VINTAGE RACER GROUP
VRG
DECEMBER 2015 VOL12.5
WWW.VRGONLINE.ORG

NEWSLETTER

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

VRG RACE SCHEDULE 2016

✓FEBRUARY 27, 2016	Winter Tech Seminar. Grato Garages, 300 A Colfax Ave, Clifton, NJ 07013. Host and Contact: Graham Long. Email: grahamtheengineer@gmail.com Tel: 908-500-5096
MARCH 5, 2016	Pittsburgh Racers Dinner. Event Chairman: Keith Lawrence. Email: keith@vrgonline.org Tel: 724-941-5330
APRIL 8-10, 2016	VDCA "WILD HARE RUN," VIRGINA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY, ALTON, VA. Event Chairman & Race Director:Mike Jackson. Email: vdca@vintagedrive.com Tel: 561-622-7554
MAY 11-15, 2016	JEFFERSON 500 AT SUMMIT POINT, WEST VIRGINIA. VRG Drivers School (May 11-12), FREE Open Practice Day (Thursday May 11), 3 Full Days of Racing (May 13-15). IMSA RS/SCCA 2.5L Sedan Series, Formula Ford Feature Race. Co-Event Chairmen: Cal Trumbo & Jim Karamanis, Tel: 304-449-7050. Email: j500@vrgonline.org
JUNE 23-25, 2016	THIRD ANNUAL VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL AT THOMPSON SPEEDWAY MOTORSPORTS PARK, THOMPSON, CT CO-SANCTIONED WITH THE VSCCA (please note: Thurs-Sat) Event Chairman: Paul King, Tel: 508-847-4809 Email: paulking@charter.net
JULY 29-31, 2016	WHISKEY HILL HISTORIC RACES, Whiskey Hill Motorsports Park, Palmer, MA. CO-SANCTIONED WITH THE VSCCA Event Chairman: Mike Lawton, Tel: 978-274-5935 Email: lawton@vrgonline.org
SEPT 16-18, 2016	NEW JERSEY HISTORIC RACES, MILLVILLE, NJ. NJMP Lightning Circuit. Formula Ford Feature Race. Event Chairman: Butch O'Connor. Tel: 973-295-3674. Email: bfo@spsk.com
OCTOBER 7-9, 2016	VRG @ THE GLEN, WATKINS GLEN, NY. Final Leg of the Races for The Chris Shoemaker Cup, 1968-81 Formula Fords. Event Chairman: Mike Lawton, Tel: 978-274-5935 Email: Lawton@vrgonline.org
NOV. 25-27, 2016	TURKEY BOWL XX @ SUMMIT POINT, WEST VIRGINIA. Event Chairman: Michael Oritt, Tel: 305-420-4929 Email: Michael@vrgonline.org

TURKEY BOWL XIX REFLECTIONS

This has been my first year of vintage racing. I've been to 6 races this year: the Jefferson 500, both events of PVGP, Whiskey Hill, NJMP and the Turkey Bowl. The experience has been fantastic...the atmosphere, the cars, the venues, and most importantly the people. My experience at the Turkey Bowl is a perfect example.

My original decision was to end the season after NJMP. I didn't have time to do a number of things I wanted to change about the car, and I thought the rear end gearing was wrong for Summit Point, but as it got closer Turkey Bowl I thought it would be a good opportunity to get some additional seat time. To me, the risk was low. VRG has a great refund policy and if the weather forecast looked bad, I would just cancel the trip.

On Friday, at the track, the weather was perfect: sunny and mid-60s. The "wrong" - taller - rear end turned out to be perfect. I was faster out of the turns and didn't run out of revs on the straight. That is, it was perfect right up until it blew up between turns 3 and 4 in the Friday morning practice. This was the first time I didn't take a spare diff to the track, so my weekend was over.

I knew there were two other Datsuns at the race, so as a long shot, I went to those teams and asked if they had a spare rear end they wanted. I ran into Ryan Downey and after a few conversations with his dad, Brian, they found one. I asked if they would sell it to me, their response was, "No, but you can use it, and our shop is 30 minutes from here – we can take your car over and put it in tonight!" Turns out Brian and Ryan used to have Datsun Dynamics, which is on the billboard at Turn 4. Now they have Blue Ridge Motorwerks. What luck!

I bought some pizza and the *diff* was in the car by 9 pm. It turns out that the weekend was not over after all, and thanks to these guys who went out of their way to help! I had lots of great track time in a relatively small run group and got to work on both wet and dry technique.

I was immersed in auto racing for several years in my early 20s. One of the main reasons I loved it then was the people. They're still out there and just as helpful! The tone of the Turkey Bowl was definitely relaxed, everybody was great – what a blast! When can I sign up for next year?

Joe Teplitz

Photo by Jimmy Saffell – a spectator, who sent it to me.

TURKEY BOWL XIX REFLECTIONS
OR
WHY I GO TO TURKEY BOWL

I have been attending this event for what seems to be forever. I originally came as a crew member for Steve Bresnahan and helped race prep his Dellow for this race. I remember thinking we were insane to be out in the cold just after Thanksgiving racing. Little did I know that it would become one of my favorite events.

I have done many things…crewed, worked with emergency services, worked black flag, and now, an operating steward. I have seen so many interesting cars and people here over the years. This is the one event when everyone gets together and just comes to have fun. No pressure of timing and scoring, and really, this is for the love of running these fun cars around the track before putting them to bed for the winter months.

These are the guys that truly enjoy the cars and enjoy swapping stories and legends. This event is where we all catch up on where everyone has raced throughout the season and get to hear the tales of those races some of us missed.

For me, it is the last hurrah before the cold weather truly sets in. (which those who know me, know I despise) and it gives me something to carry through the cold months waiting to see my friends in the spring. The arrival of Tom the Turkey and the toasting of old friends and new is always a favorite.

Tracy Hyatt

This is why I go,
good friends,
great memories and old cars.

TURKEY BOWL 2015

Why, you might ask, would folks travel to Summit Point, West Virginia on Thanksgiving weekend when they could be lounging around trying to digest their Thanksgiving dinner, putting up the Holiday decorations or trying to find a spot to park at the overcrowded shopping malls? Well, for the Joisey Boyz, the answer is simple: It is a great way to end the season on a high note of fun, camaraderie and racing.

