

For the driver who enjoys racing with others who value driver attitude, skill and car preparation.

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RACE SCHEDULE

2006

FEB 25

VRG Pittsburg Social

MARCH 25

Spring Tour and Seminar

APR 14-16 - VIR - VRG w/VDCA

MAY 18-21 - NHIS Drivers' School

MAY 19-21

NHIS Vintage Celebration

June 22-25 - VARAC -

Mosport Vintage Festival

JUL 8-9 - PVGP Historic Races -

Beaver Run

AUG 19-20

NHIS Drivers' School

SEPT/OCT - Summit Point

VRG - Fall Celebration

SPRING TOUR AND SEMINAR VISIT MAJOR RACE CAR COLLECTION March 25, 2006

Fred Simeone's collection of sports-racing cars may be the best in the world. He has winners or front-runners from Le Mans, from the '20s through the '60s. The best of the best: not just any Aston DBR1-3000, but the Moss Nurburgring winner; not just any Type S Mercedes (like those couple of dozen ordinary \$3 million examples), but the Caracciola Mountain Champion; the '37 Bugatti "Tank" Le Mans winner; the Fitch/Walters Cunningham that won Sebring in '52; the "lost" Cobra Daytona that Fred hunted for years, only to be attacked by spurious claimants once he got it home. Talk about Lifetime Achievement: Fred is one of the world's leading neurosurgeons, and also one of the greatest car collectors of all time.
by Paul Wilson

Pete McManus, Cloverleaf Auto Service and I would like to invite you to the VRG Spring Tour and Seminar.

Pete and I thought about what type of gathering we would like to have. We both agreed that last year's event was quite nice but no matter what you did tech sessions are tech sessions. While most of our significant others may tolerate or even share our strange old car obsessions they draw the line at going to tech sessions at someone's shop. Last



Photo by Walter Pietrowicz

year was VRG's first session and while we had a good turnout of significant others (including husbands and wives), I was not willing to bet it was going to happen again. Over the years Candy and I have hosted a number of these events either at my shop or at David George's. We both pretty much agreed that the wives and/or husbands ("others") came for the social amenities and good food. Just stand-alone social amenities were not enough, and we held a mini rally. That was in different era.

For VRG: Good food is a given and I like to eat, so... Pete and I, Candy and Joanne, also, thought about this a bit and felt that the rally was a VSCCA thing in combination with a tech session. I like to rally but if VRG is going to do a rally I want it to be a full blown TSD rally,

con't on page 2

IN MEMORIUM

Jackie Natrass

We are deeply saddened to report that Jackie Natrass passed away on Thursday, December 29th, 2005 at the Doylestown Hospital. Jackie was well known to vintage racers throughout the region, for her many years of service as a Registrar at the VSCCA Pocono event. She also assisted her husband Don at the VSCCA Driver's School, and accompanied him to many other events. We will miss her smiling face and helpful nature. Our sympathies go out to Don and the entire Natrass family. A memorial service was held in Doylestown on Wednesday, January 4th, with many vintage racing friends in attendance.

An obituary may be found at:

www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/224-01012006-591609.html

Spring Tour and Seminar (con't from page 1)

taking a full weekend and covering a couple of hundred miles. So we came up with this format, more social and less tech, but a very important tech.

The gathering will go something like this: We will meet at Cloverleaf's shop (doesn't hurt to have an "in" with the owners) beginning at 9am. We will lay out a late breakfast table with Lox, bagels, other assorted smoked fish, cream cheese, rye bread, dry cereals, assorted pastries, juices, coffee and teas. At 10:30 we will begin wrapping up breakfast and loading the bus for a trip into Philadelphia to see Dr. Fred Simeone's very significant race car collection. Dr. Simeone has one of the most important private car collections anywhere. Housed in an old stone building in Philadelphia, Pa. he has turned this building into two floors of car wonderland. Even non-car people can not help but to be dazzled by this collection and the obvious pride and care Dr. Simione has lavished on it. Not only are the cars beyond the pale, in one corner is an Aston Martin DBR1 along side of a D type Jaguar, alongside a C type Jaguar. In another spot is one of the original, probably the most original, Shelby Daytona Cobra Coupes. There is an SS 100, a Mercedes Gullwing, many pre-war Alfa's, a GT40, and an Auburn, and too many to tell you about here. After about two hours we will reload the bus and

come back to Cloverleaf where we can finish off the lox and have some cold cuts and salad before we begin our seminar, which is going to cover the Hans and other safety devices. This will last an hour or so and then we will wrap it all up. As per last year, for those who are local or who are choosing to stay in the area for the weekend, some of us will be heading out to a local eatery for dinner and to continuing that time honored racing tradition.talking about past races. If we were a fishing club it would all be... It was THIS BIG...

