24TH VINTAGE CELEBRATION
NEW HAMPSHIRE MOTOR SPEEDWAY
AUGUST 1 -2

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC RACES
NJMP MILLVILLE, NJ
SEPTEMBER 19 - 21

VINTAGE RACER GROUP

VRG NEWSLETTER

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WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

VRG RACE SCHEDULE 2014

APRIL 11-13, 2014	VDCA WILD HARE RUN, VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY, ALTON, VA Event Chairman: Mike Jackson, Tel: 561-622-7554 Email: vdca@vintagedrive.com
MAY 15-18, 2014	"JEFFERSON 500" AT SUMMIT POINT, WEST VIRGINIA (May 16-18) with FREE Open Practice Day May 15 - VRG Drivers School (May 14-15) 45th ANNIVERSARY OF FORMULA FORD in the USA for all Monoposto Legal FF (1968-81) VRG/Royale FF Challenge Series (First leg of three race meetings) IMSA RS/SCCA 2.5L Sedan Series **John Morton - Grand Marshall** Co-Event Chairmen: Cal Trumbo and Jim Karamanis, Tel: 304-449-7050 Email: j500@vrgonline.org
JUNE 27-29, 2014	THE VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMPSON SPEEDWAY MOTORSPORTS PARK - THOMPSON, CT OLDEST ROAD COURSE IN U.S., CO-SANCTIONED WITH THE VSCCA Event Chairman: Paul Bova and Co-Chairman Paul King, Tel: 203-329-9710 Email: paul@vrgonline.org
JULY 11-13, 2014	PVGP HISTORIC RACES, PITT-RACE WAMPUM, PA VRG/Royale FF Challenge Series (Second leg of three race meetings) Event Chairman: Keith Lawrence, Tel: 724-941-5330 Email: keith@vrgonline.org
✓AUG. 1-2, 2014	24th VINTAGE CELEBRATION - NEW HAMPSHIRE MOTOR SPEEDWAY Event Chairman: David Fromer, Tel: 802-253-8854 Email: oddjob@stowe.nu
SEPT. 19-21, 2014	NEW JERSEY HISTORIC RACES, NJMP MILLVILLE, NJ VRG/Royale FF Challenge Series (Third leg of three race meetings) Event Chairman: Butch O'Connor, Tel: 973-769-7707 Email: fiveoaks@ptd.net
OCT. 10-12, 2014	VRG AT THE GLEN, WATKINS GLEN, NY Event Chairman: Mike Lawton, 978-274-5935 Email: lawton@vrgonline.org
NOV. 28 - 30, 2014	TURKEY BOWL XIII, SUMMIT POINT, WEST VIRGINIA Event Chairman: Michael Oritt, Tel: 305-420-4929 Email: Michael@vrgonline.org

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

VRG photos by Bill Stoler

REUNION

The Bill Stoler photo of 300 plus VRG and VSCCA members having dinner together the Saturday evening, June 28 at the Thompson Raceway Restaurant tells the story. A good photo is still "good for 1000 words."

The story begins with Jon Hoenig returning from California to take over the family's management of Thompson Raceway. He saw the future of racing activity at Thompson lay in part, to a return to racing on the road course to create more use for the racing facility. His dad had him bring in Mike Rand as a consultant. Rand, a racer, Race Director of the F2000 & F1600 Championship Series, formerly General Manager of VIR for it's resurrection, and for at least 10 years, General Manager of Lime Rock Park during the Charlie Gibson years. He helped with the layout of the new track, and most important to us (VRG & VSCCA), was behind the suggestion to Jon Hoenig to have us jointly sanction the event. When you see him, thank him.

The story unfolded beginning on Thursday, an open test day. It was a reunion of old friends in both clubs. It was the beginning of a reunion with Thompson "3" for some who had raced there from the beginning. The cars mostly look new, even if they are old. The drivers, coming in generally larger sizes than their earlier model, sporting grey, white, or little hair, had reasons to be pleased to be there and to be part of the continuing history at Thompson. For VRG it was its 10th Anniversary. For Bob Girvin it was a last race in the Hemi powered Allard GT. For 19 years Bob was the VSCCA's Event Chairman for the Mt. Equinox Hill Climb. For 10 years he has been VRG's Event Chairman for its October race at Watkins Glen. He was one of the Founders and the first president of VRG.

The weekend's entertainment is well documented in the fine articles from our correspondents. Those articles cover the VSCCA and VRG. For details of the races themselves they are posted on the vrgonllne.org website.

We think this will be an annual get together. There were a multitude of volunteers that made the Thompson Reunion happen. It started with Paul and Darry Bova and Paul King and Mike Virr and filtered down like a good cup of coffee made in your Chemex. I think we were all pleased to see the field of Formula Jr's and the field of pre war and T Series MG's. In SVRA, Group 4 barely exists unless it is having a mega event. VRG, with its tire rules based on those of SVRA, sees less of that Group. It is still the focus of the VSCCA, as is prewar and it warms this old racer's heart to see them in action. I had thought that we would see a stronger field of Lotus XI's and Lola Mk1's, the VSCCA having probably the strongest field of those 50's sports racers in the country – next year!

Thanks to all
Bill Hollingsworth

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VSCCA Group 1 Prewar

For the VSCCA Prewar Group we had a good turnout of 26 cars, which consisted of a great mix of vehicles. MGs made up a good portion with 4 prewar cars, 2 T-series specials and 8 other T series cars. The rest of the field included 3 sprint cars some specials, Mike Virr's Riley, Ben Bragg's Old Grey Mare, the Holman Stutz and the very fast Alpha Monza of Peter Greenfield.

In the final race on Sunday Peter's Alpha won over Paul Fitzgerald's MG TD, the two having had several good battles over the weekend.

I had the privilege of watching a great battle from my position third in the line, between the MG TC of Mark O'Day and Scott Ebert in the Dreyer Sprint car. Mark eventually prevailed, but I witnessed some great safe driving by both parties.

From discussions that I had with other participants, I think that this track is ideal for our cars and although the location and the mystique of it being a newly built historic track contributed to the good turnout, our group would return.

For myself I think we had plenty of track time and I preferred the slow speed corners over the top gear ones that most other tracks provide.

All in all a great weekend, well organized and run in a top-notch facility!

Frank Mount

John Rutherford's father at Thompson way back when "driving the Allard in which he courted his mom"

VSCCA GROUP 2

There were a multitude of reasons to enter Thompson for the Inaugural VRG / VSCCA Vintage Event: It was close to our home of Cape Cod, it owns a great history, and...Gaston Andrey ran there successfully in his early career in a Morgan! Those were reasons enough to attend the grand re- opening for me! Our 1951 Morgan was entered in VSCCA Group 2. I had also bribed co- event chair Mike Virr with a (stolen) Morgan shirt! Promise: we would be safe from a black flag! It was great to see many faces both current and from the past. The weather: perfect. Our group hosted several MGA's and "those pesky Alfas." As with any new venue, reaction and feelings were mixed. As time went on those feelings became more positive. Let's face it: how many tracks have YOU mastered in ONE weekend ? My overall opinion: CHALLENGING. Our race group soon sorted itself out...the faster cars included MG's and Alfa's, then a mid- pack of ME in a seemingly overweight Morgan and the rest of the group - more MG's and Alfa's. Bill Lightfoot was also there in his Morgan that ran there in the day! (Nice effort, Bill.) Of course some figured out the "line" sooner than others .Mark Palmer did for sure, as he soon left the group to fend for itself! I will also compliment the Lotus Elite driven by Fryberger's nephew, Chris Cogswell, who is only in his second year. He figured things out very quickly, and that is when I realized how badly I was holding him up! We all survived our sessions without damage - always a good thing. Great staff, great weather, great friends, great event, Reason enough for next year!!!!? I think so.