This year five of the Joisey Boyz, Steve Schultz (all the way from Florida no less!), Don Mei, Nial McCabe, Charlie Tregidgo and your scribe, made the trek to the hills of West Virginia. Planning started weeks in advance with things like coming up with a rendezvous point, getting race cars ready, packing the tow vehicles and keeping up with Event Chair Mike Oritt's reminders and updates, all to keep you motivated and to build excitement. Steve was bringing his trusty MGA, Nial his Spridget and Don his 240Z. We found out later the Joisey Boyz member Ron Novrit was bringing his Spridget as well.

While our normal rendezvous spot for a trip to Summit is a WalMart parking lot just off Interstate 78, leaving early on "Black Friday" forced a small deviation to avoid the shopping crazies. However, like most "best laid plans" this one went astray. First, Don decided to leave later on Friday morning as he had been up all night, into the wee hours, trying to coax the 240Z into making the trip. It decided it wasn't ready for prime time, but Don was coming anyway. Steve, faced with a very early start for his group, decided to leave early and Nial decided to leave later. Charlie and I met at the shop where my old 1985 not-ready-for-vintage just yet VW GTI was waiting, all loaded on the trailer for the tow South. A few minutes to hook it up and we were on our way to Summit but without the usual caravan.

We made good time on a very nice day and arrived ten minutes before the next track crossing was scheduled. Once in the paddock we found Steve, who had secured a spot for us, unloaded the GTI' checked her over and got ready for the last Group 4 session of the day. The weather was beautiful, mid 60's and sunny and I was looking forward to becoming reacquainted with driving a front wheel drive car at Summit. While doing a couple of laps around the paddock to make sure the GTi was running okay, I stopped by tech to see Ralph and Tivvy. Tivvy was engaged, but Ralph looked at the GTI and said "go away". Undeterred, I suggested this might be eligible in the future and did he want to take a look. He declined, but indicated we might have to face this at some point – "but not with those tires!".

The last Friday session for Group 4 was a race and grid spots were basically random - remember, no timing and scoring, and somehow I wound up on the front row. We got the green (late), tore down the straight into turn 1. I had only been passed by a couple of cars (remember, the GTI was the slowest car in the group). As I accelerated out of turn one, the car started to miss badly and wouldn't come up to speed. Waving frantically and pointing, I was relieved to see all the cars in the Group get by safely; a testament to the kind of heads-up driving we see at VRG events. I pulled into the paddock to identify the problem, but we were done for the day. A quick check of the plugs showed them to be badly fouled, a bit unusual for this car. After replacing them, the car sounded better, but we would have to wait until Saturday morning to really know. Traveling around the paddock visiting all the other racers, most everyone was enjoying the great weather, track conditions and each other. I came upon Ron Novrit standing by his Spridget with the hood up. Not a good sign. It seemed his newly rebuilt motor was overheating and they couldn't determine why. It would be fine for three or four laps and then the temperature gauge would peg. He went out once more, but it reoccurred, so he called it weekend. Bummer. There was a driver's meeting to attend (announced as a "voluntary mandatory" meeting) which seemed to be attended by everyone. Mike Oritt and Dave Parker welcomed the crowd and reminded everyone of the rules of engagement.

Friday evening was our night to dine at our favorite Winchester restaurant, Violino, just a couple of blocks walk from the George Washington Hotel. Nial and Linda McCabe, Don Mei, Charlie Tregidgo and I made a reservation and enjoyed a wonderful meal and several

TURKEY BOWL 2015, *con't.*

glasses of Pinot Grigio. Saturday morning dawned overcast and a bit cooler than the day before. By the time we got to the track, there were a few sprinkles on the windshield of the Suburban. Nevertheless, the morning practice session went off on essentially dry conditions. The GTI was still missing, but not bad enough to miss the session, and I stayed out of everyone's way while trying to work through the problem. After the session, it was a new distributer cap and rotor hoping to find the problem. I added some fresh fuel and prepared to head out for the first race of the day. In the meantime, both Steve and Nial were running great and having a blast. Nial had even done a 3D printed turkey sculpture (about 3" tall) as a new hood ornament on his #909.

The time for the first Saturday race arrived and I got into line, at the back this time, just in case. The track was still dry and we went around on the pace lap, the green was dropped and off we went. This time the GTI was running just fine and it appeared the problem was solved. I really didn't have anyone to race with but tried to keep up with the back of the field, while looking out for the NASCAR type Chevy, a new Mustang and a blindingly quick silver Neon. It didn't take but four laps and the leaders were on me. The corner workers were excellent and had those blue flags out to warn me of oncoming traffic. Ten laps in, the GTI started missing again, but differently and only on the corners. Nevertheless, the checker came out on an essentially good race for me. When I got back to the paddock, Charlie noticed a lot of steam coming out from under the hood. It appeared that the plastic, 30 year old expansion tank gave up the ghost and was spraying coolant everywhere. At that point, Bob Crawford, who also had a VW GTI in attendance, but was running his red Neon, stopped by with an armful of wires, distributor caps and the like to try to solve the problem. We discussed the symptoms and at this point it sounded like fuel starvation. I filled the tank to the top for the next session, just in case. Bob also said since he wasn't running his GTI, he would give me his expansion tank for the next session. You have to love spirit of vintage racing.

As we approached the lunch break, it began to look like we might get some wet weather, so we changed the tires to the Toyo R888, which are vintage legal tires, and somewhat better in the wet. (I had been running the Hoosier "cheater slicks") The second Saturday race began on a damp track. The GTI was now running fine and I kept the back of the pack in sight for most of the race - finally, a good clean session. When I came in, Bob Crawford told me he had to pull out of the relay race and that I should sign up; better yet, he signed me up. Now I hadn't signed up earlier because of the issues, but with a clean (but slow) running car I was in. Now the relay race is just for fun, but when I lined up, the Group 4 Mustang was out on the line with me. Dave Parker was the starter and to my surprise the Mustang went first. Then the other three cars and then me! In any event, I got passed (lapped) by the other four cars in only four laps; humbling to say the least. It was still fun.

The highlight of the weekend is a sit down dinner in the beautiful ballroom at the George Washington Hotel on Saturday evening. Very classy, and the food and service was excellent. You will read elsewhere about the awards, but I was happy to surrender my "Fish-out-of-Water" award from last year to Jim Arnett.

We awoke Sunday morning to real rain. By the time we got to the track, it was apparent that many folks had decided they had had enough track time and fun for the weekend. Groups 1 and 3 were combined and the schedule adjusted. The first session was really wet and while some Group 4 cars were absent, several showed up and the session began. There were a pair of Porsche 944s in the group and they were out there too. I pointed both of them by, then tucked in behind. I wound up staying with them for most of the session. The car was running well and I was pretty tired, so facing a long ride home, we too decided to call it a weekend. We packed up, said our goodbyes and headed north, after a terrific weekend – low key with the emphasis on fun. Until next year!!

