



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

November - 2014

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, December 3, 2014

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The Quiet, Peaceful Life of the Track Owner



November 5—Proving once again that you never know who you're going to meet in The Villages, we were treated to a spirited overview of what it's like to own and operate race tracks. John and Mary Ostdiek, part-time residents from Minnesota, shared their experiences as promoters, owners, and operators of Elko Speedway in Elko, Minnesota and Raceway Park in Shakopee, Minnesota.

John stepped us through the behind-the-scenes activities that go into running race tracks, including the managing of payrolls, insurance contracts, grounds maintenance, material inventory, labor scheduling, legal coordination, special fan activities, and the often-overlooked tasks of promotion. Since race track promotion seems to be a major problem here in Central Florida, all of us listened closely as he covered the steps they took to put people in their seats, including radio station spots, newspaper ads, direct mail, and the fascinating world of novelty races (school bus racing, bus jumps, bicycle races, flag pole racing, trailer races, chain races, midnight/lights out races, and even card box races for the kids).

After running Elko for 20 years and Raceway Park for 25 years, John and Mary had compiled a long list of fascinating anecdotes and stories, a few of which they shared with us. These included their experiences in promoting rock concerts, to their hosting of events that included some of the all time greats of NASCAR fame like Buddy Baker, Bobby and Davey Allison, and Dale Earnhardt. John added excitement to his remarks by showing video clips of several of their events, including an Enduro event with a \$10,000 purse in which nearly 200 entries ran for 300 laps.

All in all, it was another great night, and introduced us to a whole new dimension in motorsports management!



December 3 Meeting Preview A South of the Border Experience!

For the second consecutive month, our special guest speaker comes from our ranks. Paul Barth will step to the podium and verbally give us a wild ride through the trials and tribulations of La Carrera Panamericana, the Pan Am road race held each year through some of the roughest country in Mexico. The Pan AM is described as “the last open, top-speed road race of its kind in the world.” This excerpt from the event’s website gives you a pretty good feel for what it’s about: “The Pan Am is a combination of serious racing and adventure. It is a true test of driving and mechanical skills, stamina, and patience. Most importantly, perhaps, it is an opportunity to see a beautiful country and meet its gracious people. You will be their hero! These memories and the friends you’ll make will endure forever.”

Paul will talk us through his experience as a competitor in this grueling event a few years ago, and will provide video footage designed to bring the event to life! By the way, Paul wasn’t just taking a joy ride...he and teammate Robin Bazil finished 52nd out of 76 entries (11th in their class) in the 2001 event, piloting a Chevy Nova. A wreck cut their finish short!

Come out and hear Paul share his story of this incredible event. He may even add some commentary about his Indy racing experiences!



A Trip to Tommy Small’s Place

November 2—It was a great day for a trip, and a contingent of club members took advantage of the splendid weather to join The Villages Region-Antique Automobile Club of America on a field trip to Dade City to view Tommy Small’s incredible collection of vintage automobiles and assorted memorabilia. Billed the “Tommy Small Hot Dog Soiree,” the day proved to be one of our most memorable, and one that those who were not able to make the trip this time will look forward to in the future. Tommy is pictured at right, serving up a tasty dish for one of his visitors.

Here and on the following page are a few candid shots from the day’s experience...



A Trip to Tommy Small's Place (Cont'd)

More photos from Tom Horrmann...



The Future of NASCAR! (The Pool Hall Siren's Gonna Really Get a Workout)



The 2014 Nationwide series Champion has been crowned, and as expected through most of the year, it's William Clyde Elliott from Dawsonville, GA. (also known as "Chase"). Maybe this is proof that it's in the genes, or maybe it's proof that his dad's an excellent teacher, or maybe it just illustrates that this kid is a great talent, but no matter how you view it, Chase Elliott is one of the wave of young drivers creating the future of NASCAR.

Chase turned 19 on November 28, but that doesn't mean he's anywhere near being a novice racer. He's been competing—and winning—in "the big leagues" for five years now, and has multiple wins in every year since 2009. He's won the Snowball Derby, he's won in the Truck series and in ARCA, and he's won three times in the Nationwide series this year.

If you've ever had a chance to meet him, you'd be impressed with his demeanor and his personality. In fact,

his November 10 Tweet on the eve of Veterans' Day kind of sums up his overall style: *"No way to express the amount of respect I have for those who have served, are serving, and will serve to protect our freedom. Thank you."* Kind of refreshing coming from an 18-year-old guy with a lot on his mind!

But back the gene theory for a moment...there's something to be said for the father-son pairings who have conquered NASCAR's highest levels. Bill and Chase Elliott are the fifth father-son duo to accomplish this feat in NASCAR history, joining the likes of Lee and Richard Petty, Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Dale Earnhardt Jr., David and Larry Pearson, and Ned and Dale Jarrett on this lofty plane. We happen to believe that with some breaks and some success in finding the right sponsorship levels, there might be a sixth entry into this list in the future—Randy and Corey LaJoie! Like so many of the younger wave of drivers, Corey has what it takes for greatness, we believe.

A Visit from “The Comeback Kid”

November 5—NASCAR has a “King,” and so does Florida. In our case, the King is our own club Godfather Dick Anderson, the longtime “King of the Florida Short Tracks.” As many of you know, Dick has been in retirement mode since 2010, but earlier this year the racing bug returned in full force and propelled him to announcing his third comeback. And, as those of you who know Dick well can attest, he doesn’t take those kinds of things lightly. About six months ago, he started building the race car that will take him back into competition on Central Florida’s short tracks early in 2015—a magnificent Open Wheel Modified chariot that can only be described as “a race car too beautiful to race!” Dick joined us at our November meeting to show off his new project, and it was a real showstopper. (Dick is pictured in the photo above right discussing the car and his plans.)



