

Suffolk Raceway's "Little Guy Nationals Hall of Fame"

Article and Photos by "Butch" Hora

In 1961, Suffolk Raceway opened its lanes to the public in Suffolk, Virginia. This exposed this area to some of the best drag racing in the country. The track over the years has hosted most of the biggest names in drag racing history.



Johnny Rousey was a participant back when it opened and he was there 30 years later when the track sadly closed in 1991 due to lack of support from the city. With the loss of Suffolk Raceway our area was left with **no drag strips!** Finally, in 1995 Virginia Motorsports Park (VMP) opened its gates. Later in the 2000's some smaller 1/8th mile tracks opened in North Carolina. But Johnny wanted to bring back the history of Suffolk Raceway and all the racers that made it



famous. So, with help from 1320 Productions and a small group of supporters, they held the first "Suffolk Raceway Reunion" at the American Indoor Karting in Portsmouth. Every year the reunions got bigger. So finally this year Johnny was ready to create the Suffolk Raceway "Hall of Fame" and to have the ceremony appropriately at VMP.



All inductees received a custom made metal plaque, a personalized dress shirt and an original photo of Suffolk Raceway "back in the day" with autographs of all the inductees!

The following racers were inducted:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Don Garlits | 2. Ronnie Sox | 3. Bruce Larson |
| 4. Frank LeSure | 5. Hank Hankins | 6. Dave Lewis |
| 7. Bill Gwyn | 8. John Gray | 9. Gary Sessons |
| 10. Don Teague | 11. Dick White | 12. Doug Newby |
| 13. Butch Kernodle | 14. Mark Moreland | 15. Ed Miller |
| 16. Rick Holiday | 17. Jerry Baltes | 18. Jack Bender |
| 19. Stewart Matthews | 20. Kenny Warren | 21. Lee Edwards |
| 22. Pee Wee Wallace | 23. Pete Bryant | 24. Gene Holt |
| 25. James Keaton | 26. Jerry Moore | |

Dates To Remember

- June 13-14** "Mopar Madness"
Virginia Motorsports Park, 8018 Boydton Plank Road, Petersburg, VA 23803
- June 27** "TMC/Hall Dodge Summer Show & Shine"
9am to 3pm - Hall Virginia Beach Dodge 3443 Virginia Beach Blvd., Va. Beach, VA. 23452
- July 10-12** "Carlisle All-Chrysler Nationals"
Carlisle Fairgrounds
Carlisle, PA

Club Officers

President

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TMC on the Web
<http://www.tidewatermoparclub.com>

Newsletter Editors

Chris and Bob Yates

TMC MEMBER RIDE OF THE MONTH

OWNER: *Bob Kinker*

RIDE: *1964 Plymouth Fury*

ENGINE: *440ci 4bbl*

TRANSMISSION: *727 Torqueflite Transmission*

REAREND: *8 3/4 3.91 Powertrax locker*

Article by: Bob Kinker and Photos by: Chris Yates

My saga started in the early 1970's. I needed a car and (of course) had little money. A friend of mine owned a local junkyard/used car dealership, so I went and checked out the offerings. I was drooling over a 1968 Chevelle, 327 with a 4-speed that I could not afford, when my buddy Dale steered me to a 1964 Plymouth Sport Fury. It needed a little body work, but it had a 383/335 horse V-8 under the hood. The interior had buckets with the auto in the floor, it ran great and it was cheap! Needless to say, I bought it and loved every minute I had it. The old girl wasn't the fastest car around, but it was no slouch either. I didn't realize it then, but the Mopar affliction was starting!

I don't remember where that car went, but I missed it! A succession of Pontiacs, Chevys, & Olds followed but the

Sport Fury's memories stayed with me. In the late 1970's when I was in the Navy and broke as usual, my car up and died. Lucky for me, my Aunt had a car she stopped driving and it had been parked for several years. She knew of my situation and gave me the car. This was my



second 1964 Plymouth. It was a medium blue Plymouth Fury 4-door with a slant 6 and automatic.



The car was in great shape, it only had 50,000 miles on the odometer and I knew it would last a while. I drove that car for 4 trouble free years.

Over the years I never stopped thinking about those 1964 Furys and knew I would love to have one again. So I started looking for one. Quickly I discovered that they were hard to find in this area, so I started searching the Auto Trader, the Trading Post and eventually E-Bay on-line. Over the last 9 years I found some that I could afford. So I started collecting them, some from as far north as Michigan and others from as far south as Florida. Over the years have bought and sold 8 or 9 different 1964's until finding the ones that were keepers.

As many of you know last year I had a knee replacement surgery. During my recovery I had time to think. Street racing was the thing back in the day and was very exciting. I decided that I wanted to recapture that part of my misspent youth, only this time do it on the drag strip and not on the street. Of course no car but a 1964 Plymouth would do.

