VINTAGE RACER GROUP
VRG
DECEMBER 2014 VOL. 1
WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

NEWSLETTER

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

VRG RACE SCHEDULE 2015

✓ MARCH 7, 2015	PITTSBURG RACERS DINNER (Date is tentative) Event Chairman: Keith Lawrence, Tel: 724-941-5330 Email: keith@vrgonline.org
APRIL 10-12, 2015	VDCA WILD HARE RUN, VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY, ALTON, VA Event Chairman: Mike Jackson, Tel: 561-622-7554 Email: vdca@vintagedrive.com
MAY 13-17, 2015	"JEFFERSON 500" AT SUMMIT POINT, WEST VIRGINIA (May 16-18) with FREE Open Practice Day May 14 - VRG Drivers School (May 13-14) Featured Marque is TRIUMPH, 14th Annual Triumph Kas Kastner Cup (Kas Kastner will be in attendance) IMSA RS/SCCA 2.5L Sedan Series **Brian Redman - Grand Marshall** Co-Event Chairmen: Cal Trumbo and Jim Karamanis, Tel: 304-449-7050 Email: j500@vrgonline.org
JUNE 18-21, 2015	THE VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMPSON SPEEDWAY MOTORSPORTS PARK - THOMPSON, CT OLDEST ROAD COURSE IN U.S., CO-SANCTIONED WITH THE VSCCA Event Chairmen: Paul King, Chairman, and Paul Bova, Co-Chairman, Tel: 508-847-4809 Email: paulking@vrgonline.org
JULY 10-12, 2015	PVGP HISTORIC RACES, PITT-RACE WAMPUM, PA Featured Marque is FIAT * ENDURO * FORMULA FORD FEATURE RACE Opening Event on the Expanded Road Course to 4.1 Miles Event Chairman: Keith Lawrence, Tel: 724-941-5330 Email: keith@vrgonline.org
AUGUST TBA	Possible Test Day at Whiskey Hill Raceway, Palmer, MA, or Possible Test Day at Pocono Raceway, Long Pond, PA
SEPT. 18-20, 2015	NEW JERSEY HISTORIC RACES, LIGHTNING CIRCUIT, NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK, MILLVILLE, NJ * Featured Marque is ELVA (60TH ANNIVERSARY) * Mark Donohue Cup for the best raced and prepared Elva Courier Event Chairman: Butch O'Connor, Tel: 973-295-3674 Email: bfo@spsk.com
OCT. 9-11, 2015	INAUGURAL VINTAGE EVENT AT DOMINION RACEWAY, THORNBURG, VA, A new & under construction 2 mile road course adjacent to I 95, just sourth of Fredericksburg Event Chairmen: Cal Trumbo and Jim Karamanis, Tel: 304-449-7050 Email:dominion@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

Condolences

I'm sorry. It was perfect. The Glen, Watkins Glen that is.

VRG, October, Finger Lakes, wine country, history oozing from even the sidewalks.
If you weren't there I really am sorry. Really, I am. There was room for everyone.
I suppose you might ask, why, I mean, why was it so perfect. "Were the fall leaves at their peak?" Yes, I think so. A riot of color, except for blue which was all used up by the sky. I suppose you could ask about the track, "Was it perfect too?" I'm afraid it was - dry, warm but not too hot, pretty clean, a little bumpy in a few spots - perfect. "How about the air?" you might ask. Well, the air was that kind that seemed to make it easier to see through. Like you just got new glasses and for a time you got back to good old 20/20. It just seemed way more transparent than usual. Oh, and the Goldilocks temperature was perfect too, not too hot and not too cold, just right. The cars really liked it. "What about the sun, did it shine?" you might ask. It did, but not too much. It was like the sun said, 'I want to shine brightly on this motley crew of racers with their beautiful and well cared for cars, but whilst they are flogging their beloved machines on the track I think I will try to hide behind a few gossamer clouds so as not to cause glare upon their Ray-Bans', and as far as I could tell this is exactly what the sun did. And obviously it did not rain.
Or snow.

"Were there windy gusts that blew about those leaves that fell too early?" you might inquire. Just a breeze; a soft reminder of just how clear was the air and how fresh did it smell. A reminder breeze, so to say. "And the fragrance of that air?" Well, imagine any scent that you could pick, in your wildest imagination, to permanently affix to your Nomex undergarments, and that scent, the fragrance that you would pick, would have been the breeze at Watkins Glen. I'm telling you, you really missed a good one, a really good one and I really am very sorry that you weren't there. Believe me, I am sorry.

But now I suppose you say "What about the racing?" "How do you gauge if the racing is good?" Here's my formula. If after every race you see drivers walking fast toward one another with great purpose, still in their driving suits, (knowing that they should have at least removed their expensive driving shoes), shaking hands amid much back patting and huddling in noisy groups of two, three, four or five, all smiles and talking at about the same time, somewhat loudly, animated and roused by unseen pleasures, hands gesticulating madly and a cacophony of phrases piercing the air, like, "Did you see that?", "Do you know how many times we passed each other in the last five laps?", "I can't believe I got by you on that lap (or you got by me)?", "Was that the best or what?", "How did you get around me", "I would be happy to come in second every time if I could always have a race like that", "What happened, did you miss a gear or what?". "Man, I so wanted to stop seeing you in my mirrors", and etc., etc., and etc. It was like that, time after time after time. Smiles, lots of smiles. Smiles all around. And some who felt closer to the 'Groove of Consistency' than they ever had before. Nothing quite feels like getting The Glen right. Ask Niki Lauda.

"What about the lunches you might now sheepishly ask?" Trust me, you don't want to know about the coffee makers and the George Foreman grills and the Panini makers and the crock pots. Or the cheeses and the meats. Or the groups of five, ten and sometimes even fifteen lunching together and families sharing their repast among much joy, sharing wonderful times. No. It wouldn't be fair to tell you about all of this.

I just have to tell you, one last time, VRG at the Glen - in October, with the history, the breeze, the leaves, the lake, the track, the fellowship, the racing, the sky, the cars, the garage, the lunches, … - is as good as it gets. You owe it to yourself to come race with the rest of us. Your synapses will never be the same. Your eyesight will improve. Your aches and pains will diminish. Your hair will be fuller, thicker and more lustrous. Your skin will take on that smooth glow of youth. A new jauntiness will inhabit your every step. You will be throwing your pills away. Ask anyone who was there. They will tell you I speak the truth.

Oh, and did I mention just how perfect The Glen was this year? It was, it really was, perfect that is.

James Van Deurzen

VRG at Watkins Glen – October 2014

The Crew's View:
Linda McCabe begins the story....

It's always fun to return to Watkins Glen. For Nial and I, this is our 12th trip in a row to The Glen in early October. We ran this weekend with another club before VRG took over the date in 2008.
I should include here that the weather is usually crisp in the morning but generally very nice. Other racers often ask us about "the weather" at The Glen in October, but our experience has been overwhelmighly positive. Over the past 12 years, we've seen some rain (not that often), and only sub 32F weather once.

We arrived on Thursday afternoon and were able to get tech-inspection worked out in time to have dinner at the Seneca Lodge. If you have not been to the Seneca Lodge, you need to try it next time you're in that area. The bar at the Lodge is the place where F1 racers of the 60s and 70s raucously congregated to celebrate at the end of their weekend. Racers and crewmembers would add to the bar's memorabilia collection and would pin their team decals to the wall behind the bar. Stewart, Fittipaldi, Hunt, Cevert, Lauda, Peterson, Reutermann; all their wreaths are still hanging on the wall. We met up in the Lodge around 7:30 PM with the only slightly less raucous **"**Joisey Boyz" for dinner. The food was great and the company was even better. Somehow, we managed to make it on time to the 8:00 AM driver's meeting on Friday morning.

Fran Smith continues the story....

We love visiting Watkins Glen with the VRG! Gracie, our boxer mix, and I crew for Jerry and his Devin C, supporting him at many of the venues offered by the Vintage Racer Group. We enjoy the hustle of the cars and races and the entire racing community at these events.

