VINTAGE RACER GROUP
VRG
NOV 06 • VOL 3.5

10th ANNUAL TURKEY BOWL AT SUMMIT POINT

Nov. 26 - 28, 2006

Entry Form Included

NEWSLETTER

253 BRIDLE PATH RD • BETHLEHEM, PA 18017 • PH 610-867-0288 • FX 610-954-9489 • WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

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

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RACE SCHEDULE 2006-7

NOV 24-26 - VRG Turkey Bowl Summit Point
FEB - 17 - Pittsburgh Social
MARCH 24 (tentative) - Mid Winter Gathering at Ralph Steinberg's with a visit to Bill Wonder's Race Car Shop
APRIL 13 - 15 - VDCA at VIR (support event)
MAY 18 - 20 - New Hampshire Vintage Celebration
JUNE 22 - 24 - VARAC at Mosport (support event)
JULY 7 - 8 - 4th Annual Historic Races at BeaveRun

2006 VRG SHENANDOAH FALL CELEBRATION

September 30th through October 1, 2006

"A How-To on Vintage Racing Events"

John Herrera photo

To make a vintage racer happy, here's what you do:
1.) Pick a time of year that isn't too hot, or too cold, and doesn't rain constantly.
2.) Select a beautiful and historic location.
3.) Rent a brand new, spanking clean, racetrack, but one that features a replica of a famous corner of a legendary European road-course.
4.) Offer BBQ and Beer (hint: not just cheap American crap on the beer!).
5.) Include a word like "SHENANDOAH" in the name of the event.

VRG and Event Chairman Chris Shoemaker did all of the above again this Fall, and, from the looks of Scott Janzen (above), they got it right!

For the 2nd Annual Shenandoah Fall Celebration, Vintage Racers, totaling 45 or so, from New England, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee and the Carolinas, and from close by Virginia , Pennsylvania, and Maryland, converged on the Summit Point Shenandoah Circuit to test their skills and cars at this rather unique facility.

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For those to whom it is new, the Shenandoah track at Summit Point is very compact, with lots of tight corners, 2 decent straights, and many elevation changes. In a 62 TVR, I'm mostly in 2nd and 3rd gears, only hitting 4th briefly twice a lap. It is probably more fun for those of us with wire wheels and skinny tires, as we can do our unavoidable slide-jobs while in the lower gears. Of course, that's not the end of the story about this track. As hard as it was for me to believe the first time I heard about it, this little track, tucked away in the rolling farmland and hills of West Virginia, features a replica of the famous Nurburgring's diabolical Karussel (That's German for "Merry-go-Round" I think!). More on this later.

Fortunately, the forecast for Saturday was for sun, but, unfortunately, Sunday it called for rain. Turns out, however, it started the other way around - it rained steadily during the runs on Saturday morning. The course was a big serpentine skid-pad, and the only place with any grip, because of its' drainage-ditch origins, was the Karussel. (I thank my lucky stars every time I have to run in the rain that VRG put on that Skid-Pad school at NHIS a couple years back – I'm still slow, but at least now I'm cocky!) And… fortunately for us, the weatherman's string of bad calls continued; by noon, it cleared and the track was bone dry for the remainder of the weekend. Lesson learned – stay optimistic.

John Herrera photo

Sefan Vapaa (68 Saab Sonett), Mark Palmer (57 MGA) and Ed Valpey had to contend with the still damp late morning conditions for their class wins for the first races of the weekend.

During the noon-break Chief Instructor Ed Valpey presented *a chalk-talk*. A Power-Point Presentation has now replaced the "chalk", and instead of using an eraser for a car, he featured a fast lap from Stefan Vapaa's helmet-cam. Stefan hustles his little Saab around this track as if it "could'a been" a V8, and; as the race results show, he and Ed were obviously the right people for the job.

A great, dry, afternoon on the track ensued, with the aforementioned Stefan, and Les Roub (356A) and Chris Morici (72 Lotus FF) all grabbing brass rings through the Karussel on their way to respective class wins. After all that, it was time for the VRG Annual General Meeting, the weekend awards, food and drink.

