VINTAGE RACER GROUP
VRG
JUNE 07 • VOL 4.3

Shenandoah Entry Form Included

NEWSLETTER

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

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VRG RACE SCHEDULE 2007

JUNE 22-24 - Mosport Vintage Festival - Mosport, Canada (support event)

JULY 6-8 - PVGP Historic Races, BeaveRun, PA

AUGUST 18-19 - Shenandoah Summer Festival, Summit Point, WV

SEPT. 21-23 - Fall Classic, Mont Tremblant, Canada

OCT. 19-20 - VRG at the Glen, Watkins Glen, NY

NOV. 23-25 - Turkey Bowl XI, Summit Point, WV

Visit the VRG website at www.vrgonline.org for changes and updates to the schedule

VRG LOVES NHIS

RACING IN THE RAIN 17TH ANNUAL NHIS VINTAGE CELEBRATION

Racers with a knack for going fast under wet conditions were in their glory at this year's NHIS Vintage Celebration. Other than two dry practice sessions Friday morning, steady rain dominated all the road-racing activities of the weekend. There is no way to describe it honestly other than to say it was 2 ½ days of steady, relentless, foggy, "puddles at the apexes", rain! But it is also absolutely equally honest to report, that, except for the last couple of races, the grids stayed nearly full, and, the wonderful NHIS facilities otherwise kept everyone warm, dry and comfortable.

If it were not for being eclipsed by the weather, the story for the weekend could very well have been - "Largest VRG Event Ever?" or "Formula Jr. Starts 50th Anniversary Celebration at NHIS".

Photo by Mari Ryan

A total of 113 are on the Pre-Registration list, with several others on the time sheets but not Pre-Registered. As they have done in the past, a nice contingent from VARAC padded the entry numbers, and helped legitimize the "I" in NHIS.

There was a dedicated Formula Jr race on Friday afternoon. Roughly, 4% of all of the front engined Formula Jr.'s ever made found their way back through the "mists of time" to the "mists" of New Hampshire for the inaugural race leading up to a grand 50th year Celebration of the breed next year.

Practicing in the dry Friday morning didn't do us much good for getting used to what was to come. By the time qualifying races started, the rain had settled in to stay.

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Based on practice times in the morning, Larry McKenna (59 Stanguellini) sat on the pole for the Formula Jr race. His plan was to take it easy for the first few corners so everyone could get the feel of the track. That idea was quickly nixed by Bill Gelles (59 Stanguellini) who rocketed by at the drop of the green flag. Larry managed to recover and pass Bill under braking soon thereafter, but they were nose to tail for most of the race. These cars are noted for their predictability, but there were still a couple of spin-outs before it was over. It was raining hard at the time, so most folks missed it when Larry McKenna finally got the checkered flag – they were, more than likely, staying dry in the "Checkered Flag" at the time.

Photo by Randy Clark

After all the "on track" activities were completed Friday, Joe Marko of HMS Motorsport put on an optional safety talk. Such discussions by experts are always eye opening and sobering, if not a little too much like going to the dentist for me. Joe demonstrated how important the little details are when buying and installing safety equipment. He offered to check our cars on an individual basis, and I did observe a number of racers taking him up on it. He also handed out Harness Installation brochures for those who wanted to do their own checklist.

An unfortunate incident involving the Corvettes of Chris Homer and Sim Shortman in turn three resulted in some shattered fiberglass. Although "field" repairs were made, Chris and Sim were Black Flagged for the rest of the event. Too bad for all, because watching, (and feeling), these 2 great "ground pounders" eat up the track could have been a highlight of the event. Taking things in stride, I noticed that both racers stuck around for the weekend, and Chris worked the grid as a volunteer.

At 5 pm Friday, it was time to make our way to garage #N2 for a little beer, wine, crackers & cheese, and a lot of bench racing. The Kieley brothers John (59 Gemini) and Rich (72 Dino Ferrari) hosted this "laid back" affair in their garage. Rich, with whom it was especially difficult to keep in a conversation, was constantly excusing himself to top off the snack trays. John Greenwood (Lotus 7) cleared a place for himself amongst the crackers and cheese, and climbed up on a table to invite us to the upcoming VARAC event at Mosport in June. Usually when you notice that a person is suddenly standing on the food table at a party, it is a girl and she has just come out of a cake; but John, fully clothed, was very entertaining in his own right… and he handed out nice posters. (Mosport Vintage Festival, June 22-24, 2007). Next year we understand that the Kieley's will provide a barbeque for those who wish to bring their own dinner to cook.

Photo by Randy Clark

After the Saturday morning Driver Meeting, Chief Instructor, Ed Valpey, gave a talk about the best ways to get around NHIS. Practices and races began at 10:30. For all the Saturday and Sunday practices and practice races, those with transponders were lined up based on their times from the previous session, and in front of those without transponders. Since there are not enough trained volunteers for timing and scoring to track every car with a stopwatch, those without transponders had to be lined-up somewhat arbitrarily. Transponders are the future and the future is here -- having one at NHIS makes it more likely that you will be running with your closest rivals all weekend.

A great crowd showed up for the Lobster-Steak and Steamers Saturday night banquet at the Makris Restaurant, just down the road from the track. Thanks again to Rich Kieley for putting this together; great meal, great company and easy to find. The incoming chair of the VRG NHIS event, John Kieley, led a standing ovation for Brad and JoAnn Marshall in appreciation for chairing this event over the years. One of the other highlights of the dinner was a talk by Larry McKenna entitled, my notes say, "The Importance of Formula Jr. in the World Today!" Larry gave us a little history of the formula, and provided some details about the upcoming 50 year Anniversary Celebration.

Sunday brought more rain, and the final races.
The Group 1 race found Larry McKenna (59 Stanguellini)

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VRG LOVES NHIS con't

at the pole again. (He won every race he was in all weekend!) He managed to, once again, lead every lap in this race, but was helped by the other drivers attacking each other, thus taking the pressure off him. He started getting pressure though, when Dave Sterns (60Abarth) finally got by Bill Gelles' (59 Stanguellini) who was blocked by traffic. It wasn't long after that when the little Fiat started filling Larry's mirrors, first on the left and then on the right. It was good racing, McKenna stayed in first and Sterns finished in his mirrors for second.