For me, Watkins Glen is particularly special. In addition to a gorgeous venue at the base of Seneca Lake, the largest of New York's eleven finger lakes, it is part of the largest winemaking region in the Eastern United States. There are over 100 wineries and vineyards located around the lakes that produce a wide variety of wines like Rieslings, Chardonnays and other whites as well as red varieties such as Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir. Many are open to visitors for tours and for wine tasting.

And we did just that during the VRG October Watkins Glen Race weekend. Nial and Linda McCabe joined Jerry and me to visit two wineries on the western shore of Lake Seneca. We chose to participate in a tasting at one. Since Riesling is the signature varietal wine of the Finger Lakes and the dry style Riesling is the signature of the Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard, we chose this vineyard for a tasting. We found out that Hermann Wiemer's vineyard, established in the early 1970's, was one of two vineyards whose success helped to start the revitalization of Seneca Lake in both the grape growing and wine producing industry.

At our tasting, for $5 each, we were able to sample five different varietals of this vineyard. The winery staff was well versed, speaking to the composition of the blends and guiding us in the proper order for tasting wine. We focused on the whites from dry to sweet, and then added one red at the end. And of course, there is always the hope that we will enjoy the wine enough to purchase some bottles to take home with us. We did not disappoint! Between the four of us, we purchased several bottles of dry Riesling and Gewurztraminer.

This experience could be a fun addition to the excitement of the track and the racing weekend. I would definitely recommend adding this adventure on your next trip to the Glen!

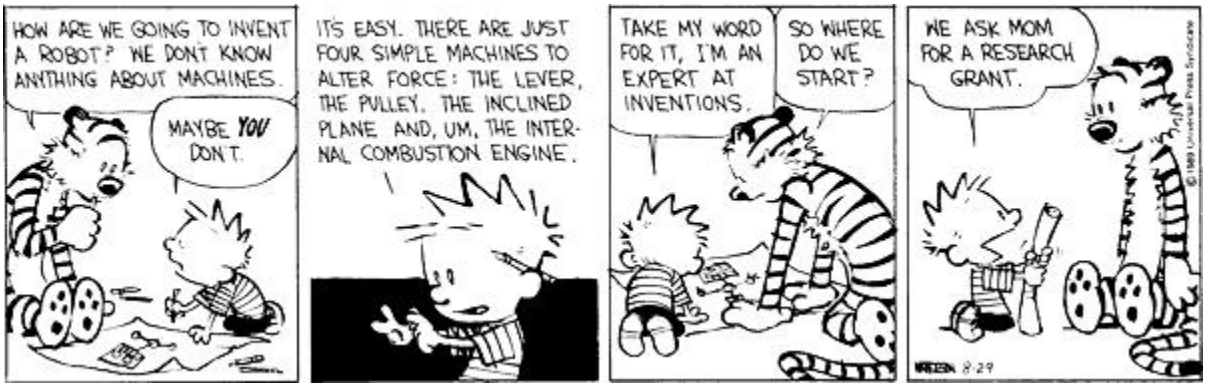
Linda McCabe concludes.....

After the racing had concluded and our Sprite was safely on the trailer, we decided to stay an extra day. Mostly because it would give us a chance to visit the Corning Museum of Glass. There is plenty of extended length parking spaces at the museum for vehicles pulling trailers, so this made the visit even easier. The museum was amazing. We got to see a glowing 5 lbs lump of molten glass transformed into a beautiful glass bowl by skilled glass workers. And this was no video simulation....it was the real deal. Later another glass worker provided a hands-on demonstation that showed how different types of glass breaks. She broke a lot of glass during the demo! (with help from the audience). It was great fun! Later in the day, we signed up for a tour of the museum by a very knowledgeable docent. This turned out to be one of the most interesting museum tours we had ever taken; the history of glass is fascinating. But all good things eventually come to an end. After lunch at the museum cafe (decent food and reasonably priced) we fired up the GPS in our van and took the 4 hour trip back to Morris County, NJ. Next time, we plan on checking out the nearby Rockwell Museum and possibly the Gaffer District.

GROUP 1
Calvin goes to Watkins Glen

Calvin? Well, I have never been one to name my cars. They've always been 'the truck' or 'the MG' or whatever.

Calvin and Hobbes has always been one of my favorite comic strips. Calvin is a (occasionally mischievous) 6 year old boy with a vivid imagination. Hobbes is his stuffed tiger who comes alive but only when *only* Calvin is around. I have used a drawing of a naked Calvin (likely from a strip where he is escaping from bath time) as my 'avatar' on the various internet forums I belong to. When I found a decal of this naked Calvin I put it on my MGA vintage race car's windscreen. Then I saw this Calvin and Hobbes comic strip and thought, "I think my car actually has a name…" (hmm, does that make me Hobbes?)



GROUP 1
Calvin goes to Watkins Glen *CON'T.*

So, in October of 2014 Calvin & I travelled from North Carolina to New York for the Vintage Racer Group's event at the famous race track near the town of Watkins Glen. We arrived Thursday evening and went through 'tech' with no problems. Friday dawned cool and clear – no rain (or snow…) was forecast.

We had a few 'issues' to address during the weekend. The alternator adjustment bracket I had made from a piece of 1/8" thick aluminum broke. A team of MGA racers in the paddock next to us gave me a spare bracket (of 1/8" thick steel) and we were ready for the next session. Then, just after the checkered flag ending that session was shown the coolant temp began to rise. I shut off the engine, coasted to the side of the track and accepted a tow back to the paddock. We discovered that the nuts I had removed to replace the broken bracket had loosened allowing the fan belt to go slack and the water pump to stop turning. (Note to self: don't re-use Nylock nuts.) I borrowed some Loctite from another racer, replaced the missing nut & bolt and we were ready to race again.

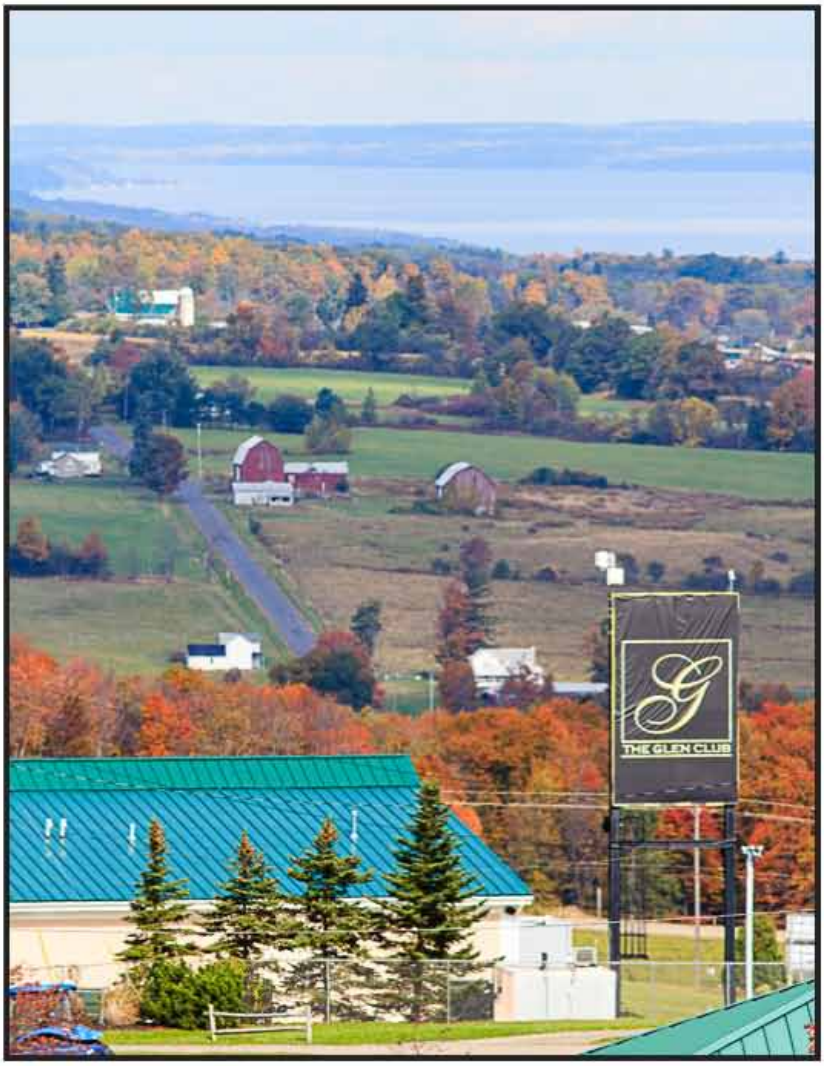
Noting that there were six MGA's racing this weekend, VRG President Mack McCormack suggested (under threat of revoking our tech inspections…) that a group photo was in order. It was hard to argue with such effective persuasion so here is photographic proof that MGA's were there in abundance.