Butch O'Connor

TURKEY BOWL 2015
It's All About the Hats

The day after Thanksgiving, Sal and I were still working on the 240. I had had some motor problems in New Jersey and to make a long story short, the machine shop didn't come through for us that week. At 11:30, we decided that it wasn't going to happen. Sal decided he would pass on the trip. Since I am slightly nuttier, I decided to take a ride. Being an optimist by nature, I had packed the Ridgeline first thing that morning. Tools, parts, jack, gas cans, racing gear, cooler all loaded and ready to go. Off we went to Interstate 95, my favorite Connecticut highway! I stayed in touch with Butch and Charlie who had left New Jersey hours ago and just settled back for a nice 75/80 mph tour of Interstates 78 and 81. We had 7:30 reservations for dinner at our favorite Italian restaurant a short walk away from the Washington Hotel. At 6:45, I pulled into the hotel parking lot after a 387 mile checked in, met the guys and had a wonderful dinner.

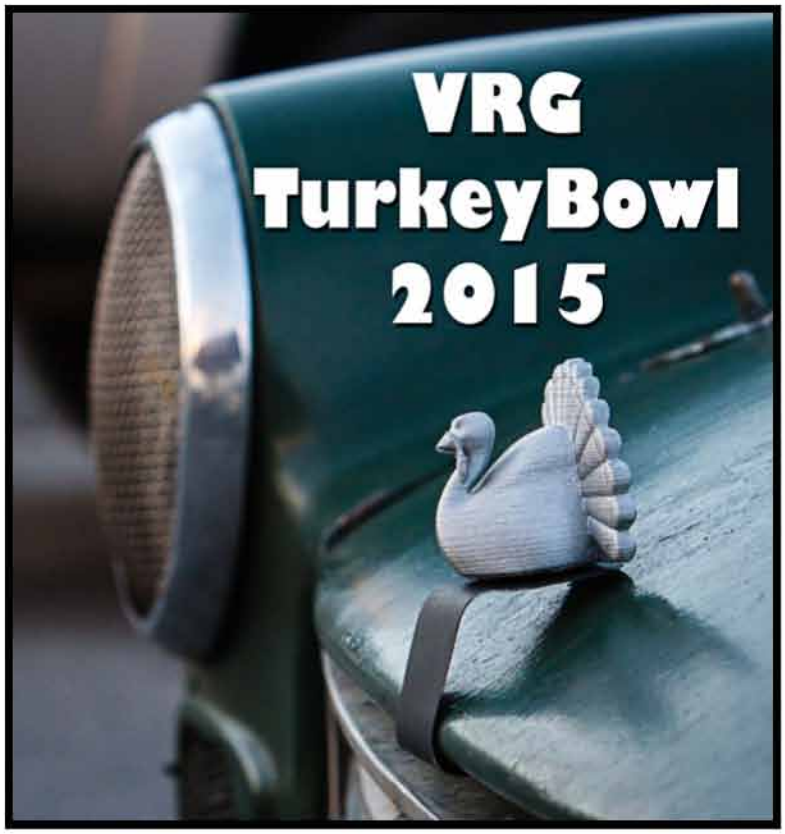
So why did I drive over 900 miles over the course of the weekend to go to a race I couldn't participate in? Good question. Truth is I really enjoy going to the Turkey Bowl. It's a very low key, no hassle event with a good breakfast at the track and totally unpredictable weather. This was my third year at the event. Two years ago, Butch and I decided to take a ride just to hit the road. We blew down there in his V70R wagon and spent the weekend hanging out, yakking with people and just generally socializing. (That's something people did before the IPhone was invented) it was pretty cold that weekend but we had a good time, the banquet was fun and the beds at the Washington are to die for.

Last year, we went again, but I actually raced in the modern car group. Butch had bought a spec Miata during the year and was planning to run that. The Datsun was apart after my monumental blow up at Thompson so I secretly made arrangements with Meathead Racing who are located at Summit Point to rent a spec Miata to surprise Butch. It worked out nicely, except I couldn't really get physically comfortable in the car. I didn't care, I was having a good time with the little roadster. It was a pretty damn cold weekend but the company was good, we hit our Italian restaurant and the banquet and the Washington were up to their usual standards (you did need a heater! - ed.)

So I was looking forward to this year's Turkey Bowl and was planning on taking the 240. I had knee replacement surgery in May, so I missed the Jeff which is my favorite event on the calendar. I've always loved racing at Summit Point going back to the seventies when I was racing motorcycles. We always had a couple of races there during the season. Unfortunately fate stepped in again and I was a spectator. Doesn't matter. We had shirtsleeve weather most of the weekend. Butch ran his SCCA VW IT car (he does have a lot of race cars) and we had a good time. We even managed to hit a Jersey Mike's sub shop in Maryland on the way home!

I guess in essence it's about the camaraderie in vintage racing in general and VRG in particular. I had been asked to look for a new member running with us for the first time with another 240Z. Found the car Saturday, yakked with the owner for a bit, told him if he had any questions, come see me. This week I got a nice email thanking me. So I guess that kind of explains why we go to Turkey Bowl. That and the fact that I love the Hats!!

Don Mei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SUMMIT
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VRG PHOTOS by Bill Stoler

