

THE SHELBY AMERICAN



The SHELBY AMERICAN #117

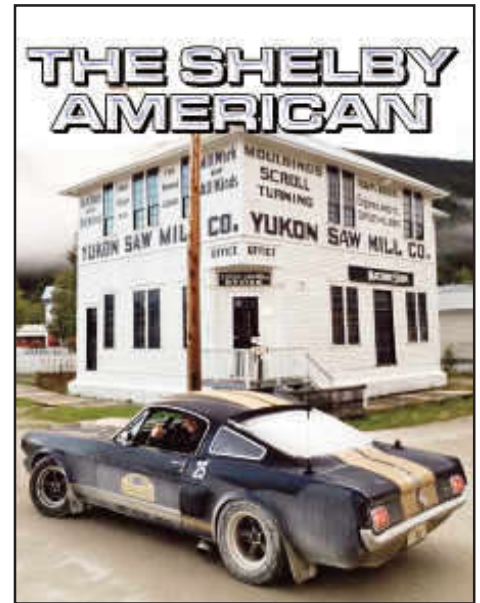
The magazine of the Shelby American Automobile Club



Copyright © 2019 Shelby American Automobile Club. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or translated without prior express written permission from the Shelby American Automobile Club. saac@saac.com

SPRING 2019

ON THE COVER. If driving a '66 GT350 Hertz car up the Alcan Highway from Seattle to Fairbanks on the Alcan 5000 Rally isn't the antidote for concours obsession, we don't know what is. As our society becomes increasingly homogenous, strictly regimented and politically correct there are fewer and fewer opportunities to engage in contrary activities. Alaska is one of the last frontiers in this country and it is a place everyone should experience. Most get there by flying or on cruise ships. But imagine driving. Now, imagine driving a GT350 Hertz car. The mind boggles. SAAC member Karl Eisleben and Joan McCabe grabbed the bull by the horns and made the trip. They came back with enough memories to last a lifetime. One look at their car and you'll never look at a concours car the same again.



THE MAIL SAAC. 13 pages. The Super Snake sells for \$2.2M at auction. That's news! Is your car next? CSX3170 is crowned Autocrosser of the Year. Does *Road & Track* have one foot in the grave? You may want to hold off on renewing your subscription. Don Yenke: Chevy's version of Carroll Shelby? Not quite. If you've always wanted a Mangusta but never find a project car, we may have found one for you. A 427 Superformance Cobra joins the 200 MPH Club. Yeah, it's a replica but it's the shape that counts.



SHELBY AMERICANA. 11 pages. It's getting so you can expect certain things in each issue: the three master eagle eyes are still trading blows in this ongoing slapfest, our lady eagle eyes are continuing to make contributions, and we keep seeing auction companies using Cobras, Shelybs and GT40 to entice us to follow their trail. And then there are the usual (actually unusual) sightings from SAAC members just attempting to live their lives when they are confronted by Shelby trivia.



ARE YOU CRAZY? 6 pages. If John Wayne was still alive and he was looking to make a point, the Duke would be driving a GT350 on the Alcan 5000. And he would fit right in. Karl Eisleben and Joan McCabe made the trip and lived to tell about it. They share some of their experiences in this article that just may make you want to look into the Alcan 5000 and do a little thinking as you're driving to work on a clogged road amidst hundreds of fellow commuters. Maybe it's time to break free and head out on a really open road.



DRAGON SNAKES. 7 pages. When most people think about Cobra race cars they envision road racers, driven by Ken Miles, Dan Gurney and Phil Hill. But there were other racing Cobras. They competed on quarter-mile drag strips and the factory car was built and maintained not by a huge team of mechanics, fabricators and engineers but by a small group of Shelby employees from the production shop. Brooks Laudin talks to a couple of the principals and uncovers the full story.

5000 Miles from Seattle to Fairbanks in a Hertz Car?

ARE YOU CRAZY?

– Karl Eisleben



Like so many things, it all started so casually, over a glass of wine. The conversation drifted to, “We should go on an endurance rally...with vintage cars.”

Jeff Wacker of Litchfield, Connecticut said he had always thought it would be very cool to go endurance rallying in a vintage car. It sounded really cool to me! How hard could this be, right? There is a very special rally called the Alcan 5000 that runs from Seattle to Fairbanks, and goes through some of the most beautiful scenery on the planet. The goal thus set, it was time to make things happen.