Calvin is my Chariot Red 1961 MGA #61.
Eric Russell, Mebane, NC

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

88



VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

Ithaca
Fire-Rescue

VRG photos @ BILLSTOLER.COM

Wreaking Havoc, But Safely

One of the primary reasons the Vintage Racer Group was founded regarded safety issues the founders felt should be necessary concerns in vintage racing. Modern racecars are designed to protect the driver and absorb impact. Formula 1, Indy Car and NASCAR continue to develop their cars – to protect the driver. Our cars, however, are old, and were generally built for the road and then modified for track use. A few are purpose built racecars, but each category, nevertheless, is **OLD –** like us. What is known now, on how to protect the driver in the racing environment, comes from research and experience and was not known 30, 40, or 50 years ago when our cars were new. This is the age of our *vintage* and/or *historic c*ars.

A few years ago a member bought a race ready Club Ford, had it thoroughly checked by a very respected race shop. On his very first weekend he drove it, a rod end fatigued and the car was seriously damaged as it careened off the track and slid into barriers. He was banged up but walked away from the accident. We have seen numerous incidents resulting from spins in which the driver of the out of control car, attempts to regain control, instead of stopping the car with "both feet in," causing a wreck that could have been avoided. The roll bars, lap belts and shoulder harnesses, Hans Devices and fuel cells did their job and they were able to walk away afterwards.

At this year's VRG @ The Glen four of our members were involved in a severe accident. One individual had some cracked ribs, another was concussed, others were sore, but all of the drivers exited their cars without a problem and walked away from the scene. There were no serious personal injuries as a result of this accident which happened at one of the fastest areas on the track. The condition of the cars is the subject of this article. Once again, the roll bars, lap belts and shoulder harnesses, Hans devices and fuel cells did their job. The lead car in the race at Watkins Glen, a MGB GTV8, an enclosed car, has been written off by its owner. Three cars directly behind the MGB GT piled into it and into one another when he went into a spin. On the safety cage far to the left of the driver, a part of the roll cage he can't reach when buckled in, is a white mark, put there by his helmet. His shoulder harness was secure and very tight, in his words «almost too tight.» When hit by another car, at over 100 mph, THE BELTS STRETCHED, as they are designed to do, over 4 inches. The driver reflected that at one point he felt as if he were in free fall before coming back into his seat with the belts again snug. The significant cage constructed in the interior of that car retained its integrity, protecting him, while the outer body absorbed the energy from the crash. The fuel cell did not leak in this car or in any of the others, including one that hit the Armco so hard it demolished the rear end of that car. There was no fire, everyone had time to get out of their cars safely.

The lesson here is that the car, a streetcar, modified for use on the racetrack, was modified well. If the car were to be rebuilt the lap and shoulder belts, having done their job and having stretched considerably, would need to be replaced. The helmet, which was cracked, will need to be replaced. His head is not replaceable. The helmet did its job. When a car is involved in a serious accident everything is compromised. Never rely on your assumption that "because it looks ok," it is ok. While what we are doing on the track is conducted, generally, in a sportsman like manner, in an attitude that "winning is not what it is all about," it is still – RACING. Racing is dangerous. We all take the risk of being seriously hurt out there. You protect yourself and your friends on the track, with your attitude, your skill, and the level of preparedness of your car. There's no room for compromise in car preparation. It is not for Tivvy to find something on your car that needs to be fixed. Look at the VRG tech sheet. When you fill out that form and give it to the person teching your car, it is a statement that you have gone through your car and that it is safe to race. The tech is there to validate the preparedness of your racecar and…if you have missed something or if there's something to be concerned about, to draw it to your attention - it needs to be fixed. There are good reasons why the belts and helmets have expiration dates. The rod end on the Club Ford did not have an expiration date yet it broke. In a race car, in the equipment you have installed, in the Hans Device you have straddling your neck, in the

Wreaking Havoc, But Safely *CON'T.*

3 layer Nomex suit you wear or f2 layers with Nomex underwear, in the gloves to protect your hands, in the socks your wear on your feet, in the choice of the helmet you choose to wear – there is no room for second best. There's no room for the attitude – "it's good enough." The VRG's role, besides the obvious one of providing you with a season of racing, is to get you and your car home, intact and safely, but you also have to do your part.

This winter, look at your car carefully. Get another set of trained eyes to go over the car. There's always something you can do to improve it. We've all learned there's always something to fix, sometimes something quite simple we've looked at dozens of times and "didn't see". There is no underestimating the importance of giving yourself the best chance to stay safe in the event of the unforeseen. Examine your roll cage. Is it good enough or might an additional bar or two improve your safety? What about the shoulder and lap belts, fuel cell, rod ends, hubs, brake lines, brakes, master cylinders, wheel bearings, fittings and hoses? Are they as good as you would want them to be if your car was involved in a nasty incident which tested the car's integrity? Ask the four fellows who walked away from the wreck at Watkins Glen. Their lives depended on their attention to the safety requirements VRG has in its rules! You can bet they were glad they spent the extra time and money to build strong roll cages in their cars. Happy to have had good harnesses and Hans devices and newer helmets and race suits too. You never know what can happen on the track. Why be anything but be as prepared as you possibly can. This is why we are so concerned with safety. It's why we insist that cars which race with us have fuel cells. Ask the four drivers who walked away from their horrific crashes at Watkins Glen. They get it and because of it, they'll be back to race again next year.

Bill Hollingsworth & Storm Field

Letter to the Editor

Weeks later, the memory that most sticks in my mind, was the feeling of being in free fall. When my car was hit at 100mph+ I was launched up and actually hovered for a moment, before being pulled back down into my race seat. My belts had been very, very tight and yet, absorbing the energy of the contact, I thought, had me some 3-4" up in the air. It wasn't until later we found a crack in my helmet from where I had made contact with part of the roll cage (marked with a white streak). That part of the roll cage was so far away from my seating position; I had to revise my original estimate. I had to have been at least 7" out of my seat!

I'm not sure how it was that we all managed to get out of our cars on our own and walk away from the scene. The expectation after collisions at that speed would be for someone to have been seriously injured. Looking at the cars afterwards reinforced that belief. How is it we weren't?

When I built my car, just good enough, wasn't. I had had enough experiences from my SCCA days that when it came to safety I wasn't going to skimp on any part of my build out. It's not that I expected to be involved in something, but if I was, I wanted the best protection around me I could have. Our design was sorely tested and passed with flying colors…I walked away after a very serious impact. My cage was overbuilt…very expensive…so what, I lived. Hans device…expensive…so what, I walked away. My belts were brand new, never used before, but they did what they were supposed to do…the helmet likewise. Part of racing is being prepared for the possibility that something might happen. It's why I wear a 3 layer suit and nomex underwear under that. I wear a nomex hood…not because I have facial hair or long hair, but because that's the safest I way I know to race. I wear nomex socks, sometimes two pair. Maybe it's overkill to some, but every time I get into my car I'm as prepared as I can be for anything.

We all know about the best ways to be safe, but we don't all practice what we know. We don't go out on the track expecting to crash or catch fire, but these things can and do happen. I have a closed car. Thankfully, there was no fire (fuel cell properly installed), as the

Letter to the Editor

door was bent and couldn't have been opened. I had to go out the window opening and did so with my helmet/Hans on. Never did that before and it was something I should have practiced.