Group 2 final race was shortened to just 3 laps because my (62 TVR) left rear axle snapped off during the Pace Lap: at 20 mph, lucky for me. Unlucky for everyone else however, because the time allotted for the race was all used up by my retrieval. Sorry guys! John Faulkner won what amounted to a NASCAR like "green, white, checker" shootout. I guess we should go back to the last full race for this group, which was the Saturday PM race, won by Dan Scully (59 Volvo). As he points out, in the dry on Friday, he was only 16th, but in the rain he is among the fastest, and pulled off a victory.

Damon Josz (68 Porsche) brought a borrowed 911 to victory in the Group 3 final. Jim Peterman (65 Mustang) started at the pole, but the big V8 spun its' tires at the start, and Damon, Elliot Shanabrook (72 Alpha GTV) and Peter Faill (69 Porsche) slipped by him. Peter and Eliot remained out front until Elliot fell off the pace slightly for some reason, and then it was the two 911s in control. With 2 or 3 laps to go, Damon gets by when Peter misses a shift. The only others able to stay on the lead lap with these 3 were Nick Pratt (65 MG Midget) and Joe Ware (66 Mini) .

Photo by Randy Clark

After a quick trip to the auto parts store to solve some cooling problems, Sandy Gilland (72 Titan) was there at the pole for the Group 4 final on Sunday. Thinking that the unhooking of his sway bars on Saturday hadn't really helped much, he hooked them back up at their lowest setting for Sunday. That turned out to be a big mistake, as handling was noticeably off during the race. Bill Gaudreau (72 Crossle) took advantage and managed to stay right up on Sandy, especially in the twisty bits. As they say, catching and passing are two different things, and Bill didn't make any heroic moves to get by, so Sandy managed to hang on for the win.

Before the final race of the weekend (the "All Comers Race"), we assembled for the Awards Ceremony. This event, Betty French tells us, is the favorite event all season for the corner workers. One reason being, it's traditional for them to pick the trophy winners. (And this year, under the leadership of Patricia Eastman, VRG organized a feed for them that "they couldn't believe!"). Their picks are, frankly, purely subjective, but they can be lobbied for a good cause.

Winners this year were:
Stefan Wiesen with his very rare and very fast 63 Elva Courier Coupe.
Sheridan Fahnestock (69 FV) who, along with his son Adam, came all the way from Washington State for the event. (They read about VRG in Victory Lane magazine.)
Randy Clark (62 TVR) who they took pity on for the above mentioned lost wheel episode.
John Greller for his absolutely, drop dead, gorgeous 1970 yellow and red Royale sports racer.
John Faulkner (59 MGA) for all that he has done for vintage racing.
And, most importantly, **Brad and JoAnn Marshall** for their tireless devotion to making this event successful over the years.

By the time the green flag dropped for the "All Comers Race," almost everybody else had already "went". I watched from the Bowl, barely able to hold my umbrella in the driving wind and rain. It was a Damon Josz (68 Porsche) and Peter Faill (69 Porsche) show once again. Mark Palmer and John Faulkner (59 MGAs) were having a good time going at each other, but then John spun at the top of the hill and Mark didn't wait for him. With a best time of 1:30.146 in those conditions, Damon, a PCA instructor, put on a clinic.

Running a full weekend in the rain was an education for all of us. Where else could we have gotten so much time on a skid pad that resembled a race course? Looking at sunny side up: there is now a small army of VRG members who are inclement weather specialists!

Randy Clark (62 TVR)

VRG Driving School Update - Uncle Sam Wants You

Before beginning with the update, I'd first like to extend my sincere gratitude to the instructors who made this year's NHIS Drivers School possible… they are our greatest asset. Stalwarts Paul Bova, Ivan Franz, Jim Warren and Bob Damore again kept the program running from start to finish. Keith Lawrence, a spectator this year, grabbed pen and note sheet and provided a great deal of valuable feedback. Bob Girvin and Kim Eastman pitched in when their other duties allowed. Once again, thank you.

We conducted both the second Level 1 Drivers School and the inaugural Level 2 Drivers School at this year's NHIS event. These were held simultaneously using the same facility, which proved, both logistically and fiscally, to be very efficient. This will be our model going forward. The radios advertised for improved instructor/student communication were collected and universal ear-buds were purchased a couple of weeks before the event. Your chagrined chief instructor later discovered (too late, unfortunately) that the ear-buds were not as "universal" as the eager young Wal-Mart employee assured. Mea Culpa. The ear-buds have been returned to Wal-Mart and VRG will apparently have to purchase radios with OEM earpieces.

Radios aside, it is my opinion that Level 1 is operating at roughly 75% effectiveness, and Level 2 is operating at roughly 50% effectiveness. These aren't particularly good "scores," but the bar has been set high and the school is being judged as objectively as possible. While VRG has one of the better schools available in vintage racing (even with these scores) we are at a point where we need to either lower the bar or, collectively, invest a little more in the program. If we choose to lower the bar we would eliminate skills training and instead, on a single day, present a "Basics of Track Driving" lecture, provide a couple of sessions of mentored laps, and then cut the students loose and keep a close eye out for problem drivers. For those instructors who have sacrificed seat time for the benefit of the school, including yours truly, this isn't an altogether unattractive option. It is possible, however, to maintain our high standards, improve the effectiveness of the programs and eliminate the necessity for sacrifice on the part of instructors… if we can do the following:

Increase the Number of Instructors: One of our recent surveys indicated that there are enough members willing to instruct which adequately spreads the burden carried by the existing instructors. If we had at each event 10 - 12 instructors willing to take notes for 2 sessions each, we would be able to provide a very good level of feedback for every student. The sign-up sheets that we use presently will be tailored to each track, ensuring that the most difficult and/or useful corners would be covered. The afore-mentioned sign-up sheet, combined with note sheets that we provide, allow instructors to simply drop their notes off at the designated feedback meeting place; they would not be required to attend personally. One or two instructors can review the notes with the students.