Jeff struck first when he sent me pictures of a 1964 Mercury Comet Caliente “K” code rally car. It was upgraded to a rally car in 2000 and has participated in rallies all over the world, including London to Athens, Targa Newfoundland, New Zealand, and the Pan American Rally. The

Caliente had all the needed prep work done, but it had been used and abused so it needed freshening and updating. He strikes, and the deal is made.

I decide the best rally car would be an old race car. That way I would start with all the chassis upgrades, the roll cage, etc., and would just need to make it street legal. And maybe add back in an interior. How hard could it be, right? So, I looked at a lot of cars, and nothing was right: not set up correctly, twisted up, cobbled together, etc. Then I found the ad for SFM6S819. I



6S819 was not your average Hertz car. It was prepared for vintage racing at one point and then it was fitted with a blown small block Chevy engine and became a wheel-standing drag car.

called Howard Pardee and he confirmed the car and its colorful history.

Most normal 1966 Shelybs have a history such as, “was owned by so and so, then sold, and sold again, and now restored as a show car.” Not 819. It took up a half page in the SAAC Registry. The car started life being shipped to Hertz and was a rental car for the calendar year of 1966 in New York. After faithful rental car duties with warranty work on the transmission twice, it was sent to Francis for Fords for disposal. Then the fun began.



The first private owner purchased 819 for a Hill Climb car. He stripped out the interior, race prepared it, and for the next six years used it in hill climbs all over the East Coast. When the opportunity to purchase a 289 Cobra presented itself, he sold the car and 819 passed on to two short term owners. In 1975, 819 was sold for the fourth time to an owner not interested in hill climbs but in drag racing. Soon 819 is set up with a Chevy engine, a blower and two four-barrel carbs. It was now a full-on drag car.

In 1979, he brings 819 to SAAC-4 in Downingtown, Pennsylvania where he performs several epic burn outs. Like a kid in a candy store with a buck in his pocket, Ken Young cannot resist. He purchases the car and quickly discovers that *"819 is scary fast pulling the front wheels off the ground in first and second gear."* Young sells the car in 1981, saying, *"I had to let it go or it was going to kill me."*

An Ohio road racer purchased 6S819, removed all the drag stuff and installed a race-prepared 351 and set the car up for road racing. The car goes through several owners in Wisconsin and is road raced from 1981 through 2015, running at Road America, Watkins Glenn, Lime Rock, Sebring, and other tracks. 6S819 showed up racing at SAAC-31 at VIR, with its last race being at SAAC-40 at Pocono. On New Year's Day of 2017 I got word of an '66 Shelby GT 350H race car sitting in a metal building in central

Florida. There is only one thing 6S819 had never been: a rally car.

I thought about and decided that a rally car must be four things:

- 1. Must be safe
- 2. Must be durable
- 3. Must be dependable
- 4. Must be awesome looking

6S819 could be all those. It had been a race car for a long time. It had a very robust roll cage, a racing suspension and was a slide-through-the-window car with no interior, a plastic windshield, no side windows, open exhaust: bottom line, a full-on track car.

What is needed for a rally car and race car are two different things. Races are usually 15-45 minutes. Endurance rallies can be 10+ hours every day for 10 or more days at a time and are thousands of miles long. Races require only a few gallons of fuel. Rally's

require major league range. Rally cars must be street legal. Racers no. It takes two people to go endurance rallying: driver and navigator. And you must be able to hear your navigator. The list goes on. Lots of changes were required to convert a race car into a rally car.

Pete Geisler and the team at Orlando Mustang and Shelby stepped up and converted 6S819 into a very robust rally car. They started with the roll cage modifications which included adding side protection. Now you can open the doors and get in – no more slide through the windows. Also included were side windows, two very COMFORTABLE Sparco race seats, complete interior, a 34-gallon fuel cell, mufflers, a TKO 600 five-speed transmission, a skid plate, and a heater! After all, we were going to Alaska on



The first gas stop in Alaska was in a town called Chicken.

What's a TSD Rallye?

Racing isn't the only way to compete with a car. One of the most popular forms of competition is rallying. There are several forms and, no doubt, you are envisioning the clips you see on YouTube showing fully-prepared pro rally cars flying down dirt roads and spectacularly getting air when they crest a hump in the road. There are tight hairpin turns with spectators lining the sides of the road, many of whom appear to have a death wish because they have chosen the most dangerous spots possible to watch from. If this is your image of rallying, change the channel.