Reflecting back on my 16 years of racing, I've been in 4 accidents. Did I expect a fellow racer to lose it right in front of me leaving me nowhere to go but into him? No. Did I expect a new racer to blow a freeze plug and spill 12-14 liters of antifreeze on the track? No, but it coated the tires of three cars and sent them all spinning into the Armco. When I spun at LRP I put both feet in coming to a stop right in the middle of the track facing the wrong way. Another racer came through the corner at speed, didn't break, just steered around me…but misjudged and crushed my fender, ripped off my bumper and ended my weekend. That's racing. It happens. I didn't intend to miss a shift coming up out of the Esses at the Glen. None of the guys around or behind me expected that either…but I did and went into a violent spin. The one at the Glen was my fault…the only one that was, but it still works out to 1 incident/accident per 4 years of racing. After 3 of the incidents I was able to repair my car and get back out on the track…but this one, I'm afraid, is more than I can deal with. Luckily I have another race car.

What a great group of people we get to share the track with. After the accident I heard from dozens of fellow racers asking if I was okay and ready to dip into their parts bins and offer up anything that might help me get back out there. Sometimes you just have to call it. People need to think about this too. While it doesn't happen often, can you deal with losing your car…for a season…or forever?

The bottom line for me is, I love racing. I accept the risks involved in following my passion for the sport and I try to minimize those risks by doing everything I can to make my car and thus, myself, as safe as I can. If you build/operate your car on the "that's good enough" basis, you may find out one day, when you least expect it, that it's not nearly good enough….and then it's too late.

Storm

Notes from the Editor

Growing up in the 1950's in Southern California there were two very good bookstores. Martindales on lower Santa Monica Blvd. in Beverly Hills was the largest at 5,000 sq. ft. and had two double rows of comic books running the full front length of the store. As a 6 to 10 year old I could sit on the floor in the aisle and read them – buy one or two (10 cents each). In 1950 I was 10 and I think that I had begun to read Road & Track. John Bond, the Editor had a column called Miscellaneous Ramblings. I saved them, re-read them, and when I went to the races with my uncle who was the president of the California Sports Club, I was able to read about it Road & Track.

Even then, as much as it was about seeing the races, or seeing the cars, it was about being in the pits with the car owners and drivers. It was about being there when the car was unloaded from its trailer, or on first hearing the story of Ernie McAfee with Chris Cord as his passenger in Chris' dad's 4.4 Ferrari drive through Banning with a posted speed limit of 25 mph at 125. It was after midnight. Banning was a speed trap on the road to Palm Springs and on race weekends the police made hay. They didn't even bother chasing Ernie, or Chris' dad following in the 3.0 litre Monza. It was being part of the game, even as a 15 year old. There was being at the Racquet Club Bar after the races drinking fresh squeezed orange juice…and listening to McAfee and Bill Pollack and Carroll Shelby, and Ken Miles and Phil Hill tell their stories and talk about their day. It was great to be a 15 year old with the orange juice and just be a part of the "happening." Some habits are hard to change. Racing those cars then was about the relationships. When we look around the pits of a VRG event we know that it is about the relationships. The cars play their part – but they are just an excuse for us to get together.

We have some wonderful contributions to this issue. I can mention Bill Stoler first…or I can mention Bill Stoler last. His photos tell the story of VRG. Our race correspondents fill in the spaces behind the photos, giving us some insite. You will not see too much attention to who won. That seems *besides the point*.

Let me mention James "Van" Deurzen and his wonderful article about the WG weekend. Linda McCabe is on his heals with another wonderful article about the WG weekend. Eric Russell, our Correspondent from NC, Linda Zukauskas, or Correspondent at Large, and Paige Hope, our Correspondent Behind the Wheel, one of the growing number of women being on the track. Steven Hyatt, our Chief Steward is always there to keep the trains running on time...a safely. And then there is Michael Oritt. He prepares and drives the car; he organized the event as the Event Chairman, and wrote up the event as a correspondent; and he keeps us dressed in our VRG clothing. Thank you from everyone, Michael. It was another great job at what is everyone's favorite VRG weekend.

Lastly, what needs to be addressed is the Storm Field and my piece on the four car pile up on Saturday at WG. As Donald Rumsfeld so eloquently said, "stuff happens." You never know when something can happen unexpectedly on the track. We learn consistency, we learn pace, we learn car control. What we cannot learn is what to do when the unexpected happens. This time everything worked the way it was supposed to. We don't want to hear from anyone questioning our demand for fuel cells in every car.

Bill Hollingsworth

RACING WITH THE BOYS REDUX

I was honored when Bill Hollingsworth asked if I could contribute to the upcoming issue of the VRG Newsletter on the topic of "Racing With the Boys". I saw this as a great opportunity to share what racing is to me…"Racing With the Family".

I can remember my first interaction with a race car. I was about 5 years old and my father's original race car, a 1964 MGB in Iris Blue, sat in the back of his Honda shop. It had collected an inviting layer of dust and, to a five year old, it appeared to be the perfect canvas. I don't remember what Picasso style artwork I created in that layer of dust but I DO remember learning that this is NOT how one shows respect to a race car.

Fast forward a few years and my father acquired a BRG 1968 MGB GT for he and I to work on. I learned about carburetors and distributors and Lucas electronics (I ran out of fuel more than once thanks to a faulty gauge). I learned that I have the skills of Stevie Wonder when it comes to welding and bodywork. But as I look back, the most important piece of all of it was the time I spent with my father.

After graduating from University I became professionally involved in motorsports sitting right seat at consumer events (brutal!) and instructing at various tracks around the US (free track time!!). This allowed me to be a contributing member in the family holiday discussions of racetracks, racing legends and how we were each were legends as well (at least in our own minds). It wasn't just my father that raced. My uncle raced not only cars but also motorcycles 'back in the day' with my father. My brother too raced motorcycles. I loved sitting around the table and hearing the stories and adventures of getting bikes to Daytona or cars to Marlboro. The stories of how the 'old' course a Pocono was the only 'real' way to drive that track and the dangers of turn 4. Even my grandmother and aunt will chime with their contributions of 'getting Ken here' or 'how we got Carl there'.

So this takes me to what I really love about racing. Beyond the personal challenge, beyond the adrenaline and the competition, it is the feeling of family and of comradery one has while at the track. I will never forget my first event with the VRG. We were lucky enough to pit next to Paul Bova. Not only did he welcome us to the VRG family with open arms but, finding out about my dependency on early morning coffee, kindly opened his motor home and coffee maker to me. And what better show of comradery than the genuine enthusiasm with which Jim Karamanis greets everyone.

We all know that no race weekend comes without a few challenges and I love how we all come together to keep each other's cars on the track (I cannot count the number of times Dave Coleman has put his head under the hood of our MGC to help keep it and us out on track). For it's not (always) about crossing the finish line first but rather crossing after a really good dice with our friends.

I love watching our racing family grow. Whether it's meeting Shawn Bullard's family and seeing his daughter's genuine interest in our craziness or hearing about the progress Bill Stoler's daughter makes while in the Air Force and her love and fascination with all things mechanical. I love working with the new drivers at the driver's schools. Their enthusiasm and drive is infectous and it is so gratifying to see them progress - not to mention that working with Ed (Valpey) is always an invaluable learning experience for each of us instructors.

I love the pit banter and the story telling where top speeds and lap times get faster with each telling: whether it's Tom Dick and I discussing who the blue flag was REALLY meant for, or Nick and Kevin Michaels arguing over who 'let' who pass.
But more than anything, what I love about getting into a car and onto a track is that, when we put on our suits our boots and our lids….we're ALL the same. (Dave Thomas – thank you for your unyielding dedication

RACING WITH THE BOYS REDUX, con't

in THIS arena!!) Young and old, male and female, father and daughter. It's just about friendly competition, a personal challenge and creating experiences….as a family.

Paige Hope

[Paige Hope asked us to print this. She is running in the Boston Marathon in support of Tufts Cancer Research for children. - Ed.