Instructor Training: There are likely quite a few reading this who are capable of making a valuable contribution to our schools, but who feel that they are not prepared to instruct. Most instructors learn very quickly that their own skill as drivers continues to improve right along with that of their students, and this alone is incentive to get and stay involved. Ten years ago the White Mountain Chapter (WMC) of the BMW CCA implemented a skills program. Some of the early students came back as instructors, and their skill and speed on the track has far surpassed those fellow students who viewed the skills school as merely a box to be checked. The WMC now has an Instructor Development Program that trains 10 – 15 instructors per season. I believe that VRG would benefit greatly from a smaller scale instructor training program, likely to be held every other year in conjunction with the NHIS event. We will conduct a survey to determine whether this is a desirable and viable option.

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VRG Driving School Update, con't

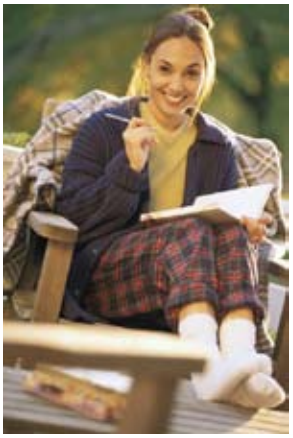
Instructor Practice: After 15 years of instructing I have learned that the higher-level skills required for skills training are, without question, perishable. After a few weeks away from the skid pad I consistently find that my skills have diminished… and this experience is typical among professional instructors. Imagine, then, how challenging it can be for instructors who see skid pads only once or twice a year. VRG has an excellent instructor corps, but we presently do very little to help them stay at the top of their game in the very specialized environment of skills training. We will make an effort to provide this time on the morning of each event.

Demonstration Vehicle: The techniques we are attempting to teach, particularly in Level 2, are both difficult and in many ways subtle. The ability to demonstrate these techniques, as opposed to merely attempting to describe them, is akin to the difference between driving oneself to an address in a strange city and simply being driven there by a cab driver. The addition of an instructor demo car, combined with the other changes mentioned, will raise the effectiveness of both Level 1 and Level 2 programs to roughly 95%. The remaining 5% would be achieved if instructors were able to both demonstrate and instruct in the students own cars. While this may be plausible in some cases, the race-prepared nature of the vehicles we drive will make it an exception. As of this writing, we have reserved one of Beaverun's Chevrolet Caprice training vehicles to be used for instructor demonstrations during our upcoming school.

The changes mentioned above will require a somewhat greater financial investment in our driver's school programs. This investment, however, can be made out of revenue generated by the schools themselves. Even with the added expenditures, our schools will continue to be a source of revenue to the club, while at the same time providing a truly exceptional value to participants and, in the long run, making VRG drivers as a whole both safer and more competent.

Ed Valpey
Chief Instructor, VRG

DIARY OF A DESPARATE CAR WIFE



Dear Diary,

I am totally frustrated and indignant -- at wit's end and want to scream and pound my fists into the wall (but I might break something, like my wrist, which could hurt!) I cannot reason with him -- my about to be "ex" beloved. He does not understand that his thought process is off-the-wall, out of control, and crazy. Wrong. Selfish. I am feeling unloved and abandoned. All because of that damn car.

It all started out pleasantly enough.. He told me months ago that he was going to race "a few weekends" this spring/ summer season. No problem with that, say I. So this morning he gives me his schedule so I can try to fit in any social plans we might have. And I can immediately see by the looks of this schedule of a few weekends that by September none of our friends will remember what we look like.

"It's just a few weekends", says he. And I retort, to paraphrase an ex-president of ours, that all depends on how you define "few" and "weekend". Our definitions , mine and his, were not in sinc, to say the least. And then the fireworks started.

I run for my Webster's. I want to make this argument an intellectual exercise, not an emotional free for all. "Few", I read, is defined as "consisting of or amounting to only a small number", There is nothing small about the number ten out of fifteen weekends, I point out. I flip to the back of my Webster's. "Weekend, n.: The end of the week; specifically the period between the close of one working or business or school week and the beginning of the next." That means late Friday through Sunday , not Wednesday morning at 5 AM through noon Monday. Nobody could define that as a weekend, even Mr. Clinton. Since my beloved is a Democrat, I'm afraid that was the end of the highbrow tone of our discussion. It went quickly south.

"My car pals all have understanding wives", says he. "Why am I the only one who married a woman who cannot feel my excitement, my rush, my thrill of the chase?" That is not fair, I counter. You are almost never going to be home. Your children will think we are having a trial separation and what's more, that may turn out to be true. And I might even run away from home and leave no forwarding address...and change the locks before I screech out of the driveway for the last time...and then I burst into tears at the very thought of all of this sorrow.

We compromised in the end. He cut his "weekends" in half, and I agreed not to complain. At least not until the fall. I am so glad that I have you, dear diary, to understand me. You are my rock.

Love, Maria

VRG NHIS FORMULA JUNIORS

The 17th Annual Vintage Celebration was held at the New Hampshire International Speedway May 18-20, 2007 showcasing antique cars, vintage racing motorcycles and vintage racing cars. The vintage racing car races were hosted by the Vintage Racer Group at the challenging 1.6 mile NHIS road course.

The featured "marque" for the vintage racing event this year was the VRG eligible Formula Juniors and, a separate race for these great cars was scheduled by the VRG. The VRG NHIS event was the first meeting of the "Unofficial and Low Key "race series to be held this year for both front engine and mid engine Formula Juniors.

