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July 27, 2018

We're preparing an upcoming episode of our history podcast, ***Before Your Time*** about the history of auto racing in Vermont – and we want to hear from you!

***What does Vermont racing mean to you?***

Call our Google Voice number and leave a short message, and we may use your voice in our upcoming episode. The number is: (802) 622-1492

We'll share the link here when the episode goes live in September, so check back!

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**SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE ENEWS!**

If you visit the VHS tent at any of our [upcoming auto-themed events](#), let us know you get our Auto Racing Enews & we'll give you a great prize as our thanks.

**SPECIAL EXHIBIT HOURS**

The *Anything for Speed* exhibit will be open the Second Saturday of each month.



**Track Walk at Devils Bowl  
August 4, 1:00 pm  
Devil's Bowl Speedway, West Haven,  
VT**

Join us for a great afternoon celebrating the history of the track. Learn about the history of racing in the area, explore all the parts of the track, and learn what it takes to keep a dirt track running in Vermont today.

**Vermont Antique & Classic Car Meet  
August 11, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Farr Field, Waterbury, VT**

Stop by the VHS booth at this 61st annual event hosted by Vermont Automobile Enthusiasts. Play auto racing trivia, learn more about our Anything for Speed exhibit, or just chat with VHS staff.

**Old Timers Night at Bear Ridge  
Speedway  
August 18, 6:00 pm  
Bear Ridge Speedway, Bradford, VT**

The VHS will be onsite at Bear Ridge Speedway for a night of racing featuring the New England Antique Racers. Check out our tent for information on our exhibit and try your hand at some auto racing trivia for prizes.

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**Spotlight On: Devil's Bowl  
Speedway**

The History Center will be closed July 27 and August 16.



**A BIT ABOUT BEAR RIDGE**

When racecar owner George Barber visited his newly-purchased land in 1966 to lay out his planned fifth-mile track, he startled a bear from its hiding place. Watching it run away, he knew he had his name: Bear Ridge.

Barber built the small track to run the cars that no longer had a home at other Vermont tracks. Newer, more competitive racecars had crowded out the older style coupes, which still had a place in peoples' hearts but were simply not fast enough. Charles V. Elms, Sr. managed the track from its first day and soon bought it from Barber. Bear Ridge remains in the Elms family to this day.

The track expanded to a quarter mile, but never paved its dirt surface and never ended its coupe division. It still runs divisions today that look much like they did in the middle of the century – with newer cars right alongside.

*Photograph: Bear Ridge Speedway, c. 1968. Photograph from the Cho Lee Collection, courtesy of Lloyd Hutchins.*



Vermont has always had close ties with neighboring states' race circuits. When Devil's Bowl opened in West Haven in 1967, it drew New Yorkers as well as Vermonters. Charles "C.J." Richards built Devil's Bowl after the failure of a nearby Fair Haven track, Fairmont Speedway. Richards owned Fairmont at the end of its run and took lessons from his time there to Devil's Bowl, which served as a lynchpin in the recently founded Champlain Valley Race Association.

The track opened with a clay surface, but was paved in 1971, at which time its Sunday night feature became the final exclamation point on five nights of racing across the north country. The surface went back to dirt and back to asphalt again over the decades, and was converted back to dirt for the 2018 season.

*Photograph: C.J. Richards, Vince Quenneville Sr., and Bob Strunk of the Burlington Free Press in a victory lane ceremony, circa 1972. Photograph courtesy of Devil's Bowl Speedway.*

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## **JOIN THE VHS FAMILY!**

Your membership will support the *Anvthina for Speed* exhibit and

complementary programs, and others like it!

We offer different membership levels and benefits for individuals and families of all sizes. [Learn more here.](#)

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