



NJMP Turkey Bowl 2022

NEWSLETTER

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

2023 VRG Event Schedule

- March 31-April 2 Wild Hare Run with VDCA – Virginia International Raceway, Alton, VA**
Event Chairman: Mike Jackson, 561-622-7554, vdca@vintagedrive.com
- April 24 Driver Development Program – Jefferson Circuit, Summit Point, WV**
Advanced/Refresher Clinic for VRG's current experienced racers and veteran drivers returning to the sport – Chief Instructor: Denny Austin, denny@vrgonline.org
- May 16-18 Driver School – Summit Point, WV**
Level 1/Novice Students – Chief Instructor: Denny Austin, denny@vrgonline.org
- May 18-21 Jefferson 500 – Summit Point, WV**
Event Chairmen: Cal Trumbo & Jim Karamanis, 304-449-7050, j500@vrgonline.org
- June 22-24 Vintage Motorsports Festival with VSCCA – Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park, Thompson, CT – Event Chairman: Mark Gunsalus, 508-272-1323, mgunsalus@charter.net – Assistant EC: John Jeffery**
- July 14-16 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix at PittRace – Wampum, PA**
Event Chairman: Ian Wisbon, 412-400-9375, ian@vrgonline.org
- September 1-4 Lime Rock Historics with VSCCA – Lime Rock Park, Lakeville, CT**
VRG Event Chairman: Paul King, 508-847-4809, paulking@vrgonline.org
- September 22-24 VRG at The Glen – Watkins Glen, NY – Event Chairman: Mike Lawton, 978-274-5935, lawton@vrgonline.org – Assistant EC: Matthew Barbour**
- October 13-15 New Jersey Historics – NJMP Lightning, Millville, NJ – Event Chairman: Butch O'Connor, Tel: 973-295-3674, Email: bfo@spsk.com – Assistant EC: Nial McCabe**
- November 17-19 Annual Turkey Bowl – Summit Point, WV**
Event Chairman: Jim Karamanis, 304-449-7050, jim@vrgonline.org.

2022 Turkey Bowl



Bill Stoler's SNAPSHOT – 2022 Turkey Bowl

The VRG wrapped up 2022 at Summit Point with the season ending Turkey Bowl during the weekend of November 18-20. I've been here for 14 of the 16 events and I can report that although the cars and the faces may change, the "neat vibe" of racing in November still makes this event special. The event drew a good turnout of 105 entries that included about 14 MGs racing in Group 1 that saw Kevin and Heather Richards racing together on track for the first time. (Be sure to check out their report elsewhere in this issue.) Group 1 also saw Alan Patterson racing with his daughter Abby in her first Turkey Bowl weekend. (Congrats Abby!) The Formula Fords raced in Group 2 and put on a great race. This weekend marked the first race for Leon Austin's recently acquired '78 Zink. Jeff Tapolci brought out a '69 Lynx FV for the first time and had a good weekend. Group 3 for Med/Big Bore gave us one more chance to see Paul Wilson exercising his amazing Lola T70 at Summit Point. Paul has announced his retirement from driving, and we are so grateful that he chose VRG events for many of his races over the years. (Be sure to see Paul's story

in this issue.) Group 3 also gave us a chance to watch Cal Trumbo racing with his son Colby who was racing in his first Turkey Bowl event. (Congrats Colby!) The Modern Car and Legends continue to support the Turkey Bowl with a strong entry and so thankful for Mike Kelley's efforts to get a good turnout for Groups 4 and 5.

Saturday afternoon was highlighted by three special races. The Vintage Festival Race for the Group 1 and 3 saw 33 cars take the green flag. Krisjan Berzins raced his beautiful '87 BMW M3 DTM and led the whole field to the checkers. Krisjan noted that this was the first time he was able to do that in 15 years of racing – Congrats Krisjan! The Formula Festival race for open wheel was led by Jordan Maire, racing the familiar '81 Van Dieman of Frank DelVecchio. Jordan and Frank shared the driving duties over the weekend with great success – but only after fixing a blown head gasket on Friday! The Modern Festival Race included the Legends cars and featured a great exhibition of a modern Trans Am TA1 Camaro driven by James McCleese (a familiar sight at Summit Point) who was



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turning laps of 1:12! Also running at the front was Graham Fuller and his amazing GT-Lite Honda CRX.

On Saturday evening – it was time for the Turkey Bowl Awards and the first Chili Cook-off. Todd Angel did a great job of organizing the event that we hope becomes a Turkey Bowl tradition. Plenty of beverages, snacks, and ample time for taste-testing. When the votes were tallied – it was a recipe prepared by Stevie Giffin – (Hank’s lovely wife) taking the win! The legendary worker awards included – “Tom the Talking Turkey” that went to Nial McCabe,

who experienced something that included – a stuck throttle cable – but working ignition switch? “Billy the Talking Bass” was awarded to “Paddock Chefs” Amanda and Matthew Barbour – who graciously shared wonderfully prepared food with anyone who passed by throughout the weekend!

