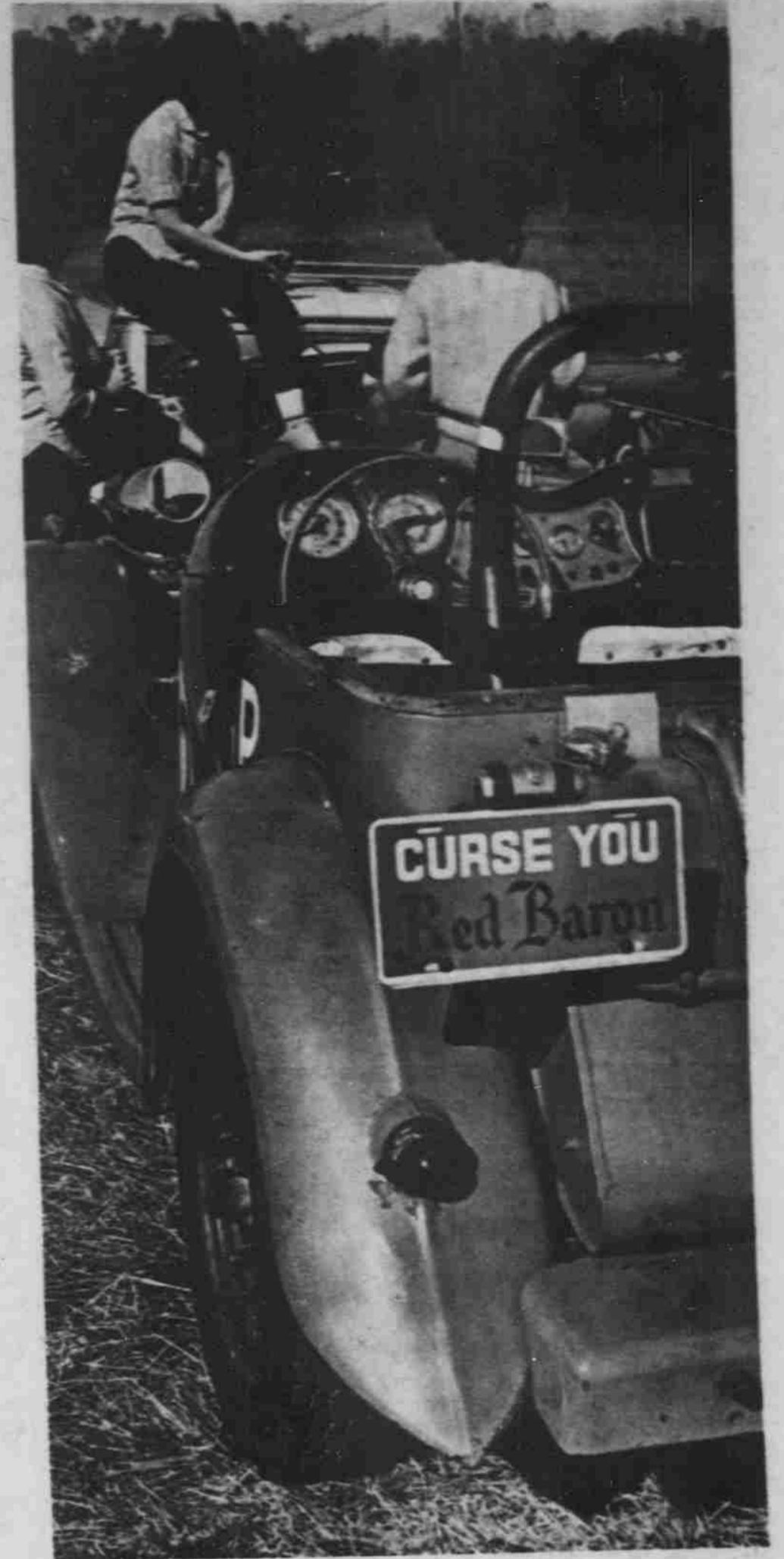




Formula Vees Race Through VIR's Downhill Esses



Curses! Foiled Again!

Goblin Go At VIR

There is a certain color to sports car racing that is quite unlike anything in the world.