The dinner is ala carte and we will be letting you know the costs of the social soon. Naturally this is not going to be a \$10 or \$12 dollar affair. There will be the cost of the bus and the food will both be a bit more and of higher standards than many tech sessions/seminars you may have attended.

Pete and I think the additional costs will be well worth it but we will need to have an indication quite soon of how many of you plan to attend. Once we have a handle on that we can better figure a price. We will also be limited to the number of people who can attend and it will be on a first come first served basis. At present we think the most we can handle will be 80 people.

Thanks,

Ralph Steinberg & Pete McManus

VRG DRIVER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM *by Bob Girvin*

VRG is focused on the enjoyment of racing our vintage cars. Toward that end we encourage our members to race with us at what ever level of intensity you desire. This program is intended to help our members develop driving skills that will provide more enjoyment and safety while on track at speed.

Our Level One course will be for those with limited or no track experience. Level Two is aimed at the driver with solid wheel to wheel race experience wanting to advance car control skills and race craft. Level Three will be directed at the racer wanting help shaving time off an already quick lap.



John Faulkner slides his MGA around the skid pad at NHIS
Photo by Jim Warren



Chris Meyers sharpening his skills at NHIS
Photo by Jim Warren

Our first effort on July 30 and 31 of last year, was led by Ed Valpey with much help from a group of BMWCCA, White Mountain Chapter instructors. We had 14 Level One and 16 Level Two drivers. Saturday was devoted to a skills school involving a wet skid pad circle and figure eight, braking/lane change and autocross exercises. Sunday consisted of classroom and on track sessions. All Level One drivers had in-car instruction if they had a second seat. All others had the option of in-car instruction or critique from instructors posted at various corners after each track session was over. Everyone went home having learned something new. Those involved in running the school also learned how we can improve the school format to better suit vintage racers.

This year we are putting together a program tailored to the needs of our members. Vintage racers drive a very diverse group of cars. They have different goals, from wanting to win races to simply wanting to enjoy the race experience safely. We hope to accommodate all vintage racers and help them become safe drivers with a proper vintage attitude at what ever level they chose.

We plan to continue to build our relationship with the White Mountain Chapter of the BMWCCA. They were the key players in putting on our 2005 school and will be helping us with our 2006 schools. I hope that we may be able to offer them a race group at some of our future events and perhaps even convert some to vintage racers.

We hope to train at least ten of our members to be instructors working under the direction of Ed Valpey. Long term VRG should be staffed and equipped to conduct schools on our own. While we plan to continue to run a Level One school as part of our NHIS event in May, we want to have a Level Two later in the season. This year it will be at NHIS August 19-20, in 2007 it will be at Summit Point or the new Thunderbolt track.

In May at NHIS the plan is to have a skills school on Wednesday, May 17 for potential VRG instructors. This will be a full day of car control exercises. Ed Valpey and a few of his BMW instructors will teach procedure, coach students on skills and how to coach others on achieving the desired skills.

Thursday, May 18 will be the start of a Level One School. This is for folks with limited or no experience. It will start with a lecture on the tire patch, weight transfer, and the exercises for the day. The balance of the day will be devoted to circular and figure eight skid pads, and an autocross course designed to teach corner entry, rotation and exit, a compromise right/left to teach line and weight transfer issues. Straight line braking and trail braking will also be included.

Friday will start with a classroom on race procedure, NHIS race line and the day's exercises. This will be followed by observation of experienced drivers on course with instructor commentary. Mid-day will have the students on track to do a lead/follow exercise and mock starts. This will be followed by Instructor comments and more classroom.

(cont on page 5)

The Pittsburgh Social

Date: **Saturday, February 25, 2006**

Location: **Sharp Edge Creekhouse, Crafton PA 15205**

www.sharpedgebeer.com/creekhouse.html - check it out for full menu and beer selection. It is styled after an old European pub and they specialize in European beers. We will have the entire 2nd floor of this converted house

Directions: This is a very easy location to get to, it is less than 2 miles off of the major North-South Highway 79. Detailed directions to the restaurant are available on their website

Schedule: Cocktails start at 6.30 pm, dinner 7 - 8.30, presentations and socializing to follow.

RSVP: Please RSVP with number attending (spouses and guests encouraged) by Feb 15th.

Via phone 412-262-6611 or email (preferred)

Keith.Lawrence@FedEx.com

We almost filled the place up last year, maybe we can do it this year.

I expect to see you there.