Chris Towner
Quahogracing Team
1951 Morgan + 4

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VSCCA Group 3

Eighteen sports racing and over 2 liter cars were entered in the VSCCA Group 3 class. Twelve cars lined up for the qualifying race on Saturday morning. Michael Kaleel's Lotus 23B was the fastest qualifier at one minute, 29.5 seconds followed closely by Dick Fryberger's Lotus XI. Third was Bob Girvin's Allard GT with Baxter Phillips' Lotus XI less that a second a lap behind. Fifth, sixth and seventh were Ernest Steubesand's Lotus Super 7, Paul Wilson's Elva Mk II and Andrew Male's Austin Healy 3000. Tom Clifford's Lotus XI was eight, Sandra McNeil's Cooper Monaco ninth, Mark Riley's Ford Thunderbird tenth, Steve Gordon's Jaguar XK 150 eleventh and Dudley Cunningham's Lotus XV twelfth. Unfortunately, Sandra's and Dudley's 2 liter twin cam Climax engines were not running properly as they would have easily been in the top group.

Saturday's afternoon race saw thirteen cars take the flag. Kaleel's 23B and Fryberger's XI were one and two in the one minute 28 second range. Phillips' XI, Girvin's Allard and Steubesand's Seven were 3rd, 4th and 5th in the one minute 33 second range, with Wilson, Clifford, McNeil and Male 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th in the one minute 36 second range. Riley's Thunderbird was 10th, Vapaa's Saab Quantum 11th, Gordon's XK 150 12th and Cunningham's misfiring Lotus XV in 13th, after only completing one lap.

Sunday mornings "Back in the Day" car show in pit lane featured a number of the car's that raced in the early Thompson events. My Lotus XI was invited because its first race was at Thompson on September 3, 1956 with race no. 99. Two other notable drivers racing that day were Carroll Shelby and Masten Gregory. Owner George Arents of Long Island had Jim Pauley of Stamford, CT install the 1300cc OSCA engine from the ex Bill Brewster MT4 #1138 that raced at Sebring in 1954 in the XI. The car had a distinctive hood scoop to fit the OSCA engine and was painted black and red with some white striping. The car was then raced by Arents at the 1956 Nassau Speed Week in Class GM with race no. 180. In 1957, Arents sold the car to Lee Lilley of Miami who was the chief mechanic for Lucky Casner's Camoradi racing Team and Lee raced it at Fort Pierce, FL with race no. 66. Lee was not impressed with the OSCA engine and sold the car to someone in the northeast around 1959 who had a burnt out Club model Lotus XI chassis no. 273. The new owner installed the Club's 1100cc Climax engine no. 6699 in the ex Arents XI. Who this individual was is unknown, but race promoter Murray Smith later purchased the car in New York City and drove it back to Long Island. There was a Rascal Racing insignia on the inside of the bonnet. The car was later owned by Bill Faircloth, of Ridgefield, CT who raced it for many years, before I purchased the car.

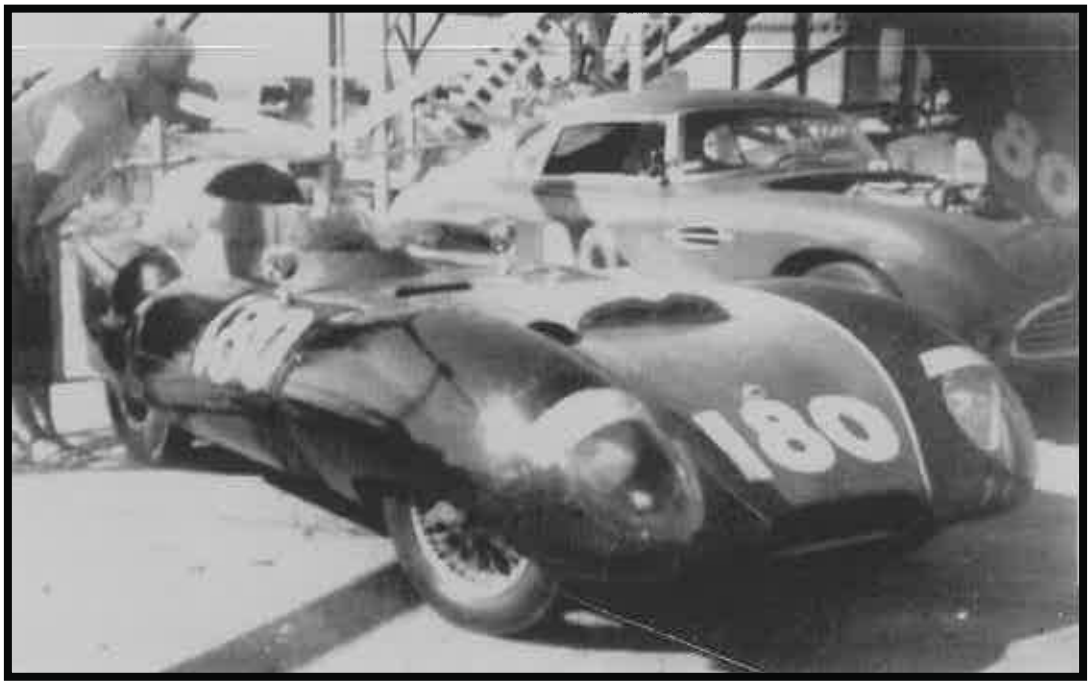
Alongside my XI in the pits was Dave Belden's ex Len Bastrup Lotus IX which competed in over 30 races from 1955 to 1960 and nearly half of them were at Thompson. After Dave brought the IX to the track on Friday morning, he and his wife Alice headed off to France for the Le Mans Historic races. His good friend and Lotus mechanic Carl Whitney showed the car for him during the weekend.

For the Sunday feature race our class was down to seven cars. Baxter Phillips was on pole followed by Ernest Steubesand's Lotus 7, Paul Wilson's Elva MK II, my XI, Mark Riley's Thunderbird and two Saab Quantums. The three Lotus' and the Elva were having a good battle, but on lap five, Wilson's Elva and Steubesand's Lotus touched and they both came in. Phillip's XI won followed by my XI and the two Quantam's. Riley's Thunderbird retired on lap 3.

The Grand Re-Opening of the Track was a great success and a lot of fun. The organizers did a tremendous job. To me, getting the cars that raced there in the 1950's nearly sixth years ago like the MG's, Allard's, Lotus', Austin Healey's etc made it extra special.

Tom Clifford

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY



Photos by Tom Clifford

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VSCCA Group 4
FORMULA JUNIOR & FV

Listening to Bob Goeldner speak at the Friday evening FJHNA celebration at the newly renovated Thompson raceway, I couldn't help but think how much these wonderful Formula Junior cars have gone through since they first appeared on the racing circuits in the late 1950's. To be sure, It was especially touching to see that Bob, an FJ racer during it's heyday, was somewhat emotional when thanking all of us for being there. It was barely 3 years ago that you would be lucky to see more than 2 or 3 of these "trainers" for Formula 1 drivers on the track at the same time. To see so many FJ racers was a tribute to their ability to maintain an attraction not soon found in any other group of vintage racer cars, an attraction the passage of time evidently has not diminished.