Six years ago, just before Christmas, the lives of a dear friend and colleague and his family changed forever. Their 5 year old son was suddenly diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. The battle ahead of them would be a long, arduous and unfathomable one. But today, that little boy is now 11years old. He has a voracious appetite for reading, is cancer free and enjoying his dirt bikes and karate, his first year of middle school and just 'being a kid'.

It is not just the incomparable treatment for his illness that he received at Tufts that has lead me to have such a strong desire to support TEAM Tufts. It is the philosophy, care, passion and dedication that I saw every individual at Tufts Floating Hospital for Children unwaveringly give to that family. The team at Tufts not only treated a disease, they cared for an entire family.

As their own mission statement vows: "Our mission is to improve the lives of children and their families. What truly makes us different is that we treat each child as if they are our own." (For more information on Tufts Floating Hospital: https://www.floatinghospital.org/About-Us)

I myself have been a patient at Tufts and I have seen this level of dedication in ALL of the staff. As a teaching hospital, the research they conduct, the level of care they provide and the access to treatments is beyond what I have seen anywhere else.

So this is why I am running the Boston Marathon with TEAM Tufts: To run for those who want to run….but can't.

I am running to support Tufts caring approach. Their never ending search to better the lives of every person that walks through their doors.]

"Why VRG Has No Trophies, Points or Championship."
(Reprinted from NY Times, Nov. 9, 2014 by Karen Crouse)

AVONDALE, Ariz. — The second-to-last race of the Nascar season produced a track-record 12 caution flags, which was fitting. In recent weeks, as the number of contenders for the Sprint Cup Series championship was winnowed to four, from 16, the debris field from the aggression that has long fueled the sport widened.

Kevin Harvick, the eighth and final qualifier with a chance to advance to Nascar's final four next week at Homestead-Miami Speedway, won Sunday's race at Phoenix International Raceway for the third consecutive year and for the fourth time in five years. A week after he shoved a competitor from behind in an ugly postrace scene, Harvick pushed the pace, leading for 264 of the 312 laps to move up four spots.

Joining Harvick in next week's championship round will be Sunday's pole-sitter, Denny Hamlin, who was third; Joey Logano, who finished sixth; and Ryan Newman, who bumped Kyle Larson on the last corner to secure the fourth and final spot with an 11th-place finish.

Newman's maneuver knocked Jeff Gordon, the race runner-up, out of the championship field. If Newman had finished one spot lower, Gordon would have made the top four. It was a tough result for Gordon; last week in Texas, he was in position to win when Brad Keselowski tried to squeeze through a gap and made contact with Gordon's car, causing him to spin.

After finishing 29th, Gordon confronted Keselowski on pit road. As Keselowski turned away from Gordon, he was shoved from behind by Harvick, setting off a brawl involving the drivers and their teams.

Asked if Newman's desperate maneuver was acceptable, Gordon said, "It was acceptable last week, it was acceptable this week."

Gordon conceded that Harvick was racing "in another ZIP code" but added that on a few of the numerous restarts, "I could have taken out Harvick, too, to make it in, but I didn't."

Newman, the only championship contender without a victory in 2014, said he was on the receiving end of the same kind of apron maneuver, from Larson, during a truck race two years ago. So he had essentially evened the score, a conclusion that drew a snicker from Hamlin.

"That's a stretch," Hamlin said.

Newman conceded, "I wasn't proud of what I had to do."

He added: "It's hard to rationalize it. I don't like racing that way, but there's a lot on the line."

"Why VRG Has No Trophies, Points or Championship."
(Reprinted from NY Times, Nov. 9, 2014 by Karen Crouse)CON'T.

Kurt Busch finished seventh, five days after his former girlfriend filed court documents in Delaware accusing him of domestic assault. Before the race, Gene Haas, a co-owner of Stewart-Haas Racing, which sponsors Busch, gave the driver his unequivocal support.

Harvick's action against Keselowski, who ran fourth Sunday, was embraced on Twitter, with photos posted of someone being shoved, creating a meme called Harvicking.

"In the end, it's not one of my prouder moments," Harvick said.

The Cup format was tweaked after Jimmie Johnson turned last year's Homestead-Miami Speedway race into his own virtual victory laps, needing only a 23rd-place finish to secure the title. The elimination races culminating with the four-survivor, winner-take-all race next week have rewarded aggressive driving, which has been like adding oxygen to a fire.

The dignitaries on hand Sunday included the three-time Indianapolis 500 champion Johnny Rutherford, known during his career as a congenial ambassador for the sport. In 1977, he was in a fistfight with Gordon Johncock at a postrace news conference after their cars collided, sending Johncock into a spin.

After Johncock criticized his driving, Rutherford replied: "That's racing, Gordy. If you can't stand the heat, you better get out of the kitchen."

Johncock's response was a right cross. At the time, Rutherford said future run-ins were "inevitable," and nothing he has seen since has changed his mind.

"Because we all drive as hard as the car will let you," he said.

The high-stakes races have increased interest and exposure for Nascar, but at what cost?

"I'm a little concerned where it could go," Gordon said. "Just like last week, we found out on pit road where the line is drawn and when you cross over that line, and I think that it could get to that on the racetrack as well."

Gordon was asked whom he considered the favorite in next week's finale. "I like Harvick," he said as Logano, Newman and Hamlin stood stone-faced a few feet away.

Would those be fighting words? Everyone in the room looked at Gordon as he approached the three. They exchanged back slaps, and Gordon said, "Sorry, guys, I don't think you need me to tell you that."

Who is JR MITCHELL?

You could describe him as the owner of GMT Racing. Or, as a racecar driver. Perhaps motoring enthusiast.

Me, I think he's an inspiration. Not just because he has a really, really, really cool job at which he excels but because of something he said during the interview. When I asked him what he loves best about what he does, which can be very generally described as prepping drivers and cars for races, his response was, "Watching people progress and gain skill and confidence. To watch a driver do better and better, that's extremely rewarding."

His shop is filled with incredible toys that would seriously distract any visitor. Toys you can drive and the toys used to fix or rebuild those vehicles. Yet his thrill comes from making another person's dream of driving come true.

J.R. agreed that racetracks are filled with people who are generous in spirit.

Given how he earns a living, it's ironic how much he admires the people who work on their own cars at a track. "It's because of them that we have any of this at all. Those are the guys that started the sport."

According to J.R., these people are the backbone of vintage racing because it was thanks to like-minded individuals and their passion for cars, racing informally on tracks like Lime Rock and creating a basis for organized races.

J.R.'s own relationship with cars began, as he describes it, "Same as everyone else. I went to a track once and that was it."

His career started with scraping rocks off tires at age 12 and progressed to crewing for a friend, Jimmy Bond, who ran a Sprite out of Pitstop Garage, Westbrook. Bill Bartlett also had a big influence on J.R.'s early career.

He built up skills and knowledge working with local dealers before hiring on with Bob Sharp's east coast factory team for Datsun, Racecars have been the focus of his full time job ever since and he opened his own shop in 1995.

"My wife Eileen has been a partner in GMT since the beginning. She runs the office, is a machinist, mechanic, and worked alongside me everywhere I've worked since leaving Bob Sharp. I wouldn't be successful without Eileen and the people who have worked with us over the years."

Today, GMT cares for approximately 40 cars and two dozen active drivers.

"We started off with a couple customers and a few cars. Now we do ground up restorations, race prep, transport, track support… pretty much whatever needs doing."

J.R. didn't envision having such a large operation. "We have 10 employees plus part time folks. After 20 years, I've become one of those people with all the equipment and trucks and nonsense. It's different but it's still fun and that's the most important part."

Just below GMT Racing, the words, "Time for fun," appear on the sign outside the shop.
"We mean that."

Several of the people at GMT are tech inspectors for VRG and J.R. has a preference for older cars.
"They're the stuff that I read about growing up and now I'm able to work on something that I figured I'd only ever read about. It's amazing."

He's had the pleasure of restoring cars that he once worked on when they were new, such as Bob Sharp's 240Z, which he redid from the ground up.

"I didn't expect to see that car again and to do that restoration was pretty cool."