Keith

CONFESSIONS OF A GRAY-HAIRED ROOKIE

by Paul Wilson

I always wanted to race, but the usual obstacles got in the way. The breakthrough was my fiftieth birthday, when I realized that the graphs were pointing in the wrong direction: I was getting older, not younger; poorer, not richer. Racing was still expensive. It was safer than in the fifties when I looked through the fence at Thompson Raceway, but still not completely safe. Should I go racing? It had to be now or never.

A friend offered to rent me his Formula Ford, and I found myself at my first driver's school. The next two days were among the happiest and most satisfying of my life. In the last forty years race driving fantasies have occupied my mind only slightly less often than sexual fantasies, and my feeling when I finally went on the track was also comparable to what it was in those other experiences—"This is so great, I can't believe I'm actually doing it!" I guess that many people, less inhibited, feel differently: if they want to do something they just do it, rather than waiting forty years. Maybe that's why other accounts by beginning racers have

never expressed the feelings I had. I ask you, dear reader/racer, as you read my confessions: did you feel this way too? First, liberated. When driving on the road, only part of your attention is on driving. You also have to be thinking all the time about children on bicycles, dogs, angry mothers calling the police to report your reckless driving. Howling down a back road at 95, you come upon some old people in a Buick, returning from church. You jink past (in a no-passing zone), in a maneuver you know is perfectly safe. You also know that the old folks are having heart failure, and that you are evil.

Among the road hazards not found on the track is the inattentive driver coming the other way, on the wrong side of a blind turn. In this part of Virginia, I'm amazed so many drivers reach maturity. I'd expect many more to be culled by the Darwinian principle of Survival of the Fittest. Typical is the farmer in his rusty pickup, looking over his shoulder at his rival's corn crop as he one-handedly cuts to the apex of a blind left bend.

con't on page 11

VRG LOG BOOKS

After working with the VRG Log Book process for a season, we've decided it needs a little tweaking to make it easier to understand and use. We will have a revised information sheet, the same application form, and temporary log book pages available soon.

The simple version goes like this: If you're new to Vintage racing and/or are preparing a new car, we generally follow the rules of the clubs that belong to the Vintage Motorsports Council and compete in this area. Check out our rules on our web site and don't be afraid to ask questions. Contact me or Tivvy Shenton and if we can't give an answer immediately, we'll find someone to help you. It's a lot less expensive if you only have to do it once.

Once you have your car ready:

1. Download the "VRG Log Book: Policies~Procedures~Requirements"(PPR) pages, the "VRG Log Book Request Form", and the "Temporary Log Book Page"

from the VRG web site (www.vrgonline.org), or request them from me or a Technical Inspector.

2. Read the information sheet carefully; then, fill out the application form, the temporary log book page, and the event Technical Inspection sheet. Please let Tivvy or me know what event you are bringing your car to in order to have it checked for a log book.

3. Bring the completed forms, your car, and driver's gear to Technical Inspection at the next VRG event you have entered and been accepted to run.

4. Once you have passed Technical Inspection, have the Technical Inspector sign your log book application as well as your temporary log book page and you will be able to run that event.

5. The folks from the VRG Technical Committee will check your car for Vintage eligibility at some point during the event and, if approved, will sign your Log Book Application Form as well.

6. You may then mail your completed forms with the required photographs of your car to me (VRG Log Book Officer) and you will have your log book a short time later.

Note: Any active member of the VRG, who does not have a log book from another vintage club or whose vintage log book is full, may apply for a VRG Log Book. If you have a log book with another VMC club we are more than happy to use it at our events. We do not require a VRG Log Book in order for you to run with us. We prefer that all cars have only one log book, as this gives the Technical Inspectors at any event a record of any problems found and corrected at previous events.

Safe, well-prepared cars are part of fulfilling our wish for our members to "enjoy racing with others who value driver attitude, skill, and car preparation".

PLAY SAFE- PLAY NICE- ENJOY THE RIDE!

Kim Eastman
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VRG DRIVER PROGRAM

(con't from page 3)

Saturday a.m. will start with a mandatory drivers' meeting for all event participants and will be followed by a detailed chalk talk on the way around NHIS with Ed Valpey. Mid morning will be a classroom on Race Safety. Mid-day will be a practice session for students followed by instructor comments. During the afternoon there will be a lecture on how to prepare for a vintage race weekend with tips on what to do when on race weekend.

Sunday all students will be integrated into their appropriate race group and run with the experienced racers. Instructors will observe and comment on all students.

Our second school, Aug 19-20, will be Level Two for experienced drivers. Saturday will focus on car control skills similar to the Level One school, but with higher expectation by end of the day. Sunday will include some classroom on race craft and track time with instruction.

In 2007 our Level One school will be held at NHIS in May and be very similar to the 2006 school. The second school will be held at Thunderbolt if the facility is available as planned. It will be a Level Two school.