Neatly contained within the Group One "Small Bore "cars were the " Its Whats Up Front That Counts " Front Engine Formula Juniors. Unfortunately no mid engine Formula Junior cars registered for this event. The front Engine Juniors were represented by:

Photos by Lu & Walter Pietrowicz
www.september8th.com

Oliver Collins	Toronto, Ontario	Stanguellini	Car # 63
Don Dingman	Underhill, Vermont	OSCA	Car # 184
Mitch Eitel	New York, New York	OSCA	Car # 740
Bill Gelles	Chappaqua, New York	Stanguellini	Car# 21
John Kieley	Temple, New Hampshire	Gemini	Car # 574
Larry McKenna	Deer Isle, Maine	Stanguellini	Car # 722
Victor Pastore	Chester, New Jersey	Gemini	Car # 664

The Group One first practice session was run in dry but cold temperature conditions. Larry McKenna's weekend began with the best lap time of the session. Then the Noreaster that was sweeping up the East Coast began its three day rain soaking weather. This was the third year in a row in which Mother Nature has drenched this VRG NHIS event. Unnamed participants have begun insisting that the R in VRG refers to rain, while others point out that some VRG drivers request such conditions to work on their race skills!

The Friday qualifying race, the Formula Junior race, all of Saturday's races and all of Sunday's races were run in Heavy Rain. The vintage motorcycle races were contested throughout the daily racing schedules. The motorcycles endured the same weather conditions that the cars did but the motorcycles added another dimension to the poor racing conditions by dropping copious amounts of oil on the already slippery racing surface.

The " Unofficial and Low key " series point standings at the end of the VRG NHIS weekend are:

McKenna	50 Points
Gelles	40 Points
Kieley	29 Points
Pastore	21 Points
Eitel	13 Points
Collins	10 Points
Dingman	2 Points

Special mention and gratitude is extended to Oliver Collins for trailering from Toronto Canada, to Mitch Eitel for racing his newly acquired exquisite OSCA and to Don Dingman for trying very hard to overcome the mechanical gearbox problems he experienced in his OSCA this weekend.

Our "Old Salt New Englander " Larry McKenna appeared to have an unfair advantage this weekend having grown up sailing in this typical late May weather. His performance has earned Larry the Formula Junior Rainmeister title.

After three days of sometimes extremely heavy weather, the rain may have dampened the track surface but not the competition, the enthusiasm and the enjoyment of the Front Engine Formula Junior Group. We look forward to our second "Unofficial and Low Key Formula Junior event at the Rolex Vintage Festival at Lime Rock on August 31 through September 3, 2007.

Bill Gelles

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VRG Vintage Celebration

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Or "We're Singin' in the Rain"

What a terrific opening weekend at NHIS in the rain. Your Secretary mentioned to me on Saturday that at most other tracks, if it had rained as much as it was doing, half the entrants would have left Friday afternoon. With the exception of a few that had family commitments on Sunday, it looked to me as if everyone stayed. In the future Ed Valpey can consider NHIS as one giant skid pad. Of course, it is the garages that make it so comfortable and keep us together; and with the long winter layoff it is the first chance many of us have had to see one another. John and Richard Kieley's Friday evening mixer was such a success that many stayed on until 10:00 PM. Next year they are going to supply a gas fired barbeque for those who wish to bring what they might like to cook for dinner. I am also making a vote to return the clam bake to the ski resort, which, in spite of drive, was a better place and Richard Kieley had more control over his dinner.

As the baton passes from Brad Marshall to John Kieley as Event Chairman, we wish to thank Brad and to welcome John. It passes from good hands to good hands. My memory of my many years at NHIS begins with David Fenton as the Event Chairman for the VSCCA event. Kim Eastman took it on for a few years and then Brad Marshall. It was a great August event as it broke up the summer in what was not too long a distance to travel. When the track shifted the date to May the VSCCA went along with it, then there became a conflict with a shift in a date at Lime Rock a few years later, and NHIS was abandoned – hence the beginning of VRG. I think that most of us who remember the event in summer would like that date back. And those of us who were at this May 2007 event, "Singin' in the Rain," would not trade the weekend for any other. Thank you NHIS – we like being there and we appreciate your working with VRG.

As I sit here this beautiful summer evening five weeks after NHIS, looking forward to the BeaveRun and Shenandoah events, and as Darry Bova attempts to put together the pieces of this Newsletter, I want to thank it's contributors. Randy Clark, Patti Eastman, and Bill Gelles have captured the mood of our rainy weekend in New Hampshire. Ed Valpey has written an excellent article on the Driver School as it matures, and Paul Wilson has made the case for Shenandoah in August. We welcome the return of Patti Eastman's column and of Maria Andretti's letters to her diary, knowing that both women have full plates. To VARAC and VDCA – "we can't do it with out *ya*", thank you!

We need to acknowledge the contribution of Frank and Connie Mount. They support the events; they always lend a hand to help anyone, or everyone. They have been part of the backbone of MGVR for 15 years. They are in the bone marrow of VRG. Their contribution to the Newsletter of their winter in New Zealand is the tip of the iceberg.

Without repeating what I have just said I wish to say the same thing about Louseann and Walter Pietrowicz. We thank you for all the things said and unsaid for your support, humor and friendship.

We can't do it with out *ya.*

Bill Hollingsworth

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I want to thank those who responded to the recent online survey. This device has served us so well that we plan to use it more often in order to have the membership more involved in shaping the direction of VRG's future. We want to hear from you. If we fail to ask the right questions, please tell us which one to ask.

One of the reasons for the last survey was to get a better understanding of the interest in the Shenandoah event August 18-19. Our long term goal has been to get a warm weather date on the main course to compliment the Turkey Bowl at Thanksgiving.

We have lost money on both Shenandoah events. Last year track management helped us out by reducing our rental fee, which reduced our loss. It also granted us our first choice for a new date in 2007 on the Shenandoah Circuit. For this reason, and for the continuing good relations with Summit Point Management, we feel it is important to have the Shenandoah event again this year. We are prepared for a loss if we cannot get the necessary entry.

Paul Wilson has volunteered to be this year's Event Chairman. He feels it is an excellent small bore track. It may be an "OK" track for my Allard, but small, nimble good handling sports cars such as MG's, Sprites, and Turners have a field day at the expense of horsepower. Sixty (60) cars make the event a financial success (we were very close last year). Paul Wilson is very optimistic that we can get 60. Most of the small bore (not open wheel) drivers have had a wonderful weekend of racing on the Shenandoah Circuit. I urge you to support this August "mini" event.

