

Vintage Racing News & Events

# VICTORY LANE



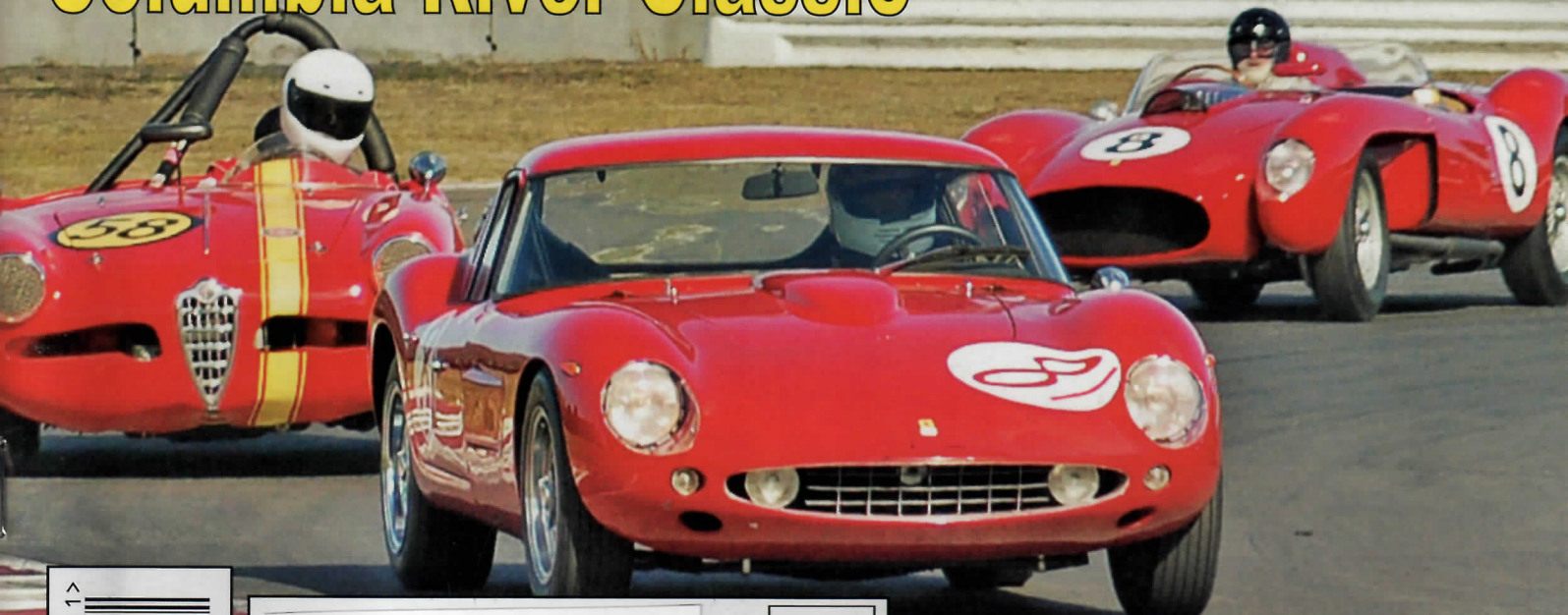
VRCBC Rivers Edge



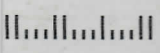
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CVAR Fall Driver's School

# CVAR Fall Driver's School and Races

Texas World Speedway, College Station, TX

September 7-9, 2007



#73, TVR, John Price.

## -story and photos by

### Don Gwynne

Corinthian Vintage Auto Racing (CVAR) drew almost 140 entries, including 15 students, to a three day session of training, racing, Texas heat and humidity at Texas World Speedway.

Students were the focus of the weekend...

The students are the vintage racers of tomorrow, and CVAR works hard to make them feel welcome. But the CVAR indoctrination course to vintage racing is non-nonsense. Students are firmly required to attend formal "chalk talk" sessions. If you get in your track time, but don't show up as required at each and every "chalk talk" session, well, sorry, you can always come back next February to get your logbook signed off.



#321 Bill Griffith, Bobsey Vangard FV.

CVAR additionally requires that before a new license application will be approved and forwarded to VMC, the driver must spend at least one full day as a corner station worker. Some drivers grumble at first, but almost all come back and say it was time very well spent, that they learned a lot and found the experience to be a valuable addition to their vintage race training. They also develop a much better appreciation for the wonderful team of workers who give of their time that others may race.

