

# Vintage American Race Cars Traveling Museum

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February, 2019

## Notes from our President Jim McDermott

The winter season is part way over so now it's time to really shift into gear and get ready for 2019 season. I have information that several members are starting on new projects or reworking their cars. Gene Steele is putting a body on a chassis. Rumor has it John Fork is starting on a new project. I am not sure what might be on the mind of Butch Evans. Terry Wells has a newly powder coated finish on his sprint chassis and a new engine in the works. Mike White is looking for a 64 Chevelle, sounds like he is considering a new ride. I heard Bob Shelhorn is refreshing the monster motor in the late model. I know that several members bought stuff at the Fremont swap meet and had plans to incorporate the parts into their cars. I happened to be one of those when I found a big block Chevy fuel injection manifold, so I am planning on installing it on the "461" sprinter that I run. I also found a machine shop that repaired a block for our "Big Old" dirt modified. I am in the process of scrounging some big block parts to finish that engine. Even though it is winter the wish list still grows, plans are in the works to have things ready for the season. Remember if you wait till spring to start on your car it will be summer before you know it. It happens every year, beautiful weather, a great track, and everybody going to the races and someone sits home wishing they would have started a little earlier. Now is the time to get going right?

I have begun to contact tracks for dates for this year's schedule and we are waiting for confirmation from them. Several have responded and the schedule is starting to take shape. If you have a track that you would like to see on the schedule drop me a note and it will be put on our list of tracks to contact. We are trying to tie tracks close together that run on different nights into the program. This is tough since there are fewer tracks running a Friday or Sunday show. Most run Saturday. If you are aware of a Friday or Sunday track get that information to me and we will see if it can be worked out. I have heard a couple tracks that have either closed or are limiting their program this season. If you hear anything about tracks that are not planning on running, please let me know. If anyone is opening or running special shows it would be great to hear about that as well. I would like to thank a few members for their help so far this season. Larry Smith has been working with the Sandusky Speedway, John Morton has been in contact with Oak Shade, Terry Wells has been checking with a couple tracks, and Bob Shelhorn is trying to get a date for us as well. I really appreciate the help of the members because it takes a lot of work to put together our program.



If you are not running a car this season, we could really use your help at our events. I am always looking for an interested member to be a pit steward at any scheduled event. It is really great to have a member take the leadership role for a night. This makes for a much better show for us. When all the drivers are strapped in and ready for our turn on the track it's a "plus" to have someone on the ground keeping track of the event and communicating with track officials. We can always use 4-wheelers and drivers to help moving our cars to and from the pits so if you can drive a 4-wheeler your help would be much appreciated. Things often change during an event and it takes somebody to help communicate these things to the drivers. I have suggested that we equip ourselves with some type of communication devices. Racecievers or small walkie talkies with ear buds. Let me know your thoughts on this. Several tracks now make it mandatory for any cars on the track and it is just a matter of time before they include us.

I would ask all members to review our rules and be sure you understand what is expected. If you have questions or suggestions contact one of the board members or officers. This organization is for all the members so let your ideas be known. We try hard to make it safe and fun for everyone that participates in our mission. We have been trying to encourage new members to get involved. If you know of anyone one with an interest in vintage racing cars and the history of oval track racing in this country talk to them about our program. Give out information about our Web site, Facebook page or give Melinda their contact information and she will mail out a New Member packet to them.

Membership cards will be sent out soon. If you paid your membership, please be patient, our Treasury Dori has been in the middle of a major home remodeling and has things sort of disorganized. She will back on track soon.

I would like to hear from you so send me any thoughts or ideas for the coming season. Waiting for warm weather and the sound of racing engines.

Thanks Jim

## Board Meeting

Saturday, April 13  
12:00 pm

Holiday Inn Express  
Ashland, OH

RSVP to Jim

440-552-8149

[jbmcflyboy@yahoo.com](mailto:jbmcflyboy@yahoo.com)

If you have anything to discuss please put in writing and email Jim.

## Notes from our Vice-President John Morton

My gosh - February already! Seems like winter is moving on, soon it will be Spring and racing season will be on us. It can't happen soon enough for me. Seems like this has been a hard winter. Winter started off with my hot water heater not working. We called the man that installed the system 11 years ago and he sent out his "technician". They found a defective gas valve on my boiler, replaced the valve and then we had hot water. 6 weeks later my carbon monoxide detector goes off, found my boiler was burnt up due to wrong gas valve installed. Original installer now out of business, so I get to foot the expense of a new boiler. In the meantime, my knee replacement recovery is going slower than I like and this is holding me back from my race car projects.

Finally I got to work on the race car. I planned on replacing the head gasket only to find I need to rebuild the engine. I found a bad valve spring, 2 broken rings and a tired girl from 10 years of neglect (my own fault). Since the engine is out, I thought I would go ahead and check the rear end only to find a broken driveshaft. So now I am into a full blown refurbish of the car. Should be good as new when done with new bars, heims, brakes, bearings repacked and engine rebuilt. So how is your winter going? I would to hear of any projects out there. I know Gene Steele has a new project in the wind.

I am looking forward to our next business meeting. Hope all can attend. I want to hear on the progress of race receivers. This could up our program to another state if monitored properly.

Just got off the phone with Oak Shade Raceway and they are excited to have us back July 6th this year and then July 7th for a play day. They have figured out how to promote the vintage program and are so excited to have us. You have to put this date on your schedule. Free rustic camping available. It would be a good time to promote a club

weekend and have a great family time celebration. I would really like to extend a big thank you to all members involved in the many behind the scene jobs that are taken care of to keep things going.

I'm going to sign off for now so keep up the good work on those beautiful race cars and see you in the Spring. If you need any information on anything just ask.