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TMC SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

BUSINESS: Virginia Motorsports Park
LOCATION: 8018 Boydton Plank Rd.
Petersburg, Virginia 23803
SERVICES: ¼ Mile Drag Strip
GENERAL MANAGER: Bryan Pierce
TMC P.O.C.: Marc Wesler (804) 862-3174

*Article by "Butch" Hora and Photos provided by VMP
Photo of Ed Miller's wheel stand by Bob Wenzelburger*

The relationship with Virginia Motorsports Park, (VMP) and the Tidewater Mopar Club, (TMC) started 7 years ago. Past President Bill Larent was approached by General Manager Bryan Pierce at a Chrysler Classic event and was asked if the club would be interested in doing a show at their track. The rest is history. TMC has since enjoyed using the track for the last 6 Mopar Madness shows and show #7 is set for it's best date yet, June 13-14th, 2009!



If you have never been to VMP, then you are really are missing out. There is nothing in Virginia that comes close to the state-of-the-art 500 acre complete racing facility. VMP is home to some of the country's hottest racing action that includes a sanctioned National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) ¼ mile drag strip, a Mud Bog pit, a Motocross track, Autocross course, Truck and Tractor Pulls, Family ATV Park and a newly constructed



BMX track.

VMP's quarter mile drag strip hosts a wide variety of racing events that feature top fuel dragsters, funny cars, jet cars, street cars, trucks, big rigs, motorcycles and monster trucks. The track's main grandstands can seat over 23,000 spectators and features over 60 acres of pit space!



The strip is host to the Virginia NHRA Nationals, which is part of the NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series bringing championship drag racing to central Virginia each October. What is really cool is that every ticket is a pit pass! This allows race fans to get up close and personal with racing stars like Ron Capps, John Force, Ashley Force Hood and Tony Schumacher.

Some of the other specialty events that the park hosts include American Drag Racing League, Nite of Thrills, the East Coast Truckin' Nationals, Mopar Madness, Little Guy Nationals, NHRA Lucas Oil Series, Virginia Bikefest and the Mid Summer Bike Bash to name a few. The Park also features a weekly drag racing program in which bracket racers from all over Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina compete.

The Mud Bog is home to some of the dirtiest action in racing. It's two tracks feature over 200 feet of mud slinging challenges. Their mile and a quarter Motocross track hosts state and local competitions which is open seven days a week to the riding public. The new Family All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Park offers over 250 acres of riding space, a pavilion, picnic area, snack bar and showers. There are 3 trails for beginner, intermediate

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Last November, I noticed an ad for a 1964 Fury Street/strip car that ran in the 11.80's. It was a freshly built car and the pictures looked good. I contacted Jon and Kevin Grasson expecting it to have already been sold. They had built the car in '07 and were having a ball with it. They wanted to tub it, install a narrowed Dana 60, a cage and add more power to get in the 10's. But instead, they bought a 1964 Dodge "Bounty Hunter" clone that was a turn key 10 second car. So after several phone calls, finally in January, Bob Greene and I went to go get her. I was ecstatic when I first saw the car, it looked better in person than it did in the pictures. A quick test ride was taken and the transaction was concluded. .

Some of the modifications that have been done to the car are: 1972 B body k-frame which moved the engine back 1.5 inches, a 1972 440 warmed over, a 727 auto built by Performance Automatic, B&M ratchet shifter, a 8 3/4 braced rear with a 3.91 powertrax locker and wild-wood front disc brakes with 11" rear drum to slow it down.



In March, Scott and Dean and I took it to Virginia Motorsports Park. The helmet I ordered had not arrived, and the spare that Scott brought didn't fit. So, I didn't get to drive the car. Scott graciously volunteered to test it out and he had it running close to it's best times. After running the snot out of it the review was very favorable. The car hooks up good and run down the track straight. I was very happy! At the Little Guy Nationals, I took my car down the strip for the first time. Boy, what a rush! The thrill of speed that I was craving was back.

I want to say "thanks" to Jon & Kevin Grasson for building a nice solid ride and selling it to me, Jon at Ecoformance in Portsmouth for mounting my new tires, to Scott for volunteering to run my car and last to Bob Green for being my copilot on the trip to pick up the car.

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and advanced riders. This year they have opened a newly constructed 1,100 foot BMX track that will feature both novice and pro courses that will host both local and national level events.

Remember that as a TMC member you can receive a \$5 discount on Friday night "Streetwars" admission tickets for you and everyone in your car!



The staff working the track; (left to right); Marc Westler (track manager), Reid Kidwell (Marketing Assistant), "Cocky" Tina Lindsay (Track Mascot and Business Administrator), Ecko McDonald (Event Administrator), Bryan Pierce (General Manager) and Travis Hill (Facility Manager) invite you to come and check out the facility. For a complete listing of upcoming events and prices check out their website at www.virginiamotorsports.com



Don Garlets' Hemi Powered Mopar Dragster was in attendance at the "Little Guy Nationals!"

