

Winter, 2017



Restoring the Spirit to Vintage Racing

Newsletter

season finale



etech photo

By Bob Spruck
MotorMouth/south

Even though the off season seems to be getting shorter and shorter, what with all the new tracks available, more events for many race organizations, and even some entirely new race organizations, most of us racers hate to see a season come to an end. Not only does it mean no racing for awhile, but it also means preparing our racer for its winter hibernation, long spells of inactivity due to frigid garages and cold-soaked sheetmetal, tear downs, awaiting parts or suppliers'/machine shop backlogs, and Christmas presents or bonuses to stoke next year's budget. Anticipating all these negatives seems to make the last race of the season much more appreciated. Such was the case with the traditional end of season race weekend of the Vintage Driver's Club of America. Sixteen years ago it wasn't so named because it was their first ever race. Ever since, however, the aptly named *Season Finale* has been the last race in North America! They have gotten away with the late date because the venue has always been Roebing Road Raceway, fifteen miles west of Savannah, Georgia. More times than not, the venue has provided warm and sometimes balmy weather and has attracted considerably more northerners than other VDCA events. But, as you might suspect, the change of season in the Deep South has also provided for some surprises. However, this December 9th to 11th, Savannah provided a taste of home for most entrants as the temperatures were in the forties during the day



and in the twenties overnight. Those that stuck it out until Sunday, however, were provided with more typical Deep South December weather with temperatures in the sixties and clear blue skies. Otherwise, creative cardboard and tape designs to block radiators and oil coolers were the big challenge as well as patience to get heat in tires and brakes. Drivers were generally satisfactorily bundled up what with all the Nomex. Another observation is that oil on the track doesn't clean up as quickly or as completely as it does in warmer weather. Despite all this, there was hardly a complaint in the house once the mid morning sun burned off the overnight chill.

The Feature races took place Saturday afternoon after a day and a half of practice sessions and the Happy Hour Bracket Challenge Race, which afforded each of the 5 Race Groups 2 hours of track time in preparation for the Feature Races. The Sunday scheduled included early morning warm-up sessions, the one hour Endurance Race and then the Sunday Races for the 5 Race Groups. That's four hours of track time over the three day event. Some drivers achieved their entire allotment, while others left sooner due to mechanical issues or early departures for home.



Race **Group 1**, for small-bore production cars, was well subscribed as usual. In addition to the ubiquitous Spridgets and Spitfires, we saw some rather rare models, like Turner, NTM, Elva, Fiat, Hague, and even Mini and Anglia sedans. Rob Stewart ('67 Spitfire) qualified on the pole as usual and stayed in P1 the entire 11 laps except for one lap when he faltered and Bob Lemke (ex-SCCA '66 MG Midget) got by. Buzz Merchlewitz in his HP Bugeye stayed ahead of the off-song '72 FP Midget of Andy Russell who was dogged by Brian MacEachern's HP Bugeye all weekend.

Another Race Group was comprised of **Groups 2, 5, and 7** - Club Fords, Formula Fords and various classes of sports racers. Because of the speed differential and the number of cars in the two groups, the SRs went out first followed by the Fords a half lap later. As expected Dave Handy ('88 Swift DB2) and Ben Sinnott ('86 Swift DB9) pulled out a huge lead followed by a pack of four cars significantly behind. Meanwhile the same happened with Doug Meis ('74 Lola T340) and Don Baggett ('72 Crossle 35F) in the FF/CF group with their fellow open wheel racers a ways back. By the end of L2, Doug and Ben had lapped the slower of the SRs. Dave and Ben's SRs had a lead the distance of the entire front straight by L3. Then, some strange things happened on the back side of the track near T3 involving, amongst others, our two leaders. Craig Harmon, driving the BMW pace car, led the next four laps while the wrecker cleared the track. Larry Wilson ('69 Brabham BT-29) passed under the checker before anyone else with Willis Woerheide ('88 Swift DB2) right behind after a stirring drive by the youngster.