We also plan to have a Level Three program in 2007. This will be for the driver that wants help finding another 1/10 of a second, corner by corner. In car instrumentation will be used to record the driver performance. While this may not sound very "vintage", a vintage attitude will be maintained.

A number of members have already indicated an interest in taking part in the Instructor program.

Any members wanting to be part of this program should email Ed Valpey at vmax@metrocast.net.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to 2006 and the second full year of the Vintage Racers Group. It is time for all of us to “REUP.”

We think that the membership can be proud of the progress VRG made in 2005. We think that most of you who participated in a VRG Event are “with us” and will renew your membership for 2006. We are still building and we need you and we thank you. For those of you who joined VRG “to help the new club to get started” and did not attend an event (and may not attend a VRG Event in 2006), we still need your support. Please renew your membership and stick with us. The first few years are crucial to a new organization and we need the continued financial support of a sustaining membership.

Your 2006 VRG Membership Renewal Form will be Mailed to you by the Secretary, shortly.

The January 2006 Newsletter is a little longer than the last one. We had some wonderful articles that we could not include and that will be published in forth coming Newsletters. Ralph Steinberg has organized a Spring Tour and Seminar at his race shop that takes us to Dr. Fred Simone’s race car collection in Philadelphia. It is a private showing that is not open to the public and Dr. Simone’s gracious invitation to VRG members is made possible by the high regard the Dr. has for Ralph Steinberg. This may be your only opportunity to visit the Dr.’s collection.

We found that probably the best event we presented last year was the Drivers School in August at New Hampshire International Speedway. Ed Valpey and Bob Girvin orchestrated an event that we think distinguished VRG from the racing and the vintage car clubs in the east. We intend to build on that success and Bob Girvin addresses the VRG Driver Development Program in his article.

Kim Eastman, who drew the straw to step off the Board and make way for a new member covers the Log Book process. Patti Eastman has joined us with the first of what we hope to be a regular column, “The View from the Corner.” Ivan Franz has written on driving a Formula Ford, Paul Wilson on being a grey haired rookie, and Maria Andretti has returned with further thoughts on the wife left home (by choice) by the vintage racer.

There is a book review of Lee Raskin’s latest book on James Dean and a recipe.

FOR THOSE WHO CAN ATTEND, DON’T FORGET THE PITTSBURGH SOCIAL, FEB 25.

Bill Hollingsworth

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Many of the start up activities are behind us so we are now working to expand and refine our programs. 2006 will see many elements of our early efforts start to mature and by 2007 we will have most of the puzzle pieces where we want them. We have a great group of people working to make it all happen and the team continues to grow. With more people sharing the load some of us that were at risk of burn out are getting our second wind. Seeing the results of those first year effort come to fruition and more hands picking up tasks to be done is refreshing.

Last May we surveyed our membership on a number of key questions regarding the direction we should pursue. The response was good and on virtually all issues the results were comforting in that they pretty much supported the direction that our board wanted to take.

This coming year we plan to expand and refine our Driver Development Program as outlined on page three. While this will help our members take there game up a notch or two, our goal will be to make our racing environment a safer place.

VRG will continue to build the NHIS event in May. Integrated into this event will be the first of our two Schools. We will again have the primary responsibility for the on track activities at the PVGP Beaver run event in July. Our second school will be at NHIS in mid August. Our final VRG managed event will be at Summit Point again. We will also be laying the ground work for an event at the new Thunderbolt track scheduled to open in 2007.

In addition to the VRG managed track events we will continue to strengthen our support relationships with VARAC and VDCA. Our season will start off April 14-16 with VDCA on the full course at VIR. In June we will support VARAC at Mosport. Plans for Mont Tremblant are still uncertain at this time. These support events afford our members an opportunity to enjoy some of the finest road courses in North America.

The VRG website is progressing well. This year additional information will be added along with other improvements. The forum is working very well and is a valuable asset for our members. I see no need for change. This has become a great resource as we have many knowledgeable members contributing helpful information. I encourage all to utilize this resource in the coming year.

Membership involvement is key to the growth of our club. I encourage everyone to stand up and be heard on issues they view to be important. I encourage all that can; to get involved in some aspect of our growing club, and contribute to the building process in what ever way is of interest to you.

See you at the races!

Bob Girvin

“THE VIEW FROM THE CORNER”

FLAGGING FOR DRIVERS: Oops...Did You Make a Pass Under Yellow?

“Yeah, but on the grid I was told the first lap would be green!” or “Yes, but the Grid Marshall told me the first lap would be under yellow. I was on the second lap!”

Want to avoid being black~flagged for passing under yellow? The solution is really very simple: Pay attention to the Flag Stations. It’s as easy as that. The information communicated to you by the corner workers is your real~time; up~to~the~second; final word on track conditions.