I want to thank our Canadian Cousin members of VA RAC for coming down to support our NHIS event in spite of the bad weather. We should all make plans to support their event at Mont Tremblant in the fall. I don't recall ever seeing so many people on track in the rain having such a good time in my 25 years of vintage racing. It is my theory is that it can not rain four years in a row -- so look forward to good weather next year.

The pieces of the VRG puzzle continue to fall in place. Our event schedule is improving.

Our financial position continues to improve as planned. More people are volunteering to help with the many club activities and providing additional financial support. Life is good.

Thanks for your help.

Bob Girvin

A VIEW FROM THE CORNER

Flagging For Drivers;

A Bird's Eye View From The Tree House at NHI

Working station #8, aka "The Tree House", (top of the hill before the left-hand diving turn) offers one of the best views of nearly the entire road-racing course at NHIS. Besides paying attention to my section of the track, I was able to watch the great racing you guys & gals put on. As always, the racing was exciting, not only among the front runners, but throughout the field as drivers diced with each other for position or just for the sheer fun of it!

Along with this spectacular view of the competition, the Tree House provided me with an excellent opportunity to observe and evaluate the following, which I think are noteworthy:

First,~~~Kudos to all the drivers! You responded perfectly to each of the "Black Flag All" track conditions!

Second ~~~ Kudos to all of the drivers who saw each of their session's Checkered Flag! Tsk, tsk, tsk to the two or three drivers who missed the waving black & white checkered flag which signals that the race, or practice, id over! Flaggers refer to such drivers as "runners"…those who have "blown the checker". Now, please stay with me while I explain the importance of the Checker from the points of view of the drivers & the flaggers; and the overall running of a race event.

Here we go: The Checker comes out!!! On-Course Drivers' POV: "Yahoo…I Won!!!" Session is over-cool down lap begins. Remember that passing is still allowed so maintain your line & use your mirrors. Responding to flaggers waving at you & giving you the ole "thumbs up" is a good idea. Drivers' on Grid POV: "Yahoo…we're on schedule!!!" When the final car receives the Checker, Control radios to all stations "Last car is #yyy…Let's follow him around. Flaggers' POV: As car #yyy clears each station, that station radios "Car #yyy through station #zz; while the flaggers' internal dialogue is "Cool…all clear…now I can go out on course to remove that piece of debris, perhaps sweep that bit of track really fast if it needs it, and check the track surface for oil, etc."

All of a sudden, over the radios come the dreaded call…"We've got a Runner!!!"

Drivers on Course: "Who the @#&^*'s blowing by like he's still racing?!?!?"
Drivers on Grid: "What??? Another two minutes?!?!?!"
Event Stedwards "*#^%$...Well we were on scheduled!!!!!!"
Flaggers on Stations are bowing their whistles to flaggers on the track.
Flaggers on the Track: "Nice……" as they scoot to safety.

The "Checker" epitomizes how drivers and flaggers must work in concert in order for both to play safe; and, keep our race events running smoothly.

So…play safe and have lost of fun!!!

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

Patti Eastman

VRG Rules Changes for 2008

The Board of Directors met during the NHIS event in May, and decided on a few changes to our Rules package. There are a couple additional safety requirements, which won't become effective until the 2008 season (NOT required this year). We wanted to give everyone plenty of time to make these safety upgrades to their cars, if they don't already have this equipment.

Safety requirements: For the 2008 season, **fuel cells** will be required. The cell must meet FIA standard FT3 (most cells from the leading manufacturers meet this standard). Also, for the 2008 season, we will require **arm restraints** in all open cars. For closed cars, the 2008 requirement will be a single arm restraint on the outboard arm, or a window net. We prefer the arm restraint rather than the window net, but will accept either.

We realize that a fuel cell can be a significant expense. However, it appears that the vast majority of VRG cars already have cells, and the safety issue is paramount. A fire or explosion from a conventional gas tank could easily involve other cars, or track workers. VRG has highly recommended fuel cells from our inception, and had always intended to make it a requirement within a reasonable time. The Board feels this time has come, for 2008. The arm restraint requirement is much less costly, and should be simple for everyone to implement.

Engine modifications: In order to remain consistent with other leading vintage groups, the Board decided to formally approve two additional engine modifications. Effective immediately, **roller rockers** are acceptable in all classes. Also effective immediately, conversion to **dry sump** is acceptable in Class F (the big-bore production class).

Dry sumps have always been legal in VRG on cars originally equipped that way, in period – i.e. many sports-racers and formula cars, and a few high-end sports/GT cars. But previously, our Rules made it illegal to convert a normal production car engine to dry sump. We have learned that many (perhaps most) of the Class F cars running with us already have dry sumps, which are legal with SVRA and other major clubs. We want to keep our Rules as consistent as possible with these clubs. Also, the historical precedent is there, as this was legal in Trans-Am in the late 1960's.

Please note however that engine location may not be changed from the original – engines may not be lowered or moved back in the chassis for better weight distribution. The adoption of dry sumps, for Class F, is simply to improve the reliability of these engines. Similarly, in allowing roller rockers (all classes), the intent is to enhance the reliability of the valve train.

If you have any questions or concerns about these Rules changes, please discuss them with any VRG Board member. Our official Rules & Regulations will be revised and released soon, well in advance of 2008. Thanks for your understanding and support!

Mark Palmer

New Zealand Southern Festival of Speed
February, 2007

The Southern Festival of Speed is a four race series, in New Zealand, run on four successive weekends in the month of February every year. The series is held on the south island of the country starting at the Ruapuna track in Christchurch. Farther down the coast is Levels Raceway in Timaru. Next is the Terratonga Circuit in Invercargill, self described as the southern most city in the Commonwealth. The last race is a street race held in the beautiful coastal city of Dunedin right by the city centre, which is aptly (for the MGs anyway) in the shape of an octogon.