When the awards for a race weekend are presented the night before the "big" Sunday finals, you get the message that success to this group isn't about winning races. But if you were going to ever win a VRG award, this would have been a good weekend to do it. The awards were 6 of a kind event posters signed by all the participants. Winners were Alan Himes, Charles Hall, John Harkness (Best of Breed in their respective groups), Nial McCabe (Vintage Spirit Award-Driver) and Alice Fartheree (Vintage Spirit-Worker). Chris Shoemaker was especially keen about recognizing Alice Fartheree, giving her much credit for the success of the entire event. BTW, he also wanted to make sure that we mentioned Merrill-Lynch for paying for the beverages at the BBQ.. I'll drink to that!

At the Drivers meeting the next morning, Chris noted that the fields were going to be smaller, and that there were Anti-Karussel Grumblings to deal with. On the Karussel situation, it seems that the transitions in and out are hard on Formula car underpinnings, and many of the other faster guys don't like the "single file through the Karussel rule". Surprisingly, though, when put to a vote, the Karussel avoided elimination by a whopping 75% margin. We did, however, in response to the lower car counts, vote to combine groups, and switch to All-Comers grids for the 2 final races.

The first race of the day was for Small Bore cars. I just happened to be standing at the Start-Finish Line, and recorded what turned out to be a dramatic contest.

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Turkey Bowl to Celebrate the TENTH ANNUAL!

Hard to believe it has been 10 years since Lee Raskin, Joe Blacker, Denny Austin, and Bill Scott conjured up a little low-key event on Thanksgiving weekend, but here we are. We're planning on making this one the best ever, a real celebration of the pleasures of informal racing with good friends. This is VRG's first year as a partner, handling the vintage side of things, while Joe Blacker and Mid-Atlantic Motorsports continue to field the Legends cars and modern sports/GT as in the past.

Most of the details remain as in prior years, this is a full THREE-DAY Event, Fri/Sat/Sun Nov 24-25-26, which, of course, is Thanksgiving weekend. As always, lots of track time for a very reasonable entry fee ($250 if you do the early bird thing). As the entry form is enclosed with this newsletter, don't delay; return it by November 10th to get the discount. We're having the traditional TB dinner at the Wayside Inn, a historic place down the road from the track in Middletown. And we have the usual block of rooms at the Hampton North in Winchester.

We're tentatively planning on more race groups this year, to accommodate a wider range of vintage cars than in the past. Final groups will depend on actual entries, but we are likely to have a dedicated group for 1960's open-wheel and sports-racers, and I'm trying to gather a decent entry of big-bore cars (Corvettes, Mustangs, etc) as a separate group. As always, we'll have a couple groups of small & medium bore sports cars, for the Mini's and MG's and Alfa's and Porsches and such.

If you've never been to this event in the past, you now have the chance. It's fun! The weather can vary, but generally we have had it in our favor, as the average daily high is 52 degrees (that is when the sun is out, and it is pleasant). It's about the most low-key event on the calendar, which means that we probably won't have timing & scoring - just a bunch of friends out for one last foray before putting the car away for the winter. The camaraderie is truly special at this event.

With our expanded vintage groups, and Joe's modern race group, we should be able to find a place for most anyone. If you have a later car, don't hesitate to ask, we can probably work something out. If you are feeling adventurous rent a Legends car for the weekend! Just don't ask questions about bump-drafting at the drivers' meeting.

Hope to see you there!

Mark Palmer

When the green flag dropped, 5 of the 6 cars were where they were supposed to be; in a tight formation accelerating towards turn 1. The 6th entrant, George Vapaa in his F Jr Saab, was, for some reason, half a track-length back, crossing the Start-Finish Line long after the Starter had put away his green flag. Laps 1 & 2 saw Bill Holden (Lotus 7) out front at the line, with Gary Kropf (Bugeye) and Bill Harding (Fiat 850) in hot pursuit. After what seemed like forever, Vapaa screamed by, still with a lot of time to make up, to catch the rest of field. Amazingly, by Lap 3 he had passed two of the front five, and by lap 4, he was in the lead! End of story? Not by a long shot! With Vapaa's little 2 cycle

John Herrera photo

Saab establishing a new pace, Gary Kropf adjusted to the challenge, and retook the lead for the win. Folks – that was a race!