A standard TSD (time - speed - distance) rally, sometimes called a "regularity rally," is essentially precision driving over a pre-determined route, usually but not always on public roads, below posted speed limits. The basic formula is $\text{time} = \text{distance}/\text{speed}$. A team consists of a driver and navigator and they are given a route map with very specific directions and instructions to maintain a certain speed over a specific distance. Speeds and distances can change at checkpoints where each team's arrival time is recorded. The difference between a team's actual time and correct time determines their penalty. Penalty points are assessed for being too early or too late.

To participate in a rally, a car does not need special equipment. The basic requirement is an accurate stopwatch, odometer and speedometer. As with anything, there are numerous types of special equipment made specifically for rallying – computers and calibrated odometers, as well as specialized apps for smartphones, but they are not essential for TSD rallies. As far as vehicle choice goes, one type is probably as good as another, and that's what makes rallying so enjoyable. You can use the car you have, not something like a race car that is built for a single purpose.

the ALCAN 5000!! Everything needed to be safe, dependable, and durable. Then came adding everything needed to make it street legal. And last of all, it had to look fantastic in the process – but not so much that it took away its history. It was important to maintain the car’s race car past. The car was also expected to receive assorted nicks and bruises from the Alaska logging roads, gravel highways along the way, so doing a concours-quality restoration would be a waste of time and money.

Then came the additional spares we would need to carry: a fuel pump, alternator, distributor cap, spark plugs, wires, oil, water, etc. Add all the necessary tools to fix anything that broke or needed to be repaired if you were 200 miles from the nearest garage – as it is in the middle of the Yukon Territory. Think “self-sufficient.” We added radios: VHF, CB, and a satellite tracking InReach (as required by the Alcan organizers so if we needed help, or did not show up at night, we could be found). And a minimum amount of luggage for two people, and 34 gallons of gas.

Once the car was completed, dyno-tested and we were set up and ready, we test drove the car for 1400 miles just to make sure everything was working and to make any adjustments that might be needed. Finally, the day

arrived to ship it to Seattle.

Jerry Hines and his team have been running the Alcan 5000 for thirty-four years. They know what they are doing and it shows. They put on a fantastic event. The 2018 Summer Alcan had approximately forty teams in cars, and almost that many motorcycles participating. By the time the starting flag dropped, five cars had already dropped out due to various mechanical failures or failed to get their cars completed. The routine was basically the same each day: start with a TSD rally segment lasting about an hour; then cover several hundred miles to the next TSD section, and then several hundred more miles to that night’s hotel. It was awesome.

As we headed north from Seattle into British Columbia, our first obstacles were the forest fires. We had fires on both sides of the route and had to drive with surgical masks on. That night at our first hotel, we washed the ash out of the air filter, changed out a head light, and made sure we were ready if we needed to evacuate the town in the middle of the night.

The scenery just kept on getting more breathtaking as we worked our way north through British Columbia to the Yukon Territory. And the roads keep getting “more challenging” (a

code name for worse). Our TSD sections were sometimes dirt or rock logging roads. I learned that the term “highway” was used very loosely. After crossing into the Yukon, we stayed in Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon Territory, a great town and welcome respite from the rough and tumble roads we had been traveling on. Then at 8:25 a.m. the next morning it was off to Dawson City.

Dawson City is a gold mining town with mud streets and board sidewalks. It is the location of Discovery Channels “Gold Rush.” This is also the location of the ferry that has to get us all to the other side of the Yukon River. Another piece of the adventure.

Now we are literally on the “Top of the World Highway” and 165 miles from the Arctic Circle. The “Top of the World Highway” is a lane-and-a-half wide mud and gravel road that is littered with water-filled pot holes. It is only open to traffic when the snow has melted off, about twelve weeks out of the year. Everyone is on their own here – no services and you’ll see very few people along the way. There were semi-paved sections, with “frost heaves” that buckle the pavement. So, we went from doing everything possible to miss the water-filled craters and sliding in the mud, to driving on a paved snake of a road, banging the ex-



Alaska is the land of photo ops. It’s like the Southwest used to be sixty-five years ago. Imagine after a long day on the road, seeing this four-engine DC-6 coming in low, barely clearing the filling station. Oh, wait – it’s just part of the service station’s theme. No charge for the wake-up call!