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DAVE SMITH
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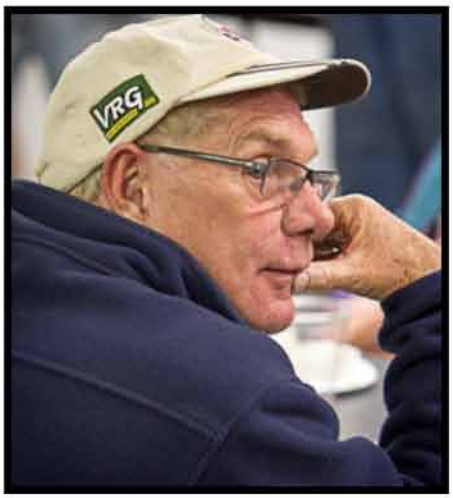
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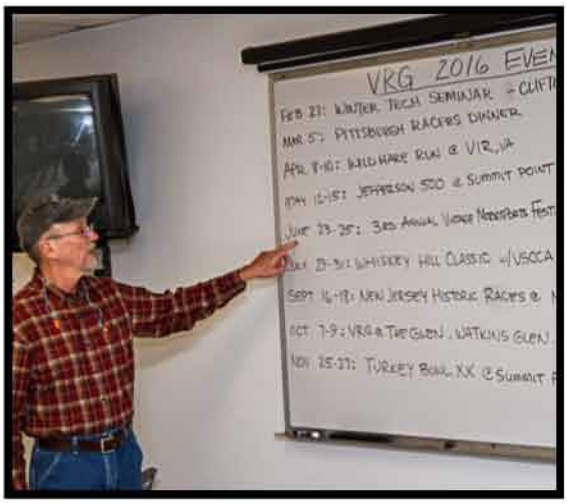
VRG 2016 EVEN
FEB 27: WINTER TECH SEMINAR + CLIFT
MAR 5: PITTSBURGH RACERS DINNER
APR 9-10: BELLEHARE RUN @ VIR, VA
MAY 15-18: JEFFERSON 500 @ SUMMIT POINT
JUNE 23-25: 3RD ANNUAL VINTAGE NOSTALGIA FEST
JULY 29-31: WHISKEY HILL CLASSIC w/ VSCCA
SEPT 16-18: NEW JERSEY HISTORIC RACES @
OCT 7-9: VRG @ THE GLEN, WATKINS GLEN
NOV 25-27: TURKEY BOWL XX @ SUMMIT

O'Connor
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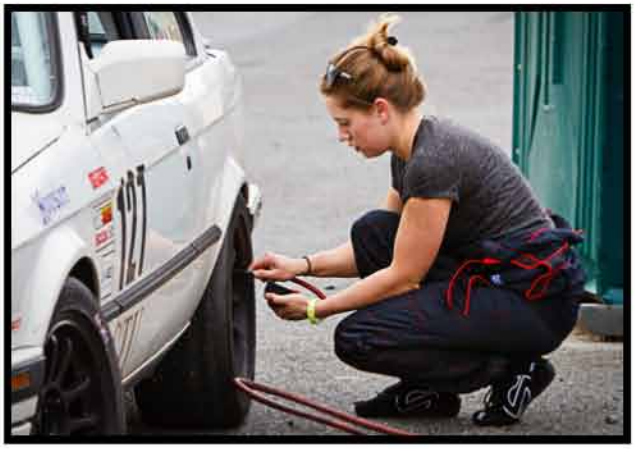

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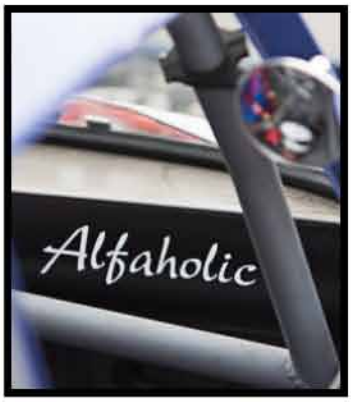
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VRG PHOTOS by Bill Stoler

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DATSUN
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VRG PHOTOS by Bill Stoler

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

These newsletters from Darry Bova and I began with the November 2005 issue. It had been a year plus since VRG had been founded. The idea of Vintage Race Group had been formalized by a "Gang of Nine," of which I was not a part, at Loudan in May, 2004. Dave Fenton told me about it on our drive to the ski area for the Lobster Dinner catered by Richard Kieley, telling me that they were looking for investors. When I got home I sent Kim Eastman a check, mine was the second one received, hence the origin of VRG #2. With both Kim and Patti Eastman as Founders I took her place on the BOD, with Bob Girvin, President, Ralph Steinberg, Vice President, Brad Marshall, Treasurer, and Mark Palmer, Secretary. Chris Shoemaker had set up the website and the newsgroups, Kim Eastman dealt with log books and membership, Tivvy Shenton, Chief of Tech. Dave Fenton and I looked on. It was the following summer that while on the road to a race that I made an I-78 call to Mark, to chat, and to volunteer for something he thought might need doing (Mark was writing the rules, editing the newsletter with Bob Girvin and his daughter, Kristin, doing layout and design, and I forget what else). He suggested I be the Editor and that he had a new member, Darry Bova, who would take over for Kristin to do the layout and design. That was the beginning of a long and productive friendship. (Being VRG President demanded an Editor change, Larry McKenna followed by "Van" Van Deurzen ably became interim Editors and are thanked again.) After my term as President I happily returned to the Editor duties. We purposely did not make the Editor a BOD position. It was thought that it should be independent and not a mouthpiece of the Board of Directors. Darry, is an individual of unlimited capacity to get something, or anything, done. **No** is not in her vocabulary. **Yes** is!

I have enjoyed being your Editor. The invitation to write a piece for the Newsletter has generally been enthusiastically received. It has only been once that I was turned down flat. There was another time when an individual who accepted the invitation, and after the deadline had past had been called to ask him about his article. His response, "I did not feel like writing it." Some of you I have hit again and again because the race reports have been so entertaining and so well written. I am only going to single out a few. Paul Wilson is an author and when he writes for the newsletter his pieces have been very special. When VRG was able to resurrect the Jefferson 500 we were able to have Peter Krause write the race reports. He had participated in all of them, and he offered a perspective and historical view in his very polished and articulate prose that set a standard for the Newsletter. The *Girls Racing With the Guys* I am very appreciative of as it highlights the involvement of our spouses and daughters. Thank you Paul and Peter and the dozens of you who accepted the call. The Newsletter would never have been produced without your support. Louise and Walter Pietrowicz developed their motorsports photography career helping Mark Palmer with the MG Vintage Racers Newsletter. They followed Mark to VRG and Darry and I inherited them. Much of Walter's photography became race coverage for Vintage Motorsport and Victory Lane. As Walter's "real life job" was becoming too demanding, Bill Stoler knocked on the door. He took over where the Pietrowicz's left off, continuing the exceptional event coverage in photos and words for VRG, Vintage Motorsport and Victory

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR, con't

Lane. And our default photographer has been Linda McCabe, who is in attendance at most every event with her camera. We cannot do it without you. I have often thought that most of you look at the photos and never read the articles – sort of the *Playboy* affect. It is heartening when someone comments on the content beyond the photos. Those twisted arms of our cadre of correspondents were twisted in vane if the articles they write go unread. Our *Correspondent at Large,* Linda Zukauskas, became friends with Darry at the Historics at Lime Rock in 2014. From that friendship she has given us some fine interviews of "Friends of VRG," and in particular the fine piece on Tivvy Shenton in the last issue.