Some call it the sport man's most dangerous game, others call it his most thrilling, but to those who watch, it is much more.

It is the tingling smell of exotic methanol and alcohol fuel blends and the deafening sound of high performance engines being turned to razor sharpness.

It is the thrill of seeing a green flag send 30 drivers and machines screaming down the straight and into the first turn and the agony of seeing one spin off the course.

The drivers themselves are as varied as the faces of a deck of cards. Many are young, few are old, and some are women. All put a tent over their cars while they themselves sleep in the open.

Their uniforms differ only in colors and degrees. Some wear

tennis shoes, some boots. All wear flameproof suits and crash helmets.

Ask one why he races and often the reply will be simply, "It's my job," or "It started as a hobby and now I can't stop." Many will say they don't know why.

The cars these men drive are as exotic as the fuels they burn. Some are bizarre hybrids of several different cars, while others are street machines tuned for racing.

Some look impossibly small for racing. Only 24 inches high at the top of the roll bar, they look pitifully inadequate for the 140 mph they can travel.

The racing courses are long and tortuous. In most there is a corner and a gear change coming every three or four seconds.

Virginia International Raceway, rated by many drivers as one of the nation's top sports car circuits, is 3.2 miles long with 12 major turns and two long straightaways.

The fastest cars will reach over 170 on the straight but the lap record is only 87 mph.

The spectators come from far and near to see the VIR races. Many are college students who just want a lazy afternoon in the sun away from the grind of classes. Beer and blondes keep them company.

Some are hardened racing fans, who know they will be treated to some of the most exciting driving in the racing world.

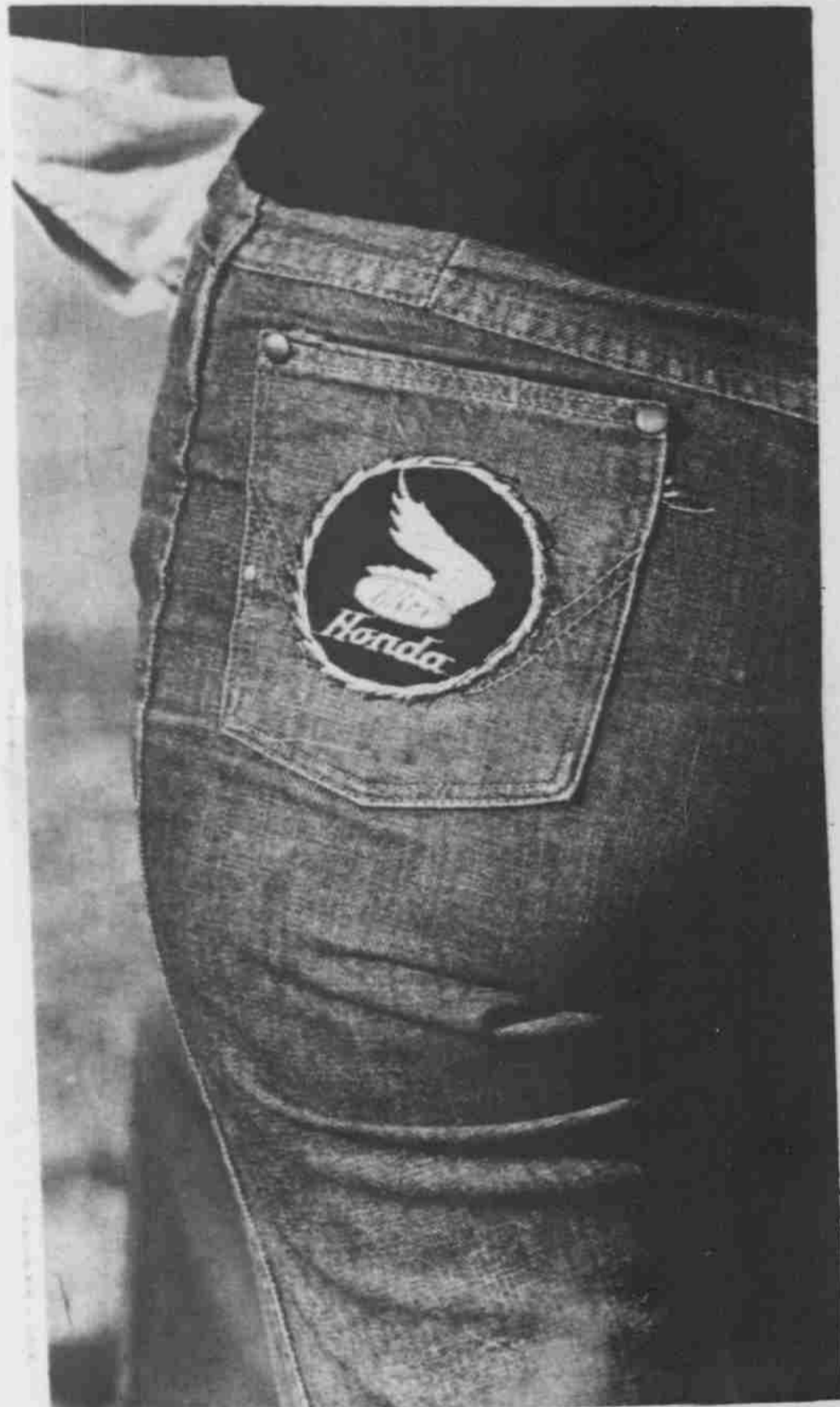
Occasionally they wave to the drivers whizzing past, and often a gloved hand will be uplifted in return.