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Group 3 was the largest group and was made up of the larger displacement production cars. Also in Group 3 were the newly vintage Mazda Miatas. After a trial run earlier in the year by Bill Vanderford's MX5 that proved the cars could run well with the older cars, seven Miata 1600s were entered in this event. Once they learn to drive like vintage racers, they will be a welcome addition to the grids. Meanwhile experience proved to dominate as the top three finishers were from the old school. Ray Morgan in his '64 Merlyn

Mk 6 started sixth but managed to sneak through the leaders and took over P1 by the chequered flag. Hap Waldrop in his '67 MGB started second and Dave Bondon in his '64 Morgan 4/4 started third. They swapped places early and kept them to the finish. Jay Javetz put his '91 Miata 1600 in fourth.

Larger displacement production cars with lap times in the 1:20s raced in **Group 6 & 8**. This eclectic group contained BMWs, Datsuns, a couple of Porsches, some American iron in the form of a Tiger, a Shelby GT350, a Falcon, a Pinto, a Corvair with a V8, and a mix of other European makes. This is always a good race due to the variety of cars and diversity of speeds. It didn't work out as planned this time, however, as two impatient racers, stymied by some blocking tactics of another, set up to pass him coming off the last turn onto the front straight. The blocker continued his obliviousness and caused Ernie Bello ('74 Opel GT/E) and Bob Desloge ('72 Lotus Europa) to collide with each other and the inside wall. The result was not only a red flag and an eventual black flag, but two very hurt cars and two shook up drivers. Of course, the instigator went merrily on his way, oblivious until some discussions in the paddock after the race. Technically, the 5 lap race was won by Paul Netterstrom ('61 Lotus Super 7), followed by Tom Rogers (Porsche 911), and Peter Shadowen ('83 BMW 528i).



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Group 9 contained the five Pre-War cars, eleven FVs, and one beautiful FJunior. The Lotus 18 was part of the stable of Henry Grady, long time car guy (racer, manufacturer, historian, and who knows what else. Although too old, at 87, to drive, he had a '60 Lotus 18 FJ, a '58 Lotus XI, and the '62 Bagra Mk III. The latter is the last of three small displacement sports racers built with Gene Beech of Formula Vee (and other) fame. It is a beautiful car and harkens back to the days when an individual could build a car himself with what he thought was a better idea than the competition and do well with it. Henry, although very sharp at 87 years old, relinquished the driving to a friend who wanted to remain nameless. He was listed on the records as The Stig, Red Myst, and Rod Knox thanks to Neil Harmon's sense of humor. FV went out first in the split start and ran away. Mike Ennis ('69 Lynx B), Mike Jackson ('69 Shadowfax), Marcus Jones ('66 Zink), Neil Sullivan ('69 Lynx), and Mark Lemmon ('65 Formcar) formed the usual pack out front and passed each other frequently. It was exciting to watch on the track and confusing to try to analyze the lap charts later. After all was said and done and after some late race excitement, Neil Sullivan and Marcus Jones both snuck past Jackson and Ennis while they played with each other and finished 1,2 while Jackson and Ennis were 3,4. Meanwhile in the second group, Scott Ebert ('39 Dreyer Ford Special) stayed out ahead of George Pardee ('55 MGTF) while Sam Blanton ('36 Winfield



Ford Big Car), Rick Sanders (Ford Speedster), and Bill Stelcher ('29 Ford Model A Speedster) kept the old cars going while being passed by those pesky FVs. Scott finished first, George second, and Sam third.