Later, John



## Notes from Melinda

It is not too early to start asking for Donations for our Banquet. I have already asked several businesses and have received items from some of them.

Please let me know who you receive donations from so we can send them a Thank You. If you need a letter of request or receipts let me know and I will get them to you.

# Winter Projects

Terry Wells has stripped his sprint car down to the bare frame. It needed a little repair work and will then go out to get powder coated. A new engine is in the works.



Gene Steele spent a day in the shop removing the sheet metal off the 3K donor chassis, and I mean all day. He will try to save as much as possible. There is some frame damage on the right front, but he thinks a little



porta-power wizardry will correct that. No surprise broken welds or cracks. A basic Rust~olum tune up should have it in tip top shape. One thing he is going to change is the pan-hard bar set up. He likes a basic J-bar with a left side frame mount to the right side rear-end mount. That thing must have had 3 lbs. of Duzs buttons in it. But it now sits naked and ready to have the '37 Ford slant back body fitted to it. Next is getting the '37 in the shop and get it stripped down.



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Jim McDermott is working on his Sprinter and trying to get enough parts to build a big block engine for his old dirt modified. He says it is time to get the car back on the track. It has been sitting too long taking up space in his garage. He has also been working on replacing the lights in his shop. It might be nice to be able to see what he is working on without using a flash light.



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Jim as heard that Bob Shelhorn has pulled the engine out of his Late Model to freshen it up and check it out. Jim thinks he is secretly looking at ways to get more cubic inches and horsepower out of that monster engine. It is also rumored that he is also thinking about looking at a sprint car ride for next year! Not sure about that.



Bob DeBolt thought he would drop us a line on his winter project. He spun a rod bearing in his Nance car at Lima fairgrounds when he was there with VARC last summer. He still had a blast with everyone. He thinks the 327 Chevy will be an easy fix.



## Member Profile Michael Bosak

I first got introduced to the concept of cars and racing when, as a young lad of 5 years old or so, my parents bought a set of World Book Encyclopedias (in 1964). Since I had started to develop some reading skills, I was religiously poring over every page of the 'A' book, starting at the beginning, fascinated by it all. I had every intention of going through the entire set of books in that manner, but when I got to the section on *Automobile Racing*, I distinctly remember my jaw dropping. Needless to say, I never made it past that section. Three images: John Cobb's land speed record car at Bonneville; an Offenhauser-powered Indy roadster; and some gassers launching off the line at a drag strip with a flag starter; are still seared in my memory.

Fast forward to age 9. By then I had lots of Hot Wheels cars, model cars, stacks of drag racing magazines from my cousin, etc. and had been to the AutoRama at the Convention Center in Cleveland at least once, maybe twice. A friend and I had heard the infamous "SATURDAY AT BEAUTIFUL THOMPSON DRAG RACEWAY!!!!" ad on the radio one summer and we begged his mom to take us there in her new white 1968 Impala. Once there, I felt like I had landed on the moon. There was a staged match race between TV Tommy Ivo and his front engine fuel dragster and the *Turbo Shark* Corvette jet funny car. I remember walking in the pits and just being completely overwhelmed with what I saw. The sounds of the engines and the sights of the metal flake paint and lettering, cars with names like *Rex Ram*, *Sucker Punch*, and *Canned Heat* were just blowing me away.

Many years later, after graduating with a certificate in Auto Mechanics from Max Hayes Vocational Trade School, I purchased a short wheelbase front-engine dragster less engine/trans from a gentleman in Canton, Ohio. The car was called *Blue Blazer* if I'm not mistaken, and I never did get that car running. I did not have the resources to make it happen, but in the process of trying, I met some other dragster folks and got involved in being a crew member on a couple of cars when the Super Comp series, an 8.90 (later reduced to 9.10) bracket series for open-wheel and econo funny cars (this was way before computers in drag racing and was quite different from what we know now as NHRA Super Comp) moved from track-to-track in Northeast Ohio. I had a great time doing this for a few years, and eventually

ended up taking a couple of easy passes in a front engine car at Norwalk.

But time passes and a few years later I had lost all interest in cars and motor racing, and didn't think I would ever look back. I didn't even work on my own car anymore, which is saying a lot because I was always disappointed by others' work on my car. But a girlfriend at the time wanted me to get more involved with my niece, and she knew I had a former interest in cars. She said "let's take her to the AutoRama downtown" and I thought, why not? Oh, boy, talk about getting bitten by the bug for the second time, and this time it went even deeper. Two later events stand out. One was meeting Chuck Dillon for the first time at yet another show and really admiring his CAE sprint car. Chuck was so friendly I signed up as an associate member of VARC shortly thereafter. A year later, I came back to Cleveland on break from graduate school in Columbus to visit with my parents and, of course, to go to the AutoRama. This time VARC had a club exhibit, and much like my first time at Thompson, I just fell totally in love with these exotic vintage oval racing cars. It was an era I missed seeing in person as I was too interested in the straight-line stuff growing up, but today I am blown away by vintage oval track racing cars. One of the cars I fell in love with was the #58 Corbett/Studebaker sprint car, built in 1954, that was for sale at the show and which I now own. Looking back, it's a bit nuts that I bought a vintage racing car while I was in my first year in grad school, but as I said, the bug bit deep the second time around. I purchased the car from former VARC member John Malone, who was very helpful in getting me started on this path.

So now I have a wife, an almost 4-year old son, a full-time job, and a vintage sprint car that I am hopeful to get on the track soon. It's difficult to extract the time for working on the car and getting to events, but I am excited about making it out to at least a few events in 2017. I'm really glad VARC exists and I will try to take advantage of these opportunities as I am able.



# FOR SALE

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 419-625-7749**

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