Seeing Don Dingman's OSCA come off the trailer on Thursday's track day, one of 4 front engined FJ's, I knew this was going to be a great renaissance for this track as so many FJ cars and stars of that era raced at Thompson in the day. Thursday was hot and humid with the sky threatening to open up but held off until severe thunderstorms crashed through the skies at 1 AM Friday morning. From then on in, the weather was perfection, adding more good karma to an already exciting weekend. The only other glitch was being brand new, the asphalt had come up in three spots on the track. Thompson management was on top of it and, entering the day before the open track day, you could see road crews repaving those spots. The crews' diligence in getting the job done paid off.

Thompson's new road track, although not identical to it's predecessor, did retain some of the elements of the original layout. The part of the course utilizing the original oval, was repaved but the transition from the road course to the oval at two spots was a bit unsettling to the cars but after a lap or two, you became accustomed to it and corrected accordingly. As there is little run off room, the jersey barriers behind scantily equipped impact absorbing material could be better (on the improvement list for next year) - the course was a 9/10ths circuit all the way.

The track day had six 20 minute sessions. Nick Grewal in his Lotus 27 and Bob Goeldner in the Brabham BT2 promised to be the front runners. Unfortunately Bob was plagued with car trouble all weekend and except for some stellar qualifying laps, had to retire on race day. Nick had a small shunt in the race but no one was injured and after an all course black flag, the Sunday race continued with Josh Mitchell, driving Jerry Morici's Lotus 18 to first place.

The front engined cars were dicing on track day. Larry McKenna, seen for the first time in years with his gorgeous oxblood painted Stanguellini dueled nobly with the blue Stanguellini of Bill Gelles. Victor Pastore in his green Elva 100 and Dingman's sicilian blood orange OSCA did crowd pleasing battle on a continual basis.

This joint adventure between the VSCCA and the VRG will be a keeper and the FJHNA expects this venue to become a prime FJ event in the Northeast. Given the present attitude for race organisers to give FJ racers their own grid, we expect to see great FJ growth for the Thompson Vintage Festival.

Joseph DeLucia

(Who is going to tell me that elephants don't fly. When my mother took me as a little boy to see Dumbo, I believed. As I grew into adulthood I began to have my doubts. After watching the FV's race the FJr's at Thompson I am again a believer. Paul Buttrose, Harry Sroka, and Allen Ward were the "peskiest" bunch of FV's to this fine field of FJr's - the three finishing an overall 2nd,3rd, and 4th in the Saturday race - Buttrose again 2nd on Sunday, having beaten Josh Mitchell's Lotus 18 in the Qualifying Race Saturday morning. The Saturday PM race was shortened after a black flag brought the field into the pits. Buttrose led the field out of the pits but Josh received the checkered flag, the scorer not noticing that he had pitted at the end of the pack under the black flag rather than at the head of it – he was one lap down. However, the pesky little FV's did not pass Josh's Lotus 18, but for most of the race he might have felt as if he were swatting flies. Very impressive. Ed.)

38
7

353
VRG photos by Bill Stoler

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 1

Auto Circus of Thrills on New Asphalt

Thompson provided the small bore group lots of BIG action over the weekend. I still can't believe they built this place in one year. It does remind you of the old American "Can Do Spirit"! (Believe it or not, the Empire State Building was built in one year. but that's another story.)

Group 1 always provides a big field and lots of action as the pack separates after the start. (Note to TMSP' I have T-shirts larger than your green flag!) That's what makes the group great; there's always someone to race. We had some extra variety this time out with Robert Anderson's Vitesse Sports Racer and Alain Raymond's very cool Fiat Abarth added to the mix of Spridgets, Elvas, Alfas, Lotus and Turners in the group.

But let's get down to racing. First and foremost it was fast and without car contact, keeping the Drivers Committee happy. Next, it was close thereby keeping all the drivers happy.

Since this was the inaugural event for Thompson, it was good to bring a car and driver back to the track that had some history there - Ray Stone. What Ray may not have been expecting was the constant view of Pete Carroll in his mirrors, not to mention views of his taillights! In this case Ray proved again that age and treachery still edges out youth. I hope video from Alain Raymond's Fiat hits the Internet showing a portion of Saturdays' race. He was right behind Pete Carroll during the following escapade. In Turn 1 Pete decided to do his best "***Joey Chitwood Auto Circus***" imitation as he makes the corner on only two wheels with the other two perched about 3 feet in the air in a 45 degree angle. Believe it or not, he drove to the edge of the track, dropped it down in the gravel and sped away hardly missing a beat (fear will do that) continuing to chase Ray. I've seen the photos and they're awesome.

Only a second or two off the pace my Sprite was sandwiched in between Kevin Gosselin's Spitfire and my old adversary Steven Hirschtritt's Sprite. A few laps of trading back and forth with these guys make for lasting memories. Face it; driving the front of your car and the mirrors is double work!

Just a few cars back, the Spridget of Nial McCabe was in a tight spot as he tried to run down the two very cool Alfa's driven by Thomas Lacosta and Sergio Cecconi. Lacosta finally got away and Nial and Sergio went back and forth; Nial catching him under the bridge and passing in the Oval and then Sergio using horsepower to retake in the straight. As always when you start racing someone specific, the pack catches you. While Nial was focused on Sergio, Lee Walsh's Turner and the Bugeye of author Upton Charles squeezed by. Nial overtook Lee when he went a little agricultural in Turn 1 and again passed Sergio in the oval. Nial couldn't put a gap on them and in the end horsepower won out in the finishing straight. Maybe Nial's cameras were affecting the aero-package on his car? But, I'm sure all those drivers will enjoy Nial's videos

It looks like actually Paul Bova may have won the battle of the Turners while a whole group of Spridgets changed position on almost every lap.

All in all, TSMP provide to be suited to the Small Bore group. Being a new track it took some time to find the fast line and the multiple racing lines, but I can guarantee most of us would enjoy more seat time there.

Richard Jefferson

VRG photos by Bill Stoler

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 2

The best thing about the road course at Thompson was that it is one hour from my house, which was welcome after Mosport. Thompson was well prepared for us and the course was tight and the surface smooth, but I especially loved the long undulating straight. This was event 1 1/2 for our renovated Marcos GT. I realize some explanation is due here. We bought the Marcos about 5 years ago from, where else - eBay. A Rocky Mountain logbook showed some 1980's racing history with a Rover V8 but the car was being converted to street use. Nick Julian at Wellwood Garage dragged the car back to his shop near Syracuse where he reassembled it into a race car. Without many examples racing, some improvising may have been necessary. After a couple of unrewarding outings, we decided to swap lumps to a Volvo B20, more like original Marcos installations. The Jefferson 500 showed that to be a good decision but a medical emergency at home cut that party short.

The first Group 2 sessions at Thompson were full of trying to learn the track, flag stations and braking and turn in points but were marked by several full course black flags. Several drivers didn't get those quite right. Things got interesting very quickly in qualifying on lap 1 when fast running Mark Lydell was facing the wrong way in turn 4. I'm still not sure how the Marcos instantly avoided his MG. A late race full course black flag was waved at turns 9 and 11 when I was in P5. In pit lane, I was the first car that responded by pulling in and some fuel standoff ignited under the hood. A slow discussion on pit lane brought a fire responder who deliberated a minute and then gave a quick squirt with the extinguisher he brought with him. Hood back down and ready to go when waved out, however, someone in white decided to let 15 cars at the back of the line to go first. So instead of dicing with Thomas Leavy in his MGB, I played catch up way back. (Mark P., you still owe me a glass of wine.) On track exit, more flickers of orange flame under hood concerned officials who said that that must stop. Good thing this was the first of the metal frame and not a plywood Marcos.