The Fall 2007 Student Class included Mark Bebic #273 blue Porsche 911, Mark Hanna #75 red Porsche 911, Mark Domiteaux #71 yellow Titan FF, Ken Caldwell #53 green Porsche 911, Gregory Byrne #26 yellow FV, Barry Findley #94 blue & yellow Merlyn FF, Mark Robinson #0 yellow & blue Merlyn FF, Bobby Whitehead #33 yellow Triumph GT6, Gene Hassell #1 red Mustang, Dale Rolison #67 white & blue Zink FV, Roger Beasley #34 yellow Volvo P1800S, Denise Etcheson #9 white & green RCA FV, Joe Westervelt #36 blue Titan FF, Terry McCormick #49 black MG Midget, and Don Gwynne #89 white Ford Escort.

Mark Domiteaux, student driver of #71 Titan Mk9B Formula Ford, wrote "This was my first experience at a CVAR event, and it exceeded

my expectations in every way. From the moment I pulled into the paddock on Thursday evening trying to sort out what and where, there were willing and friendly members to help us at every step. Even better, I was sandwiched into a paddock space next to Art, Charlie and Grover with my instructor Bruce on the opposite side of the workbenches... I give a

hearty thanks to the corner workers (for their dedication and good humor in the face of such oppressive climate! I am looking forward to years of active participation with this great group of characters and new friends."

Easily the fastest driver/car combination in Group 5 (the student group) was Yuri Bebic and his blue #273 Porsche 911.

Fellow student Mark Hanna in his red & yellow #75 Porsche 911 was on Bebic's heels all weekend long.

Although your scribe had raced SCCA, IMSA, and FIA back in the late 60's and early 70's, he found that 35 years of rust takes more than a lap or two to brush off. Many thanks to instructor Berkeley Merrill (shown above in his red driver's suit) for his patience with my initial efforts at re-finding "the racing line". After a fun day in Friday's school, the Escort's engine failed on Friday evening, so DNS on Saturday and Sunday. I took the opportunity to work a corner on Saturday, and agree it was time very well spent. The Saturday crew at Turn 10, ably led by Patrick Phillips, was great to work with.

The flag & communications workers, timing & scoring workers, grid marshals, etc. all receive a free lunch from CVAR.

### Old Fuel Cells Leak

"I was nursing a small fuel leak all weekend, but it wasn't serious and since one has to remove the rear window on the TVR to get at the fuel cell, I thought I could get by until Sunday afternoon. Back in the day when I flew freight in the old wet-wing Convairst, we had weeps, seeps and leaks on the underside of the wings. Weeps and seeps were OK, but if a leak was more than 5 drips/minute it was a no-go (the Convairst was prone to stack fires).

After I fueled the "Turtle" for the last session my wife pointed out that fuel was now running out of the fuel cell. Well discretion being the better part...I didn't run the last session. Gregg Rogers and I drained the cell and he took the car back to Fort Worth. I just received an e-mail from him telling me that the bladder disintegrated as he was removing it from the cell.

Lesson learned: If your fuel cell bladder is more than 5 years old, check it every year or replace it. As Bob Green said: "It was just too hot for a fire".

by John Price

Friday evening's heat spawned several pool parties. Some opportunistic organisms in Camp Lotus / Brazos Valley Racing took advantage with their own tarmac beach party, complete with an inflatable pool.

Slightly more upscale, Tom Upton and his gracious wife Jeanette hosted many CVAR racers and friends at their nearby country home, complete with a BBQ buffet dinner and a real swimming pool. Tom drives the red #77 Pantera in Group 1.

Saturday's schedule kept the "Group 5" students in a separate group in the morning, then integrated them into their regular race groups in the afternoon.

Saturday night entertainment included "Throwback Jam", some organized bench racing with show and tell by a couple of CVAR's "elder" racers. Al Schorken brought scrapbooks and other memorabilia from his early SCCA racing adventures in California. He talked about how the average racer could occasionally share venues with big names like Stirling Moss and Chuck Daigh. Al and his son are currently restoring the same Arnolt-Bristol that he raced back then.