That car and the others he works on go to the track; GMT Racing does not prep cars for show. "All the stuff in here gets used."

In addition to the joy he finds in the cars, J.R. appreciates the lifelong friends he's made by being associated with racing and the places he's been able to visit.

Who is JR MITCHELL?

Recently, he traveled to Australia to deliver racecars that he'd not only prepped but customized a shipping container to deliver the vehicles safely.

He finds, "Vintage and historic are the fastest growing section of the sport. A lot of people have always fancied having a car and now have enough time and money to get into it. The cars themselves are appealing… they just don't make cars like that anymore."

While there may be a lot of maintenance associated with a vintage racing car, J.R. said that they are unlike a modern racecar, which would need a team to change three or four things every time the car goes out and to be competitive.

"These cars are frozen in time. You can see something that looks exactly like it did 40 years ago when it was new. That is amazing."

J.R. enjoys racing. "It was an impossible dream. One of my customers made it possible for me to buy a car. I fixed it and ran it."

His advice to others is straightforward, "Follow your dream and get a car you think is really cool," and his thoughts on his own career ring just as true, "It beats working."

Linda Zukauskas,
Correspondent at Large

(Linda Zukauskas is newspaper reporter in Woodbury, CT and a neighbor and friend of Joe Riolo. She accompanied Joe to Historics 32 at LRP this year and wrote an article for the last newsletter. She asked me if she could do more. My thought was to get someone close by that she could interview. GMT is located in Newtown, 2-3 Exits away from her off I-84. This was an experiment and J.R. the willing "Guinea Pig." She will do other interviews from time to time, possibly at the track after Joe's Corvette is rebuilt, or in her "neighborhood" where she does not have too far to travel. We thank her for the article and her enthusiasm. - ed.)

VRG TurkeyBowl 2014

Bill Stoler Photography

SUMMIT POINT

Pfeiffer Racing
59
SCOTT SWIMMING POOLS
75+1
INTERSPORT
23
Bill Stoler Photography

35
RMD 695H

Turkey Bowl
Charity Rides
High Performance Heroes

62
62
41
Safety Bowl

75+1

TURKEY BOWL 2014 REPORT

By Michael Oritt, Event Coordinator

Though as the official Event Coordinator I am supposed to know everything and be everywhere at all times the truth is that I am usually involved in small details for much of the weekend: Making a refund, finding an extra dinner ticket, etc. etc. Having little time to view the actual racing action I instead solicited input from others, and thus I pass along to you the comments of those who were "on the ground":

GROUP ONE—by Mark Palmer (Out of Bed – ed.)

As an imbedded reporter (i.e. one of the race entrants in the group), you get to see things that trackside observers can't see -- and you also miss things that you might see if you were hanging on the fences. So with apologies to those who may have had terrific races half a lap ahead of me or behind me -- here goes!

The dire forecasts of significant snow on the preceding Wednesday turned out to be largely mistaken, except for a few places to the far north. So travel to Summit Point, WV was uneventful for most of us, but it did seem like there were a few no-shows who may have gotten more weather -- or more discouraged -- than the rest. Nonetheless, the small-bore group was the most numerous of the three vintage grids for the weekend.

Friday was rather chilly, and most people seemed to roll in late morning and skipped the opening practice session. The afternoon session was enjoyable (probably more so in an enclosed car!) with most folks taking it easy and adjusting to cold tires, cold track, and cold hands. Steve Hirschtritt managed to break an axle shaft, and had the unenviable task of pulling the rear end apart (he had spares) but got it done and was ready to rock & roll for Saturday -- a great example of the intrepid small-bore group in VRG! Poor Larry Smith was not so fortunate: his gearbox wouldn't shift after he rolled off the trailer, and he discovered bits of the layshaft thrust washer in the drained oil, so he was finished before he started. It was great to see one of our newer members, Rick Londono, gaining valuable track experience and making improvements to the Spitfire. He's not fast yet, but will be, and in the meantime doing a great job of pointing one by and holding a predictable line -- all you could ask of a new driver.

Friday evening saw various groups adjourning to their favorite establishments for drink and eats, and Janet & I enjoyed a relatively quiet meal (compared to some past years!) at the Cork Street Tavern with Sam and Joan Smith and Hank and Stevie Giffin - who, by the way, are now proud grandparents of ten!

The weatherman (not our Storm) promised that Saturday would be warmer, but it took a while. Group 1 was running at the front end of the schedule, so we were envious of Group 5, which had more favorable temperatures. Our race, however, was fun! Event Chairman Michael Oritt (Elva Mk IV) provided some excitement at the start, when his throttle cable broke at the moment the green flag came out (and he was at the front of the inside line). Tom Grudovich (Elva 200 FJ) got bottled up behind Michael, leaving Hank Giffin (Elva Courier) and Pete Carroll (Sprite) to get away at the front. The MGA's of Rob Brownlee-Tomasso, Tom Dick, and yours truly, gave chase, but couldn't match the pace of the Elva brigade; and Tom G quickly recovered to come blasting through by the end of the Lap 1 to chase down the leaders. I wasn't close enough at the end to see the exact finishing positions, but I think it was Grudovich, Giffin, and Carroll. I might have been 5th or 6th, behind Hervey Parke in another of the dreaded Elva's. I came upon Tom Dick in the twin of my car (bright red MGA roadster) right at the end, so we provided a nice *photo op* of the two cars crossing the finish side-by-side -- if anyone caught it.

The Saturday evening soiree at the elegant George Washington Inn was lovely: excellent food, free drinks (well, one freebie with your *din-din* ticket), attentive service and short speeches. The "worker's

TURKEY BOWL 2014 REPORT, con't

By Michael Oritt, Event Coordinator

choice" award for Group 1 was Pete Carroll's Sprite, but the top awards (a singing fish, and the traditional Talkin' Tom Turkey) went to Butch O'Connor and our hard-working EC, Michael Oritt -- well deserved, even if a bit tongue in cheek.

Sunday AM was still rather cool for the warm-up sessions, but just as Group 1 left the grid for our feature race, the clouds parted and the sun shone brightly. Not sure why, but Tom Grudovich arrived at the grid a bit late and started from the back ... some sort of strategy, I suppose. Hank Giffin lead us to the green, with the other fast guys up front (Michael O with a heavy-duty throttle cable this time). Steve Hirschtritt inched by me on the straight and outbraked me into Turn One, and I hoped to keep up, but he just kept drawing away. Soon after, Tom G came by, picking off cars one by one until he reached the front and finished there again, I believe. Hank Giffin and Michael Oritt had a race-long battle, until a lapped car forced Michael into an evasive maneuver and created a big gap. Michael was able to close the gap just in time to reach Hank's door -- but not quite make the pass -- at the checkered flag. Must have been a thrilling race for both of them!

Nice to see my friend Paige Hope in dad›s (Ken Williamson) Elva Courier notchback coupe, which she had to borrow when the family MGC/GT gave some problems -- I understand she had a good run with another MG and perhaps Harry Sroka›s spic-and-span FV. Vic Schuster seemed to be *among-the-missing*. We saw the Turner in the paddock but it never seemed to intersect on the track – maybe it was just running somewhere else in the pack. Kevin Michael had some strange engine behavior after blowing a core plug on Friday, so had to sit out, unfortunately.

It's always nice to wrap up your weekend by lunch on Sunday, but at the same time it's sad to pack up and leave knowing this was the last outing for 2014. But it's a satisfying end to the season, another great year of events for VRG, and keeps the appetite whetted for springtime and the 2015 season. See you then!

GROUP TWO—By Tom Grudovich

Group 2 had the lightest number of entries of the five race groups but nonetheless provided some exciting racing throughout the weekend. The group was made up of the Formula Fords of Tivvy Shenton, Andy Stein and Dennis Austin complemented by the two Ginetta G4's of Tom Grudovich and Michael Clifford and Todd Reid's 1967 Lotus Super Seven.