Sunday afternoons race didn't go according to plan. With the tires going off, it led to the car going off too. In turn 4. Twice. The Marcos nose was within 6 inches of Thompson's Lego block barriers. Then being paranoid about flames and black flags, I mistook a black flag for an MGA and stopped to visit pit lane again. After being waved out, I found that taking the long way thru pit lane doesn't help with finishing position either. A best lap time in the 1.29's but I don't want to talk about the rest of the race again.

A challenging track with supportive staff, clean facilities, good Group 2 racers- a good race weekend. We do need to repeal the CT state law on race engines before noon on Sundays. It should be a local issue, like Lime Rock, and not a state issue.

Thanks.
Richard Brown

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 3

Checkered Short

RE: Grand reopening of Thompson Speedway road course

1968: Twenty-three year old with a 'new' Elva Mk IIA (A for the Alfa motor) bought out of a garage in Pittsburg, PA for $450. Loaded on a rickety GMC stake body truck and headed to Thompson for our first driver's school.

Initial laps behind the instructors left me in awe. They were Gods. I was having trouble keeping up and the motor was spewing water requiring a pit stop every three laps.

Rained hard that night, really hard. We slept under the truck. Paddock was flooded. We helped one of the instructors find his Porsche by wading into 4 feet of water.

He drained the oil and ran the car the rest of the weekend.

Back here some 46 years later. Same good feeling, goose-bumps, some of the same friends and cars still running.

Two Hundred and thirty of us showed up for the combined VRG & VSCCA grand opening of the new road course after being shut down about 37 years ago. I brought my 1981 Van Dieman Club Formula Ford towing with my RV and enclosed trailer. Wow – enclosed trailer. Didn't get one of those till 1999. Can now carry at least a ton of stuff I'll never use.

Splitting the weekend between running several sessions on Saturday and handling the PA announcing in the oval all weekend (the A and B paddock missed my endless drivel), along with interviewing drivers during the pit lane car show on Sunday morning there was one common thread. SMILES.

To a person, each of us older drivers took decades off our ages once the green flag dropped. We raced like the kids we were back in the day, reversing father time.

Several notable events:
Mike Joy's reminiscing during the dinner Saturday night.

Sunday breakfast with Bob Leitzinger, Double D and Nancy. Bob snookering the entire field of big bore cars on Sunday afternoon's race re-start and winning in his 1965 Lotus 26R with 96 cubic inches of motor.

Peter Greenfield driving the 1930's Alfa Romeo Monza GP car like it was for the world championship.

Bob Girvin, reportedly hanging up his helmet, with an amazing display of driving the heavy Allard GT against the nimble Lotus's and Elva's.

And my favorite group of mostly Club Formula Fords, racing 100% with each other - even this fat old man got a couple of 5th places.

I'm still grinning.

Frank Del Vecchio
#13 Van Dieman CF

P.S. And then there was Ben Sinnott, who I have never seen or met, who is so fast that he may have forced Bob Bruce into retirement. Who is Ben Sinnott? He is very, very fast. (Ed.)

look for more photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

View more photos from TSMP www.clarusstudios.com

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 4

Having raced on two of the past layouts at Thompson Speedway in the 60's and the 70's, I looked forward to my return to this track with great anticipation. The new layout is much different than those of the past, but it has a character all its own and does not disappoint. The facilities are fantastic and the running of the joint VRG/VSCCA race program was exceptional.

After agreeing to write the Group 4 report I contacted some of the 'senior' Group 4 drivers to get their impressions of the new Thompson compared to their recollections of the old course(s). I was surprised to learn that 'senior' drivers, Rod Folia (Mazda RX3) and Jim Scott (Porsche 911), had never raced on early Thompson courses. I could not resist reminding them that they surely looked as though they must have been there!!

Rod Folia admitted that he is plenty old enough to have raced at early Thompson layouts, but he did not move to NH until after Thompson 3 had closed. He loves the new Thompson facility and the way everyone made the entire weekend run so smoothly. However, Rod was not comfortable with the track layout. He admitted that some of his discomfort might have been because his "tire pressures mysteriously grew too high." He said that Sasco discovered excessive water vapor inside all his tires. He would not admit to any speed secret gone awry…but I will be keeping a close eye on him at NHMS!

Jim Scott (Porsche 911) is one of the fastest Porsche racers I know. He often reminds me of that fact by simply running away in our races. He did not stay for Sunday but was one of only two Porsches (Jim and James Hamblin/ Porsche 911ST) to turn laps in the 1:19s. Although Jim had not raced on earlier Thompson layouts he has raced on tracks that few of us have even visited. He commented that everyone seemed to have a hard time finding the racing line, particularly in the wide twisty sections. It reminded him of Sebring years ago where they actually painted the line on the track surface through Turns 1 and 17 to provide some reference. He found it helpful at Sebring even during the daytime laps. "Maybe a painted reference line would help here, especially under the Bridge," he remarked. He also stated that he thought this new layout should be ideal for the smaller cars, but found it difficult to get past the bigger cars -- even in the twisty sections where the straights are just a little too short.

Kent Bain (Porsche 914/6) ran Thompson in the early 70's. Again, the assumption that the new layout should be an equalizer between small and big cars, proved incorrect. He also said that the twisty sections are just not long enough, nor fast enough, to overcome the advantage the big cars gain on the long straight. Otherwise he commented on the great job the track has done in bringing the road course back and the how well everyone organized and ran this very first event.

Bob Leitzinger (Lotus 26R) and I both raced at Thompson during the 60's. On Saturday afternoon we had a neat dogfight and we finished almost nose to tail. As I write this, a comical vision comes into my mind. Two old dogs scrapping to be first to get the bone that is the Checkered Flag! I certainly did not think the scrapping was comical on Saturday. It was just seriously awesome! Although I did not see him afterward, I made a point of calling him to ask if he had as much fun as I did. What a Stupid Question! We both appreciate how great it is to be able to thrash our racecars around the same old tracks we ran on so many years ago. Bob was especially effervescent about his return to Thompson describing the entire weekend as "Fabulous." He remarked that the Thompson layout of the 60's was much more friendly to his Lotus. The big sedans of today are much more powerful and handle much better than in the old days. The new layout is great fun but his Lotus cannot overcome the gap the big cars open up on the long straight. I asked whether he had a favorite race at the old Thompson and he immediately described how he and his little Lotus passed Frank Dominiani (Corvette) and Mark Donohue (Shelby GT350R Mustang) on the same lap at an SCCA National in the 60's.

I contacted Peter Baselice and Scotty Hackenson and a number of other drivers, who all said the facilities were

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 4, (cont.)

great and the Thompson area was neat. All commented that the track was a challenging and technical layout that takes time to really learn.

I also talked to a couple of the younger drivers in Group 4. These 'kids' were barely walking when Thompson 3 closed down. They found the track challenging and one said "The corners have a way of sneaking up on you creating real excitement". They also had typical responses you would expect from young lions and both cautioned me to just wait until they learn this place…. then 'old #80' and I had better move over!