Al showed a personal letter from Arnolt, congratulating him on his successful season and reminding him to get his crank re-nitrided. Listeners were also treated to the early evolution of racing safety, particularly helmets and the development of the Snell rating system.

Following Al's presentation, Don Gwynne laid out a multi-media spread of photos and personal recollections from Green Valley, Ponca City

and Warbonnet, in the period 1965 to 1972.

These now-extinct SCCA racing venues are some of the key regional roots of our CVAR heritage, and those fortunate enough to witness this rare look back were thrilled and amazed at some of the footage. Many thanks also to Dr. Michael Saxe for his excellent video projection assistance to Don's presentation.

Some of the younger racers may have had difficulty "connecting" with these vintage history presentations, but it was their loss. One individual even drifted by looking, but not stopping, only to miss seeing rare decades-old footage of his very own race car.

Sunday Points Races were well subscribed and were contested in fine Texas Fall weather. The Texas World Raceway course is a real equalizer on power vs. handling.

**Group 1 (AP, BP, A Sedan, Trans-Am, FIA, A Sports/Racing):** Bob Rowley's ASR red Lola T-70 coupe took the overall win and the class win in Sunday's Group 1 points race, with Jeff Anderson's ASR yellow #29 Lola T-212 about one second behind him. Dr. Michael Saxe's red #979 Porsche 911 was first in FIA class and third overall. Tom Upton brought his red Pantera home in fourth overall and second in FIA class,



#110 Brad Balles, Cooper-Lotus.

while John Fershtand took A Sedan driving his blue #47 Boss Mustang, fifth overall. Mark (aka "Cone Boy") McIlyar's orange #33 Camaro finished second in A Sedan and sixth overall. Robert Cobb took an unopposed B Production win in his #03 white GT-350 Shelby Mustang.

**Group 2 (FP, C Sedan):** In Group 2, Herb Hilton won every race of the weekend driving his red #02 MG Midget. In the Sunday points race, Herb beat Tom Aguillon (#112 white & red MG Midget) across the line by slightly less than one second, so it wasn't as one-sided as it might sound. Jay McClanahan (#113 silver MG Midget) finished third, with Pete Sandy (#04 yellow bug-eyed Sprite) a distant fourth.

Sam Partin won C Sedan in his red #44 Alfa on Saturday, but there were no CS starters for the Sunday points race.

**Group 3 (FV, SFP):** Bill Griffith, driving Dick Ryan's black #321 Bobsy Vanguard FV,

*Continued on pg. 74*

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## CVAR Continued from pg. 47 --

took the overall win and the FV class win by 1/3 second from Roger Bailey (#87 yellow Lynx B FV). Team Geezer driver Mike Callahan (#68 white Zink C4 FV) placed third, and Jeff Wilt brought his rare #39 blue Nash Scrambler FV home in fourth. Mike Vecellio's yellow #3 MG Midget won SFP ("Spec Sprites"), finishing ninth overall. Eddie Dick was second in SFP, thirteenth overall, driving his Texas flag themed (red/white/blue) #54 A-H Sprite.

**Group 4 (VA, VB, VC, FJr, CM, DSR):** The Group 4 overall win and first in CM went to Bruce Revennaugh's 1956 white #36 Lotus XI. Third overall and first in FJr was Pablo Gonzalez driving his 1960 green & yellow #20 Lotus Formula Junior. Mike Orlie's blue #18 Porsche 356 was the winner of VB, placing fourth overall. John Page's white #61 Alfa was hot on Mike's heels, finishing less than one second behind for a second place in VB. Reed Yates won VC with a seventh overall finish in his 1954 green #11 MG-TF, eight seconds ahead of Roger Williams' red #56 bugeyed Sprite. Sandwiched between them was John Furlow, Sr., driving his rare 1962 Dolphin Abarth #37.

**Group 5 (Students):** Group 5 didn't have a points race. By Sunday afternoon, many students were DNS. The final Group 5 student session was



#02 Herb Hilton, MG Midget.

comprised of just two cars. Barry Findley II drove his #94 blue & yellow Merlyn Mk30 Formula Ford with gusto to finish more than a minute ahead of Gene Hassell in his red #1 Mustang A Sedan during the last student session.