During the noon break, I also happened to be at the starting grid during Corner Worker Rides. From what I observed, these rides are a lot more important than we think. We might be a little too blasé about what it's like to ride in an old racecar, and need to think of it from their point of view. A thanks for keeping your passenger compartments uncluttered goes out to Bob Girvin (Allard), George Vapaa (Saab), Dan Leonard (Speedwell), Mark Palmer (MGA) and Brad Marshall (a modern Mini, cause it's hard to fit 2 in a FF). The Allard was the biggest hit (they were fighting over getting a ride in that thing!) The new Mini? Not so much!

The second to last race was the All-Comer's Sprint. I was in this one, so my first hand description is limited to stuff like how well I held the line whilst pointing by the fast guys, twice in 3 or 4 instances I think, and dicing it out with Dan Leonard (59 Speedwell). It was great fun, and I really like this track. Chris Morici managed to work his FF within the limits imposed by the Karussel for the win, followed by Ed Valpy, and Jim Hartman (911).

The last race of the weekend was an All-Comers Enduro. I was putting away my stuff by then, so I've asked the eventual winner Jim Hartman (72 Porsche 911S) to write a few words.

"*How does one define good vintage racing? How about 25 or so laps where two cars were never more than a few car lengths apart? Perhaps that should be the classic definition of great vintage racing.*

George Wright and I enjoyed this privilege during VRG's Enduro at Shenandoah. George gridded behind me and I had sight of his pretty yellow TR4 in my mirror for the majority of the race. Had his kill switch not inadvertently killed his car, we may have been destined for a photo finish.*

It is interesting that we dueled with decidedly different weapons. I kept a rear-engined, air-cooled 911 ahead of his front-engined, water pumping vehicle. While I would estimate our respective lap times to be equal, our cars were not equal throughout the track. George had the advantage in several corners and the Porsche eked out some open track in a couple of corners and under braking.

That we both were fighting for first place added to the excitement. Honestly, though, our race together would have been long remembered even if we were skirmishing for last place. Truly, that is what vintage racing is all about."

*Our heartfelt condolences to Jim Hartman's car (ed).

We have come to expect great events from VRG, but Event Chairman Chris Shoemaker wrote the book with this one. Having a great Fall event to look forward to makes Summer's end easier to take.

Randy Clark - 62 TVR # 84

Ralph's Ramblings

(Ramblings from the Vice President)

As the racing year winds down for most of us the New Year and the calendar of events for our club are already big topics for the board and your officers. Thinking on where we have been and what we have achieved so far in and with our club, and where we hope to go and the goals we would like to attain put me in a reflective mood. Most of you that know me are used to seeing me race around in my big old orange XK120 - my stone stock XK120. Some of you may remember that I used to also race a MGA twin cam coupe and occasionally I raced in Pre-War with an SS 100 Jaguar. Now, either the event organizers gave a lot more credit to the capabilities of the Twinkie than my driving skills, or they figured I had gotten real good at driving with one eye on the mirror in the big bore group with a stock Jag. Whatever! I have spent most of my driving life chasing around at the back of the pack. I have a good time and if the race is long enough the old Jag will out last a lot of faster cars; but I do know what it feels like to finish at or near the top, and its not a bad feeling at all.