The journey began at Pearson International Airport in Toronto at 2PM Sunday afternoon January 31. Twenty-four hours later, by way of Los Angeles and Auckland we landed in Christchurch at 8 AM Tuesday morning New Zealand time. Since we were too early to check in at our motel, we decided to brave driving on the left side of the road and head downtown visit "Babe" the TB special that had arrived by container ship a couple of weeks earlier. She was received by a company called "Auto Restorations" that also looked after all the customs clearances etc.

The shop at Auto Restorations is an amazing place where a staff of 30 odd mechanics, machinists and body makers restore and repair all makes and models of cars. In the shop at the time were a mix of makes, including a matched pair of MG tigresses. Apparently the owner of the cars had made a deal with a friend who would restore both and get to keep one for the expenses that this entailed. Besides the MGs there were several Ferraris, a Delage, a Formula 3 Cooper, a Bugatti, and Peter Giddings P3 Alfa Romeo,

By now it was lunch time and Peter took us to a little historic café on the Avon River for lunch. It was part of a rental facility for row boats and canoes that had operated since the late 1800's.

Our room was now ready and with Connie making sure to keep me on the correct side of the road, particularly at intersections, we made it back to the motel in one piece for some long overdue sleep.

Wednesday we were free to see some of Christchurches' many sights as we didn't need to go to the track for the first race weekend until Thursday noon. We borrowed Peter's Landrover and trailer to transport "Babe" the 20 Km to the Ruapuna Race course. I had two good afternoons of practice on Thursday and Friday, but on the first lap of the first race on Saturday, the front part of the super charger casting broke off. It looked like the only way to get Babe going again would be to borrow a manifold and carburettors. By the time an hour had passed the MG community in the Christchurch area was aware of our plight and by the end of the day we had promises of an inlet manifold from one guy and a set of carbs from another!

By 9AM on Sunday both people had arrived with their parts. The only problem left was fuel lines which I hadn't thought of. At this point a spectator known to the others was convinced to pull his TF into the pit area so that I could strip off his fuel lines for the day. Everything went together well except that the gaskets in the 50 year old MGA carbs had all gone hard and I couldn't stop the fuel leaks. No new ones were available on short notice so we had to give up for the weekend and work to making sure that all would be ready for the next weekend at Levels Raceway at Timaru.

Monday I picked up all the gaskets needed and again borrowed fuel banjos etc. to complete the transition. We then went to Auto Restorations where the machinists began discussions - of not if, but how - they would repair the super charger. The biggest problem was a very complicated steel coupling (from the drive end to the lobe shaft), the worst part of the job being the internal spline in a blind hole. It was decided that it wouldn't be ready in time for the Timaru event, so I worked on getting the carb setup working. This was completed on Monday, so Connie and I did some site seeing prior to heading south to Timaru.

Tuesday we drove right across the country to the west coast through Arthur's Pass and the Oteri gorge. It is an absolutely amazing trip with so many hairpin turns and steep up and downhills, that you lose count . All the highways in New Zealand (at least on the South Island) are 2 lanes, often with no shoulders, and lots of bridges are single lane. The really scary part is that cars share this road with 2 unit semi tankers. Lots of times when Connie thought that we were going "faster than necessary" we would be passed by a local in a small SUV hauling an 18' fiberglass boat & motor on a trailer with no brakes. We did however make it to Greymouth on the west coast and back safely.

Wednesday we visited a local auto museum , the Air Force museum, the Antarctic centre and an internet café to connect with home.

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Thursday we headed for Timaru. On the way we noticed an auto and agricultural museum that deserved a visit in the small town of Geraldine. It was full of old cars, some restored and belonging to the locals and others just retired drivers. Lots of early Morris and Austin 7s, Prefects and other early Fords. The surprising thing to me was the variety of early American cars in New Zealand RHD and all. Lots of Model Ts and As and odd stuff like Hupmobile Willys and old Chevs. This museum had the most amazing collection of old farm tractors, all makes, as early as 1910, mostly unrestored. Ater this we stopped at the race track on the way to the hotel and found that Babe had just been delivered, so we set up our pit and got things ready for the morning.

Friday we registered and completed tech inspection, and I did my best to tune the carburettor set up. After lunch we had our first track session and although the car ran smoothly, she was down on power. I guess being super charged, the engine was built with about 8.5 to 1 compression which didn't add up to anything like the previous performance. As it turned out however, I had good racing with a good running and well driven TF for the rest of the weekend. It really doesn't matter how fast you go, it just changes who you race with, although it was hard to see some of the cars that I could stay ahead of in practice the previous weekend driving by this time.
In typical New Zealand fashion this was a major social event with "nibbles" on Friday evening, a catered feast on Saturday and "nibbles" again on Sunday after racing.
At this point Babe had been put away in a maintenance shed graciously offered by the track people, in readiness to be picked up for transport to Invercargill for the next race weekend.

While at the Levels race track the Kiwis had organized the repaired supercharer parts to be picked up by a spectator coming down from Christchurch and brought to us on Saturday. A trial assembly revealed that a counterbore was missing on the repaired part. Other than this the workmanship and thought that was put into the job was first class. This unfortunately ment that we had to back track to Auto Restorations on Monday to have this rectified. The good part was tat I was then able to reassemble the unit in their shop under clean conditions rather than at the track.

We now headed South to Invercargill and the Terratonga Circuit. On the way we spent a night in the small town of Fairlie where we had one of the best meals of the trip in a town resturant, a 7 vegetable roast lamb meal for $10.00 (about 7.50 CDN). The following day on the way to Wanaka we took in the Warbirds Aircraft museum and a huge transportation & toy museum all on the airport site. Both these venues were extensive and included many fighter aircraft from WW11 and hundreds of cars and other vehicles back into the 1920's.

Wanaka is a very nice tourist town which boasts the best weather in all New Zealand. Next morning we headed out for Queenstown. When we arrived there were no rooms left except for one at the hotel by the dock on the lake. We took it in spite of the cost, thus putting the couple behind us in line out of luck. Having booked the room the shopping began in earnest until it was time to board the steam boat for a trip to a BBQ lunch at a sheep station which also included a herding dog and sheep shearing demonstrations.