The highlights of VDCA events for many racers are the **Gimmick Race** held at the end of the first day of practice and the one hour Endurance Race on Sunday morning before Quiet Time. These two races allow all registered cars to enter so there is a wide range of speed differentials and driver skills. It is a considerable challenge for the drivers of both the slow cars and the fast cars to safely coexist over the course of each race, yet the safety record for these races is excellent. The Happy Hour Bracket Challenge Race requires each member of a four man team to declare a target time against which his best time in the race is compared. The plus or minus differential to the target time for each of the team members is added to create a composite score for the team. The team with the lowest score is the winner. Except that there are additional considerations for things like team name, Christmas decorations of car, crew, and paddock, and some unnamed wildcard points determined by bracket race director Doug Meis. Everything was set up and ready to go, with 40+ cars crowding the false grid, when one of the cars in the previous BMWCCA practice session blew its motor and deposited copious oil from turn nine to turn one, i.e. the entire front straight. Tell that guy to watch his mirrors and listen to the sound of his engine next time and pull off the track!!!! After much hand wringing and anguish, Race Director Margaret Mitchell and the Track Manager decided that there was not enough daylight left to properly and completely clean the track to make it safe for racing, so the event was aborted. In order to not waste the gimmick prizes that would be awarded at the Saturday night festivities, Doug relied on his Wild Card rights to declare the winners to be the Drunken Termites and Bugs Team of Dave Bondon, Hank Giffen, Buzz Merchlewitz, and Bryan MacEachern (Morgans and Bugeyes, of course).

Finally, the BIG ONE!. The one hour **Endurance Race**, sandwiched between the early morning warm-ups and the hour long Quiet Time on Sunday. Forty-five cars started the race, 29 finished. With that many cars racing for an hour and with a required five minute pit stop, it is pretty hard to know where the good dices are going on. It's all about how many cars' positions you can hold in your short term memory. You could follow a few friends' escapades, or the fastest cars, or the rivalries between a few drivers. The other unfair part is that you can only be in one place at a time and invariably, the action occurs where you're not! Such was the case here. Larry Wilson ('69 Brabham BT-29), Dave Handy ('88 Swift DB2) and Ben Sinott ('86 Swift DB9) were lined up in that order but Handy was caught short when the signal to leave the grid was given. He couldn't get it moving until all the other cars had left, so he started 44 cars back. Ben pulled out into the lead with Larry and Paul Netterstrom ('61 Lotus Super 7) close by. Meanwhile Dave passed 5 cars on the first lap, 8 on the second, 9 on the third, and another 8 by the fifth. He was the man to watch! Too much was going on with the rest of the racers to keep track of other than to appreciate some of the moves visible from my vantage point. Pit stops occurred whenever each driver thought it would be advantageous for him – some early, some late. I relatively minor incident in turn 5 on the back side of the track (an example of the unfairness of being in only one place at a time I mentioned earlier) caught up Sinott. Guess who got past –yep, Handy and also Willis Woerheide who was lurking around the front after his fifth place start. When the chequered flag flew after one hour and 35 laps, Dave Handy finished an unbelievable drive, Woerheide came in second and Sinott was out of the picture.

Gosh, I forgot to mention the most important (to some) event of the weekend - the Pig Pickin' and Oyster Roast on Saturday night that VDCA is famous for. As usual, the food was delicious and plentiful as was the beer selection on tap. Bench racing and camaraderie was rampant, numerous awards were given to worthy individuals and a good time was had by all. As always, I closed the place up and then decided to walk through the darkened and quiet paddock. It was thrilling to see all the trailers and RVs decorated with bright lights for Christmas and the warm glows from the windows as racers and friends and family hunkered down to escape the cold and settle in for the night. There were even some local festivities still going on that pulled me in for "just one more". What a great brotherhood vintage racers have.



2016 HUGH KLEINPETER AWARD PRESENTED TO HENRY GRADY

Hugh Kleinpeter was a man who many feel helped to develop sports car racing in the USA and especially who supported vintage racing and made it what it is today. Over a more than 40 year career he was a driver, a mechanic, a constructor, a restorer. He was also a great guy and a contemporary and friend to most of the big names in the sport. He was involved with designing, importing, selling, and supporting both Argo and Royale race cars. Because of his deep involvement in what would become vintage racing, VDCA recognizes his contributions to the sport by awarding The Kleinpeter Award each year at its Season Finale race.