What does any of this have to do with our next year's event calendar? We just finished a nice little fall event at the Shenandoah course at Summit Point. This is the second year for the event and the second year I have worked the event for Chris. I have been around the track in big cars, Bob Girvin's monster Allard, and smaller, Mark Palmer's MGA & George Vapaa's Saab. I quickly decided that either I needed to add a new, small, car to my inventory or I would just work for Chris. Do not get me wrong, big cars get around this track all right. This year, besides the Allard, there was a Jag, a Corvette, and *a big ole* Pontiac GTO! Being a typical in house club event the groups usually break up into three groups: fast, slow, and open wheel. But what makes this track one of the most unique tracks around is that all of those "faster" smaller cars that typically have to move over on the straights when the big bores come thundering around, here they get to rule! Stefan Vapaa, driving the Saab Sonnet with a little V4 engine of around 1800cc entered the grid late, had to catch the field and then go onto win. Oh, by the way, did I mention that this was the fast group with Jags, Corvettes, Pontiac, Triumph and the like charging around? Now, Stefan is a superb driver, and one of our instructors, but if this had been on the long course… What are you going to do when the car along side of you down the straight can crank it up to 130mph?

So again, what does this have to do with you and the VRG? Our club has a large number of small bore cars. This track, more than any other on the East coast and perhaps in this country, negates the cubic inch differential. This is where your little cars get to shine. But, we need you to come out and make it happen. I have heard all of the reasons why not, including that there is a big event that same weekend at VIR – and we accept that you had to make a choice. For next year we are attempting to change the date to the weekend before, or after VIR. Traditions happen because we make them happen and if the small bore cars keep coming back to the fall event at Shenandoah it too will be a tradition. What's the longest ***continuous running*** street course in the world? It happens each year in Pittsburgh. The Watkins Glen races of today have become bigger than the original that they are supposed to mimic.
Create your own history. Make the VRG Shenandoah Fall Festival ***the*** place to be with a small bore car in the fall! If you want to see the VRG and its events continue and grow we need ***you*** at ***our*** events. We, your officers and board, are looking at trying to put together a calendar of events at places like New Hampshire International, BeaveRun, Watkins Glen, VIR, two at Summit point (the Shenandoah and the long course) and tracks in Canada. Some would be ours alone and some would be in conjunction with other clubs. Particularly in the east, the vintage racing season is short, there are many vintage organizers and there are many vintage events. We appreciate your support at the VRG events, and when there have been conflicting dates, and choices had to be made, we appreciate your being with us, when you can, and we will attempt to avoid conflicts with other vintage racing organizations, when we can.

I would appreciate comments, thoughts and any musings you may have. You can direct them to our VRG chat room or if you do not want them attributed to you, you can email me at ralph@cloverleaf-auto.com
Drive Safe.

Ralph Steinberg

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Fall is here. It is almost Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. It has been two years that we have been VRG. "You 've come a long way, baby." Thanks for the memories, all of you out there in membership land, that have made the VRG dream possible.

In the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Association September 2006 News: "Ralph Steinberg and the Vintage Racers Group outdid themselves again. 171 drivers participated at the PVGP Historic Races at BeaveRun this year – a 20% jump from 2005. On only its third year this separate event has grown so quickly that it is now on the national map as a significant vintage racing weekend." Thank you, those of you who have made it such a good event. If you missed it – come next year. BeaveRun is an excellent track (that is expanding from 1.3 to 2.3 miles – maybe for next year) and it is a "run for charity," a just cause at the right time with all your friends. VRG thanks Mike Connelly and all those associated with PVGP.

Our "girls," Patti Eastman and Maria Andretti, are on strike. We are negotiating a new contract with the Women's Vintage Auto Racing Writers Union (WVARWU) and we expect them back in print soon. We have a new Director on the Board, Ed Valpey, who was an overwhelming choice to take retiring Director's (David Fenton) place. Welcome, Ed, and thank you, David.

This year's success was due in a large part because we had "a little help from our friends." Our cousins to the north in Canada, VARAC, and our brothers to the south, VDCA, gave great support, brought cars, themselves, other cars and other people; and made every effort to support the VRG events. We have posted an incomplete calendar of events for 2007. Please take notice of the VDCA event at VIR in April and the VARAC event at Mosport in June. These are excellent events at great race tracks. Go if you can – "tell them that VRG sent you."