**Group 6 (FA, FB, FF1, FF2, S7, BSR):** Young Diego Fernandez Duez, driving Jeff Anderson's red #9 Crossle F35 Formula Ford, showed everyone what quick reaction times and European racing experience can do for you in Sunday's Group 6 races. Diego won the point race overall by a slim margin over Jeff Anderson. But Anderson was driving his #16 black Formula B Brabham BT-29! Of course, in the process, Diego also won the FF2 class. Although he is only 19 years old, Diego Duez spent last year driving Formula Renaults in Europe, and enjoys sponsorship of his driving talent development from "Alamo Sports Cars", "Texas Law Firm", and "La Union de Morelos", his hometown newspaper in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Scott Monroe won FF1, and placed third overall, driving his silver #39 Caldwell

D9. Kent Liming enjoyed an unopposed win in FA, driving his red #15 Centaur FSV, and Mike Vecellio took a similarly unopposed win in BSR in his rare black 1963 EMPI Crusader #12. While there were two other FA entrants and three other BSR entrants, by Sunday afternoon they were all DNS for various reasons. Another surprise in the same race was seeing



#9, Crossle FF, P.D. Sohn.

P.D. Sohn's large frame nestled down into the ex-Bill Hill blue #9 FF. Quite a change from P.D.'s blue MG Midget, which he still owns.

**Group 7 (CP, DP, EP, BS, S7):** Porsches ruled the Group 7 roost on Sunday afternoon. Seven of the first nine finishers were driving either Porsche 911 or Porsche 914-6. PCA ace Jim Buckley led the way, scoring the overall win and first in CP driving Jim Collier's white & blue 1971 Porsche 911T #57. In addition to obviously having considerable driving talent, Buckley is also an expert Porsche mechanic, and did most of the preparation and suspension set-up of the car he drove. Ron Shade was second overall and second in CP, but as consolation, his blue & yellow 1972 Porsche 911T #810 set a new CP lap record of 1:56.201 while chasing after the fleeing Buckley. Mitchell Hibbs, driving his #6 yellow Caterham, was the first non-Porsche, finishing fifth overall and first in S7 class. Dr. Berkeley Merrill drove his silver & red #4 Datsun 240Z to sixth overall and fifth in CP. Tim Woodruff won B Sedan, finishing tenth overall, driving his blue #74 BMW 2002. John Hamilton drove "The Great Pumpkin", aka his orange MGB #80, to win EP. The final finisher, and winner of DP class, was Gregory Hibbs, in his red 1962 Lotus Super Seven #377.

## Results not available

## Over the Limit

Story and photos by Grover Maurer

After winning the SFP ("Spec Sprite") class in Group 3 on Sunday morning, Grover Maurer had the misfortune to roll his green #77 Sprite on the fifth lap of the Sunday afternoon Group 3 points race. Grover shared the following "lessons learned" narrative with all his fellow CVAR racers via e-mail:

"Well someone said that you are not racing unless you are testing the limits. I stumbled upon some limits this weekend in the way of tire grip and driver piloting skills, among others. Exiting turn six I dropped one or both right wheels off the racing surface and spun back across the track, across the badlands of the TWS outback, and struck a bank flipping the Turtle on its back. And on a dry sunny day. As rollovers go it probably would only scale a 1 or a 2. But as this is MY rollover, it will only get better with retelling. I will never again care that my rollage has been compared to the Brooklyn Bridge. I had not a scratch, and the 2 inch (head clearance) rule worked just fine. While I can not recall a whole lot about the spin itself, things happen pretty

fast, I can tell you this, that when all the sounds and motion stop, and you know you are upside down, your senses become very sharp. Switches off and get the heck out.

With my weight added to the harness catch release, it took several tugs to release the belts. That was a pucker moment. I usually exit the car by standing up first. Fat chance. Not a lot of room to maneuver, but I wiggled out and was met by a friendly guy in white that was sincerely concerned about my welfare.



I wish I knew his name. An army of responders arrived in trucks and SUV's, and all were there for me and the Turtle. And through it all, Bob

Green (CVAR's Chief Steward) in so many words saying, "you can relax now, you are in good hands." I needed that. The crew took care in turning the car back on the wheels to minimize further damage. Most of us, thank God, will never see this side of our club, but those of us that have had the privilege will never forget... the next time you are sitting there on the grid, take an extra tug and cinch the belts tighter. You just never know.