After our first session on Friday, none of the Group 4 drivers I spoke to had anything good to say about Thompson's new track layout. This was not only from those racing the heavy V8 cars, but also from those racing the lighter cars. After the Saturday sessions, very few had changed their minds but the comments were less forceful. After our Sunday Feature Race, the comments I heard were all about how this layout makes for exciting racing among the different types of cars. The enjoyment certainly increased with each session

The Saturday morning race was fortunate to even to have been completed. The brake rotor on Pole Sitter James Hamblin's Porsche 911ST exploded going into Turn 1 immediately after the Start. His trip into the dirt and evasive action by the first three or 4 rows raised a dense cloud of dust that was impossible to see through. Most of us were turning and coasting through Turn 1 purely by instinct. I hoped no one had stopped in the dense haze and was startled when a dark shadow appeared and slowly rolled across my path no more than 5 feet in front of me. I could not even identify what type of car it was! Next time we reached Turn 1 it was as if nothing had happened, except for all the dirt on the track. As expected, the race was dominated by the Cobra Automotive trio of Chuck Bentley, Curt Vogt, and Scott Hackenson. David Gossack, who finished fourth, Kent Bain and I all had a wonderful brawl for the entire 9-lap race.

The Saturday afternoon 12-lap race was more of the same where all four Cobra Automotive cars dominated, again with Chuck Bentley showing the way. The Porsches of Jim Scott and David Gussack were only 1 second apart as they finished fifth and sixth. Next came 'old #80' and that other old dog, Bob Leitzinger. After chasing that bone all the way we were only 0.6 second apart at the finish.

The VRG Group 4 Feature Race on Sunday had more of the same intense dicing throughout the field. This race would eventually turn into a 3-lap dash to the Checkered Flag after the Black Flag All was needed to clear Dana Merak's disabled Corvette from the edge of the track. I am glad I was not the only one to miss Black Flags. Five of us hope some attention will be given to the flag stations, especially those at the beginning of the long straight where Black Flags shown there blend into the dark background. Some drivers wondered afterwards why Double Yellows had not been used, at least before the Black Flag All. Regardless, five of us missed at least one of those flags. We became the last cars in the line waiting on Pit Lane for the restart and were awarded a one-lap penalty. Bob Leitzinger did see the flag, restarted at the front and held on to win this race - awesome job, Bob.

As expected, the four Cobra Automotive cars had been fastest all weekend. Their fast laps in the Sunday Feature Race were all within 0.128 second. Equally impressive, maybe more impressive, is that a diverse group of cars set the next three best lap times within 0.098 second of each other. Bob Leitzinger was "Best of the Rest" with his Lotus 26R at 1:21 965 but Chris Homer was only 0.098 sec slower in his Corvette and David Gussack in his Porsche 914/6 were only 0.024 sec slower.

Everyone I talked to said they can't wait to get back to Thompson and look forward to the next VRG/VSCCA event. I could not agree more.

Frank Grimaldi

(Frank won the Noise Award for the loudest car in the garage. – ed.)

VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMSPON SPEEDWAY

VRG Group 5

It was the usual mixed breed brood, plus a few foxes put into the coop. Porsches, Alphas, a BMW, a few Corvairs and a few Volvos, and an indecently fast Pinto chasing several Pinto motored Sports2000s! Yes, ravishingly fast Sports2000s keep the sedans active in their mirrors. Attrition seemed to reduce the ranks, but not because the foxes got them as they swiftly cut through the field, in hot pursuit of their own demons - Ben Sinnott disappearing into the distance, and in what seemed like minutes reappearing in our mirrors- for many of us twice! – without ruffling our feathers.

In the final the two Corvairs followed the S2s, the lone BMW 2002 was ahead of the Porsches who seemed to play well together, as did the Volvos – surely having fun amongst themselves- while making plenty of noise. Great track with a handful of curves and a long straight, and I suspect that even after a weekend it's very late apex corners were still getting the better of many of us as we tried to learn her ways.

Daniel Scully

RACERS' TIDBITS

While at Pitt Race weekend for PVGP, heard at least three drivers compliment and thank VRG Tech Inspection for finding issues during tech that could have resulted in major safety issues. Kudos to the tireless and thorough Tech Inspectors!

Ian Wisbon

With overseas work, a troublesome engine and a family, it was very difficult to get to any events last year, so with only the two day NHMS event in 2012 to go by, I was very pleased to be treated as a long lost racing soul at the VRG Thompson Speedway event.

Everyone was friendly, open and helpful to me and everyone else.

I'm looking forward to meeting back up at New Hampshire in August.

John Jeffery - 240Z

Over the last 15 years I have had two sons start racing in "Club Fords." The first one, 15 years ago, jumped in the car, went fast right away, and crashed a lot. He is still racing but now in FC in SCCA and doing very well. My other racing son started last year and is very cautious and slow, at least compared to other vintage Fords. The first son never liked working on the car. The second son, Paul, wants to know all about the car and in fact spent a day with Don Denomme a couple of weeks ago learning all about chassis set up. At Thompson Paul only used 3rd gear(!) while trying to concentrate on the line and staying on the track but his times were still better than mine in the Jabro and my friend and teammate Paul Wilson in the Elva. It is great fun having sons who race. I do worry, yes, and I wonder what is the best way to learn: go fast and crash or be slow and methodical. And I wonder in life what is best too.

Rick Presbrey, Jabro #3

RACERS' TIDBITS

Overheard in the garage at Thompson Saturday afternoon at the completion of the Formula Ford race: "There goes Don Denomme" (who had exited the track at turn four after sliding off something slippery, and connected with a tire barrier) "to see the dreaded Mark Palmer"(waiting in the end garage as Head of the Drivers Committee).

Think of Chopin's Funeral March!
Bill Hollingsworth

YES, Why is it that all cool events end up on my kids graduation weekend, leaving for some obscure Family function or Holiday or Archery Elk Trip ???? LOL

David G Zavetsky

A VRG contingent from Joisey Boyz racing is heading out very early tomorrow for the VDCA event at Road Atlanta. Storm and Tom Leavy will be racing and Mark Sherman and I will be crewing. Going to meet up with our friends from Team Zapata from Tennessee. Should be a hell of a good time.

Don Mei

The only thing I can say is VRG runs an excellent event, in all areas. my brother & myself are very happy we discovered VRG!

Dave Lebrun

Increasingly shippers are using crumpled up paper for packing material. I've been taking this packing, rolling it up and using to put under the race car when I'm using a garage at the track. It's not foolproof but it does aid in cleaning up oil leaks at the end of the weekend. I know Mark Palmer uses rosin paper left over from his house project.

John Faulkner

A big thank you to all who came out to support the inaugural Vintage Motorsports Festival at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park.

We had 137 VRG entries which is spectacular for a new event. We hope you enjoyed yourself and will be back next year.

Paul Bova
Paul King

Below is a great video of Frank Grimaldi and his 1968 Camaro thanks to Theresa Condict from Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixQjOosxi-o

FF driver and veteran endurance racer, Frank Delvecchio showed up at the Ferrari club event at Lime Rock last weekend, with his bone stock 2013 Honda CRX Si (except for tires) and put a hurtin on many 6 figure super-cars, from Mclaren's to Porches. Biggest problem was I made the mistake of going out with him for a couple of " fast" laps. Now Frankie is a club instructor, and Ferrari Challenge coach, it just goes to show money does not buy speed, sorry Banjo. (Banjo Mathews had that sign outside his shop)

Michael Hays

As the new guy in the Formula Ford group, I am having a blast with my Lotus 51-C. Everyone has been very welcoming, and I feel very comfortable racing with the group. And the view from the back of the pack is awesome! Had a great time at the Jefferson 500 and Pitt Race. Sorry I will miss NJ.