Sunday morning's thirty minute feature race saw a dry track and temperatures in the mid-40's. Mike Clifford, the Younger, stood in for his dad, who would be going in for a knee replacement the following Tuesday. The race saw Todd Reid expertly take the lead in his Super Seven early and hold it for much of the race, closely followed by Tom Grudovich in his Ginetta G4. Clifford was caught in traffic and fell back to third but kept closing the gap throughout the race.

With only a few laps to go Mike Clifford caught and passed both Grudovich and Reid to take the lead. Then Grudovich got past Reid to take second. Only a few car lengths separated the three in the rush to the checker with Clifford taking the victory (Ah, to be young again. – ed.)

GROUP THREE—By Michael Oritt

I had asked Michael Clifford II (referred to above as the Younger) to submit a report for Group 3 but due to an unfortunate incident (really the only serious one of the weekend) Michael's Lotus Cortina, with whom he was sharing with Mark Miller, was knocked out on Saturday when Miller dropped a wheel on turn three, re-entered the track, and t-boned Shawn Bullard's Alfa GTV. Michael shares responsibilities with his dad, Michael Senior, for supporting several racing clients

TURKEY BOWL 2014 REPORT, con't

By Michael Oritt, Event Coordinator

and as a result young Michael did not get to see very much of the rest of the action. By this time it was too late for me to find another information source so I am unable to provide a report for Group 3.

GROUP 4--By Dave Parker

Group 4 is the "Modern Sports" car group, which encompasses all sports racing cars that are not vintage eligible or a Legends car.

This year's Turkey Bowl had its usual wide range of racecars in attendance. There were four Spec Miata's (or is Miatae?), several Dodge Neon's (including an SRT Turbo model), a couple of Porsche 944's, a late model Porsche 911 (996), a Porsche 914/6, a couple of V8 Mustangs, a couple of Corvettes, and a former Busch series stock car. Al and Melanie Mitchell brought their fleet of Alfa Romeo's as well.

It was a very eclectic group of racecars whose drivers all played well together and had a fun event with no carnage. The group leader and the Chief Steward set the schedule so that Group 4 had a ten minute morning "practice", then a morning fifteen lap race and an afternoon fifteen lap race on Friday and Saturday. This change to the schedule was well received by the racers.

GROUP FIVE—By Dave Parker

Group 5 is the Legends car race group. A Legends car is a purpose built, motorcycle engine-powered multi discipline racecar manufactured by INEX/600 Racing in North Carolina. A Legends car can be raced on ovals (dirt and asphalt), road course, even on the ice.

The Legends car group has had growing attendance for the last three years, even with the cold weather we had this year. The unique aspect of Turkey Bowl is that many Legends car drivers can come to Turkey Bowl and get their first exposure to European style road racing in a low key, fun event. Four of the twenty-three Legends car drivers had never been on a road course before this weekend. Several of the "young guns" stood out and were very fast and competitive.

Friday's race: Tyler Hughes won Fridays feature race. Tyler advised his Dad after Friday's feature that he felt the motor in his car "going soft". That led to their staying up late on Friday night to install a new motor so that Tyler could continue to race. Second place was held by the local Washington, DC SCCA region Legends hotshoe, Stephen Brewer, Jr. Third place was occupied by Damian Payton, a Summit Point resident, who primarily races asphalt ovals. This weekend's Turkey Bowl was only his second road course event ever - his first road course event being the 2013 Turkey Bowl. Another stand out was Zack Wells. He is a very young Legends driver who was only competing in his seventh weekend in a Legends car. Zack finished fourth.

Saturday's Legends feature race had Tyler Hughes win again in a hard fought battle with Damian Payton until Damian's motor expired on lap eight. Second place went to Bob Connor. Zack Wells improved his driving and got more comfortable with the road course to finish third. Saturday's race had tight, door-to-door, nose-to-tail racing throughout the field.

Sunday's Legends feature race had its own off-track drama and on-track excitement. Tyler Hughes chance at a trifecta sweep of the weekend disappeared when his motor broke during morning qualifying and he was unable to start the feature. Damian Payton and his Dad had their turn to stay up late Saturday night and do a motor swap, which paid off greatly when Damian went from 10th in a 13 car field to win the race, with one of the most spectacular drives that this observer has watched at Summit Point in years. He won it the old fashioned way – "he earned it." J.J. Pack, who quietly improved all weekend, finished second. Zack

TURKEY BOWL 2014 REPORT, con't

By Michael Oritt, Event Coordinator

Wells finished third, with a fine drive from the back of the grid as well. Zack was gridded behind Damian Payton on the start.

Bob Weymouth, Stephen Johnson, and Patrick Dillon braved the 12 hour tow from Maine to race in the Turkey Bowl Legends group with us. Bob and Stephen have joined us for the event several years running. Patrick Dillon was experiencing his first trip to Summit Point. He made a point of telling the group leader, "this is a great track at which to race." The event was extremely fun, with tight racing. Thank you for taking the time to do this. I will come back next year."

RELAY RACE—By Michael Oritt

In addition to the regular group one through five racing, the schedule featured a Relay Race on Saturday afternoon. The concept was for several teams, composed of cars from each of the five race groups, to race--one group at a time of course--in 1-3-4-5-2 order. The finishing time differentials for the cars in each group would be passed along to their teammates in the ensuing groups which would be started with appropriate delays and the first group two car to finish would determine which team was the winner.

In the end four teams were constituted but because of often substantial speed differentials within groups some inequality was built in. One team, for example, had a full-blown stock car as its group 4 entrant and there was not much of a contest between it and its brethren. As a result while the plan held together quite well for groups 1 and 3 the same could not be said for groups 4 and 5 and by the finish of the Group 5 session there were some large disparities.

That's where some track officials—who shall go unnamed—stepped in and changed the rules (a *no-no* in the middle of the game – ed.), with the result that all five Group 2 cars left the grid together in pretty much of a drag race. Because the team that won should have properly lost, had the rules been followed, and because I was on the team that *should* have won—the results will go unreported except to say that beyond some understandable grousing from a few competitors the proverbial good time was had by all. This "gimmick" race was a fun event and it will no doubt be repeated next year but with different officials in charge.

Overall, we had a great weekend. Because the longrange weather forecast seemed a bit dire a number of people changed their plans and as a result the grids were a bit thinner than last year's. Nevertheless the predictions for no rain or snow held up and despite the cold temperatures the track was surprisingly *grippy.* Continental breakfast was served in the classroom all three days and a number of folks tended to hang out in its warmth when they were not racing with resulting fellowship.

I had a great time chairing this event and thanks to the help of a lot of people it came off successfully and without any hitches. Thanks to all of you who attended and I look forward to another fun and successful Turkey Bowl in 2015.

Michael Oritt

Letter from TURKEY BOWL

All--

Mark, thanks for the great report and I think it is for the VL guy though it--and hopefully others that I asked for--can also go into the Newsletter.

I had a fantastic race on Sunday. I started out in first row with Hank at the pole and we swapped places on almost every one of the first four or five laps, usually the result of drafting each other down the straight.

About half way through the race I was closely following Hank to the last turn expecting to again take the lead on the ensuing run down to turn one. Hank got by on the outside of a driver--Tom Dick--well before the last turn and I expected to do the same. I was almost alongside Tom short of the turn when he began to drift slowly to the left and I wound up having to drive off the track and reentered through the sand trap and back onto the straight.

I had lost a lot of distance to Hank as he was almost all the way down to turn one but I pressed hard for the remaining four or so laps and I think he thought I was out of the event. To make a long story short I caught up to him on the last lap and we went across the finish line together with him ahead by 1/2 a car length. It was one of those races that makes up for a lot of bad events, etc.

Tom came over right after the race to apologize and I told him no problem He said he had seen me but did not think I would catch up to him that quickly. I am not sure he in fact knew I was there but it was his turn and he never gave me a pass sign so he is entirely in the clear from my perspective whether or not the flagger said otherwise.

Best--Michael

POSTSCRIPT

The 18th Turkey Bowl is in the books, a great finish to VRG's season.

I've had the pleasure of keeping the event running for the last 5 years. It's always a good time of both racing and social activities.

