

Sandy Lovelace Award 2011 Winner George Bell

By Doug Harder.

Like other automotive enthusiasts I got to know George through his talents as an artist. His attention to detail was second to none. As a community of auto enthusiasts we are so lucky to have had an artist like George to design our various logos, T-shirts and posters. In many cities their collective art (by their local automotive artists) is lacking whereas in this area we are fortunate to have had the very best.

During the past thirty years, George got to meet the major players in motorsport through his artwork. In the beginning he used his experience in sales to sell his art but it wasn't long before his "art" sold itself and all the major players were coming to him.

George was born in May of 1942 at St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster, B.C. I know this because when the concerned public tried in vain to save the hospital six years ago he commented on that. The family moved to Vancouver Island where George grew up and received his education.

George may have had several cars as a teenager, but his favourite was a 1952 Ford, which he customized and modified like many of his peers at the time. He moved to the mainland looking for work and found employment mostly in the sales field at various companies. One was at ESCO Foundry and another was Harding Fork Lift.

At ESCO George met Sandy who also was employed there and they were married and have lived in Maple Ridge since 1972. They have a son named Ken who is now 38 years of age.

George's racing involvement began at Westwood in Coquitlam in the sixties. He both raced cars and worked as a pit crew member with his pal, Mickey McGuire on an MGA and a Mini Cooper. This experience led him to work on another pit crew later when he went to work as a sales person for Harding Fork Lift. Pete Harding, the owner, and George Bell first met while attending a fork lift apprenticeship course together in 1979. Later, Pete



George Bell at the 2004 GVMPS Induction Ceremony (Gerry Frechette photo)

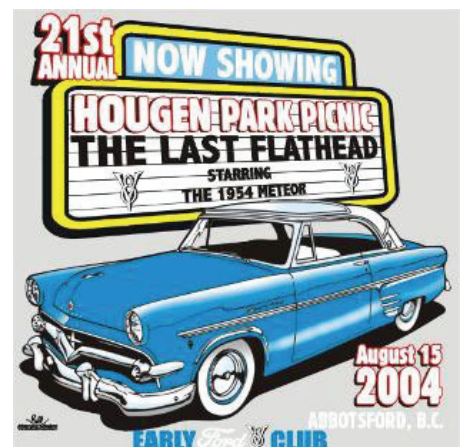
formed his own company and asked George to come over and work for him. Pete recalls George doodling and drawing and the subject was always cars. Pete was racing cars on dirt tracks like Skagit Speedway in Alger, Washington at the time. Every year Pete would get a new car and George would sketch each one and give Pete the results. Pete still has those '83, '84 and '85 drawings and is as fond of them today as he was when each original was first given to him.

One of the most important items on any race car is the tires. Pete says "that was one of the projects George excelled at on his pit crew". "George's list of tracks and tire combinations including air pressures was as detailed as his drawings" said Pete. Incidentally, Pete is still racing today in the NASCAR Touring circuit.

Living in Maple Ridge, George developed friendships with others in the area such as Jim Grant and Jack Williams who are both recognized pioneers by the Society. George often traveled to events, races or socials with one or the other on many occasions.

Sandy recently told me that George was a self-taught artist. She said that in 1982 he thought he was able to make a

career out of automotive art and he was right. The name of his company was Bell Motorsport Designs. George also benefited from the fact that he did not pigeon hole his craft towards just one or two types of motorsport, he was open to it all. Road Racing, Vintage Cars, Collector Cars, Demolition Derbies, Hot Rods, Drag Racing, Boat Racing, etc. They all helped pay the bills. Mission Raceway itself and including all the various race teams and associations were important clients. One of the most popular shirts was the B.C.H.R.A. 40th Reunion edition that sold 1200 copies. The annual Vancouver Motorsport Show commissioned George as an annual artist from 1988 through 2002.





Examples of George's motorsport art

What is the Sandy Lovelace Award?

The late Sandy Lovelace was a drag racer who was a regular competitor at British Columbia tracks, in particular, those on Vancouver Island. To honour his memory, a group of veteran Vancouver Island drag racers, *Island Dragway Promoters*, has funded an annual award in recognition of *the person, or persons, who have made an outstanding contribution to the preservation of the history of motorsport in British Columbia.*

Rick Gonders is the administrator of the award. Mr. Gonders has charged the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society with the responsibility of managing the award process annually, including assembling nominees and selecting the winner.

Since 2004, the award has been made at the GVMPS annual induction ceremony.

A permanent plaque is inscribed with the names of the winners each year. Additionally, there are beautiful keeper trophies.

Past Lovelace award winners

2004: Doug Harder, Tom Johnston, and Brian Pratt

2005: Larry Braine

2006: Langley Speedway Historical Society

2007: The BC Hot Rod Association for their 50th anniversary event.

2008: The Digney family; Joyce and Dig for their preservation of the history of the Digney Speedway.

2009: The Vintage Racing Club of British Columbia for their British Columbia Historic Motor Races and the Westwood50 celebration.

2010: The Deeley Motorcycle Exhibition



George Bell designed GVMPS logo