In the situations described above, the Grid Marshals are giving you the latest information they have from Race Control. Once you go on course, however, whatever the corner workers tell you overrides everything else you have previously heard.

Why are there flag stations at every racetrack “manned” by corner workers? They are there to provide instant communications. They are communicating with you, the race driver, via flags & hand signals in order to keep you safe during a race or practice session. They are also in constant communication with Race Control via radios.

FLAGGING FOR DRIVERS

This column is being written specifically for Vintage Race Drivers. Corner workers receive on~going, on~the~job training with experienced workers. “On~going” & having an experienced worker at your side are the keys here. Most drivers, however, are taught only the basics of the flags...once. Then, you are on your own...no one to turn to if you are unsure of what a certain flag means or how to respond in a specific situation

In future issues of the VRG Newsletter, I will go over each of the flags you will see used at the race track and

One of the most important things you need to do during every one of your track sessions is: Note where the flag stations are located, keep an eye on them during your time on course, and remember that the corner workers on those stations are giving you the very latest in what you need to know about what’s ahead. Drivers have often told me that they are just way too busy to do this. I was once a racer myself and understand this rebuttal perfectly. However, I think you will agree that seeing, say, a waving yellow & reacting appropriately to it, you will be much less busier than you would be by missing the yellow and discovering the stalled race car center~track around that blind corner on your own.

Remember... it only takes one driver who doesn’t see, ignores, or doesn’t understand the flag shown at a station to cause a problem for the other drivers on the track.



what each flag is “telling” you. A particular flag may be “FYI” only or it may require a specific response from you, the driver. If a particular flag requires you to do something, I’ll tell you exactly what your response needs to be. Some flags are shown to you in different ways (furled, standing, or waving) and I will explain the difference between each configuration and what this means to you. Also, you will see some significant differences between Vintage, SCCA, and FIA rules. So...even if you have raced all your life, I think (hope) you will find something of value in this series.

Comments & Questions Are Always Welcome at cabbageyard@yahoo.com

Patti Eastman

LETTERS

BOOK REVIEW - JAMES DEAN AT SPEED

by Bill Hollingsworth

1955 was a year in which the Bordeaux vintage was very good (not on par with the '53's), in which Eisenhower, having recovered from a heart attack, was making plans to run for a second term, Ford had introduced the Thunderbird, and the DC-7 was still flying most of the U.S. routes coast to coast. It was also a year in motor racing in which many died. At Le Mans, Pierre Levegh's 300 SLR Mercedes swerved to avoid the swerving Austin Healey of Lance Macklin, crashing into the spectators lining the track, killing Levegh, 70 or more spectators, and injuring another 100. Two weeks before, Bill Vukovich, while leading the Indianapolis 500 in search of his third straight victory, crashed and died. I was 15 years old and living in Los Angeles.

1955 was the year that East of Eden was released, James Dean was made a star, Rebel Without a Cause was released, and Giant was completed; and James Dean was killed in his Porsche 550 Spyder, breaking it in on the drive from Los Angeles to Salinas, where the car was entered in a SCCA road race in Salinas.

In 1955, if you were young and "into" sports cars, you would have wanted a Porsche (even if all you could afford was a MG). If you were "into" girls you wanted Natalie Wood. James Dean had a Porsche Speedster 1500S, which he raced, and he had Natalie Wood, in the movies. Lee Raskin, a VRG member and historian, has written, **JAMES DEAN AT SPEED** (David Bull Publishing, Phoenix, Arizona), which covers Dean's short life, in photographs with text by the author. It is a wonderful book.

The story begins at childhood, in Indiana. It takes us to New York with Dean as an aspiring actor, to Los Angeles, back to New York to the Actor's Studio, and again returning to Los Angeles. From the beginning he had a motor on two wheels. Motorcycles were an early passion for a struggling and moody young man, penniless, but overflowing with a passion to act, and for speed. His transport in Los Angeles was mostly on a motorcycle, by then in was a Triumph TR5 (500cc twin) and Raskin tells the story of his riding it up the canyons and across Mulholland Drive. He was very much like the characters he portrayed in East of Eden and Rebel Without a Cause – a little out of control (wild). The photographs are terrific. There are scenes from stage sets, in public with girl friends and on his motorcycle and in his Porsche – on and off the track. The last half of the book covers his racing,

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DIARY OF A DESPERATE CARWIFE

by Maria Andretti

Dear Diary,

Hi! It's me, Maria! I'm back by popular demand. Well, sort of. To be totally honest, I received absolutely no hate letters from carpeople (phew!) and actually 3 1/2 letters of support from spouses. Mostly female. The 1/2 was questionable. To be expected, I guess, in today's world.

