

Vintage Racer Group Sponsors 14th New Hampshire Vintage Celebration

The 14th NHIS Vintage Celebration was the best ever, despite typical New Hampshire weather; hot, cold, wet, dry, sunny, raining, etc. with a record number of 131 entries. We also celebrated the birth of a new club, ***Vintage Racer Group, (VRG)***.

The VRG was formed to expand Vintage racing in the Northeast by including most of the cars from VSCCA, VARAC, SVRA and MONOPOSTO Classic. Though the VRG founders are long time VSCCA members, they plan to remain active in both clubs and will make every attempt to avoid conflicting event schedules.

In the interest of driver education and safety, VRG had a Skid pad event and Safety seminars on Friday and Saturday. The skid pad was similar to and taught by Ed Valpey, an Instructor from a famous race driving school, a course called Car Control, which follows their Three Day Introduction To Road Racing. Attendees ranged from some of our most seasoned drivers to new members. One person exiting the skid pad enthusiastically spouted "I learned so much!!!" Most of us who took the Skip Barber Car Control School had the same reaction.

Mark Palmer and Dave Fenton once again provided a chalk talk on how to do a safe fast lap of NHIS, followed by a lunchtime drive around the course. With 13 turns in 1.6 miles this track is either loved or hated.

A safety preparation and safe driving seminar by Bob Girvin and Tivvy Shenton was well received. As many have read, Dale Earnhart's fatal crash was partially a result of improper seat belt attachment. Tivvy provided valuable safety instruction on belts, seats, side bars, and roll bars. Bob Girvin talked about racetrack driving situations and how to handle them. Watching Bob herd the giant Allard around confirms his ability to handle tricky situations.

The VARAC contingent this year grew to over a dozen cars, which are very compatible with our VSCCA and SVRA brethren. Better exchange rate or just good racing? They chose to park in the Eastern section of the grass camping area and erected a Canadian flag. John Greenwood even suggested renaming the street. Last year at PVGP, they had a Canadian Customs station, VARAC troops are lots of fun upholding the Canadian Party reputation. John Greenwood provided an after dinner entertainment Saturday night, with jokes and awards.

The Kieley brothers John and Rich, on Saturday night orchestrated the best "Racer Dinner" any of us have ever enjoyed, complete with a good microbrew, at Gunstock Ski Area home of the original *Laconia Road Races*. Gunstock and the motorcycle racers have had a dispute and rumor has it that this year the race will be on the downtown streets of Laconia, an unusual move in this time of race location activists.

An all MG and Lotus race was held to provide a show appreciation for this strong support. We had a mini -MG focus event with 21 of the Octagons; TCs, TDs, As, Bs and a Nick Pratt's Midget. We counted 12 Lotuses. Mark Palmer (MG-A) and Dick Fryberger (Lotus 11) ran away with this one. Dick got a great start and ran away as

Fryberger so often has done. Mark had to work hard to get away from MGAs, MGBs a Lotus 69, several Lotus 7s. Greg Lane's Lotus 23B did get between Dick and Mark due to mechanical issues. Mark gave a great chalk talk earlier and it was suggested that he used a private line to beat much quicker cars. But again we have seen that this track can level the field. Horsepower is not king, the line can win. After several years of trying to catch Mark in my Alfa, I gave up and sold the Alfa to Peter Krause. Now I look forward to seeing those two running together.

Corner worker picks

Group 1: The Abarths of Alain Raymond, Pat Donovan, Chris Shoemaker and Jim Duffield were pursued by 10 MG Ts, and were challenged by the familiar JAP (J. A. Preswick) powered, Dreaded 1931 Morgan of Jeff Jacobson, who seems to have tamed the 1188cc JAP race engine. In past events, Jeff would burn a piston and rapidly replace the race engine with the road engine, milder version, still going fast. Jeff complained that even at 90 MPH in the wet, traction was an issue. We could hear him spinning the single rear wheel as we watched him snake around the MG Ts on the front straight, with a single rooster tail. Jeff has a 1931 Mog. Trike, BUT it has a 1938 JAP engine, any protests? The T's had their own race within a race, Fitzgerald and Hollingsworth leading the 50's vintage pack. The front engine Juniors of Kieley, Victor Pastore and Don Dingman were placed with Ray Saidel in the open wheel Jomar. Ray recently celebrated his 80th birthday and is still driving a racecar of his own creation, wish we all could celebrate an 80th like this.

Group 2: Under two liter VARAC and VSCCA event with MG-A's Ginettas, Lotus 6s/7s, a Porsche 914/356s thrown in, Ahs, Elvas, and two Arnolt Bristols. As the dust cleared in three races, generally Palmer in the MG-A, Greenwood in a Seven and Beaudry in the 914 would be in the lead, chased closely by the Faulkner MG-A; Lightfoot, Navin, Pratt in newer MGs and three storming Healeys.

Group 3: The open wheel contingent got bigger as Chris Shoemaker and Christian Morici joined the Formula Ford ranks, we also invited some Club Fords as Monoposto has recently allowed in their ranks. Peter Faill ran away, closely followed by Larry Rossi, a replay of last year. Larry in a new car was still sorting out the slick tire advantages. Jeff Schur, Ivan Frantz and I were running in the second wave with new FF drivers Chris and Christian dicing with the Lotus 18s.

Group 5: As an open event, we allowed several SCCA historic cars (like Dan Scully's Volvo) which push the upper end of SVRA specs, however Tivvy Shenton handily showed that an old '140 Jaguar can hold its own with modern machinery in wet or dry conditions, as he was chased with enthusiasm by "Hot" Volvos, Datsuns and Alfas. Dudley Cunningham is still sorting out the Blower-Bocar-Stiletto, had a drag race or two with Bob Girvins Allard, but soon the smaller machines got them in the twisty bits.

Peter McLaughlin brought a car for each Vintage group, but only ran in three groups; Sebring Sprite in group 1, Lotus Seven in group 2, and a couple of laps in group 3. His group 5 car, ex-Bob Sharp Datsun did not get to go.

Awards a NHIS tradition, established by Bob Valpey (well known contrarian, collector, restorer, desert rat) of the corner workers choosing "winners" of each group resulted in the following selections.

Group 1, Prewar, preservation and small bore, Alain Raymond, VARAC driving a well prepared Abarth, got the Marty Therrien trophy. Corner 5 liked the paint and aggressive driving style.

Group 2, Under 2 Liter, Martin Beaudry, VARAC, Porsche 914 won the Malcom Labatt Simon trophy, chosen by corner 2 for great driving style and nice French accent.

Group 3, Open wheel, Will Thomas, famous Mini driver got the Charlie Gibson Trophy for a cool paint job and a well driven race with Larry Rossi's Merlyn, from corner 10.

Group 4, Porsche Racing Group, corner 9, the John Sherrigan trophy, chose Laurie Sanborn for a beautiful car, great driving and the guys at turn 3 admired the presentation.

Group 5, Big bore, Jim Carlson won for having the ugliest car a VOLVO 240 series on steroids. Earned a trophy from turn 3 for beating Tivvy in the rain, something many of us dream about.

The Belknap Cup is given each year to a person who exemplifies Vintage auto racing sportsmanship. A group of peers awarded this trophy to Dan Scully, a consistent vintage racing competitor, long time NHIS supporter driving the Volvo PV544, a car which looks like a bumblebee, but runs like a bear.

See you next year on the same weekend!

Brad Marshall