Excited to say that my typical “Snapshot” is a bit shorter this time because we have some racer submissions this time – be sure to check out these great stories and consider becoming a contributor to the newsletter next year! Hoping everyone has a safe and happy off-season!



Alan Patterson with his daughter Abby



Krisjan Berzins in his '87 BMW M3 DTM



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A New Perspective on Vintage Racing

by Heather and Kevin Richards

Heather's Perspective: I had been going to the track with Kevin for almost a decade when I think I mentioned casually that it might be fun to try racing at some point. Initially, a vintage race was just a fun weekend with my husband and friends, and later became a way to test my skills as a photographer. I grew to appreciate the cars and racecraft through the lens of my camera and had the crazy thought it might be fun to try racing myself. Truth be told, I wasn't entirely sure I would like it!

In early 2022, Kevin came home with a funny smile on his face, and pushed a picture of Jim Byers' MG Midget in front of me. "Yes?" I said questioningly. I knew the car from years of seeing it come and go with Jim. "It's yours," he says, and after I regained my composure, it was off to race school at Summit Point in May. After finishing my first full race weekend at the Jefferson 500, I was completely enthralled.

My other competitive sport is dressage – an equestrian discipline of contained power and precision. It is very quiet (and slow) but has so many parallels to driving. It is a sport of small percentage gains, making each corner just a little smoother, with a better entrance and exit. It's hard for most people to appreciate, but what I've grown to love about dressage is exactly what has hooked me on racing.

Kevin has been incredibly supportive of this endeavor, putting his own racing on hold most of the year so he could act as team principal, chief mechanic, and pit crew for me at the Jefferson 500 and the Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen.

Turkey Bowl rolled around and we decided we could make it work with both of us racing at the same time. My dad graciously came down from NJ to lend a hand for the weekend. Kevin put the new engine and



transmission in “Vivian,” his 1960 MGA, and we just barely got both cars on the trailers and off to the track.

The couple that races together, stays together – as long as they don’t try to outbrake each other into Turn 1. Or something like that. The weekend saw both of us racing in Group 1, and while Kevin was definitely the faster driver in the faster car (thanks to that new engine!), we had some good racing together.

I had a few starter and coil issues with “Miriam,” but those were relatively easily fixed and we managed quite a few sessions racing together. Dinner discussions for the weekend centered around how we each approached turns, braking points, and where the best racing line and shift points were for each of our respective cars. Definitely not standard marital dinner time conversation.

I’m still excited from my first year of racing, and we’re both looking forward to racing together again next year.

Kevin’s Perspective: Heather asked me to add my two cents here, so here goes. After storing his car with me for years, Jim Byers approached me about selling his car when he decided to retire from racing. He put a great deal of effort into making that car perfect and he did not want it to fall into disrepair. When I told him that I wanted to buy it so that Heather could go to race school, he agreed to the sale.

It was a natural match for Heather as she had sat in the car a time or two and remarked at how it “fit” her. She

said, “I can reach the pedals perfectly and the steering wheel is at the right place.” It was fate!

Early May came up quickly and while Miriam had been put away in a “ready to race” state, it had been some time before she had been driven at speed on the track. Heather wanted to know everything about the car, so I basically taught her how to do everything on the pre-race check. From oil change to transmission and differential fluid checks, to safety wiring all of the drain plugs, changing and gapping spark plugs, bleeding brakes, checking every nut and bolt in the suspension, to fueling and strapping her down in the trailer, Heather did it all herself. Heather even caught a few things I missed, like checking the fuel level before going out on track.

Heather did great at race school and was a natural. VRG’s school is well presented and professionally executed – two and a half days with a ton of track time all aimed at ensuring that drivers are out there being safe and hitting their marks.

We are both huge proponents for women in racing. We need more of them. We want to encourage more women to come out and give it a try. The community we’ve found at VRG has been welcoming to both of us as racers and has made it possible for people with small budgets to get on track and make lifelong dreams come true. We extend a sincere thanks to everyone at VRG and all our friends in the paddock for welcoming both of us.

We are both really looking forward to our next race on track and just hope it’s not 26 degrees next time!

Heather Richards in her Midget with husband Kevin right behind in his MGA



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Thank You Vintage Racer Group

by Paul Wilson



At the Turkey Bowl, which I'd decided would be my final race weekend, I received an award for my longtime VRG participation. I was deeply touched by the gesture, and want to thank the VRG community in turn, for creating exactly the race environment I was looking for. Each racer, and each organization, looks for something different. How do you get a perfect match? Here's how I found the VRG.