This editor did not go to every VRG event. He has not heard of any serious incidents or of any one placed on a 13/13. That's good. Tonight he read on Apexspeed.com a report of the open wheel event at Lime Rock this past weekend, that he attended (NARRC Runoffs, October 20-21), by Mike Rand. It was about a highly contested 25 lap race in which Mike did not win but was punctuated by stupid driving of slower cars, carelessness, and driver mistakes that we, in vintage racing, would not associate with a regional SCCA end of season runoff, and which VRG would not tolerate. One of the worst offenses a faster car sometimes encounters in attempting to work it's way through the field of slower cars , is that the driver of the slower car thinks that the overtaking car is there to race with him (which the overtaking car interprets as BLOCKING), and prevents it from getting to the front of the pack.. GET OUT OF THE WAY. Be aware of what is going around you. The frustration to the quicker car's driver, and the danger to the slower and/ or rookie driver is in not paying attention to his environment, his mirrors, and his speed. There is always some one faster, prettier, smarter, richer. When it comes to racing a car, have the race with the equal, who you may beat, or to whom you may lose, but it is fun and there is something to revel about afterward. To block the overtaking and faster car is nothing to revel about afterward. Mike Rand has been racing his Crossle 30F Club Ford for 30 years and at Lime Rock the modern Formula Fords can rarely beat him. He gets around Lime Rock in 0.56 seconds. He was being blocked by guys lapping at 1:06. Don't be one of those guys. In Mike's case there was a trophy, that he does not need, and in our case there is not even a trophy – however, if it is a trophy you need, Mike has plenty and he would give you one.

Best wishes for Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years,

Bill Hollingsworth

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

After a good race weekend at our Shenandoah event I continued driving west, stopping for short visit with Tivvy at his new shop in Danville. We are now at our winter home in Arizona enjoying blue skies and warm weather. Firstly, I want to thank Chris Shoemaker for all his efforts to make Shenandoah a successful event. Secondly, I want thank the VDCA members that helped support this event.

The VRG Annual General Meeting was again held outdoors with nice weather and a setting sun in the background. The results from our annual election were announced; and Ed Valpey is our new director replacing David Fenton, who stepped down. I want to thank David for his help with the early formation of VRG. Brad Marshall and I were returned to office. Ed has done a great job of establishing our Driver School with further improvements planned for 2007.

We are working to finalize our 2007 schedule. It will be similar to this year, however, there is a chance we may share a weekend with EMRA at Watkins Glen in October. The Thunderbolt facilities are now scheduled to open in 2008, and we should have an event there in 2008. In 2007 we plan to have a second school at BeaveRun in July.

I hope to get another survey out to our members before the end of the year. Now that we have been up and running for more than two years, I feel its time to get membership input on what we have done right, and what we have done, not so well, or what we could do better. The survey will be structured much like the first one, with specific questions and the opportunity to address issues that are important to you. Please be thinking about what direction or advice you might want to offer your Board.

I want to encourage more membership participation in expanding our activities and improving the quality of all aspects of our club's endeavors. Should you desire to contribute in anyway, please let a Board member know of your interest. A few specific areas where we could use help are: membership administration, timing and scoring, driving instructors, event registration, managing our regalia program, event photos and reports, flagging and grid workers, organizing social activities. As we spread the work load over more people we will be able to offer better quality activities and all have more fun.

Last week I raced with VARA at Las Vegas. The entry fee was only $225 thanks to Corporate sponsors. If any one has any ideas on how we can tie into that sort of resource please let me know.

Our Driver Award program will wrap up at the Turkey Bowl November 24,25,26. There is still no clear winner. However, there is a good chance that the winner will be someone who attends the Turkey Bowl and gets the points for attending that event. There may well be two or more tied for first place. If that is the case ties will be broken by drawing straws. The winner get a free entry next year and the four runners' up get a $50 discount at any one of our events next year.

