



**#5 Dennis Austin, Zink C5-A; #248 Cal Trumbo, 1972 Royale RP-16; #82 Graham Long, 1976 Tiga CF.**

# VRG Turkey Bowl

## Summit Point, WV

**Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2013**

– *story and photos*  
by **Terry Johnsen**

Planning for outdoor activities in late November is always tricky. Though, the VRG Turkey Bowl has always been able to dodge the big one. Less than a week earlier, one of those rain, sleet, and snow beauties came through the East Coast states, snarling up pre-Thanksgiving travel plans for everyone. But just a few days later, calm winds and a brisk chill with temperatures in the mid-30s and lower 40s, welcomed the competitors of the Vintage Racer Group's Annual Turkey Bowl. The event is held every year at Summit Point Raceway, located in the rolling splendor of West Virginia. A healthy field of just over 100 entries filled the grids in the five featured groups: Group 1/Vintage Small Bore (<2 liter), Group 2/Open Wheel & Sports 2000, Group 3/Vintage Big Bore (>2 liter), Group 4/Modern Sports GT & Baby Grand, and Group 5/Legend Class. Prior to the race activity on Saturday, I was able to spend



**#414 Rich Rock, 1971 TVR Vixen 2500; #37 Scott Janzen, 1963 Triumph TR4.**

some time and speak with a few notable VRG representatives for their reflective thoughts on 2013 and for the future.

I first met with Michael Oritt, who this year's Event Chairman for the Turkey Bowl. He only had a moment or two to spare, as he was preparing his white and red, 1958 Elva Mk IV SR (Slow Dance Racing) for a morning practice session. Michael described the weather as decent for this time of year, and typical for the Turkey Bowl. Friday's weather conditions were expected to be the best of the entire weekend, with temperatures hovering in the low 40s. Needless to say the track was slick, as was expected. He noted that the schedule for Saturday featured two exciting activities later in the afternoon. The first was a lunch time charity ride activity that raised money and awareness for a group called High Performance Heroes. They have formed to assist combat-injured service personnel, empowering them to achieve their motorsports aspirations. Later, the track activity for the day closes with the Turkey Bowl Relay Race. This unique VRG concept consists of five teams that are made up with a representative car from each of the five groups. It's fun...they're not keeping score...everyone has a blast! I then proceeded to the warmth and comfort of the Summit Point instruction room and continued my conversations.

Next, I was able to speak with Mack McCormack. He had just assumed the position as President of the Vintage Racer Group (VRG). He most recently served as the Vice President under outgoing President, Bill Hollingsworth. Mack shared his thoughts on a variety of topics

to include; becoming President, the 2013 season, the upcoming 2014 season and beyond. He began by stating that VRG is doing very well, adding that his job is to maintain the momentum of the group for the three years of his term. Mack explained that VRG is known for fun, fair, and safe racing. When looking back on the 2013 season, he noted that VRG grew their ranks and welcomed 57 new members, increased their overall Formula Ford car count, and that they strive to continue that trend. Mack stated that Group 1 has been their strength, but that the goal is to increase the numbers of the big bore entrants. Looking forward to 2014, Mack added that VRG will be involved in the re-opening of a classic and historical road course, Thompson Speedway in the northeast corner of Connecticut. The facility originally opened in 1938 and has a long and prominent history featuring an oval track. The Hoenig family is now dedicated to bringing road-racing back to Thompson through the redevelopment of the road course. The facility will celebrate its re-opening (June 27-29, 2014) with an event co-sanctioned by VRG & VSCCA. Mack was also excited to talk about a special Formula Ford Challenge being planned for 2014. The series will consist of three races to be held at The Jefferson 500 (May 14-18), the PVP Historic Races (July 11-13), and the New Jersey Historic Races (September 19-21). Overall, Mack noted that VRG's strength derives from being able to provide a lot of track activity for the cost of an entry fee. A good racing value. Looking forward and beyond his term, Mack stated the goal is to



**#189 John Wentz, 1967 Ford Mustang.**

maintain the path that they're on..."we have a good thing." He added VRG has term limits for their leadership positions, which then fosters new and fresh ideas of improvement.