Photo by Christine Nettleship

The recipient this year was Henry Grady who had a complementary career with Peter. In fact, Henry said they were best buddies as well as keen competitors. They also combined their skills on a number of cars and campaigns. Henry has had a life-long relationship with sports cars and race cars. He is 87 years old, so his experience and influence is has been broad and deep and long. Although he no longer races, he had three cars from his collection racing at the event – a 1958 Lotus 11 sports racer, a 1960 Lotus 18 Formula Junior, and the '62 Bagra Mk III one of a half dozen cars developed and raced with another pillar of sports cars racing, Gene Beach.

A more fitting recipient of the Kleinpeter Award would be hard to find. Congratulations, Henry!

Grady's Bagra on track during the weekend



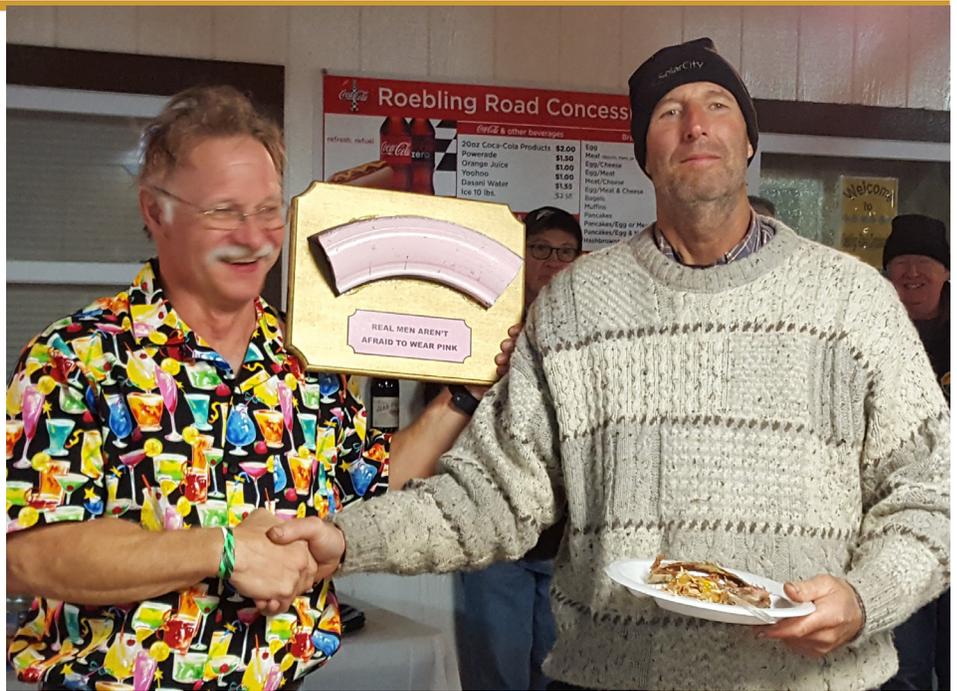
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PINK TIRE AWARD

When Alonzo Taylor thought he would like to enter his 1984 BMW 325i in VDCA's *Season Finale*, he contacted Technical Director Doug Meis to be sure it would be accepted and placed in its proper class. Apparently Al caught Doug in a silly mood or perhaps even caused that silliness, resulting in some of the common joshing and repartee that big kids often take part in. However it developed, Doug told Al he would be accepted only if he painted his tires pink, thinking he would defer his interest and entry.

Since Al really wanted to do the event, he complied and appeared at Tech with all four tires painted shocking pink. The Tech Inspectors had been forewarned and the joshing and silliness continued. There's no telling how much heat Al received in the paddock. He did OK on

the track where his skilful driving earned him some respect despite his cute pink tires. Continuing the fun, Al was awarded a one-time prize at the Saturday night dinner and told that the award was to be retired, never to be presented again, unless, of course, some silliness blooms sometime in the future over another circumstance.



Bob Spruck



Electronic Communications

If you remember phones like these, you're probably "old as dirt," but technology marches on, and with the cost of printing and postage going up all the time, VDCA is communicating electronically more and relying less and less on direct paper. Be sure we have your correct e-mail address and that your spam filter does not have VDCA blocked. You will receive important Club communications from us and from MotorsportReg.com. as well as through Constant Contact. We promise to not send you too much electronic mail, but we want to provide timely information about event registration and plans.