Have happy Holiday Season,

Bob Girvin

MORE PICTURES FROM THE 2006 VRG SHENANDOAH FALL CELEBRATION

photos by Stefan Vapaa

And

Mid-Atlantic Motorsports

10th Annual TURKEY BOWL

November 24 – 26, 2006

Summit Point Raceway

Summit Point, WV

DRIVER

Name _____ Tel. (H) _____

Address _____ Tel (W) _____

City, State, Zip _____

Fax _____Cell _____ E-mail _____

Competition license: Club name _____ License # _____

-- *OR* -- I am a Qualified Driver with the following club(s): _____

Last three races entered: _____

Are you currently on probation or suspension from any club? *Yes* ____ *No* _____

If yes, explain on back side of this form ----------→

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____ At track? _____

Driver Medical Info: Doctor's name: _____ Phone: _____

Blood Type: _____ Date of last tetanus: _____ List allergies: _____

CAR

Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____

Car color: _____Race number: _____ 2nd choice: _____

Log book: issued by (club): _____ Log Book number: _____

ACTUAL engine displacement (cc's): _____

Carburettors, number/type/size: _____

Tires: Make & designation: _____ Treaded? y/n _____

Tire diameter, front: _____ Rear: _____ Tire width, Front: _____ Rear: _____

Wheels: Type (steel, cast alloy, wire) _____

Wheel diameter, front: _____ Rear: _____ Rim width, Front: _____ Rear: _____

Lap time at Summit Point: _____ BeaveRun: _____VIR: _____ Other: _____

FEES

One car with driver & crew:

EARLYBIRD DISCOUNT – entry received and paid by November 10th:	$250
Regular entry fee (rec'd November 10th to November 23rd):	$275
Walk-in entry received at track:	$300
Second car, same driver:	$200
VRG club dinner, Wayside Inn, Saturday evening:	$ 40 each

Menu: Stuffed pork loin, Boursin stuffed chicken breast, or fresh filet of salmon

PAYMENT

Entry fee, one car & crew: $_____

Additional cars, same driver: _____ x $200 = $_____

Number of dinners*: _____ x $40 = $_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_____

***Indicate number of each: Pork ____ Chicken ____ Salmon _____**

*Please make check out to **"Vintage Racer Group"** and mail to:*

Mark Palmer, 253 Bridlepath Road, Bethlehem, PA, 18017

Questions should be addressed to:

Vintage (pre-1972) cars:
Mark Palmer
e-mail (preferred): mgvrmark@hotmail.com
Phone: 610-867-6014

Legends & post-1972 cars:
Joe Blacker
joblacker@aol.com
Phone: 410-964-1212

WAIVER

WARNING: Auto racing is dangerous and can resulting serious injury or death. I hereby enter the above vehicle(s) for the 2006 VRG/MAM Turkey Bowl. I will abide by the rules set forth by the track owners (Summit Point Raceway), and the governing sanctioning bodies (Vintage Racer Group, Inc. and Mid-Atlantic Motorsports). I hereby agree that I will not hold the event organizers, Summit Point Raceway, or their employees or volunteers, or any party connected with the above event responsible for personal injury, damages to entered vehicle(s), parts, or other items displayed on my behalf during this event. This includes theft, or any type of damage related to racing or displaying this vehicle or vehicles. I know of no physical or mental problem that would prevent my safe participation in this event.

Vehicle owner's signature: _____ Date: _____

Driver's signature: _____ Date: _____

Cool Runnings:
Tips for racing in cooler weather

We all know it is going to be 65 degrees and sunny for Turkey Bowl, right? Well just in case the mercury dips a few degrees, here are some tips for car (and driver) preparation. For the most part, our vintage cars seem perfectly happy running in 40 to 50 degree ambient. But we seem to see more than a fair share of popped core ("freeze") plugs and blown head gaskets, at cold-weather events. I'm not sure why, but with a few simple precautions you shouldn't have any problems in cooler weather.

