

## *MG Vintage Racers with VRG at Thunderbolt Historics*

To say MGVR's East Coast Focus Event at VRG's inaugural *Thunderbolt Historics* at New Jersey Motorsports Park's Lightning course was a success would be an understatement to say the least! 39 MGVRs took to the new circuit to play on this challenging, fast course. Mother Nature outdid herself with gorgeous weather all three days, with just enough of a breeze to keep the temps in the comfortable range throughout the event.

Friday was 'practice' day; reserved for keeping speeds down and learning the new track. Following on-track activity, MGVRs retired to the Paperwaiter Restaurant for our annual banquet, this year featuring Tony Giordano's Abingdon Competition Department photo collection.

Saturday's race schedule was jam packed with fast, furious action, including the MG/Allard Challenge Race, won by MGB pilot Stephen Mullen, followed closely by Jack Cassingham (Midget) and Bill Shields (MGB). Ralph Steinberg was the first (and only) Allard across the finish line. Ralph carried the torch for Allards this weekend in the Pete McManus J-2. Following Saturday races MGVRs and VRGers met at the Millville Air Museum for a barbeque dinner and general carousing.

Sunday dawned foggy, but damp was to yield to another day of blue skies (filled with WWII fighter and bomber aircraft) and warm temps. By now attrition played a part in partially filled grids and emptying paddock. Those of us still in one piece enjoyed perhaps the best racing of the weekend, with plenty of track time and ideal track conditions. Dicing in Group 5 was especially fierce as a crew consisting of twin cam MGA, two pushrod MGAs, Elva sports racer and TR-4 traded positions throughout the race, all chasing Jim Holody's twin cam. It doesn't get any better than this! The noon hour brought the Awards Ceremony at MGVR Central. The gathered contingent applauded as it was announced that Mike Kusch was the recipient of the Bill Parish *Master of Speed* Deception award. The applause was deafening when Vicki Leonard hoisted the Big Copper Bucket as MGVR Spirit Award winner. Continuing the MGVR/Allard challenge from Saturday, the Australian Pursuit Handicap race turned into a picture of perfection with the race to the finish was close, with Rachel Prehodka-Spindel gaining 1<sup>st</sup> position(TD), followed closely by Jim Juhas (MGA) and Mark O'Day (TD). After post-race awards at MGVR Central, all racers acknowledged another successful focus event, said their goodbyes, and packed for the long trip home.

Congratulations to MG vintage racers who participated in the inaugural VRG Thunderbolt Historics. My personal thanks to everyone who assisted in the preparation and execution of this well run event. Special thanks to event chair Rich Benz, Friday Banquet presenter Tony Giordano, Friends of MGVR John Targett and Gregg Kozuhowski, event staff Steve Schultz, Greg Prehodka, and Bob Watkin (VRG), regalia coordinators Dan and Vicki Leonard, and event photographers Lu and Walter Pietrowicz A huge thanks to VRG event staff and especially event chair and VRG President Mark Palmer, whose fingerprints were on every aspect of this event.

*Chris Meyers, Editor*

*MG Vintage Racers' Newsletter*

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