Bob Girvin, Mark Palmer, Brad Marshall, Kim Eastman, Ralph Steinberg, Chris Shoemaker, David Fenton, Tivvy Shenton and me when I was invited in through the side door, never envisioned the success of VRG. We did not envision. It was something that Bob and Mark and Brad and Tivvy thought had to be done. It has worked, we think, because the premise was based on the drivers and not the cars. VRG is about the relationships more than it is about the cars. As the Founders have phased themselves out we feel that VRG is in good hands. It is your club and it is for you to have it work for the membership.

Darry had said to me when I returned as Editor, "If you quit, I quit." In looking at the Bova's new life in Florida, which is an all-consuming adventure when settling into a retirement community of 100,000, their life is "a'changin." Paul is selling the Turner, the house in Stamford is for sale, Darry has turned over her part in the layout and design of the Roster to John Rutherford – the "handwriting is on the wall." We think that it is time to give the Newsletter to a new team. We have enjoyed presenting it. Some others will enjoy what we have.

I still have the Crossle and am not prepared to stop racing it. Ralph still has me on the Eligibility Committee. John Rutherford has me to aid him in editing the Roster. Prior to the Jefferson 500 dinner 5-6 years ago I had been to the University Glee Club of New York's Spring Concert at Alice Tully Hall. My brother in law was president. I thought that night, "This is his crowd." At the Jefferson 500 dinner the following week, I realized that "you are my crowd." I have been around racing – inboard hydroplanes or racecars, before I knew what they were. Thank you for all the help in making the Newsletter as an enjoyable experience as it has been.

Darry and I say, "Thanks for the memories," or "until we meet again," or "hasta la vista baby."

Good night and good luck,

Bill Hollingsworth, Editor
Darry Bova, Layout and Design

A FEW NOTES FROM THE TURKEY BOWL 2015

Bill Hollingsworth put the word out prior to our annual trip to the Summit Point Circuit, that he wanted a few thoughts from the VRG faithful about how and why we bypass the traditional Thanksgiving break activities, like Black Friday shopping, football, hunting to squeeze in one more racing week end before mother nature forces us to park the trailers and wait for the spring.

My first thoughts were "how could I even think about being somewhere else?".....the thought on my VRG friends racing on the track located only about an hour away, while I stay home and shop, wrap gifts, watch football or catch-up on other "routine projects? The thought seemed almost blasphemous.

After arriving on Friday, I wandered the paddock, looking for those newsletter shots that tell the story of the Turkey Bowl weekend, and I informally surveyed the VRG racers, friends and family members with the question: "Why does the vintage racer participate long after many racers have parked their 'steeds' for the winter? *Why the Turkey Bowl?"* The most popular answer was similar to mine. "The VRG Turkey Bowl is a tradition" or, "we wouldn't be anywhere else. "Among my favorites answers were: Donald Mei: "I'm just here for the free hat!" and Mack McCormack: "I'm the VRG president…I have to be here!" Dave Good of Canada had another good answer, "it's a free weekend for the Canadians, and we celebrate Thanksgiving in the month of October." An example of a Turkey Bowl family affair in the paddock that couldn't be missed was the Patterson family from Pittsburgh. Led by Alan Patterson and his beautiful 1958 Elva Formula Junior, the elder Patterson was joined by his son Alan Patterson III (Austin Healy Sprite), nephew Peter (1958 Lotus FJ) and his son Spencer (Mazda MX-5). Alan described how the family gets together for the traditional Thanksgiving meal on Thursday, and then right after dinner the family prepares to head to Summit Point, WV. According to Alan, the Patterson's have been attending for about 17 years. An example of the true spirit of a Turkey Bowl racer might be a story I came across on Friday. Paige Hope and her father, Ken Williamson, had entered the 1968 MG MGC GTS (one of my favorite VRG cars!) in the 2015 Turkey Bowl. Paige was doing the driving duties this weekend and I am looking forward to shooting photos of this great car. But right before the lunch break, I saw the MG being towed back to the pit area. When I spoke to Paige during the lunch break, she revealed that head gasket was blown. She was giving some serious consideration to making the six hour round trip back to State College, PA ,to get another car and return! If it wouldn't have been for the bad weather that was forecast for Sunday, I really sense that she would have made the trip. I'm sure there are other stories just like this one that might demonstrate the spirit of a vintage racer at the Turkey Bowl, but I only have time for one in this space. I look forward to seeing Ken, Paige, and the rest of the family at the historic West Virginia circuit next year. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a great start to 2016. We'll see you at the Jefferson 500 next year.

Bill Stoler

TURKEY BOWL 2015

I'd been to the Turkey Bowl once before, but only to spectate. This is the first time I've attended as an entrant. In truth there was some familiarity about going because I've been to the Fall 4 Hour Twilight Enduro at Summit so many times. We spent Thanksgiving at our house with family members and then towed #909 down on Friday morning (about a 5 hour ride for us). Since TB is supposed to be low-key, Linda and I decided to leave at a reasonable hour and skip the Friday sessions. We arrived around 3 PM, registered (thanks Dave T.!) and were *teched (*thanks Tivvy!), in an hour or so. We paddocked with some of the *Joisey Boyz*, including Butch O'Connor, Charlie T, Steve and Peggy Shultz and Don Mei. Steve and Peggy came all the way up from Florida for this event with their MGA and a new, open, lightweight aluminum trailer. With such a long run, Steve said the new trailer made towing a breeze. They were also able to visit relatives in the Northeast so their Turkey Bowl Tour served double-duty. Don Mei spent a number of days prepping his Datsun Z car but cylinder head and head gasket problems scotched all his efforts - next year. He came anyway, sans car, to spectate and support the gang. Butch's VW Golf, running in the modern class, was down on power. After several sessions he was able to resolve the problem (plugs/ignition) and finished the weekend out strongly. The Shultz MGA and my Midget ran with no problems all weekend. So out of our four-car *Joisey Boyz* contingent, the British cars ran the best. We can only assume the stars were properly aligned.