The holidays are over, thank heavens. It's the cocktail parties that do

me in. Don't get me wrong. I love the drinks, the hors d'oeuvres, and that fa la la stuff. It's the cartalk I loathe. Just put my adorable husband within seven feet of another carperson and the two of themglom on to each other like magnets. First they sniff, like dogs, to test each other's interest base, and then whammo! They know, boy do they know. They have found another maniac they can talk carburetors to. And they do talk carburetors, ad infinitum. I then go totally bonkers. My eyes are by now very fixed in the "glazed over" mode. I make the valium stare chic in my holiday togs. I have been told, I admit proudly, that I have taken "looking bored" to a whole new level.

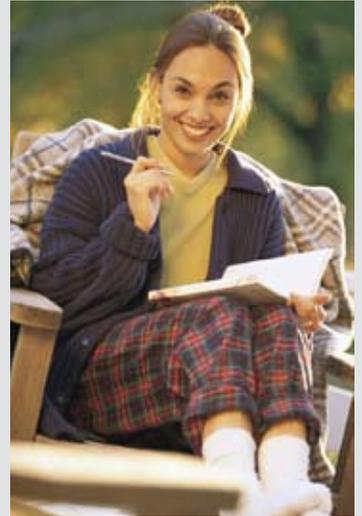
Does my dear mate care? I could pass out on the floor in a red and green velvet heap and he wouldn't even notice. I could pull a temper tantrum, kick the floor. Not worth it. He is truly, deeply immersed. No mistletoe for this lady. Only hanging shock absorbers.

For Christmas he gave me a very nice present. Then he gave himself an even nicer present. He waited until Christmas morning to tell me about it, not surprisingly after he had mellowed me out with his very nice prezzie. Then he took me gently, lovingly by the hand and led me-- can you believe? --to the garage. And there it was, his present to himself, another balnkety-blank racecar. Do you see my problem? How could I demolish him in front of the tree and all the children? It would not have been a pretty picture,

Ho Ho Ho and Vroom Vroom Vroom. The holidays are over indeed. I weigh ten pounds more because I ate every hors d'oeuvres rather than create a scene (gotta blame someone), he has his damn car, and my family has not been served supoenas in a murder case (which would be justifiable, I assure you).

Peace on earth. Happy New Year. Even for carpeople.

Love, Maria



VINTAGE FORMULA FORD FROM THE DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Ivan Frantz

Your editor asked me to write something about Vintage Formula Ford from a driver's perspective. First the disclaimers. There are a lot of guys out there with a lot more experience than I in racing in general and Formula Ford in particular. Prior to purchasing the Ford I had been racing a Lotus 7 in vintage events for 10 or so years, and felt like I couldn't have much more fun or success. There was, nonetheless, an urge to drive a car built for no purpose other than racing. Formula Ford seemed to provide that at reasonable cost. People have frequently referred to the Lotus 7 as a formula car with fenders, but I quickly discovered that there were a couple of learning curves to be climbed: car preparation and setup, and driving.



Photo by Walter Pietrowicz

I brought the Seven to the track for its first event, asked Charlie Gibson how much air to put in the tires, then drove it that way for 10 years, adapting my technique to the characteristics of the car. The car was totally adaptable and forgiving, and I found there were few situations I couldn't drive my way out of. With a purpose built race car such as the Ford, almost everything is adjustable and the object is to set the car up to be easy to drive and fast at whatever track one is at. There are a number of excellent race shops serving the vintage racer that can

do all of this, but for me a great part of the fun of racing is preparing and maintaining my own car. I had read the books, and some set up information came with the car, but it took me the better part of the first season to get to the point where I could reliably produce consistent and appropriate settings. Inappropriate settings could make the car almost undriveable, and the skills I had learned in the Seven weren't necessarily enough to compensate.



Photo by Walter Pietrowicz

There are some fundamental similarities in driving the Seven and the Ford, in that both are "momentum" cars. For those of you used to driving ground pounders, that means that nothing

happens when you push your right foot to the floor. The punishment for loss of momentum is greater in the Ford than in the Seven. I think this is because cornering speeds are higher in the Ford, making speed swings during a good lap less than in the Seven. To win in the Ford one must maintain momentum near the limits of the car's potential at all times. The margin between "almost lost it" and "lost it" is narrower in the Ford so one must learn to read the car well and respond appropriately.

In addition to superior cornering ability, the Ford also has much better brakes than a production car. One has to remember to use them, but this is an easier transition.

My early impression when starting to drive the Ford was that the only way everyone else could be so fast is that they must be cheating. With time I have come to realize that the class does just what it was designed to do: level the playing field with nearly identical cars and reward the best driver. I've found the degree of camaraderie in the vintage open wheel group to be every bit as great as in the vintage racing community in general, making my transition an easy and enjoyable one.