Next I had the pleasure to speak with Mark Palmer. He was one of the founding members of VRG and a past President. When asked to share his views on the Turkey Bowl, Mark noted that it's a low-key event, just for fun. He went on to add that there is a different kind of camaraderie that prompts fellow competitors to come out in these conditions. He referred to them as the "true believers." There are no timing and scoring sheets to worry about, no

trophies. The goal is to have fun and bring your car home in one piece. He offered one caveat, and mentioned that there is an award called the "Tom Turkey Award." This light-hearted award goes to the person who has done "the stupidest thing during the weekend." (Writer's note: I'll allow the identity of the honored recipient to stay within the brotherhood of the Turkey Bowl competitors.) Reflecting back on 2013, Mark stated it was a good year, highlighted by their marquee event, the Jefferson 500. This year's 500 featured their largest entry count with over 240 car/driver combinations. Mark added that VRG does not hold festival events, but in turn focuses their race meetings on the drivers, offering a great value, maximizing track time.



**#378 Mark Rosenberg, Peerless GT1.**

Mark was excited for the future, noting the planned opening of Thompson Speedway road course, adding it was the first purpose-built road racing course in the US. He was very excited for the upcoming Formula Ford series, noting it will coincide and highlight the 45th Anniversary of the Formula Ford racer. When reflecting on Summit Point Raceway, Mark stated that this is one of his favorite tracks. He

#### ENTRANTS LIST

##### GROUP 1

##### DRIVER/CAR

J. Beil/1957 Porsche 356a  
N. Berke/1959 Elva Courier  
C. Bolton/1961 Austin Healey Sprite  
R. Brownlee-Tomasso/1958 MGA



**#86 Michael Spraggins, 1970 Porsche 914.**

J. Byers/1968 MG Midget  
P. Carroll/1963 Austin-Healey Sprite  
A. Cecconi/1971 Alfa 1750 Berlina  
S. Cecconi/1966 lancia fulvia  
M. Clifford/1965 Lotus Cortina  
D. Coleman/1950 Crosley Hotshot  
T. Dick/ Triumph TR4A  
H. Giffin/1959 Elva Courier  
D. Good/1959 MG A  
T. Grudovich/1960 Lola Mk 1  
K. Haas/1966 MG B Roadster  
S. Hirschtritt/1965 Austin-Healey Sprite  
R. Jones/1967 Fiat Abarth  
B. Kolesar/1973 MGB  
K. Michael/1960 Elva Courier  
N. Michael/1966 Austin Mini Cooper S

loved the course for its rhythm and for being a drivers course. He particularly mentioned The Carousel for its multiple flowing corners as being a key area for making up time. Overall, "Summit Point has a real grass-roots feel to it."

Next, I spoke with Ashley Shutka, Director of Race Operations for High Performance Heroes. She explained that later in the day during lunchtime (Saturday) their organization would be sponsoring an activity to raise funds and awareness for their cause. High Performance Heroes is a group of dedicated individuals from the racing community that has donated their time and talents to develop cars for combat wounded veterans in order for them to pursue their racing dreams. The two Heroes they have been assisting thus far are SSgt. Liam Dwyer and Cpl. Pat Brown of the US Marines. Both of whom were wounded by IED's; Liam while deployed to Afghanistan and Pat while deployed to Iraq. HPH began their project with developing a blue 1962 Austin-Healey Sprite for Liam. They are currently developing a 1974 MG Midget for Pat, while he in turn is still recovering at Walter Reed Hospital. Ashley noted that a special racing insert seat has already been fashioned at the hospital for Pat. Liam was on hand this weekend and drove a specially prepared 2007 Nissan 350Z in Group 4. This is a fantastic organization that truly needs our continued support and thanks. You can learn more through their website, [www.hheroes.org](http://www.hheroes.org).

D. Moritz/1972 MG MGB  
M. Oritt/1958 Elva Mk IV SR  
C. Pitt/1967 MG Midget  
M. Rosenberg/ Peerless GT1  
B. Shields/1964 MGB  
R. Thompson/1965 Austin Mini Cooper S  
M. Washington /1963 Austin Healey Sprite  
T. Wetzel/1957 Turner Mk 1  
P. Wicks/1967 Mini Cooper S

##### GROUP 2

##### DRIVER/CAR

D. Austin/ Zink C5-A  
T. Calef/1964 Bobsy Vanguard FV  
D. Chesanow/1966 Venus FV  
F. Del Vecchio/1981 Van Dieman RF-81  
D. Kinsey/1980 Ford Lola T-540  
K. Lawrence/1969 Lynx B - Formula Vee  
R. Leeht/1969 Lotus 51C  
G. Long/1976 Tiga CF  
C. Morici/1971 Lotus 69  
H. Parke/1960 Elva 200 Formula Jr  
P. Patterson/1959 Lotus 18 fj  
R. Romanansky/1969 Macon MR7  
C. Shoemaker/1973 Caldwell D-13  
H. Sroka/1967 Autodynamics Mk IV FV  
A. Stein/1970 Merlyn Mk . 11/17  
C. Trumbo/1972 Royale RP-16