One of the best parts of the weekend (for me) was the lack of timing and scoring. It adds to the "low-keyness" (forgive me...I'm from New Jersey and we make up our own words). Thus you could start anywhere on the grid that you wanted to. Naturally, I went to the front of the pack at one session, knowing that I'd have a great view (and video) of the real leaders passing me. Sure enough I ended up with a ringside seat as Nick Chamberlain (Sprite), Dave Good (MGA), Steve Hirschtritt (Sprite), Pete Carroll (Sprite) and Bob O'Connor (FV) zipped passed me by the middle of the first lap. Eventually, I settled into a fantastic race with John Styduhar (red TR-3) that went on and on for the entire session. I drove a red TR-3 to college and I still have a real sweet spot for these cars. You can see the entire session on Youtube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9EvI1ljfl4

By the way, I had an equally fantastic race later on (in the rain) with Dave Good in his dark coloured MGA. A dark coloured MGA was my first street car and I drove it to high school. So again, I got to race against one of my old favorites. With VRG racing, you CAN go home again!
I also had some great on-track chases with Alan Patterson, Jeff Graham, Jim Arnett, and Dave Smith.

And speaking of Jim Arnett, Jim was also able to collect some out-of-date seat belts and harnesses at the Turkey Bowl that he will put to good use. Jim volunteers with a group of engineers in Maryland who work to develop mobility devices for handicapped people. The belts are used to restrain them in these mobility devices. This is a good cause and a worthy "second life" for your old belts! Jim can be reached at jim_arnett@rocketmail.com

One of the fun facts that I realized is that along with my car and Butch O'Connor's, we have a big (and growing) contingent of VRG racers in my part of NJ. Rick Londono and Andy Konopka (both Spitfires) live nearby. Ron Novrit is also just a few minutes away. And Tomas LaCosta also lists a nearby address. Even Graham Long is only a half hour drive from me (that's a Garden State half hour so the distance isn't too far). Of course a few other *Joisey Boyz* including Tom Leavy and Mike Kucsh couldn't make it this time but we are hopeful for 2016. And we always include Rob Brownlee-Tomasso and his Dad as part of our *South Joisey Boyz* contingent. (How does one qualify for a *Joisey Boysz* living in NY and CT? - ed.)

Along with Rob Brownlee-Tomasso, there were lots of other family groups at Turkey Bowl including the father and son Patterson's (Sprite and FJ), the

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Konopka's and others. The Legends racers seemed to bring ALL of their family members with them! Turkey Bowl is a family affair.

One of the best things at Turkey Bowl is the eclectic mix of cars in various sessions. Where else can you see rousing races with cars like this? We saw Legends, a 914-6, a GTV, a Super 7, a GT6, a 240Z, a Honda Accord, a 944, a Miata, a Sentra, Mustangs, a classic Mini-Cooper, a Volvo PV, a classic Abarth, a Berlina and even a Peerless (!) - lots and lots of eye-candy.
And even thought the weekend was filled with lots and lots of fast, close racing, the Driver's Committee had very little to do (thankfully!). The moderate rain on Sunday increased the challenge but even in the slippery conditions, the racing stayed "clean" (not the cars, however - ed.).

Mixed in with all this was a great dinner at the George Washington Hotel on Saturday night. We settled down at a table with some folks we knew and some folks we didn't know. But by the end of the evening we had shared lots of stories and were all friends (must be that no politics were discussed - ed.).

I can't say enough good things about Michael Oritt and his organizing this event. And all the various workers and volunteers including Dave Handy, the Hyatt's and all the others who supported this event did a fantastic job as well (mother always said, "If you can't say something nice, say nothing at all."- ed.).

Nial McCabe

A THANKSGIVING POEM

We headed down to Summit Point;

To see the racers roll;

In truth it was the first time; that we'd been to Turkey Bowl With modern cars and Legends;

Plus our vintage cars in sight;

The spectating was eclectic; T'was truly a delight!

On Friday and on Saturday;

The weather was quite clear;

And Sunday rains were moderate; and didn't bring much fear

The dinner at G. Washington's;

Was Michael O's affair

Good conversation filled the room; and quiet time was rare

This was a season's end event;

With cars and drivers spent;

Still racing was exciting; But with narily a dent

We had a lovely time this year;

With friends from VRG

We'll surely come back next year; with our little green MG.

Professor Nial McCabe

LAST RACE

It all started on October 1, 1977 at the U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. It was a cold, rainy and windy weekend, not uncommon for the Glen. It was my first Grand Prix and my first visit to the Glen. My anticipation was 'off the scale' with a chance to see legendary drivers and constructors battling it out on the track. Drivers included were Hunt, Andretti, Lauda, Scheckter, Fittipaldi, Peterson, and Ongais. Manufacturers were just as legendary; McLaren, Lotus, Ferrari, Wolf, Matra, Hesketh, Shadow, Surtees, Brabham, March, and Penske. The odd ball Tyrrell six-wheel F1 car was also there. I didn't know it at the time, but it used 10 inch diameter front wheels, the same as my first vintage race car, a 1966 Mini Cooper S.

Before the race weekend all I could think about was the Formula One race; but that all changed when I got to the Glen and spotted a circus tent with some really neat old cars inside. Curious to see the cars and learn why these old cars were at the Formula One race, I walked inside the tent and my life changed forever! There in front of me were vintage racecars I had only read about in magazines and books: Mercedes Gullwing 300 SL, Bugatti, Alfa Romeo and several others lost in the fog of time. I drank in every detail, every smell, every sound. I marveled at how beautiful they were in person and how personable and friendly were the owners in answering my questions and even in letting me help them work on their car. From that moment I was hooked on vintage racing. After the vintage race was concluded on Saturday I was ready to go home. Forget about the Formula One race, my weekend was complete! Don't despair, I stayed for the Formula One race and saw James Hunt hold off a hard charging Mario Andretti, beating him by just 1.5 seconds on the rain slicked track.

Fast-forward 11 years to 1988. Encouraged by my good friend and racing mentor Hank Giffin, I decided I would look for a suitable vintage racecar and go racing! The car I chose was a 1966 Mini Cooper S named Morris. My friends were surprised that I didn't buy an MGA but I wanted something different. I found my Mini for sale in the Auto Week classifieds and drove up with my family to Philadelphia to check it out. The owner, Dr. David Reiter, was very helpful in explaining the features of the Mini and sharing his vintage racing experience. After a quick test drive I bought the car and drove it home. That's right I drove my race car home from Philly to Northern Virginia - no license plates, no registration, cherry bomb exhaust, and racing numbers on the doors with a big red cross on the roof designating it as an ambulance! Did I mention it was nighttime? Needless to say the drive home on the NJ Turnpike and I-95 was interesting and amazingly uneventful. My friends Bob Schoeplein and Bob Watkin were eager to get into vintage racing too and the three of us became close friends in the ensuing four decades.