The biggest duty I have is collecting and presenting the Workers Choice awards. This is presented to a driver in each race group, who may not have won, may not have the prettiest car or the best drive. It's the workers choice.

The winner's for 2014 are:

Group 1 Ken Williamson in an Elva Courier

Group 2 Todd Reid in a Lotus Super 7

Group 3 Jim Scott in a Porsche 911

Group 4 Graham Fuller in a GTL Mini-Cooper

Group 5 Dusty Summers in a Legend.

This year was the 3rd running of the Turkey Bowl relay. Each race group supplies a car and driver. They each drive 4 laps. A winning team is crowned. Sounds easy but a lot of work and behind the scenes strategy goes on to pick the correct team. 4 teams took to the grid this year and in a fiercely fought battle, Team "C" was crowned champions. The team members were presented a piston trophy. The Team "C" members are: Pete Carroll, Michael Clifford Jr, Fred Pfeiffer, Robbie Wilson, and Dusty Summers. Great job was done by all the competitors and crew to have the event run smoothly.

Tivvy was quick to try and to return *Bill the Bass Stewards* award early in the weekend so as not to have to keep it another year. It was not in doubt after watching this year's winner. He arrived early afternoon on Friday and drove numerous laps around the paddock looking for modern tech. This paddock tour was with his car on the trailer. He finally gave up and drove a few more laps looking for the perfect paddock spot. He did make it out for a session on Friday. The winner for 2014 of the Turkey Bowl Stewards award for floundering about to fine tech and doing more laps with the car on the trailer then on track is Butch O'Connor (Yeah, Butch – ed.)

Great driving, very few issues, and mostly great weather place another Turkey Bowl in the books.

As a reminder - check your gear, belts and helmets sooner rather than later. You have lots of time now before the first race of 2015. You used your gear hard so give them some attention now.

Just think the J500 is only 6 months away,

Steve Hyatt

215

11

31

09
GTB1

79

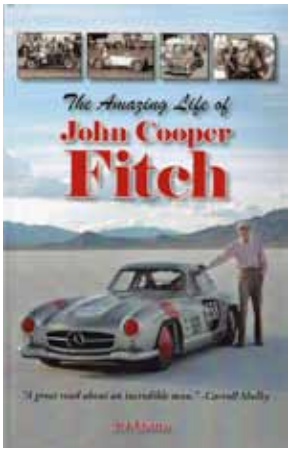
Bill Stoler Photography

44
64

51

Bill Stoler Photography

Bill Stoler Photography



BOOK REVIEW

The Amazing Life of John Cooper Fitch

By Art Evans

(Available from the author: Art Evans, 800 S Pacific Coast Hwy, Redondo Beach, CA 90277. Email: agevans@yahoo.com Tel: 310-489-5330 $35.00 including postage.)

This is the third book I have read on the life on John Fitch. One was his autobiography narrated to a journalist, William Nolan, and the second, a biography authored by James Grinnell (the introduction is written by Juan Fangio). The first was published in 1959 and the second was published in 1993. John Fitch autographed both of them for me. This biography has been published in 2014 – John Fitch died in 2012, in Lakeville, CT at the age of 95. It is the posthumous biography written by his friend of 60 years, a fellow race driver who was entering the sport when Fitch was at the peak of his career. It is a very good book.

Evans covers much of the same territory of Fitch's being shot down in his P-51 Mustang over Germany in 1944. He was imprisoned and escaped emprisonment and was recaptured. As an attractive long and lean bachelor he enjoyed his single life in Palm Beach before moving to White Plains, NY, in 1948, buying a MGTC, marrying the "prettiest girl in town" and racing in the newly formed SCCA. History for one of America's racing legends began. Fitch lived in Europe, raced for the Rootes Motors Rally Team, the Mercedes Benz Sports Car Team, and the Briggs Cunningham Factory Team. The best accounts in Art Evans biography are his coverage of the Carrera Panamericana in 1952 and 1953. Fitch drove a 300SL Roadster to finish 4th in '52 (and was disqualified) and a Chrysler in '53; and of the Mille Miglia in 1955, in which he finished 5th overall (Moss won in a MB 300SLR, Fangio was second in MB 300SLR, Maglioli was 3rd in a 3.75 liter Ferrari, Giardini was 4th in a AGCS 2.0 liter Maserati – all sports racing cars.); and Fitch's 300SL was a GT Gullwing, just like the ones you can buy at auction for $2 Million; and his account of Le Mans in 1955 in which Fitch was Pierre Levegh's co-driver. Evans tells the story of Fitch's involvement in making the movie, *The Racers*. He was responsible for developing the Corvette for racing at Sebring in 1956. He was Lime Rock Park's designer and first Director. He designed and had constructed the Fitch Inertial Barrier and the Compression Barrier – moveable objects at the race course designed to save your life. About race course design John Fitch had to say, "*The premise is that a race course can establish dependable references in the behavior of both vehicle and driver because, unlike the highway or the proving ground, it can be used to full capacity. Driver ability and effort, usually difficult variables, are relatively uniform under racing conditions. What is learned here can be applied later on public roads*."

In 2003, at 86 years old a friend of John's took him and a 300SL to Bonneville to attempt to break the F/GT Touring record set by a Datsun 240Z of 168 mph. Fitch performed fine. The 300SL lacked the team of MB Factory technicians that he had in the Mille Miglia. They did not break the record.

Evans ends his engaging book with a written quote from Fitch shortly before he died:

In looking back over past decades since those frantic days racing on public roads and early Sebrings, I have no regrets. In order to participate in this intense activity, I've risked everything including life itself, being motivated by what can be described simply as the pursuit of success in what some social scientists have concluded is the only truly modern sport in this age of the automobile…It provides not only the mobility of a magic carpet, but also the satisfaction of the mastery of an obedient machine, a subject and a servant of power, speed and considerable heft…

…I have had a full life. Over the duration of my career, I have had countless rewarding experiences; I've traveled extensively, lived with my family in Europe for several years, have made literally hundreds of friends among extraordinary people, and have many rousing battles in the racing machines of their day. It's been a good bargain and a good life.

Art Evans, his friend, his biographer, has given us a fine and interesting and well written account of a distinguished life. Of his piers, it is only Shelby and Gurney that also had a major influences with Detroit. Fitch and Gurney you could say were/are reticent – not Shelby – but Phil Hill was. We could run out of space on this page naming the great of 20th Century Greats in American auto racing. John Fitch was one them. Racing sports cars in the 50's and 60's - it is all in the book. BUY IT

Bill Hollingsworth

VINTAGE RACER GROUP

VRG

Mike Lawton, SECRETARY
94 Old Shirley Road
Harvard, MA 01451

WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

FJHNA Regional Race Schedule for 2015		
RACE CHAIR	**LOCATION**	**EVENT**
Spring Races February 20-22	**Texas Speedway**	**Jim Yule**
Brickyard Invit. June 10-14	**Indianapolis**	**Jim Yule**
Vintage Motorsports Festival June 10-14	**Thompson Raceway Connecticut**	**Bob Goeldner**
Vintage Race Weekend July 24-25	**Palmer Raceway, Mass.**	**Bob Goeldner**
Monterey Pre-Reunion August 8-9	**Mazda Raceway**	**Nick Grewal Danny Baker**
Historic Festival September 3-7	**Lime Rock**	**Bill Gelles**
US Vintage National Champ Nov. 4-8	**COTA**	**Tom O'Grady**

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

VRG 2015 Directors

Mack McCormack, President
Cal Trumbo, Vice President
Paul Bova, Treasurer
Mike Lawton, Secretary
Butch O'Connor, Director
Jim Karamanis, Director
Keith Lawrence, Director
Nial McCabe, Director
Ed Valpey, Director

You may also contact:
Mack McCormack e-mail: mack@vrgonline.org
phone: 518-527-9918

William Hollingsworth - Editor
wihiii@aol.com

Darry Bova - Layout and Production
darry@vrgonline.org

Bill Stoler Photography
www.billstoler.com
wrstoler@comcast.net

MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANUKKAH AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL THE COOL CATS AT VRG