The following morning we got an early start to make the departure of the Kingston flyer steam train a short 15km trip to the town of Fairly and back. The engine and coaches were all beautifully restored, the most impressive heritage railway that we have experienced. From there we began the rest of our southerly trip covering some really amazing roads through the spine of the southern alps.

Thursday afternoon we booked into our motel in Invercargill for the third weekend of racing at the Teretonga race track. On our way to the track Friday morning, (a 15 minute trip from the centre of town) we happened to see "Babe" on the car transporter also headed for the track with several SUVs, and other cars. We had until noon to remove the carbs and install the supercharger. This operation went off without a hitch and we were ready for afternoon practice. What a difference to have the supercharger back in action! The race group at Terratonga lacked some of the slower cars that I was able to play with at the two earlier events but I was able to have good runs with a mother and daughter in two "lowcosts", home built Lotus 7's, (similar to John Burgess'). One was powered by a Triumph GT6 and the other by a 1500cc Spitfire engine. The father rounded out the family group in a home built single seat racer also powered by a Triumph 1500cc.

Friday and Saturday "Babe" ran well although she developed a very disconcerting shake on first starting. This seemed to disappear on running a bit and wasn't evident at top RPM, so we soldiered on. During the Sunday morning race she ran really well but just after crossing the finish line lost most of her power. I immediately shut off and received a tow back to the paddock. During diagnosis we noticed that the rear of the engine wobbled up and down when cranking over plus 3 and 4 cylinders were way down on compression. At this point I figured that I was done for the trip. I could fix the blown head gasket, but had no idea what the other problem was. The only way to tell would be to pull the engine out to see what was wrong. Just when I was resigned to giving it up, I was talked into taking it apart by Peter Giddings. He was staying with the Clearwaters, the family of racers that I described earlier and they in typical Kiwi fashion offered their garage to me to do the work. We booked a couple more nights at our accomodation and started work. It turned out that the

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pilot bearing in the back of the crank had worked out onto the output shaft of the gearbox and was all chewed up and allowing the clutch plate to float around causing the wobble. A straight forward fix, but no standard bushing would do. A lump of porous bronze was ordered and shipped overnight.

In the meantime David Clearwater and Peter went to a friend, Dave Brown's shop and set up for the machining of the new bushing the next day, leaving the afternoon free for us to visit "The World's Fastest Indian" display at the local museum. If you have seen the movie, you will know that Invercargill was Burt Munro's home town. When we went back to pick up the completed bushing at Dave Brown's shop, we got a chance to look around. He runs a shop making exact replica "D" type and "C" type Jags and GT40s. These are so exact that part on his cars are interchangeable on the real ones. Absolute quality.

I picked up the bushing at 2PM on Tuesday and by 7:30 that night the engine was in and everything done except replacing the oil pan. By Wednesday at 11AM the job was completed and successfully test run. Time to call the transport company and head back up north to Dunedin, for the final event, a street race in the centre of the city. We took the scenic route up the east coast through rolling hills, endless twisty roads and scenic outlooks for viewing the ocean and beaches. At one stop by a lighthouse we saw a pride of sea lions playing like family dogs on the beach.
We arrived at our destination for the night, Balclutha, again getting the last motel room available in the town. We spent a quiet night and set off the next morning for Omaru. This is a beautiful small city with many historic buildings constructed from the local limestone. We had booked a viewing of the Blue penguins in the evening. These little creatures come in from the sea at dusk every evening having spent the day traveling an average of 50 km out on the ocean in search of food. They come back to their nests every night to sleep and feed their young.

Now it was off to Dunedin for the final event of the Southern Festival of Speed.
We had time to do the "tourist thing" for a couple of days before the race day. We took another tourist train trip, this time through the Taieri Gorge with many spectacular views and heart stopping trestle bridges. The trip began and ended at the Dunedin railway station, an Edwardian masterpiece of mosaic tile and vaulting arches. We also went to the Royal Albatross colony where we saw adults and chicks in their nests and were lucky enough to see the Albatross in flight, which some of the locals said that they had never managed to see themselves.

"Babe had been shipped from Invercargill to a depot yard a couple of kilometers from the circuit. Saturday we picked her up and drove to a friend's house for a good clean up after the complete teardown job. We were invited to display at an indoor car show in town which gave us a place to store her overnight.