Bob Schoeplein chased his dream with an MGA that he found in a barn and soon realized that it needed a new chassis. A new chassis was procured and a bunch of Bob's friends worked over a couple of weekends to transfer all the good bits onto the new frame and "Honeybee" was born. Did you know how "Honeybee" got her name? Bob's daughter's name is Melissa, which in Greek means honeybee. Yellow body and black interior were a natural fit for that name and have commemorated Bob's daughter at racetracks all across the U.S. Bob Watkin bought a Spitfire and joined us on the track. Bob W. is a soft-spoken, quiet guy but I can tell you that on the track he is a demon! We could be seen paddocking together at tracks up and down the East coast, helping each other out when the need arose, and always having a great time even when things didn't go so well on the track.

Oh the stories I could tell - Bob S's first SCCA driver school at Summit Point in the snow, my second SCCA driver's school at Lime Rock mucking through 5 inches of rain over the weekend, Bob W's driver school at Watkins Glen (how appropriate!) where we were in the Kendall Center garage sharing space with the John Andretti Skoal Bandit March 88C IndyCar, finding an engine for Joe Tierno after he grenaded his in Friday practice, and our rebuilding it overnight on the back of his trailer using 2" x 4"s and muscle power to pull the engine. Then there was the time at Summit

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Point when Bob Watkin's Spitfire engine blew up and a friend offered to transplant his street Spitfire engine into Bob's racecar. We got that swap done about 4 AM and made it to the track in time for the first session. I vividly recall the intense anticipation at my first race, that first rolling start, wheel to wheel, nose to tail and then being suddenly and utterly immersed in the sound and fury of 30+ racing engines all going to full power at once and the chaos of entering the first turn with cars jockeying for position, skittering around on cold tires and somehow managing to avoid running into each other. There were some close calls! A group of Brit Healey racers brought 6 cars to the US and ran them for the summer at various tracks. I was gridded with them at Lime Rock. These guys had a reputation for some pretty wild driving so I decided to give them a wide berth at the start. Sure enough, as the mob entered the first turn there was the tell tale cloud of dust. I managed to thread my way between the crunched and still spinning Healey 3000 on the inside of the turn and a Spitfire on the

We were racers then. Left to right, Steve Harrison, Bob Schoeplein, Ron Eaton, Bob Watkin, Bob V, Bill Lowerre

outside that had somehow managed to lose a rear wheel and axle. (My memory of those Healy's was the dented bodies. They used one another in the corner by leaning on the outside car – a Parnelli Jones maneuver. – ed.)

Invariably there were other close calls - like experiencing complete brake failure at the end of the main straight at Mid-Ohio. I have no idea how I managed to avoid disaster but somehow I did, and limped back to the pits where I discovered a brand new brake hose had failed. Then there was the time at the Glen where I was dicing with a pair of Lotus Sevens and as I downshifted for the chicane the gear lever broke in half. I threw the broken part into the back of my Mini, grabbed what remained of the gear lever and finished the race that way. Another Glen shifting incident involved the entire gear shifting mechanism coming off in my hand as I downshifted for the 'Toe of the Boot.' That was the end of that race. (At Lime Rock I managed to execute a perfect 360 at the exit to the steep

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downhill Turn 10. I was told that the ESPN TV crew was very pleased for the video footage I provided.)

Oh there were some 'hero driver' moments too, no doubt made more dramatic with the passage of time! Again at the Glen in my Mini, I recall passing a Lotus Elite on the outside of Turn 10 in the pouring rain with that Watkins Glen blue guard rail staring me in the face and thinking, "Should I be doing this?" I did do it, and somehow managed to pull it off without incident. Summit Point has it's share of rain stories too. Going into turn 3 in the pouring rain, I saw the lead car begin to lose traction and start to spin. The cars between him and me began to take evasive measures swerving every which way. It felt like I was in a car blender. I thought, "Well I'm driving a Mini and they made their reputation on the Monte Carlo Rally, so why not try some off-roading?" I grabbed second gear, stood on the gas and swerved left into the mud and somehow managed to keep control and pass the entire field on that one turn! My friends said it was quite a sight as they waited, looking for the field to appear – and all they saw was me and my Mini and no other cars! Another Summit Point moment occurred as I was braking hard on the downhill entrance to the tightest turn on the track, a blind left hander entering the double apex right hand carousel. A Formula Vee lost it right in front of me and I managed to just avoid collecting the spinning open wheeler, but my fun was just beginning. As I slid around the turn and could see ahead there was another spinning Formula Vee! I decided to go wide to the left, off track between the embankment and the pavement, through some pretty amazing mud. Again, second gear, foot to the floor. I entered the mud and created a tsunami of the goopy brown stuff that totally and completed covered every inch of the VW and its hapless driver. After the session we had some serious cleaning up to do on our white Mini. My Crew Chief, Chris Kintner, came back with a bucket of water and a huge smile on his face. He had just seen the FV'Dub driver sitting in his car and being hosed off with a water hose. He didn't look very happy, Chris said. Hey, he should be grateful I didn't hit him, right? Then there was the time I out dragged a 1961 Corvette down the main straight at Lime Rock. As I went by him I looked over at him and he at me. I don't know who was more amazed!

Then there were the MG moments. Bob S., Bob W. and me racing together in the Collier Cup at Watkins Glen in 2004. Bob W. was driving Hugh Burruss' 1962 MGA Sebring Coupe and I was piloting John Wright's 1960 MGA Sebring Twin Cam. What a wonderful memory. Not so wonderful was being pulled over by one of New York State's finest during a "familiarization drive" in John Wright's Sebring racer. For the first time in my life I didn't get a speeding ticket (I think he said we were going 85 in a 55 MPH zone). A little of the MG Magic at work! Another year at the Glen my wife Chris, and I were accompanied by several of our friends from our local Shenandoah Valley British Car Club. The ladies formed a "Bobby V" cheer leading team and kindly provided "Brolly Girl" service. Everyone had the best time that weekend. We laughed 'til our sides ached. Down south at Sebring in 2002, I was privileged to drive Hugh Burruss' 1962 Sebring MGA, which was commemorating its 40th anniversary of racing at Sebring. I decided to position myself at the back of the pre-grid for first practice so I could figure out the course. As I sat there, Jack Woerhle, one of the sanctioning body officials, came up to the car and knelt by my window. He had a very serious look on his face. Jack said, "Bob I know you are a good driver but please be careful out there. This car has no fuel cell and no roll bar. If you go off the track in this sand you'll flip." And he walked away. I thought "Great, here I am in sweltering 90 degree heat, in a priceless historic race car that so many people busted their knuckles to take from a basket case to race ready in just 100 days, that hasn't been driven in decades, that I've never driven before, on a track I've never driven, with 76 competitors in my group, and this is my first race since my heart attack. Well at least I'm the last guy in this mob of race cars." I briefly closed my eyes to concentrate on something more positive. I opened them and glanced in the rear view mirror as a Corvette rolled up behind me. Sigh.

