



Wild Hare Run!

Focus Event Race Report



By most reports our 2015 Focus Event with VDCA at their Wild Hare Run at VIR was a success. With the exception of Friday evening's rain and wind event, the weather could not have been better! Somewhere in the neighborhood of 47 MGs joined in the fun and frivolity-let me share the weekend with you...

This writer arrived at VIR to a loooooong line of racers waiting to enter VIR ahead of schedule to stake a claim to some paddock space. With what looked to be record attendance for this event, paddock space was surely precious. Luckily VDCA and VIR authorities secured an MG paddock area ahead of time and posted a rather polite, but persistent guard who took his job quite seriously-MGs ONLY! Of course many of our gang had their friends scattered throughout the paddock so as it turned out we had plenty of space in the MG paddock. Thursday's agenda included setting up MGVR Central, Tech (thanks to Frank Mount, David Smith, and Storm Field for their tech help), prep for the traditional Thursday evening MGVR Meet and Greet at Central. At around 6 pm racers filtered into MGVR Central as Larry Smith and Rick Starkweather warmed up their grills and unpacked brats, burgers, snacks and salads for a Welcome to VIR barbeque! By 7 we had around 80 or so partiers enjoying the company of their fellow MGVRs while listening to old vinyl albums (Grateful Dead, The Band, Dire Straits etc) and consuming some of the best grilled grub ever!

Friday began with sunny skies but questionable weather predicted for the afternoon. With practice and qualifying planned for the day, everyone scrambled to prep their cars. As luck would have it the weather cooperated throughout the afternoon. One surprise treat for MGVRs and others was the Peter Krause track talk after the drivers' meeting. This well-attended talk must have helped as the off-track excursions of the morning were followed by more sure-footed driving in the afternoon. Once track activities ceased we were off to the Sasco Sports party at their shop located within the VIR facilities. A special treat was seeing Mario Andretti's Lotus 79 John Player Special that won him the 1978 Formula 1 Drivers Championship and the constructors championship for Lotus. Thanks to Sasco Sports for opening

their facility to entrants and crew, AND for the beverages and snacks we all enjoyed! As dark settled on VIR, so did the rain clouds-and rain it did! A small, dedicated cadre of hearty souls settled down at MGVR Central to share some Whistlepig Rye (courtesy Kevin Richards) and bench racing/story telling as the rains pounded the shelter above us.

Saturday dawned. There were clouds aplenty but skies were bright as we all prepared for a fine day of qualifying followed by afternoon racing. Voting was brisk for the MGVR Spirit Award-the Editor forgot his ballot box but Crew Chief Jim Warren stepped in to offer an empty 12-pack box of Copper Ale that appeared to qualify as an impromptu ballot box. The famed hooded monks met in a smoke-filled room to select the Bill Parish *Master of Speed Deception* Award winner while an ad hoc committee met in secret to decide who should take home the John Targett *Doff of the Cap* Award. All three awards would be presented at Saturday's VDCA Banquet. The only Focus Event award to be handed out (in theory) Sunday would be the MG-V-8 Award going to the first MG to finish the All MG Race...except for the small detail that someone (no names) forgot to bring it to VIR. Saturday afternoon's racing was as exciting as it gets-MG V-8's of Les Gonda and Jerry Richards defending MG honor in Large Bore Production going up against Loti, Corvettes, BMWs etc, MGB's dicing with more Loti, Datsuns, Triumphs, Merlyns, Turners, etc, MGA's dicing with Elvas, Sprites, Turners, Fiats (?) and T-Series MGs dueling with Formula Veels! Racing was furious with plenty of wheel-wheel dicing. I won't mention any names but someone forgot to tell his connecting rod to behave-it escaped the confines of its tiny A-Series block. Someone else forgot to lecture his crew about the virtues of securing the bonnet (again-no names). Despite these minor inconveniences the racing was fine and dandy once the full-course yellow flags lifted. Keep in mind that Saturday's racing was only a warm up for Sunday's All MG Feature!

MGVR joined our VCDA brothers and sisters for their Saturday Wild Hare Banquet-an on-site extravaganza featuring some of the best buffet fare and a low-key atmosphere complimenting the friendly environment that is a feature of this event. Grand Poobah Mike Jackson outlined the banquet presentation thus: "I'll take two minutes to talk about and award the Wild Hare Trophy, and then Hank Giffin will address the gathered racers for as long as he wants to-because he is big. MGVR will have 5 minutes to conduct business before the crowd becomes rowdy". Well...Mike took about two minutes to award the Wild Hare to MG Vintage Racer Jim Byers, who somehow figured out the formula to finish first in Friday's Wild Hare Run. Hank (MG Vintage Racer)Giffin stood to praise Mike and Sandy Jackson and others for their selfless and tireless work to organize and run the VIR weekend. Yours truly, with the help of Bob Watkin, *raced* through announcements, MGVR Focus Event awards and Thank You's. This year's award winners are:

Bill Parish *Master of Speed Deception* Award went to Rob Orander and his Beer Flag. Rob has two responsibilities as award winner- share his fascinating vintage racing story with his fellow MG Vintage Racers, and return the award to next year's Focus Event!