PRIOR TO THE EVENT: In addition to your usual pre-race prep, you need to change some engine fluids. Anti-freeze is essential (and allowed) for late-season events like the Turkey Bowl. It doesn't take much to protect the engine, and I'd highly recommend using the minimum amount – the mixture would be less slippery and result in less clean-up time if you do happen to drop coolant on the track. A 25% antifreeze mixture (1 part antifreeze to 3 parts water) protects down to 10 degrees, which is plenty of safety margin for this event. Check the weather forecast a few days prior to the event and add just enough antifreeze for the forecast. No need to over-do it (it may yet be 65 degrees). And please, safety wire the radiator drain tap/plug!

If you normally run a pressure cap on the radiator, consider using a lower p.s.i. cap – or a zero-pressure cap – for cold-weather events. You certainly shouldn't need the boil-over protection of a high pressure cap, and the lower pressure just might help to avoid blowing out a freeze plug.

You might also consider changing to a slightly thinner oil, say 15w-40,or 10w-30, if you normally run 20w-50. This will make the car easier to start on a cold morning, and you will probably not get the oil very hot during your track sessions anyway. Ask your engine builder before doing this! While you're at it, tape off at least part of the oil cooler – I tape the whole thing off to start with. This will help the oil get up to operating temperature more quickly. You can always peel off some tape at the track, as the temperatures warm up.

If you have SU carburetors, you might want thinner oil in the dashpots. While you're attending to them, consider drilling a small hole in the air cleaner plates so you can inject some carburetor cleaner or race fuel, if necessary, without dismantling the air filter. (Make sure the heater works. Ed)

THINGS TO BRING: Pack your jump-start battery, if you have one (make sure it's fully charged too!). Bring a regular battery charger. If you have access to electric power at the track, bring a trickle charger or battery tender for overnight use. Bring some extra anti-freeze, just in case. Conventional starting fluid ("ether") is not recommended, as it is VERY prone to detonation in high-compression engines. Tivvy Shenton reports good results using a spray can of carburetor cleaner, instead – it will help start the car, and there is no chance of detonation. It may also help to have some race fuel in spray bottle. If you've changed to the lighter grade oil, don't forget to bring some extra. ALSO: Bring ALL your Nomex underwear; and while you're going through your driver gear, put some anti-fog on your visor or goggles (and if it is really cold you might cover yourself in grease - Ed.).

AT THE TRACK: Start your car well before your first track session of the day! It may take extra time – sometimes a LOT of extra time – to get it started the first time in the morning. PLEASE warm it up thoroughly, but gently. Run at moderate RPM while stationary in your paddock for a while. If you have an engine-driven fan, you might want to lay a towel over the grill opening to help get the car up to temp faster. After the engine has a little heat in it, I highly recommend driving the car around the paddock for a while – slowly, please – and watch out for pedestrians, dogs, children, etc. Even a slow drive will help warm up the transmission fluid, rear end fluid, wheel bearing grease, etc. The warmer you can get the car before entering the track, the better.

PERSONAL GEAR: Remember to take your helmet with you into the hotel overnight – don't leave it in your race car or tow vehicle. A cold helmet fogs up right away. If you forget and leave it outside, put it on your head well before your track session and let your body warm it up. I haven't tried this idea, but if you have a ski boot warmer, that might be just the thing to use.

DON'T wear a regular jacket over your race suit! Most jackets have some nylon or polyester, and you don't want that stuff anywhere near a fire, even with Nomex underneath. Instead, wear an extra layer of Nomex underwear. Yes, I know it doesn't cut the wind like your Bean anorak, but safety first!

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Cool Runnings:

Tips for racing in cooler weather (cont.)

ON THE TRACK: PLEASE, take it VERY easy for the first few laps! Let your car warm up gently. Don't use full RPM or full throttle. Have some mercy on all those poor bearings and tappets and pistons, they don't like rapid temperature changes. No matter how much you've warmed the engine in the pits, the gearbox and rear end oil will be stone cold for the first few laps – take it easy! Your tires will be hard as hockey pucks, so you couldn't go fast even if you tried. I normally shift at lower RPM's, and avoid full throttle, until I see the oil temp gauge at least come off the peg. This can take quite a while in the first session of the morning, sometimes nearly the whole session.