##### GROUP 3

##### DRIVER/CAR

R. Anderson/1966 Ford GT40 Mk V  
K. Berzins/1976 BMW 2002  
M. Clifford/1965 Ginetta G4  
T. Grudovich/1966 Ginetta G4

S. Janzen/1963 Triumph TR4  
J. Karamanis/1972 Ford Pinto  
M. Kincaid/1965 Ford Mustang  
D. Mapes/1966 Dodge Dart



**#77 Dan Chesanow, 1966 Venus.**

J. Marshall/1970 Porsche 914-6  
J. Netterstrom/1961 Lotus Super 7  
R. Poole/1970 Porsche 914/6  
T. Reid/1967 Lotus Super Seven  
R. Rock/1971 TVR Vixen 2500  
L. Schrader/1973 Saab 99  
V. Schuster/1962 Lotus Super 7  
M. Spraggins/1970 Porsche 914  
J. Wentz/1967 Ford Mustang  
I. Wisbon/1976 BMW 2002

##### GROUP 4

##### DRIVER/CAR

P. Ackley/2005 Baby Grand Monte Carlo  
E. Adams/ Chevrolet Baby Grand  
T. Alvaranga/ Chevrolet Monte Carlo  
M. Baracka/1979 Volkswagen rabbit  
N. Bates/1990 Mazda Miata  
C. Bucher/1985 Toyota mr2  
D. Davidson/1985 Volkswagen Golf  
L. Dwyer/2007 Nissan 350z



**#149 Bill Shields, 1964 MGB; #773 Russell Jones, 1967 FIAT Abarth.**

The Turkey Bowl event does not have timing and scoring. Each group sets their grid based on pace and then they get out there and just have fun. Pretty simple concept and a great way to end the season by getting that last adrenaline fix before winter. Some of the notable pace setters in each group were: Michael Oritt, 1958 Elva Mk IV SR, #82 (Group 1); Harry Sroka, 1967 Autodynamics Mk IV FV, #25 (Group 2); Derek Sweger, 1973 Porsche 911, #177 (Group 3); Liam Dwyer, 2007 Nissan 350Z, #7 (Group 4); and Matt Lewis, 1937 Ford Sedan, #0 (Group 5).

The Vintage Racer Group has yet again put on a fantastic season ending event with the traditional Thanksgiving weekend Turkey Bowl. They served up a healthy plate of sports car road racing and no one went home feeling stuffed. A low-calorie, high-octane menu for sure. The 2014 season looks to be full of great racing, as does the outlook for VRG into the future. Good luck VRG, see you next year!

M. Flitcroft/1990 Mazda Miata  
R. Korzen/2013 Ford Boss 302S  
M. Liller/2004 Dodge Neon SRT-4  
A. Mitchell/1971 Nissan 240Z  
M. Mitchell/1986 Alfa Romeo GTV6  
M. Munley/ Baby Grand Baby Grand  
J. Orzechowski/2005 Baby Grand  
E. Stahlman/1982 Alfa Romeo GTV6

##### GROUP 5

##### DRIVER/CAR

R. Austin/ Ford Legends  
B. Brasz/1934 Ford  
N. Brasz/1934 Chevrolet Legend  
T. Braunschweig/1934 Ford  
M. Conner/ 1937 Ford Legends  
R. Conner/ Legends 34 Ford Sedan  
C. Earnst/1937 Ford Sedan Legend  
J. Felcht/ Legend Car Legend Car  
S. Gobrecht/ Ford Legend  
G. Harnish/ Legends Legends  
C. Hitchens/1937 Ford Sedan Legends  
S. Johnson/1934 Ford Legends  
B. Kramer/2010 Ford 37 ford legends  
M. Lewis/ Legends 1937 Ford Sedan  
T. Martin/ Ford Legends  
W. Payton/1934 Ford legends sedan  
G. Rittenhouse/1934 Ford Legend Car  
C. Shepard/1934 Ford  
B. Stough/ Ford Legend  
A. Vorrilas/1934 Ford legend  
B. Weymouth/1937 Chevrolet Legends  
C. Earnst/1937 Ford Sedan Legend  
B. Weymouth/1937 Chevrolet Legends