John Targett *Doff of the Cap* Award went to the B Stingers Race Team. Team members include Max Fulton, Simon Briggs, Zarrel Lambert, Jim Lathan, Terry Jones, Andy Broughton, Michael Byrne, Ted Alman, and Rick Starkweather.

Of course the Big Award at any Focus Event is the MGVR Spirit Award as represented by The **Big Copper Bucket**. This award is presented to the MG Vintage Racer who best represents the Spirit Of MG Vintage Racing as selected by vote of the MG vintage racers. This year's winner was **Larry Smith**.

The Sunday itinerary included multi group warm ups, the ALL MG race and Group racing. This year's ALL MG race featured a slight twist based on negotiations between VDCA Race Chair and MG Editor-Square-body Sprites were allowed to participate providing they purchased MGVR stickers from Dan Leonard and *adhered the stickers to their bonnets* for the All MG Race! Two thusly adorned Sprites joined 43 MGs for the MG Feature Race. While finishing position is not the point I will emphasize that Les Gonda started near the end of the grid and easily and politely found his way toward the front before pulling off before the finish, making way for the MGB 4-cylinder battle. Butch McKenzie ran a spectacular race to first position, followed by RMVR's Jonathan Lane, who drove from Colorado to race at VIR for his first time! Steve Konsin finished third in his well-prepared MGB, followed by Larry Smith in his Midget. Joe Lightfoot was VARAC's first finisher at position 5 in his MGB followed by Dave Nicholas in first MGA "Honeybee". Top Ten included Luening (MGB), Russell (Midget), Conrad (MGA), and Pitt (Midget). First (and only) Twin Cam was Jim Holody, First T Series was Dan Leonard, and First with Wild Hare Co-Pilot went to Jim Byers. Most Improved was David Good, whose MGA was screaming all weekend until early in the All MG Race. Best VSCCA-legal MGA goes to Jeff Sienkiewicz-who appeared to be in a weekend-long battle with Eric Russell's MGA. Congrats to Eric for finally shedding his stripes! Best Barn-Find has to go to Stan Heath and his ex-SCCA MGB. Cleanest MG on-track was care of Carol Stevenson. Best Finish by a Street MG belongs to Bob Vitrikas and his 'for sale' MGA. "Crimson and Clover Award"...TIE!- Dave Smith and Butch O'Conner. A big High Five to Donald Dickey and Jerry Richards-great to see both of you on track again for 2015!

Congratulations to the award winners and everyone who participated in this year's Focus Event with VDCA at their annual Wild Hare Run!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

2015 Significant Events:

June 19-21 Canadian Historic Grand Prix with VARAC at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park (Mosport). MG-Triumph Challenge!

July 23-26 Glenora Wine Cellars US Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. Collier Cup Race for MGs!

August 31-September 2-MG "Out Of Focus" Event at Put-In-Bay!

2016 Focus Event: CSRG Charity Challenge at Infineon Raceway. First weekend in October 2016! Mark your calendars for the Left Coast's most challenging circuit located in Wine Country!

2016 Focus Event East Coast-yet to be determined

Thanks to the following folks who went out of their way to make this a special focus event-

VDCA:

Mike Jackson-Race Director, Chief Cook and Bottle Washer

Sandy Jackson-Preregistration, Registration, Post Registration, and Everything Else

Beau Gabel-VDCA Tech

Doug Meis-Technical Director and Driver Etiquette Compass

Neil Harmon, Timing and Scoring and ...

Margaret Mitchell, Chief Steward

MGVR:

Dave Smith-Tech, Keeper of the Paddock Signs

Frank Mount-Tech, and more Tech

Storm Field-Tech,

Jim Warren-MGVR Central Roadie, Chief motorhome mechanic

Rick Starkweather-Thursdays Barbeque

Larry Smith-Thursdays Barbeque, MGVR Treasurer

Dan Leonard-MGVR Regalia

Kevin (Keith) Richards-Whistlepig, Moonshine

Chris Kintner-MGVR Webmaster

Greg Prehodka-MGVR Public Relations

Bob Watkin, Alan Tosler, Manley Ford, Monks- Awards

Butch O'Conner-MGVR Central Breakfast

Chris Meyers