Stewart Bartley

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

PITT RACE GROUP 1

Once again VRG is to be highly commended for organizing and hosting an outstanding weekend of racing with the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP) at the Pittsburgh International Race Complex (PITT Race). In writing this report I reached out to several Group 1 drivers to gather their thoughts and one of them summed it by saying "I thought that Keith Lawrence did a fantastic job as event chair, that the flaggers did a tremendous job and that the whole event was pretty much flawless". You can't get much better than that!

In addition, Chris Shoemaker is to be congratulated for putting together the second round of the three-part FF 45th Anniversary Challenge. I was not at the Jefferson 500 and I thought that this race added a new dimension to the weekend, as well as being a lot of fun! While Chris opined that he would like to see more entries at the third and final Challenge at NJMP, the race attracted 14 starters and was one of the highlights of the PVGP weekend.

Here are a few more quotes about the overall event from the drivers who I reached out to: "Group 1 was full of great drivers and fine machines. I admire the preparation of all of the Formula Fords and their ability. It would have been nice to see other Sports Racers in our group."

"There was always somebody to race with! Too often in other groups you find yourself alone on the track during races, not engaged with another driver."

"I was again impressed by how few incidents there were. For me, PVGP has to be one of the best race weekends there is."

The icing on the cake was gorgeous weather throughout the weekend – with sunny skies, temperatures in the 80s and comparatively low humidity – that cooperated fully and lasted through the end of proceedings on Sunday afternoon.

Group 1 at the PVGP saw sixteen cars registered – comprising six Formula Fords, nine Club Fords and one Sports 2000. Many of the well-known Formula Ford marques were represented, including Crossle, Hawke, Lola, Lotus, Macon, March, Merlyn, PRS and Zink, as well as the lesser known Gemini.

Qualifying on Saturday saw Christian Morici (Lotus 69) as the fastest with a 1:04.3, a position that he was to keep throughout the weekend. However, in close contention were Greg Kokolus (PRS RH01), Andrew Stein (Merlyn Mk 11A/17), Denny Austin (Zink C5/Z10) and Ralph Zuponic (Alexis Mk14), all of whom were in the 1:05 bracket. In amongst them was John Gatto (March-Apache) in his S2000, racing it for only the third time. Sprint Race 1 that followed saw the same drivers leading the pack, although with improved times – Christian recording a 1:03.9 (his first time under 1:04, which he was very pleased with) and some of the other drivers in the 1:04 bracket. The middle of the order saw Daniel Finnochiaro (Crossle 40/45), Christopher Shoemaker (Royale RP16), Robert Romanansky (Macon MR7) and Nigel Cass (Merlyn Mk29).

In seeking input from the drivers I learned of some interesting facts about the history and performance of their cars. For example, Greg purchased his PRS in 1997 and has raced it mostly in SCCA in the east. Says Greg "There aren't a large number in the US and it never became a popular marque. However, after a horrible last season the car was back in top form and I could concentrate on driving and dropped a significant amount of time."

Andrew "had good racing with Dan Finocchiaro in all races. My car performed well, as I'd had it there last year and took notes on what gearing to run. There were no mechanical issues to deal with all weekend, although the abrasive track surface managed to wear my tires quite a bit."

Denny's Zink is Citation Engineering's "kit car" version of the Z10. The "A" refers to the original "narrow track" suspension. Most Z10's are "C" which is about 2" wider. As Denny says, "For what it's worth, according to Steve Lathrop (Citation's founder), mine is the last "one-owner" Z10 in existence." Denny shares the Zink with his son Leon who has been racing karts for the last 10 years. For Denny "the challenge was learning a new track and racing on it successfully. The car performed exceptionally well – especially once we figured out the lingering brake bias problem (too much rear) that was destabilizing things!"

John's S2000 is a "1984 March with 1985 SCCA homologation and was raced by Richard Morgan for March Engineering. Morgan later acquired the March Sports 2000 rights and created Apache Cars in Bolton, England. The car was the development chassis for Apache and I purchased it in late 2012. The car was brilliant. Preparation was perfect, the new Quicksilver engine was great and track support spot-on. To be honest, only the driver needs improvement!"

The Royale USA FF Challenge Cup on Sunday morning was the highlight of the Group 1 weekend in many ways with 14 cars competing for a share of the glory! Run over 12 laps – with Christian, Greg and Andrew finishing on the podium in

PITT RACE GROUP 1 (cont.)

that order – the contestants at the front looked mostly familiar but stronger showings were also made by Tivvy Shenton (Crossle 32F), Daren Mann (Lotus 51), James van (Van) Deurzen (Merlyn Mk17), Stewart Bartley (Lotus 51-C) and the author (Hawke DL15). Perhaps the most fun of all occurred after the race when all of the drivers assembled with their cars beneath the podium for group photos, sharing of race stories and general bragging. As already stated thanks are due to Christopher and the rest of the team that organized the Challenge Cup for creating a competitive, fun and safe race! Seeing all of the different marques (with their drivers) posing for the camera after the race made me quite nostalgic for the heyday of Formula Ford but also made me think that this is what Vintage Racer Group is all about!

The Feature Race on Sunday afternoon saw a smaller grid of 8 cars as some drivers decided to head home or were mindful of the forecast rain that never arrived. In spite of that a very good race was run over 13 laps as was evidenced by all the smiling faces in the vicinity of the podium after the race. "Competing in a group of really good, competitive, safe drivers and managing a podium with 2nd on Sunday was, of course, the highlight for me" said John of his podium finish in his S2000. Of the Formula Fords, Leon (in his father's car and in his first Formula Ford race since graduating from karting, so I understand), John and Richard finished on the podium in that order.

Perhaps some of the drivers can best sum up the race weekend in their own words.

As Denny said "My family and I (which now includes a grandson) thoroughly enjoy the racing opportunities provided by VRG. These events have all the social qualities of a friendly competitive atmosphere that we experienced in Club Ford back in its prime - but without the body and suspension damage. I know – I was there! We really appreciated the podium ceremonies; yes, I know vintage racing is not about winning but the guys who got up there really worked hard for it and the "Workers Choice" was an especially nice touch.

Greg commented, "Once again VRG has proven that they can run a quality program with a significant number of cars in class. Even though vintage is purported to be a more "gentlemanly" form of racing, I have found the competition to be equal to anything I experienced in my years with the SCCA."

That would seem like a very good note on which to end this report.

Here's looking forward to PVGP 2015 (on the new PITT Race track!)

Richard Morris

PITT RACE GROUP 2
The Pesky Bunch

The Group 2 (small bore) sessions at the first weekend of the PVGP at PITT-Race provided great entertainment for both drivers and fans. The cars often ran in tightly bunched clusters that were a delight to behold. Bill Hollingsworth good-naturedly described the group as a bunch of "pesky buggers".

Group 2 was offered a total of 3 sessions on Saturday and another 3 sessions on Sunday. Some small bore cars also ran in the additional Donna Mae Mims session and/or the Formula Vee session.