This stop in Watson Lake, British Columbia had a fence festooned with 72,000 signs and license plates from all over. It is something to see, but think about this: how many people travel with a large sign from their city or town that they can leave as a souvenir? It’s more like you see this the first time and bring something with you to leave on a subsequent second trip.



Fires in the wilderness areas are difficult to put out and most of the time they are allowed to burn out by themselves unless structures are involved. The smoke was so bad that face masks were necessary.

haust pipes on the surface and seemed like it was jarring every nut and bolt loose in the car.

By now we have deduced a pattern to the “frost heaves.” At the first frost heave, the rear tires rub the outer fenders, filling the interior with the smell of heated rubber. The second frost heave bottoms the suspension and we slam the pipes into the pavement. Then it was lather-rinse-repeat. It wasn’t until we had burned off half a tank of gas that we began to get over these heaves without drama.

Jeff, in the Comet, was doing better with its extra ride height. But then disaster happened: the rear brake line separated from the junction block on the axle and he lost his rear brakes. We pulled the broken parts off and he drove 245 miles on front brakes only, down shifting at times on the 10% grades. Exciting, but no real problem.

The temperature dropped to 37° and sleet started hitting the windshield. We crossed into Alaska and stopped in Chicken for gas. Then we

pushed on to Valdez. This is a world class road with glaciers, lakes, huge waterfalls and amazing vistas, sometimes through deep valleys loaded with wildlife. Truly magnificent. The Valdez NAPA store had all the parts needed to fix the Comet and a kind soul nearby even opened his shop so Jeff could put the car up on his lift to fix it. This is the kind of thing that makes Alaska so special. There is a sense of community that embraces visitors as well as residents. Would this happen in Connecticut? Forget about it....

The Hertz car draws a crowd even covered in mud. Every time we stop for gas, travelers and locals are all amazed it is being used and abused, and then the comment, “*You are doing 5000 miles in a GT 350H?? Up here? You must be crazy, but that’s awesome!!*”

On up through Alaska past Denali, the North Pole, (yes there is a North Pole, Alaska) and on to Fairbanks. The final Finishers Party is at

the Fountainhead Auto Museum – a world class collection of brass and pre-war autos you wouldn’t expect to find up here. It was a great place to hand out trophies to winners (not us) and celebrate the fact that we just completed the Alcan 5000. We felt like winners, merely having completed this amazing adventure. Our fellow competitors were awesome and it didn’t matter if they were on a KTM/BMW/Suzuki adventurer motorcycle, vintage car, or monster Jeep. Everyone shared a love of the adventure and the beauty of the scenery on the Alcan 5000.

Like the Olympics, Jerry and his team hold the summer Alcan 5000 every four years. Also like the Olympics, there is a winter Alcan 5000 coming up in 2020. The thought occurs to me that maybe we should take the GT350H...but I shake that off quickly. Clearly the GT 350H is not the right machine for a Winter Alcan. But if I could talk Joan into that Shelby Raptor...

Here are a few facts:

We traveled on the

- Top of the World Highway
- Dalton Highway
- Denali Highway
- Dempster Highway
- Klondike Highway
- Parks Highway
- Richardson Highway
- Logging roads with no name
- Dirt and mud roads that weren't even on a map

Farthest distance between gas stations was approximately 185 miles.

Places along the way:

- Kirkland, WA
- Whitehorse, YT
- Valdez, AK
- Chicken, AK
- Delta Junction, AK
- Dawson City, YT
- Fairbanks, AK
- Anchorage, AK
- Copper River, AK
- Tok, AK
- Quesnel, BC
- Watson Lake, YT
- Blackwater, BC
- Cassiar, BC
- Teslin, YT
- Telegraph Creek, BC
- Canol, YT
- Other towns too small to name

The temperature ranged between 92° in Seattle, to 37° and sleet at the border crossing at Poker Creek from the Yukon Territory into Alaska

The question that everyone asks is, "Did the GT350H break anything?" Yep. But never anything fatal. It never left us on the side of the road and was always ready to go by morning. Some of the broken parts were not discovered till we shipped it back.