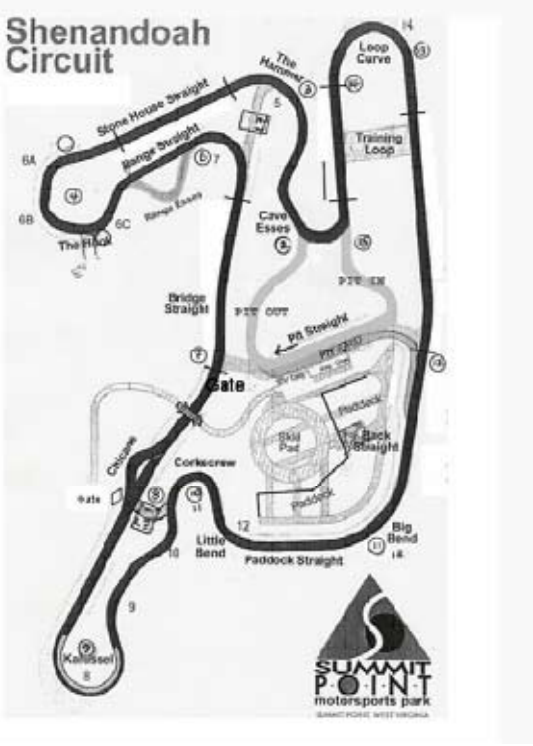
Dunedin is a street race and the roads are open until the night before so there was no pit set up until Sunday morning. Driving a race car on the streets to and from the circuit doesn't seem to bother anyone in New Zealand. You see all sorts of strange models of vehicles on the roads that were never imported to North America. The race group that I was in was the vintage car club grid. Apparently there was somewhat of a boycott afoot due to a huge increase in the entry fee (still about half of ours) which meant that we only had about 15 cars. There was a mixed bunch of New Zealand specials and some sports cars, all pre 1960. There was only a very old Buick Special and our MG that were pre war. Most of the circuit was defined by concrete Jersey barriers and curbs like in our Pittsburgh venue. The very high speed section on highway #1, the main north/south road on the south island was defined by a continuous row of 20' steel sea containers on one side and concrete jersey barriers on the other. The speeds here for me would exceed 100 mph (if I could work up the nerve) finishing in a narrow shoot running down a slight hill to a 180 hairpin which required the whole road full lock in the MG to make it around. From there the track went up hill to a series of blind LRL corners cresting the hill and heading down again to the Start/Finish line. This series of corners were at about 120 kph crowned and not all that smooth. Although the course was fun to drive and I had a couple of good dices in the races we had, one really needed far more practice to feel comfortable doing really fast laps.
The good thing was that "Babe" finished the day with no problem and is in better shape than when we set out. After the race we drove the car to a borrowed spot in an indoor parking garage ready to take her to the trucking depot for the trip back to the starting point in Christchurch.
As usual at these events there was a well attended BBQ, this time at the local rugby club which gave us the final time to socialize with the new friends that we had met and received so much help from during our trip.
By Wednesday the car was back at Auto Restorations in Christchurch ready for us to pack up for the trip to Canada and return the borrowed carbs and manifold to their owners.

As this is written, at the end of April, we have just put the car back in the garage after her long ocean voyage back home. Everything was received in tip top condition with very little fuss from customs etc. This whole trip was a huge undertaking for us but we had a fantastic time, both as racers at the different tracks and as tourists traveling the country. In retrospect it was truly a "once in a lifetime" trip.

Frank Mount

The Case for VRG Shenandoah, August 18 - 19, 2007

This event has a unique niche in the VRG schedule. First, the date: we've changed it to otherwise race-empty August, from the event-packed fall. It's about the only race all summer within reasonable distance of mid-Atlantic racers. Second, the track. Some criticism of our earlier events at Shenandoah was due to a mismatch between the track and cars that were too big or powerful for it. We think this is one of the best small-car tracks anywhere, and we're working hard to refine this event to take advantage of its strengths. We are not using the much-criticized Karussell. And we're making a special effort to encourage small-bore entries, for which the track is best suited.



What kind of track is it? It's very tight, with similar speeds as Pittsburgh or the NHIS vintage circuit, and is perfect for small, nimble cars. You spend lots of time in tight U-turns, some with blind over-the-hill apexes, off-camber entries and exits, and steep grades. Remember, the track was designed by Summit Point owner Bill Scott, the racer's racer, who replicated famously-difficult corners from other tracks, like Laguna Seca's Corkscrew. The straights aren't any longer than NHIS or Pittsburgh, so top speeds are limited. A car that's happy circulating on a small skidpad–a Sprite set up loose, or a Mini–will be best. The track has challenge and variety, and seems relatively safe. The crash barriers are further back than at Watkins Glen, where speeds are much higher. All appropriately-prepared cars are welcome. But if you're tired of your little Group One car feeling lost on the big tracks, you should definitely try this one out.

This is a small, friendly event that friends and family will enjoy. Once again, VRG will be hosting our at-track, all-inclusive barbeque on the premises. There's no program or PA chatter–it's not officially a spectator event–but that also means there's no admission charge; all guests have to do is sign the release and get a wrist band, to satisfy the insurance people. If they volunteer as flaggers, they can even get a few laps as a passenger in one of the race cars. (NOTE: we'd *love* to have worker volunteers. They save us money paying professionals–but only if we know they're coming well beforehand.)

Getting your applications in early helps us make the best schedule and race groupings. You get a full refund if you can't come. If you do not put a wheel on track then you do not pay.

For UP-TO-DATE information on the Shenandoah event go to our www site or sign up for the VRG vintage newsgroup forum

Paul Wilson, Event Chairman

VINTAGE RACER GROUP

VRG

Shenandoah Summer Festival

Summit Point Motorsports Park
Summit Point, WV

ENTRY FORM

August 18th & 19th, 2007

1st car with Driver and Crew - $310.00 | 2nd car with same Driver - $200.00

DRIVER:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (Home): _____ (Other): _____
eMail: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ @Track: _____
Telephone: _____

Current Vintage License: _____ License #: _____

Are you on probation from any racing club: _____ If so explain: _____
_____
_____
_____

Driver's Competition History (include last three races): _____
_____
_____
_____

CAR:

Year: _____ Make/Model: _____ Car #: _____
Color(s): _____ Actual Displacement(cc): _____

Carburetors (Number/Type/Size): _____

Wheels: Type (alloy, Wire, Steel) _____ Treaded (y/n)? _____
Diameter: F_____ R _____ Actual Rim Width: F _____ R _____

Tires (Manufacturer/Model): _____ Size: F _____ R _____

Logbook from VMC Recognized Club: _____ (VSCCA, SVRA, VARAC, etc…)

VINTAGE RACER GROUP

VRG

MARK PALMER, SECRETARY
253 BRIDLE PATH RD
BETHLEHEM, PA 18017

WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

PITTSBURGH AUTO SHOW

THANK YOU

Running a successful event depends on the work of many volunteers as well as financial sponsors.
The 2007 NHIS Vintage Celebration had more of this valuable (priceless) resource than ever before.
Cash sponsors contributed nearly $1200 for; trophies, the Friday party, the Corner worker's parties, comp meals for a few special visitors, etc.

Volunteer workers contributed (estimated more than 500 hours); planning, drivers school, registration, the grid, 12 corners, sold regalia, timing & scoring, tech inspection, driver's committee, dinner arrangements, party arrangements, etc.

Thanks from all VRG members, BOD and the management of NHIS

Brad Marshall