There were also beautiful quiet times. Arriving at Mid-Ohio at 7 AM to prep Morris for first practice

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at 8 AM. Small-bore groups always seemed to get the early sessions, probably to dry the track for the big guys. As I wiped the dew off in the still, cool morning air, I heard the sound of that first engine exploding to life and echoing off the nearby hills. Soon it was joined by small-bore sopranos and big American V8 bellowing baritones blending together, somehow into a beautiful mechanical symphony. I also fondly recall one clear, crisp night during the vintage fall festival at Lime Rock. It was midnight and no one was stirring in the paddock except me. God provided an awe- inspiring blanket of stars and a bright moon overhead as I walked among the now silent racecars. I frequently paused to take in the beauty and craftsmanship of these historic machines. Each one had a story to tell, a history to recount, a struggle against all odds to get to the track, and heroic driving moments that gave immense pleasure to its owner, driver and the spectators. Oh yes - so many happy memories these now inanimate objects had given us. I slept well that night.

Through the years I've had the privilege of driving ten different racecars thanks to the generosity, and perhaps clouded judgment, of my racing friends. In addition to my 1966 Mini Cooper S and 1957 MGA, I drove John Wright's 1960 MGA factory Sebring car, Hugh Burruss' 1962 MGA factory Sebring car, Bob S's MGA 1600, Bob W's Spitfire, and Jerry Wade's Spridget. Hank Giffin, my vintage racing mentor and dear friend, was incredibly generous to share his Morgan 4/4, Morgan +4 and historic Cooper MG.

Along the way I learned how to work on a car, really work on it. After completely wearing out every piece of my Mini, I tore it apart to the last nut and bolt, and rebuilt it over a four year period working as an apprentice to Tom Howen, a gifted driver, engineer, fabricator and teacher. My good friend Chris Kintner poured his boundless energy and enthusiasm into the project even to the point of using two weeks of his vacation time to help me get Morris ready for his debut at the Glen. After working 60 straight hours on the car we left Charlottesville at 9 PM and arrived at the Glen at 5 AM the next morning. Somehow we managed get thru tech and put the car on the track for first practice! Over the years my lap times at Summit Point dropped by nearly 40 seconds and I collected a few medallions to hang on my garage wall, mostly due to small fields or bad weather or both. I may have been in the middle of the pack but nobody had more fun than I did! I can't remember where I placed, but I do recall dancing a gig in the pits after my first race.

As the years passed, I sold my Mini named Morris and bought a 1957 MGA roadster named Arthur. Arthur was the polar opposite of Morris (phase 2), street legal and low maintenance. In addition to adventures on the track, Chris and I drove Arthur to Key West Florida and Watkins Glen, NY. Just like 'back in the day'. And the way Bob S. did it because he didn't have a tow vehicle or trailer. Every race was an adventure for Bob S, even before he got to the track!

Over the past 10 years the cars have gotten faster and frankly, I've gotten slower. My reflexes have slowed, my balance isn't what it used to be, various body parts have had to be replaced or overhauled, and my judgment began to falter a bit. I still experienced the excitement of going racing, the adrenaline rush from the dropping of the green flag, satisfaction from getting a corner right and sometimes even passing another competitor. But most of all it was the 'family reunion' with my racing buddies that kept me coming back to the track. Oh what dear friends they are to me and Chris! We had a great time competing in the 60th Collier Cup in 2014 but I couldn't help but have flashbacks to the 50th Collier Cup when I drove John Wright's 1960 Sebring Twin Cam MGA, UMO 93. Here's a highlight from the MG Vintage Racers' Newsletter that summarizes that memorable Collier Cup experience

Some of the MG racers arriving had special stories of their coming:

The highlight of the weekend for my wife Chris and me was sharing a once in a lifetime

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experience with our MG friends. This was the vintage racing Woodstock and we were there! I was absolutely floored when John Wright asked me to drive his 1960 Sebring Twin Cam MGA in the 50th Collier Cup Race. John had waited over 20 years to buy the car, then he and his wife Linda worked like demons to get the MG ready in just a few months! John and I have been good friends for over 25 years. That he trusted me with his MG on the racetrack after all he had been through to bring it back to life meant so much to me. Together we made a memory we'll take to our graves! You can't do any better than that in this life!
*- **Bob Vitrikas**, MGA*

I decided to have one more go on the track at the MGVR Focus Event at nearby Virginia International Raceway, held in April 2015. In the back of my mind I kept thinking that this might be my last race, but I wanted to give it one more try. The excitement of racing was still there, albeit down a notch or two from when I started racing 26 years earlier. Best of all was being at the track with many of the friends I had made over the years. Fittingly, Bob Schoeplein and Bob Watkin were there, as they always were, supporting me at my last race. As the weekend unfolded it became clear to me that I had lost my edge. At times I felt I was not only a hindrance but perhaps a hazard to other competitors. In 26 years of racing I never put a scratch on a car and I didn't want to start now. It was time for me to hang up my driver's suit. Those of you who are nearing the end of your racing will probably experience the same feeling. You will know when it is time to retire

I've sold my MGA racecar and trailer and passed along what equipment I could to give a brand new vintage racer a good start in the sport we all love so dearly. That did my heart good. I'll still go to the track as a spectator and run my 2006 MINI John Cooper Works at track days. Some habits just won't be denied.

See you at the track. I'll be the old guy with the big smile on his face talking and laughing with his dearest friends and recalling the good old days. There are lots of them!

Safety Fast!
Bob V (Vitrikas)

VIR April 2015: Three friends until life's finish line, Bob S, Bob V and Bob W

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TURKEY BOWL 2015

Why does everyone love the Turkey Bowl? It's not the thrill of loading your car in the trailer when it's 40 degrees outside. It's not the adoring looks we get leaving the house 15 minutes after the Thanksgiving meal. It's not trying to find a decent meal in Winchester on Thanksgiving evening – IHOP, anyone? Everyone loves the Turkey Bowl because we get to run our cars one more time in a no-pressure, all-for-fun environment. Most of all, everyone loves the Turkey Bowl because we get to see our VRG friends and family one more time before the winter break. The memories from VRG race weekends can't be beat!

Kevin Michael