Photo by Walter Pietrowicz

RECIPES FROM THE PITS

by Paul Bova

A collection of recipes for those hearty souls who camp out and barbecue at the track. These recipes are useful because they are simple and utilize, whenever possible, items readily available to most racers.

Cylinder Head Chicken

1 cup olive oil (do not substitute motor oil)

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

6 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves

2 chickens butterflied

(Split down the back, with backbone removed)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Lemon wedges, for garnish

1 unserviceable cylinder head

(We all have one or more of these that, for some unknown reason, we hang on to as if they will someday heal themselves)

1. Whisk together the oil, lemon juice, garlic and rosemary in a large baking dish. Add the chickens and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in your cooler for at least 1 hour, or up to 4 hours.

2. Preheat the grill to medium. Wrap the cylinder head in aluminum foil and set aside. Remove the chickens from the marinade, blot off excess oil, and season with salt and pepper on both sides. Place the chickens on the grill, skin-side down, and place the cylinder head on top of the chickens. Grill the chicken for 8 to 10 minutes, then turn over, and return the head to the chickens. Close the cover and continue cooking for 8 to 10 minutes or until cooked through.
3. Let rest for 10 minutes and cut into quarters. Serve with lemon wedges
4. You may discard the cylinder head at this point or keep it for future cooking duties.



BOOK REVIEW *(con't. from page 8)*

first in the Speedster and then his purchase of the the 550 Spyder and his last days - and the last day on that fateful drive up the Ridge Route out of the San Fernando Valley, through the Tejon Pass north toward Bakersfield, turning northwest and heading through Maricopa and Taft, the badlands of the San Joaquin Valley (a place populated by oil wells and tumbleweeds, and best suited for nothing that lives), on a succession of two lane roads that end at Paso Robles and U.S. Route 101. From there it would have been north on a main highway to Salinas. He never made it out of the badlands. It is a very moving story, told in photographs and Lee Raskin's words.

Nine years later (and I was born nine years later than James Dean), living in Los Angeles, I had a motorcycle and often road it through the canyons and across Mulholland Drive. By then I had gotten my Porsche and was drafted into the Army. I spent two years at Fort Ord. The way home from the Monterey Peninsula was through Paso Robles, Maricopa and Taft, the Ridge Route and into the LA Basin. I only saw the area at night. It was all shadows. I had never paid attention to where James Dean died. Seeing the photographs and reading the story reminds me of those late night drives to Los Angeles, and early morning drives in the dark back to Fort Ord (a 700 mile round trip). There were no lights, no cars, no people (any houses one might pass had no lights on). There was nothing living out there. Lee Raskin's story makes you wonder how James Dean could possibly have found a car to run into him. He was in the Twilight Zone.

BUY IT.

Lee Raskin published last year, PORSCHE Speedster TYP 540 (Big Lake Media, Inc, Incline Village, Nevada). This is the complete and definitive history of the Speedster. It may not be Natalie Wood but at our age a Speedster still looks pretty good. Great Book.

CONFESSIONS OF A GRAY-HAIRED ROOKIE *(con't from page 4)*

Laughably, he assumes that his reflexes and the response of his truck will be quick enough. One local driver nailed his opposite number headlight-to-headlight. I haven't mentioned the cops. But what fast road driver doesn't have in his mind a running evaluation of his exposure to legal problems? e.g. cops are rare on this road. . . this looks like a radar setup. . . is that an unmarked car? . . if I'm caught doing this, I'll be in jail for life. Last year a friend of mine served time for some afternoon fun on his motorcycle. Sure, racing is expensive, but so are tickets.

Contrast this mind-wracking, guilt-inducing experience with the serene pleasure of driving on a track. The green flag waves you out of pit lane, and there you are, free to go as fast as you like. Life is so simple and carefree, just you, the car, and the track. Nobody coming the other way. The experience is so intensely enjoyable that, deep in your bones, you know it must be criminal. Occasionally, from habit, you check the mirror for cops. But when you come in, your instructor encourages you to go still faster. Smiling women in pit lane ask you if you're having fun. Have a good orgy, now, you hear? A gentle pat on the helmet. Happy faces all around. It's surreal.