The eclectic mix of small bore cars added to the dynamics of this racing group: there were numerous front-engine, RWD Spridgets, Spitfires, an Alfa Spider, Turners, etc. There was also an equally "pesky" pack of fwd MInis and various mid-engine or rear engine cars including a Europa, an Abarth Coupe, a 356 Porsche, and all those Formula Vees. All these cars approach turns in a different fashion. For example, your author saw a Mini setting up a right hand turn using the predicable late-apex entry. Since my Spridget likes a more traditional entry (roughly mid-apex) there was room to move to the inside of said Mini. That's when a Formula Vee went BETWEEN us! Driving with this group will really keep you on your toes!

PITT RACE GROUP 2
The Pesky Bunch, (cont.)

And since all these cars are "momentum racers" there was a lot of side-by-side, very late braking. Great fun to see who's going to back off first. This can really add to the "pucker factor" when going "three wide" into places like Turn 1 at PITT-Race.

The Dennis Racine (Mini) and the Vengantune-powered Vitesse sports racer (Andersson) were generally the fastest car in most sessions, with Jeffereson and Carroll (both in Spridgets), Their (Spitfire), Cassin (Alfa Spider), McCormack and Don Racine (Minis) plus Bailey and Sroka (both in FVs) in close persuit. Richard Jefferson ran out of gas while leading Spridgets in the FV session (and most of his fellow Spridget racers are unlikley to let him forget *that* for a while!).

For the Sprint race on 7/12 the finish order was Andersson, Dennis Racine, Don Racine, Carrol and Jefferson. For the Feature race on 7/13 the finish order was Dennis Racine, Andersson, Their, Jefferson and Cassin.

Several cars "went agricultural" but with no harm. The only incident in which there was damage involved a very pretty Midget that was thankfully uneventful, other than a crunched front fender. The car was able to be flat towed and repairs are not likely to be major beyond the fender repair. We hope to see it out again soon.

It's always great to have the MGAs in this group. They are really a nice combination of timeless good looks and speed. I suspect some of the MGA drivers were saving their cars for Schenley.

The father-son Minis of Dennis and Don Racine came all the way from California. Racers will note that these two fellows own "Mini Mania", a company that sells speed-parts for (what else?) Minis. Their cars were stupendously fast. In one case Dennis's red Mini started last and still won. That car had full street gear too. Other long distance travelers to the event included Mike Barstow (also from California) plus Dolan and McCue (both from Florida).

A number of new (or newish) drivers acquitted themselves nicely (Moore, Wisbon, Bittenbinder, Seifert and Licht). It's great to see our sport growing with these new drivers.

Professor Nial McCabe

PITT RACE GROUP 4
The Noisy Bunch

This year's gathering of Big Bore cars at PIRC had some of the usual cars and racers as well as several newcomers. On Saturday the weather was ideal and the Sprint race saw several races develop within it. Leading the group were the American ground pounders Corvettes, Mustangs and Camaro. The rest of the group was a varied group of smaller displacement cars some of which, despite the horsepower disadvantage, kept up the pressure on the American iron. The BMW 2002, Ginetta G4, Datsun 510 and Porsche 911and 914 were all well represented. The race saw a few early retirements but the racing was intense with several hotly contested races for position.

Sunday's race was scheduled for mid-afternoon and rain was forecast. Predictably the number of cars on the grid was substantially reduced from the day before. As a result the racing was not as keen and was further dampened as rain showers started during the second half. Despite the diminished Sunday racing, the venue, the public attendance, the cars and the drivers made this another memorable Pittsburgh Vintage weekend.

Earl Roberts

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

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MICHAEL'S VINTAGE RACING

Leigh McBride Photo

PITTSBURGH VINTAGE
GRAND PRIX
300
33
195
7
015
62

PITT RACE GROUP 5
NOT AFRAID TO PLAY WITH THE BOYS

When I was a little girl, boys teased me, pulled my hair, stuck their tongues out at me, hid my stuff and pushed me around…what a surprise, they are still doing it (in our paddock at least). They try to get into my head before a race and there's lots of competition among our group, who paddock with Fast Company Productions. We are all from Pittsburgh so the rivalry and camaraderie continue all year.

This year's weather at the 11th Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix at PITT Race cooperated for the most part. There was sunny, warm, and great weather for racing until late Sunday afternoon, and then the storms and torrential rain hit us during the last race. The great weather forecasters at the track and VRG anticipated this and had shortened the races a bit so all the racers and spectators could enjoy the entire race schedule.
About 150 cars were there and more spectators than I ever remember. The Pittsburgh media's coverage of the PVGP events gets better each year so word is getting out to spectators about our special racing event that supports the local Autism Society and Allegheny Valley School.

I was in Group 5, which had a wide variety of cars….and lots of them, with a field over 30. We had a beautiful Elva Mk7, a very competitive Alfa Romeo GTV (he's faster than me), a Gulf theme lovely 911S (he got by me on the start…phooey), a new-to-the-driver Lotus Elan, that got lots of admiring looks, a few Triumph's, including a pretty blue/white one, new-to-the driver…(he got by me at the midway point of race but I stayed in his mirror to keep him on his toes), a number of Elva Courier's, MG's , and Porsches. I drove our Alfa Romeo Spider. John and I traded off this year; he was in our Porsche 914.6 in another group (which we prefer…marital harmony).

The racing was competitive. I got into a small gaggle that included the other Alfa, the Lotus Elan, and two Triumphs. There were a few spins, some grass got mowed, and a few close calls….have to keep that Drivers Committee and Steve, the black-flag marshal, entertained. (Missing from the Drivers Committee this year was that "dreaded Mark Palmer" – ed.)

In the end, there were a few DNF's, and Bob Anderson won in his Viteesse, with Chuck Pitt and Greg Maloy nano seconds behind in their Elva Mk7 and Datsun 510, respectively. I finished 8th so I'm looking for more horsepower……but aren't we all?

If you haven't enjoyed the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix at PittRace, in its 11th year, be sure to come next year, when the new track opens….more than double the present length, it'll stretch 3.4 miles with great elevation changes!! And, it'll be new to everyone!
See you at the track.

Dotti Bechtol #55

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

VRG/Royale Racing Formula Ford Challenge Series: Round Two: PVGP at Pitt-Race

The quest for the VRG/Royale Racing Formula Ford Challenge Series Championship continued when the Formula Ford racers visited the Pittsburgh International Race Complex (formerly BeaveRun) in Wampum Pa. The second race of the series was run during the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Historics @ Pitt-Race weekend. Celebrating the 45th anniversary of the historic Formula Ford race car, and sponsored by the VRG and Royale Racing. The series concludes with a final race that will take place September 19-21 at the New Jersey Motorsports Park during the VRG visit to the "Lightning Circuit."

The weekend consisted of three point races. Defending FF Challenge champion Christian Morici of Clifton NJ winning two of the three events, a preliminary sprint race on Saturday and the PVGP Royale USA FF Challenge Cup special sprint race on Sunday. Morici set a personal best lap of 1:03.811 in his Lotus 69 during the Sunday morning sprint race. The runner-up was Dennis Austin in his Zink C5/Z10 Club Ford and third spot went to Greg Kokolus in a PRS RH-10 Club Ford. During the afternoon 17 lap feature race, the second place finisher, Dennis Austin turned the driving duties over to his son Leon who took the top spot on the podium!

The VRG/Royale Racing FF Paddock Party was a highlight of the weekend and had a bit of "international" theme. Mexican food and homemade salsa was enjoyed by the FF gang, and if I'm not mistaken, there may have been a few beers tossed back during the Paddock Party which was part of a new "Paddock Walk" throughout the Pitt-Race pit area. A large crowd gathered during the podium awards presentation and some very "collectible" checkered flags were presented!