And when it's all over, the drivers load the racing machines on trailers and head for the next circuit, the spectators throw out the empty beer cans and head home and the track closes down until the next races.

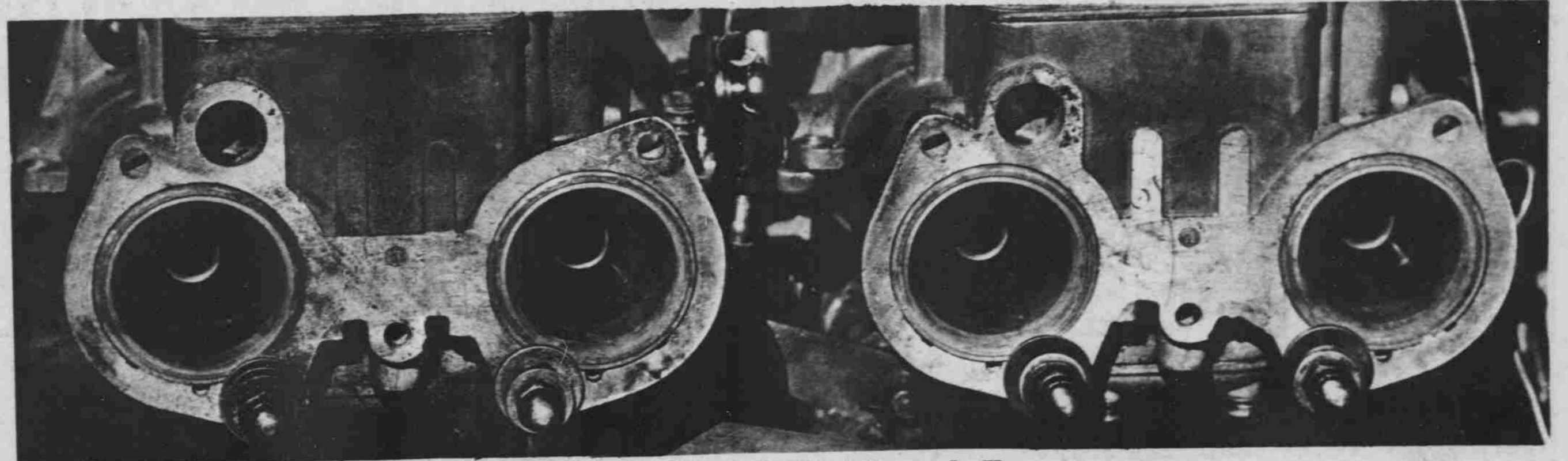
It's a world all its own.

Photos by Steve Adams

Text by Steve Price



You Meet Hondas On The Nicest People



Exhaust Manifold Of A Formula Vee



A Woman Driver Checks Dials Before The Race



A Spectator Watches The Race From Her Car