What broke:

- Replaced an over-active fuel pump
- Adjusted the clutch three times
- Broke left side motor mount
- Bent and twisted exhaust pipes (from HUGE rock)
- CB Radio quit
- Very large dent in the fuel cell (the same rock that bent the exhaust)
- Replaced one headlight
- Used 3 quarts of oil
- Repaired both tail lights
- Replaced rear springs (the car was 2-inches lower at the end of the Alcan than the beginning)
- Timing gear on distributor severely worn
- Rear tires worn due to "rubs" on the outside edge
- Assorted rock chips
- Tighten or re-torque almost every nut and bolt

•Gas consumed... LOTS. 91 octane when we could get it or 87 most of the time as it was the only choice.

•Entry Fee: \$3,000 for one car and two passengers.

We shipped 6S819 back to Florida and did NOT wash it. It was shown at the Hilton Head Concourse and received the Ford Award presented by Moray Callum, VP of Design for Ford Motor Company as his favorite pick of the show.

What is next for 6S819? Finish the repairs, clean it up, and get it ready to be shipped to Europe for the HERO London to Lisbon Endurance Rally! You never know. Peking to Paris in 2028? The Alcan 5000 was not the end, but the beginning of a new rally career for 6S819.

Additional Information:

- www.Alcan5000.com
- <https://www.facebook.com/Nit-toTire/videos/vb.127494713927669/1029679050556165/?type=2&theater>
- <http://www.alcan5000.com/pdf/DrivingLineFall2018.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnySjcaDZI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6PJW-owHQw>





Yes, Virginia, there is a North Pole.



TSD Rally stage completed. The rally makes it more than just a vacation drive. It gives you a purpose and allows you to churn some of those competitive juices.





DRAGON SNAKES

Who were those guys behind Shelby American's drag race Cobra project? The Cobra Experience's Brooks Laudin catches up with them, and we tag along.

– Brooks Laudin

The Fates brought these two guys together in 1963 at Shelby American where they managed to pull off an unusual transition; they went racing from the production side of SAI. The racing was in 1320-foot increments and in a straight line, but it was racing nonetheless. About twelve seconds at a time.

Tony Stoer's family came west from New York in 1938 and he was born in Petaluma, California in 1941. His father, a clinical psychologist, was pressed into running the Petaluma Poultry Producers Co-Op during WWII, which provided and allocated processed poultry for the troops. Tony didn't grow up in a car-oriented family but found his street racing muse with

a few buddies in high school. He says his '34 five-window coupe wasn't fast but he did pretty well with it. There were just a few mods to the engine but the real trick was the 3:54 rear end, which allowed him to wind by the competition in second gear while they were searching for third. He and his buddies learned how to modify a car at the school of hard knocks, laying on their backs in the dirt, wrenching on the latest modification or the last thing that broke.

Jere Kirkpatrick's family came west from Gadsden, Alabama in the early '40s and landed in Culver City; California. Jere was born in 1944 at Santa Monica Hospital. Dad worked for Bill Murphy Buick in Culver City and spent his spare time as a me-

chanic for eventual Hall of Fame Midget racer "Bullet" Joe Garson. This was the cageless racing era for midgets, when men were men and where the driver's heads and shoulders were exposed above the open wheeled body work. Jere grew up at the tracks in Southern California, predominantly Gardena, Ascot and Gilmore, and grew to love "the dirt."

By junior high he was racing his own midget and had developed the view that "asphalt was for getting to the race track." He won his last midget race in 1958. In high school Jere took every shop elective he could and worked summers for a local machine shop, Kellogg Engineering. After graduation in the fall of 1962 he went full time at Kellogg's as an apprentice machinist, which meant a not very exciting existence de-burring holes and doing simple machine set ups.

The owner's son, Jim Kellogg, shared Jere's interest in working on cars and one day came by with a magazine article about a company over in Venice that was building sports cars. Jere was skeptical; sports cars weren't exactly his thing, but off they went one lunch time in the fall of 1962 and wandered into Shelby American Inc. His skepticism evaporated as soon as he saw a full boogie race shop. Jere can't remember who talked with them but the word was that the race season was over and they didn't need any help on the racing side, but try across the street. "Maybe they need someone."

Over to Carter Street Jere went, and knew his short-lived career at



Jere Kirkpatrick [left] and Tony Stoer today, fifty-five years after their Cobra Dragon-snake days. People change but cars don't.