The top point earners for the weekend were:

1. Dan Finocchiaro 127 pts. 2. Andrew Stein 122 pts. 3. Jim Van Deurzen 121 pts.

The FF Challenge Series features a unique point system which rewards more than just winning. Competitors get a chance to earn points in addition to "on track" performance. Points are earned "full participation" in the series, like the drivers meeting and social activities, like the "Paddock Party" and helping other racers during the weekend! Points may also be awarded by the series officials for "just being able to make others laugh!"

As a result, the VRG/Royale Racing FF Championship is up for grabs heading into that final race at New Jersey Motorsports Park in September. The points are as follows:

Austin	**Dennis**	**Zink C5-A**		**240**
Van Deurzen	**James**	**1969 Merlyn FF MK 17**		**239**
Cass	**Nigel**	**Merlyn Mk 29**		**236**
	Dan	**1980 Crossle 40F**		**230**
Bartley	**Stewart**	**Lotus 51-C**		**229**

VRG/Royale Racing Formula Ford Challenge Series: Round Two: PVGP at Pitt-Race (cont.)

		1971 Royale RP16		226
	Robert	1969 Macon MR7		214
Morici	Christian	1971 Lotus 69		209
Kokolus	Greg	PRS RH-01		208
Griffin	Joseph	1981 Crossle 45F		131
Fairchild	Scott	1978 Zink Z-10		125
	Frank	1981 Van Dieman RF-81		121

After two events, the series has been contested among 46 entries. Three drivers have shared five checkered flags. The points have been tallied and the awards presented. The racing has been safe, close and clean. The 3rd and final event will commence on September 19-21, 2014 at NJMP during the VRG New Jersey Historic Races.

We look forward to a great group of racers taking the green flag, piloting a display of a great racing machine, the Formula Ford in the finale, as well as fun and good times at NJMP.

Bill Stoler

Note:
Be sure to check out my website images from the VRG/Royale Racing FF Challenge Series.
www.billstoler.com
See my website for special pricing for Vintage Racing.

VRG Mini Racing Team takes on Mid-Ohio, Pitt Race, and Schenley Park

June and July were busy months for VRG Mini Racers Jim Arnett, Rick Little, Mack McCormack, Nick Michael, and Ian Wisbon. Starting off with the Can-Am Mini Challenge at the excellent Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, OH, followed by back-to-back weekends for the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix - lots of great racing and Mini celebrating took place.

2014 marks the 55th anniversary of the little front-wheel drive car that could. The Can-Am Mini Challenge saw over 50 vintage Minis take to the track, a field comprised of warmed up street racers to full SCCA GTL/GT5 prepped national championship winning cars. The VRG was represented by 4 racers and while competition was stiff, we gave the field a good run. The weather was beautiful but hot, as Mid-Ohio is known to be, and the typically warm running A-series motors were once again raising the eyebrows of their owners. Mack McCormack was running a few degrees warmer than he would have liked in the #109 Louvers Unlimited Mini, while young Nick Michael in the green #15 Cooper S was also reporting warmer than usual temps. Auxiliary radiators were a hot topic amongst the drivers, particularly those running the PVGP events in July. Overheating issues plagued Rick, but Mike Kearney - owner of 7 Enterprises and 5 time SCCA Nation Champion crew chief - provided an aluminum rad to get him into the Sunday feature race. Rick reportedly will be changing the car number from 960, to 666 and naming him “Damien”, after several suggestions that Rick may not be the only one “inhabiting” the race Mini!

A Mini-only paddock area was host to a large BBQ gathering, and Mini drivers from across the USA, Canada, and England gathered to trade racing stories, swap a few engines, and admire each other’s cars. Of note was the recently re-discovered Morris Cooper S of John Colgate, an American BMC Works driver, wearing the patina of a racer tucked away since 1967, with original Downton Engineering powerplant still installed! UK Mini builder and racer Nick Swift was racing the ex-Bob Kimes Mini, with a motor Nick built and brought over with him. A potent motor, so much so that his vintage-legal Mini was giving the SCCA GTL Minis fits, and finishing P2 overall. The VRG racers all reported having a great time, with the occa-

VRG Mini Racing Team takes on Mid-Ohio, Pitt Race, and Schenley Park

sional issue here and there. Nick's starter gave up on Friday, and his crew had the pleasure of push starting him uphill for the start of the Mini feature race...gridded right in the middle of 49 other Minis, it was a harrowing start for the crew, to say the least.

Mack, Nick, Rick and Jim put in excellent drives, all lifting a wheel sometimes maybe two, navigating the Carousel, or climbing Madness. While the VRG Mini Racing team didn't walk away with a podium finish, all were honored to have taken part in likely the largest gathering of vintage racing Minis in the United States, and sharing the track with so many fellow racers and champions.

Pitt Race was next on the calendar, Mini being Marque of the Year for the 32nd annual running of the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix. This time your author would be racing, and knocking the cobwebs off the helmet for the first time this season. Weather was pleasant, and while Mini entries were decidedly smaller than the Can-Am, fun was had nonetheless. A new feature to this year's Pitt Race event was a Friday evening paddock crawl, with racers again sharing their paddock spaces to trade stories and libations. Mack put in an excellent drive, picking up a podium behind the Racine Minis, all the way from Nevada City, CA. Your author was awarded with "Worker's Choice", of which I was flattered - but of course all of the thanks goes out to the workers, without whom we couldn't do this. Nick Michael was fighting for a P2, when a sudden and random failure in the last few turns ended his race; apparently it was an unfortunate gremlin, so Nick resolved to win a podium another day. His car fired right up back in the paddock, so the first win will just taste that much sweeter.

The daunting Schenley Park followed the next weekend, the 2.3 mile road city street road course is already intimidating enough - this year, we had rain on Saturday, and a lot of it. Most were tentative in their wet sessions,

VRG Mini Racing Team takes on Mid-Ohio, Pitt Race, and Schenley Park

and rightly so. Still, the Mini is known for it's ability to handle in all situations, so times were still respectable given the wet conditions. This event is always a big draw for spectators, so when the rain stopped, kids big and small were kicking tires, asking questions, and sitting in the racers with huge smiles. Sunday dried out and provided absolutely beautiful weather to go racing. The Minis of father/son duo Don and Dennis Racine took P1/P2 in the Mini feature race this weekend, while Nick Michael and your author finished P4 and P5, and the faithful Cooper S of Jim Arnett putting in a stellar P8. We all took great pleasure in waving to all of the fans on the golf course, and the 22 turns of corner workers - certainly the largest crowd any of us has yet competed in front of.

All in all, a very successful and enjoyable summer of Mini racing so far. For those who've never had the pleasure, you should find a ride in a Mini and see why it brings smiles to so many faces - whether on the face of the fan watching the little car take a turn on three wheels, or the driver in the car giving it a bit more welly to take that turn with impossible pace. The mighty Mini continues to be an excellent competitor, and joy to race.

Ian Wisbon

VINTAGE RACER GROUP

VRG

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THANK YOU

Thanks to all of you who helped make the PITT RACE Auction and Candy's Rides success. We had some very generous donators and some wonderful shoppers who helped us raise the tally and make the auction a success once again.

This auction started 5 years ago as an outgrowth of a successful auction run at another event. Since that time it has helped raise over $9,000 for the PVGP charities.

Please keep us in mind for next year and start putting aside those items that you no longer need but that might be attractive to fellow racers.

Darry Bova