President's Corner

The May 2009 Tidewater Mopar Club (TMC) meeting was held on May 12th at Hall Virginia Beach Dodge with 26 members present. Our special guest speaker was Neil Renvyle, the owner of a new Maaco Auto Paint Collision and Repair (one of TMC's new sponsors) next to NAS Oceana. Neil, a longtime Mopar owner and past President of the old Scat Pack Club gave an informative slide presentation to club members about the history of MAACO; services provided by his shop and answered everyone's questions. I learned that Anthony A. Martino, the man who started MAACO, years before had also started AAMCO, his first business, (get it A.A.M.Co. then M.A.A.Co.). Neil is highly motivated and his experienced crew does fantastic work. So, go and check out their facility and some of the work they are doing. Remember, TMC members get an even better deal using their club card for an additional 10% discount on parts and labor!

The main event for May was the club's participation in the "Little Guy Nationals" at Virginia Motorsports Park (VMP) on May 15-17th. Despite the bad weekend weather forecast, the club made plans for a TMC cruise to the track Saturday morning. Of course, veteran's like TMC lifetime member Ed Miller, a NHRA 1967 Super Stock World Champion and a 2009 Suffolk Raceway "Little Guy Nationals Hall of Fame" inductee arrived on Friday. Also

a couple of the club's newest drag racers, TMC's Vice-Prez Bob Kinker and Scott Smith



showed up early to get some track experience during test and tune. Later in the afternoon, I arrived with the club's trailer to set-up the club's show site. Bryan Pierce, General Manager of VMP set us up a tent in a choice spot at the end of the grandstands, next to the track (25 ft from the restrooms!) and beside the pits. We didn't have to walk far to watch some cool high speed drag racing. When A.J. and the cruise cars rolled on to the show field that morning it was overcast. But the sun broke through and shined once the 25 Suffolk Raceway "Little Guy Nationals Hall of Fame" inductees lined up at the "Christ-



mas tree". Unfortunately Sunday, Mother Nature won the race and the event closed up early that afternoon. All and all the show was a

big success and good time was had by all the 27 club members and guests that received free spectator passes.

For some pics of the show, go to:

<http://rides.webshots.com/album/572261861zYyHNNH>

TMC's big event of the year, Mopar Madness 2009 at Virginia Motorsports Park (VMP) June 13-14th is here! Our Spotlight Sponsor for the month of June is VMP and our guest speaker for our meeting on 6/9/09 at Hall Dodge, 7:00 pm will be the General Manager, Bryan Pierce. So if you have any questions about the show that would be the time to ask them. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the show!

Oh by the way, our sponsor, Hall Virginia Beach Dodge was named the #1 Dodge Dealer by Chrysler for the month of April 2009 in a 3 state area! Congratulations to Hall Dodge. Mark your calendars for Saturday the 27th of June for the 2nd Annual Hall Dodge Summer Car Show. It is going to be a big family event with music, car show trophies and of course Scott and Gary's famous pig BBQ!

Remember for all of the latest information on upcoming shows you can always check out our website at <http://www.tidewatermoparclub.com/> Just for your info, as of May 31, 2009, TMC membership count is 112!!!

Mopar to ya,
"Butch" Hora President



Chris Yates made a recent trip to the "Crusin Ocean City" event in Maryland and took just a few (1200+) pictures! Here are some notable Mopars. Great weekend event, if you get a chance to attend in the future.



2009 Tidewater Mopar Club Membership Card Sponsors:

<u>Business</u>	<u>POC</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Discount</u>
Hall Dodge www.halldodge.com	Scott Benson	502-8450	10% Parts/labor
Magnum Machine	Kurtis Bosh	424-1440	10% Labor
Beach Radiator www.beachradiator.com	Glenn Davis	437-7800	10% Parts/labor
Oceana Muffler www.oceanamuffler.com	Ernie Hill	422-0944	10% Parts/labor
Gene's Transmission (Norfolk) www.genetransmissions.com	Wayne Dunham	461-3530	10% Parts/labor
Maaco Paint Shop (Oceana) www.maaco.com	Neil Renvyle	425-5600	10% Parts/labor
H & T Collision (Body Shop)	Hank Fassler	498-3051	10% Parts/labor
Herb's Parts www.HerbsParts.com	Herbert Reynolds	302-376-8508	Best Price Available
Flatlanders Media Blasting	Aaron Bloch	440-1932	10% Labor
VA Motorsports Park www.VirginiaMotorsportsPk.com	Bryan Pierce	804-862-3088	\$5.00 Discount (Friday)
Mancini Racing www.ManciniRacing.com	Wes Sheehy	800-843-2821	Best Price Available
Amsoil Independent Dealer www.lubedealer.com/ajs	AJ Schneider	285-8299	10% on Amsoil Products
Hart Architectural Signage	Rick Hart	420-5626	10% Materials/Labor
Freedom Mechanical, Inc.	Harry Paul	486-5896	10% Parts/Labor