Since, we are using the electronic service *Constant Contact* to send most of our e-mail blasts, have you noticed that they have a link at the bottom of every note to have your e-mail address removed from our list so that if you decide you do not wish to receive our e-mails you can do so. However, following your action, their service will never again allow us to send to you so be careful in making such a decision.

Be sure to notify us if you change e-mail providers and remember to update your account in MotorsportReg. You can drop Mike a note at vdca@earthlink.net or call us at 561-622-7554.

There is no need to create a new account in MSR even if you forget your password: just log in with the old e-mail (ask for a password reset if you need to) and update your original account. Sandy can try to merge duplicate accounts, but she cannot always complete the process for you.

In a related topic, several of you have used your new cell phones to take pictures of your medicals so that you could conveniently mail them to us. Unfortunately, the low resolution and poor picture quality produces pictures that are all too often illegible. (See the sample to the right which is fuzzy, dark and hard to read) Please scan or photocopy your medicals if you don't elect to send us the original and make sure that folds, wrinkles, poor color resolution or other problems don't compromise the legibility.

Now, if you do not have an e-mail address, we will continue mailing our newsletters, but they are occasionally not timed well for late-breaking information. Please let us know if you are opting out of e-mail contact or have no e-mail so that we know who you are. And be sure you're not blocking us with your spam filter. Oh, and if you move, please be sure to let us know of your change in mailing address too.

Vintage Driver's Club of America
Vintage Racing License Medical Form

Applicant name: _____ Phone per driver: _____

DOB: _____

Dear Doctor:
You are being asked to examine this applicant for the purpose of obtaining motorsport competition racing privileges. Your exam should concentrate on medical conditions and disease processes that could lead to injury or death during high-speed driving at a competition being held and possibly put others at risk when participating, working at, or attending such an event.

From a physical point of view, a driver should have:
 1. Good overall health - physical ability to handle stresses of mechanical systems of the race car (torque devices allowed on a can-by-car basis).
 2. Good vision - visual acuity comparable to 20/30 in each eye, normal depth perception, ability to distinguish basic colors (red, green, yellow, blue and black flags are used to signal drivers when on the course), and good peripheral vision.
 3. Good general health - absence of conditions or substances that could impair performance from any known disease or treatment program. Material safety - the ability for rapid mental activity and problem solving. The applicant must be able to operate a race car in an environment which may include:
 1. High heat temperatures in race cars that may exceed 125 ° Fahrenheit.
 2. Presence of fumes, exhaust vapors, and dust.
 3. Very loud noise levels, high "G" forces, and vibrations.
 4. Risk of collision, being struck and hit.

With the above listed requirements and conditions in mind, careful consideration should be given by you, the examining physician, to the candidate who has any of the following conditions:

Level of disability or age	Alcohol	Age of operation
1. None	1. None	1. None
2. Minor	2. 1 or 2 times a year	2. 1 or 2 times a year
3. Moderate	3. None	3. None
4. Severe	4. None	4. None
5. None	5. None	5. None
6. None	6. None	6. None

Certification: A base-line EKG is recommended with regular physical exam (not racing age 40). Applicant cards being age 40, baseline, an EKG is strongly recommended at the time of the first physical exam. After age 50, a stress EKG (Stress) is strongly recommended. The decision to do an EKG should refer EKG for an other class or laboratory test is left to the discretion of the examining physician based on the applicant's history and physical examination findings.

The applicant should have no established medical history or clinical diagnosis that may reasonably be expected, within one year after findings, to make him/her unable to perform those activities as described above. On the basis of the above information, please mark one of the following recommendations (check one box below):

(1) The applicant is physically and psychologically fit to drive a racing car in competitive events at high speeds.
 (2) The applicant is not presently or is psychologically fit to drive a racing car in competitive events at high speeds.

