

Good Friends of Gene Henderson, Mark Henderson  
Harry Henderson and of Rallying!

## ON RALLYING

ROADRALLY BY JAMES HEINE

### REMEMBERING ERIC

SCCA's rally community, British-car circles – and motorsports in general – lost a longtime friend on Aug. 24. **Eric Jones**, 65, an SCCA member for more than 40 years, died peacefully in his sleep after a nearly year-long battle against mesothelioma.

Jones, of Delaware, Ohio, was the longtime owner of British Auto Service and Overseas Motors in Columbus, Ohio, and a ProRally regular from the early 1970s through the mid-1980s. He passed away a few hours after his annual summer party held at his home, Riverside Farm, for his British-car customers, friends and rally colleagues. More than 250 people attended the event, at which the 1972 RHD Datsun 510 he was restoring and preparing for Great Britain's Lands End to John O'Groats Classic Reliability Trial on Dec. 6-9 was exhibited.

"When **Harry [Ward]** and I ran Le Jog last year, I already knew I had mesothelioma. That's why I was so cautious that the Escort failed, and we didn't finish," Jones explained in a telephone conversation shortly before his passing. "I had really wanted to finish that rally."

Jones said the most likely source of his cancer was exposure to asbestos during his many years as a mechanic. "An occupational hazard," he called it.

Jones began rallying in the early 1960s while still a member of the Marine Corps, sometimes participating in as many as three rallies in a weekend. A graduate of Ohio State University, Jones was a founder of the Columbus Rally Club and the Central Ohio Rally Club. He was involved in the Scioto Sports Car Club, Buckeye Sports Car Club, Central Ohio MG Owners, the Central Ohio Mini Owners and the Mid-Ohio Austin Healey Club. A delegate to the Austin-Healey Club of America, he and his wife, **Susan Logan**, planned numerous driving tours for British car enthusiasts.

In 1966, Jones founded the Sunriser Forest Rally, which became part of the ProRally series. In 1982, he chaired the Ohio Valley Region's Budweiser Forest Rally, which was named the best rally of the year. (Sunriser, chaired by **Richardaddock**, was named best rally of the year in 1985.)

As a competitor, Jones was the first, and one of only a handful of U.S.



rating. He was best known for his exploits in the early days of the SCCA ProRally series, where he successfully campaigned Datsun 510s. He won the 1977 Susquehannock Trail ProRally and placed fifth in Canada's 1974 Rally of the Rideau Lakes, which was part of the World Championship that year. In recent years, he had competed in vintage rallies both in North America and the U.K. He and Ward were the only U.S. team to ever earn a coveted medal on the grueling multi-day (and night) Le Jog.

"Eric and I ran eight Le Jogs," Ward recalls. "In 1999, Eric brought over from the U.S. his 1964 MGB. In 2000, we rented a 1966 Lotus Cortina from **David Sutton**. Eric then bought a 1965 Cortina GT, which was prepared and stored at Sweep Motorsport, Nuneaton. We ran the Cortina in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. A 1974 Escort RS2000 was then purchased, which we used in 2006 and 2007."

Ward notes that 2006 was their best year. "We won a silver medal, the National Team Prize, along with Class F3 and Best Non-European crew.

"You really get to know someone when you spend two or three weeks together in another country, especially when at least a week of that time is spent in intense concentration and close quarters. Eric and I became good friends. We could usually anticipate each other's moves."

Ward also recalls that Jones was a voracious reader, and part of his joy about rallying in England was that it allowed him to visit the sites he had always read about. Of their first visit to Le Jog, Ward says this about the days leading up to the rally: "Each day we would start with his map of England all circled. There was the first cathedral in Yorkshire that we just had to see. Then we certainly needed to stop at the foundry where Big Ben was cast. Then

canals that needed to be toured. And we couldn't miss the stop at **Donald Healey's** house, or that famous old restaurant on the edge of Dartmoor. And while we drove, I was getting a history lesson about the Roman road we were on, or the moors in the distance."

In an obituary prepared for NeOhio's newsletter, **Greg Lester** recalls that when the FIA regularly allowed competitors to cloak their real identities under assumed names, Jones registered the pseudonym *Rex Karrs*. "Eric's wonderful sense of humor and no-nonsense style will be greatly missed," Lester notes.

**Peter Nedin**, clerk of the course for Le Jog agrees. "Eric was one of Le Jog's greatest fans," says Nedin. "He loved the event, and no matter how bad the weather he always arrived at the finish with a broad grin on his face. His enthusiasm was infectious, and even when problems occurred – which can happen on an event as tough as Le Jog – Eric never complained, although if he felt a penalty had been incorrectly awarded he would politely but firmly point out the error. Eric and Harry's entry for Le Jog 2008 was one of the first to be received. He will be missed."

So true. Eric will be missed by a legion of friends and colleagues. SCCA rallying benefited enormously because of his passion for the sport.

Memorial contributions may be made to The James Cancer Hospital Fund 310578 for Dr. Miguel Villalona (P.O. Box 183112, Columbus, OH 43218-3112 – see also [www.jamesline.com](http://www.jamesline.com)) or the Highlands Nature Sanctuary (7629 Cave Road, Bainbridge, OH 45612).

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Eric Jones was well known and liked in the rally community, competing in various events, including Le Jog (BELOW). Sadly, Jones passed away on Aug. 24 after a battle with mesothelioma.



E. JENKINSON



Eric Jones

MG  
Mini  
Riley  
Austin  
Morris  
Triumph  
Wolseley  
Austin Healey

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