The situation is better on the track, and so is the car. A big part of the pleasure, for me, was driving a real racing car. Through the years, I've owned and driven my share of high-performance street cars. At the limit, they all do something dumb. Some plow, some get squirrely, all have a mind of their own. If you think I exaggerate (I can just hear you: "My Porsche isn't like that!"), try driving a formula car. For once, the car does exactly what you tell it to, directly and predictably. And instantly. For the first time, your reflexes will be slower than the car's. A touch fast on the turn-in? Hello, we're a bit loose, give us a moment to hook up, yes, now you can squeeze on the power. A full conversation in a few tenths of a second. No rubber connections in the whole car, so the communication isn't insulated and delayed. And a Formula Ford is fast! You might not think so, with its little pushrod four-banger. But Peter Egan tested one in *Road & Track* a few years ago: 0-60 in 4+ seconds, 0-100 in a bit over ten. Stopping distances half those of a good street car. And it's built just for racing, so you can go all-out without breaking it. The stresses of all-out racing are "normal." Wind the hell out of it, brake

at the limit every time, no problem. Banging shifts isn't vandalism, to be paid for by an early and expensive gearbox rebuild; it's what the Hewland is designed for. Are dreams always better than reality? Not for me, not in the case of racing, anyway. Reality was better than I'd imagined, even at that first driver's school. I was told, for example, that it would be very different from road driving. So when I nervously went on the track, I was surprised to feel so comfortable, so much at home. For me there was lots of transfer from road driving. Sizing up unfamiliar corners, practicing lines by simplifying irregular turns into single arcs that can be taken with one movement of the wheel, turning in quickly and smoothly, using all the road (given visibility)—all these techniques I'd perfected at ordinary speeds, on back roads and freeway entrances. At driver's school, everything happened faster, but I'd been preparing the essentials for decades.

Happy and relaxed: that's how I felt (and still feel) in a racing car. I'm relaxed partly because I'm not stressed out about winning, though I enjoy a good race. Is this due to age or personal experience? I don't know. I was a serious athlete when I was younger, but I got tired of the obsessive, all-absorbing focus on the task of winning. My friends from those days mostly feel the same way. I rowed once in an old-timer's race in a boat with four other Olympians (I was on the U.S. Olympic Team at Munich in '72). Someone (not one of us) started talking seriously about strategy when Joe Amlong (gold medal, Tokyo 1964) cut him off: "We'll row as hard as we can when we're out there, but let's not have any of that bullshit." I feel the same: I like to race, and race hard; that's part of the fun. But I don't need another trophy or championship. Somewhere in the attic I have boxes of trophies and medals that I haven't looked at in years.

So, dear reader/racer, was this how you felt at your first driver's school? If you're 22, and dream of making it to Formula One, you'll be shaking your head and rolling your eyes: no, that's not it, not at all. But you others—maybe a little bit? If so, for this gray-haired rookie it would be comforting, and something to say to my wife, who often shakes her head and rolls her eyes (but with an understanding smile).



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George Vapaa in his 356 Porsche at BeaverRun, photo by Stefan Vapaa

DRIVER COMMITTEE

The VRG driver committee will consist of five members. It will be our goal to have three members that are attending a given event serve as the committee for that event. We will do our best to resolve any incidents quickly the day of the incident. In the case of support events, one representative of the visiting club will be invited to serve on the committee, resulting in a three person committee, two from the host club and one from the visiting club. At Mosport and VIR we will have one person on their committee. In 2006 the VRG committee will consist of Bob Romanansky, Mark Palmer, Jim Bok, Ed Valpey and Bob Girvin.

FLAGGERS FOR NHIS

We would like to strengthen our flagger team for the NHIS event in May 2006. Patti Eastman will be organizing an informal mentoring program during this event for persons with little or no experience. Corner workers take their role in keeping drivers safe very serious, but have a lot of fun at the same time. This will be an excellent way to get exposure to this important element of our sport. Should you or someone you know want to give this a try contact Patti at cabbageyard@yahoo.com.

CLUB FORD

Club Fords as designated by Monoposto (1973 – 1981) with

treaded Dunlop Tires (SVRA & Monoposto specs for FF) will be eligible to run in all VRG events, classed separately, with Vintage Formula Fords. We think that this should stimulate further interest in FF participation, and give the many Club Ford owners not wishing to run in F70 a chance to be on the track with cars of similar speed potential.

VRG DRIVER AWARD PROGRAM

We have put together an award program for members that participate in most of our track events. We realize some members may not want to attend all events; however, we wanted to recognize those that support most of the events on our schedule. The program is this:

1. You will receive 10 points for passing Tech.
2. You will receive an additional 3 points for starting each race session designated a point's race by the Event Chairman at a VRG managed event. (NHIS, Beaverun and Summit)
3. Top point person will be given a plaque "2006 VRG Top Point Driver" and a free entry to one of the VRG managed events in 2007.
4. The next four runners up will receive a framed certificate and a \$50 discount on the VRG managed event of their choice in 2007.
5. The next five runners up will receive a framed certificate in recognition of their support.