Examinee Physician Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Examining Physician Address: _____ Tel: _____
 Applicant Signature: Email: _____

REEXAMINATION: It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to present him/herself for re-examination as follows:
 1. Upon expiration of their current medical certification.
 2. Following any significant illness, injury or hospitalization.
 In other circumstances the applicant's driving privileges will be temporarily suspended until such time as a physician certifies his fitness to drive.

Please send completed form to: VDCA, 13505 Running Water Rd., Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418-7933

VDCA's Fifteenth Annual *Wild Hare Run*



PRE-REGISTRATION ENTRY: April 7 -9, 2017

Register on-line with *MotorsportReg.com* or use this form

Please fill out one entry for each car and additional driver entered

All entrants must complete a car registration form if one is not already on file

Driver name: _____

Second driver – must submit a separate entry form for approval and tech sheet for gear. No additional charge, but current membership required.

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____

Eve Phone: _____

Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

All drivers must be either VDCA or VRG members

Member#: _____ Ex.Date _____

Owner/Entrant: _____

If different than driver

Car Make/Model _____

Year: _____ Class: _____

Displacement: _____ Color: _____

Tires. Manuf: _____ Type: _____

Front size: _____ Wheel Width: _____

Rear size: _____ Wheel Width: _____

Transponder # (required) _____

Car number requested: list three options

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

This section MUST be completed.

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

Will be at track (check if "yes." And then be sure he/she is on your crew list!)

Please check all that apply

VDCA Membership \$ 75 ()

3-day race entry, snail mail or fax \$500 ()
received by SAT. April 1st No Foolin'!

(on-line pre-registration also closes Sat, April 1)
Second car, same driver, different group \$250 ()

At-Track Entry \$600 ()

_____ extra crew \$30 ea (2 included with entry) \$ 30 ()

Amount paid: _____

Check #: _____

Rec'd by _____

—New Member Applicants only—

Competition license issued by: _____

License number: _____

License/Medical expires: _____

Mail entry and payment to:
Vintage Drivers Club of America
13505 Running Water Rd
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418-7933

Mike Jackson, Race Director
Phone 561-622-7554 FAX 561-228-0552
vdca@earthlink.net

List crew (2 free); minors under 12, no charge

1. _____ 3. _____ (\$30)

2. _____ 4. _____ (\$30)



A Note from Your Race Director

New Policies – **PLEASE READ**

Our yearly Board of Directors' meeting in December resulted in a few policy decisions that all entrants need to be aware of:

- ◆ For the first time since our formation, we are increasing the yearly membership fee to \$75.
- ◆ We are requiring mandatory head and neck restraints. Nearly all other racing organizations have already done this! While HANS is the best known name, there are others that also meet the SFI specification.
- ◆ Similarly, we are advancing the helmet requirement to **SA2010** as have VRG, SVRA, HSR, SCCA, etc.
- ◆ Tires – VDCA has seen an increase in the use of illegal tires, and we need to get this under control. We tried asking nicely. We now will deny participation to those with tires that are illegal for their group/class. Changing to illegal tires during the weekend will be a cause for exclusion for the remainder of the weekend. We continue to follow the tire rules established by SVRA: those rules include not allowing the Toyo RA-1 that has been designed to wear off the “tread” quickly.

Here's a rule of thumb – if it doesn't look like molded tread, it's not VDCA legal for the production car groups. A complete list of accepted tires is available on the SVRA web site where you can download the “SVRA Supplemental Tire Regulations”. If you live in a cave and do not have access to the Interwebs, you can call Doug Meis at (336) 480-7619 for clarification.

2017

April 7-9
The Wild Hare Run
VIR

May 17-21
VRG: The Jefferson 500
Summit Point

July 8-9
The HOTlanta Historics
Road Atlanta

Oct 20-22
VRG: The Pumpkin Run
Dominion Raceway

Dec 8-10
The Season Finale
Roebling Road

Reach us at
561-622-7554
VDCA@earthlink.net
Vintagedrive.com