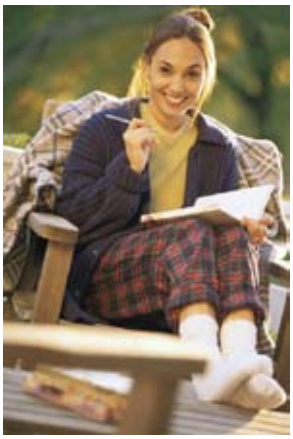
Of course, it will take a VERY long time for the tires to warm up, and the brakes! I suggest that you avoid weaving back and forth during a pace lap, it doesn't really help much (the pro's do it to clean marbles off their tires, not to keep them warm) and weaving has resulted in some silly crashes on the pace lap. Do NOT weave at the beginning of a practice session – no one is expecting it! Some people accelerate hard, then brake hard during a pace lap to warm the brakes – I don't recommend this, many vintage drivers won't understand what you are doing and you may find yourself getting rear-ended on the pace lap. Instead, I recommend holding a steady speed and left-foot braking to warm the pads/shoes.

Tire Pressures: The cold track and the cold tires are no aid to car control. Be careful. As the tires may not get to their normal operating temperatures it is recommended to add two pounds if the tires are filled with air, and one pound if they are filled with nitrogen. If it is very cold you might add more. Unlikely your car will have the grip it has on normal spring or fall day. Be careful.

AFTER YOUR SESSION: Check tire pressures between every session, we seem to see more flat tires during cold weather - I don't know why. Keep a close eye on fluid levels. You may want to check the plug color, with cold ambient temperatures the car may run lean (cold air is more dense) and you may have to richen the mixture – it's your call, consult your engine guy, YMMV, etc, etc. If you have an oil cooler, you may have to block it from the air. If the engine never achieves a proper operating temperature when on the track, you may want to tape off part of the radiator, too. When inspecting the engine, look at the core plugs for signs of weeping or leaks. Some people wrap a blanket or plastic around their engine overnight, thinking that it wards off the cold or wind – I'm not convinced that this helps. But if you do this, put a large message somewhere on the car where you (or your crew) can't miss it the following morning – on the steering wheel, taped to the bonnet, or something – to remind yourself to unwrap the motor!

I hope this doesn't discourage anyone from attending late-season or early-season events, they truly are some of the most enjoyable events on the calendar. There is a special sense of camaraderie and adventure that one gets by challenging the elements just a bit, and it's a great conversation starter to tell your friends that you just went racing in your vintage car when they're thinking about hunkering down for the winter. So make some preparations, then come and have fun at Summit Point!

Mark Palmer



To the editor:

Dear Editor: I am sorry that I cannot submit my column this month because, quite frankly, I am having a nervous breakdown. My darling has been away for almost the whole damn month at his car races and I have had to cope with... well,you really don't need to know. If you don't fire me I'll be back next issue... that is if I am still sane and married. You can't be a desperate carwife if you don't have the wife part of car. Love, sadly, Maria

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John Faulkner's MGA
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SHANENDOAH FALL CELEBRATION

Quick Notes

DRIVER AWARDS PROGRAM

We have one event to go to establish the winner and runners up for the 2006 season. Fifteen drivers have a shot at first place. The winner will get a free entry to a 2007 event of their choice and the next four will receive a $50 discount on a 2007 entry. It looks like you will have to enter the Turkey Bowl to stand a chance of winning. There is an excellent chance that there will be several tied for first place. We will then draw straws to establish the real winner.

Drivers that are in contention for a top five result are:Ivan Frantz, Bob Bruce, Tivvy Shenton, Mike Muckle, Bob Girvin, George Vapaa, Keith Lawrence, Michael Dube, Les Roub, Stefan Vapaa, Christian Morici, Chris Shoemaker, Gary Hagopian, Brad Marshall, Vic Schuster.