I went to races as a spectator, and dreamed about racing, all my life, but didn't have the money or time for it until I was 50. So it was always going to be for my private satisfaction. Could I learn to brake at the limit, execute a clever pass, carry maximum speed through deceptive corners? Close racing with an expert opponent would give clear answers; overall results didn't matter.

Besides my age, another factor influenced my thinking. I'd had a long and successful career in rowing: school and college championships, many wins in every kind of boat, U.S. Team membership in the World Championships and Olympics. So, in sports competition, I'd been there, done that. Somewhere in the attic I've got a huge box with trophies and medals, which I haven't looked at in decades. Don't need any more. I also don't need the relentless pressure. I was

in year-round training for 15 years. I had to eat right, sleep right, not risk minor injuries. The last thing I wanted was to renew that obsession to win, which can take control of your life.

I started by racing a Club Ford with the SCCA. Their Driver's Schools were excellent, local races happened once a month, entries were cheap. But I was a car guy, and the SCCA is about racing, not cars. A car was just a piece of sports equipment. The point was to win. That took money: one Regional Club Ford champ reportedly spent \$40K on tires (new slicks every weekend) and engines, just in one year. Also risk: in one qualifying session, a third of the field returned to the paddock dangling from the wrecker with a corner missing. If you didn't spend or take risks, you were simply a loser. I respect their aims, but that wasn't the place for me.

Later I raced with the SVRA. I liked it because I saw beautiful classic race cars I'd loved all my life. But then those cars got high-end restorations and were put away in climate-controlled showrooms, with replicas often taking their place. Once at VIR a novice in a 700-hp GT40 replica held me up the whole race. He was much faster on the straights, but my Lola was faster in the turns, creating a very frustrating but not uncommon situation. My fastest lap was six seconds slower than the year before.

In the VRG, those situations are nowhere to be seen. Improper driving is prohibited, with firm policies effectively implemented. The driving standard is higher than I've seen in any other group. The welcoming, inclusive atmosphere, developed by VRG leadership from the beginning, is felt by everyone. I had a great time this year with my Lola, one of the fastest cars, and last year with my Elva, the slowest.

Thanks to everyone in the VRG. You've created something wonderful. I'll miss those magical weekends.

MGs at the 2022 VRG Turkey Bowl

by By John Fontanella (excerpted from the *MG Vintage Racers Newsletter*)



Fourteen MGs (six Bs, five As, three Midgets) made up about half of Group 1 at the 2022 VRG Turkey Bowl that was held 18-20 November at Summit Point. Dave Nicholas pointed out that a MkII Sprite and an MG Midget are the same car with slightly different badges and some interior differences so we'll include them in this article. That makes a total of 17 cars – an impressive turnout. They are outstanding examples of what vintage racing is all about.

In the “old days” the Turkey Bowl was held during Thanksgiving weekend but, for the past few years, it has happened the week before. Presumably, the shift in the date has led to fewer divorces.

The weather for this year's event was a bit chilly but dry. Temperatures for Friday and Saturday were in the 40s and about 10 degrees colder on Sunday. As fellow MG racer Drew Cullen likes to say, “there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.” That's definitely the case for racing in cold weather. While some drivers always wear a balaclava, others only break them out for use in cold weather. For racing in cold weather, one has to also worry about badly prepared cars. In addition to using anti-freeze, a few practice runs to determine the amount of air flow/cooling restriction necessary to keep engine temperatures high enough are also useful. With just a

few adjustments, racing in cold weather can be quite enjoyable.

The drivers of the Bs were Marcus Jones, Dave Good, Butch O'Connor, Steve Konsin Sr., Lynn Grimshaw, and Maurice O'Donovan. Maurice is shown below. He tells me that this picture can be described as “Morris' with his Morris.” I like the blue sculpture in the lower left corner of the picture. The composition somehow looks very familiar.

Kudos go to Dave Good who came down from Canada for the races. He made the trip to Summit Point from Ontario via Buffalo the day before the snows began. Presumably, a little cold wouldn't bother Dave but seven feet of snow (which they had in Buffalo during the race) might. Thomas Dick, Eric Russell, Kevin Richards, John Faulkner, and Rob Brownlee-Tomasso drove the As. The drivers of the Midgets were Thomas Van Auken, Larry Smith, and Heather Richards. Those in the Sprites were Steven Hirschtritt, William Bazley, and Alan R. Patterson III.

In summary, VRG lived up to its reputation by providing copious amounts of seat time and safe racing. A lot of drivers had a lot of fun.





Jeff Tapolci in his '69 Lynx FV



Colby Trumbo with dad Cal

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Paul Wilson racing his Lola T70 in his final event.

We Need Race Reporters!

No formal education required! – just tell us how the weekend went, throw a few sentences together and send to Bill Stoler at wrstoler@comcast.net or Rob Brownlee Tomasso at rob@rbtomasso.com.



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

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