price not much different than I had paid in 1966. The new car was plusher inside, but still no power brakes or steering and still had roll-up windows. The new model was a little bigger and came with a 1599 cc OHC engine producing 84 bhp. A four-speed floor shift was still the only transmission choice. The improvements made the new model much more drivable on Canadian roads and definitely more comfortable. In other respects, however, the new Viva did not compare well to the earlier model. The gas mileage on the earlier HA model was consistently close to 40 mpg. The new HB model, however, rarely reached more than 20 mpg. Moreover, the HB model turned out to be much less reliable.

In my case, I returned to the dealership countless times for recurring mechanical issues. By 1972 and working full time, frustrated with the trips back and forth to the dealership, I traded it in for a Volkswagen Beetle.

During the 1970s, General Motors continued to have quality and reliability problems with the Vauxhalls, particularly the Viva models. By this time, they had limited the models they were importing to a sporty, 2000 cc OHC version of the HB named the Firenza and sold only at Pontiac dealers. This car, designed to appeal to the young drivers also had problems, the most serious being that some of them caught fire, usually without warning. In the 1970s, Firenza owners found that the value of their vehicles fell drastically.

Collectively, they tried to launch a class-action suit against General Motors but existing federal legislation, at the time, did not allow the owners to use this method of redress.

It is no surprise that shortly after this, General Motors stopped importing Vauxhalls into Canada. However, the vehicles continued to be made in the United Kingdom and are still in production there.

Very few of the HA or HB cars are still on the road today in Canada. Apart from the mechanical issues, both models suffered from serious rust issues, amplified by the use of salt on most Canadian roads. So, the Vivas ended up, in spite of the numbers sold and lack of many survivors, a rare car but one with very little value as a classic car.

Jigsaw Puzzle



<https://thejigsawpuzzles.com/Cars-and-Bikes/On-the-Coastline-of-the-Caribbean-Sea-jigsaw-puzzle>

Did You Know?

Steering Wheel Cigarette Dispenser



In an effort to ease the frustration and potential safety implications of fishing for a butt on the fly, DeSoto marketed this ingenious cigarette dispenser back in the 1940s. Conveniently mounted directly in front of the driver in the steering wheel hub, it made chain smoking all that much easier. Push a button, and out popped a smoke. A 14-cigarette capacity ensured sufficient supply for road trips, or at least a good start on the way to lung disease. Keep that nicotine flowing, folks, for a happier and healthier drive.

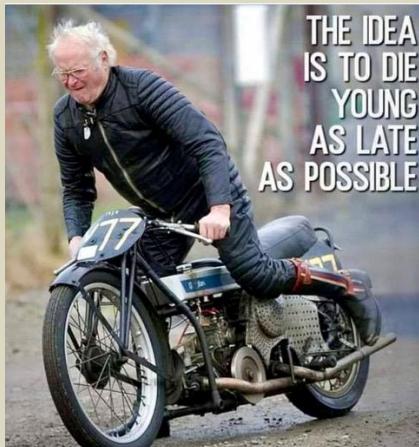
Hagerty News, Week of 27 December 2025

The World's Fastest Car Is

From China. It is BYD's Yangwang U9 Extreme with a record top speed of 496.22 KPH.

Toronto Star, January 17, 2026

Monthly Giggle



And Finally



Where Jaguars go to get their nails done. Photos Pete Moffett

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Note: The *Flywheel* is usually submitted for proofreading several days prior to release date, so always watch your inbox for subsequent changes to published dates or details of events.