Dick announced that the new car’s first race was set for Nov. 22, the 100-lap event the night before the Governor’s Cup, with a guest driver (see article on the next page for an update). Dick also reported on plans to begin his on-track comeback at the start of the 2015 racing season. Our group will continue to be represented with our logo on the car, and our sponsorship contribution will be helping Dick with race expenses. Be sure to check out his new website—www.ShortTrackKing.com.



Prediction Row—How’s That for a Chase!



OK...it’s all over but the shouting (and there’s quite a bit of that going on around the internet and on Sirius/NASCAR radio) and Shirley Birchwale has captured bragging rights for the coming year. Even though she was tied for second in total points, her three winning predictions trumped the two scored by John Angiolo and David Vanderwall. Here’s the final tally:

Predictor	Total Pts.	No. of Winning Predictions
Shirley Birchwale	356	3
John Angiolo	384	2
David Vanderwall	334	2
Mike Anderson	356	1
Janine Woodsford	337	1
Syd Baker	302	0

Come out and watch Shirley claim the trophy at our February 7, 2015 Hall of Fame event!

Hall of Fame Night Set for February 7

Janine Woodsford and her committee have been hard at work with the preliminary stages for our eighth annual Hall of Fame Induction. Mark the date—Saturday, February 7—and plan to be there for what always is a grand night for our group. This year’s event will feature keynote remarks from one of the best known figures in International Speedway Corporation’s administrative ranks, Eddie Roache. As many of you know, Eddie recently retired from the position of Images and Archives Manager for ISC, and has been a staple in motorsports journalism for over 40 years. He was Field Editor South for **Stock Car Racing Magazine** in the 1970s, Motor Sports Editor for the Scripps-Howard daily newspaper **The Hollywood (FL) Sun**, and he’s authored **Florida Motorsports Retrospective Pictorial Books Vol. I and II**. In addition to that, Eddie has been a freelance journalist for Goodyear, NASCAR Newsletter, and Daytona 500 programs, as well as a consultant on numerous books, including **History of the American Speedway** (Allan Brown), **NASCAR Families** (Herb Branham), and **Sebring: The Official History** (Ken Breslauer).

Here are some of the details for the event...Janine will be providing updates at the December and January meetings. See her at the meetings to reserve your spot...It’s gonna be another great night!

2014 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION AND AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, Feb 7, 2015

La Hacienda Recreation Center

Door Open at 5:30 Dinner Served at 6:00

Dinner Catered by Sonny’s BBQ

\$5.00 Per Person

BYOB

The Turkey Run—A Festival of Cars and Excitement!



Mike and Wendy Touchette represented the club at this 4-day annual motor-head extravaganza at Daytona International Speedway. With cooperating weather and a full field of displays and entries, it was a sight to behold, with Wendy reporting over 6000 cars on display, many of which were restored classics and “Rat Rods.” Here are a few of Wendy’s favorite photos...



The 49th Annual Governor's Cup Not a Good Day for the Home Team



November 22 & 23—It was shaping up to be a magnificent weekend for the interests of our group. First and foremost, club Godfather Dick Anderson was set to run his brand new No. 7 Modified on its inaugural competitive event, with proven and highly-skilled Augie Grill behind the wheel. After taking a close up look at this expertly crafted machine at our November 5 meeting, we were primed to see our logo once again showcased in the winner's circle. Unfortunately, Mother Nature didn't see it that way, and instead launched a steady rain that forced postponement of the event until sometime in 2015. By the way, the No. 7 placed unofficially at the top of the speed charts during Friday's practice session. It was shaping up to be another landmark race for us!

Then, on Sunday, the Governor's Cup 200 was set with a field that included 37 Super Late Models, four of which had strong connections to us. First, there was heavily favored Wayne Anderson, a three time winner of the prestigious event. Wayne had a comfortable lead until about lap 130, when an oil leak forced him out. Jeff Choquette, who piloted one of Dick Anderson's cars to a commanding victory in our club's first road trip back in 2007, also led much of the event before an incident with Augie Grill (yeah, the same one) led to Choquette's disqualification. Our 2014 Scholarship winner Anthony Cataldi also wrecked out on lap 60, leaving TJ Duke as the only other Club connection running. Duke's car was originally Dick Anderson's No. 92; he finished ninth after running near the front.

Local Racing Corner

As we've mentioned quite a few times in the past, these tracks represent the local roots of racing and they need our support! If you've been to an event at any of these tracks recently, you'll no doubt agree that attendance is down. Car counts are down as well, and it's easy to see that either of these facts represents a cause-and-effect situation. If the cars don't come, neither will the fans, and it's becoming a downward spiral that can only lead to the closing of tracks here in Central Florida. We've already lost two this year (Columbia and Putnam County), and our "home track" (Citrus County Speedway) is in trouble. Most of the others are struggling. So, let's do our part to keep the sport alive! These tracks are where the future big-league drivers cut their teeth, and they need us in the stands. Remember...without these tracks, there'd be no NASCAR!

Track	Location	Telephone	Website URL
Original Speedway Park	Fruitland Park	352-348-4336	originalspeedwaypark.com
Citrus County Speedway	Inverness	352-726-9339	citruscountyspeedway.com
Bubba Raceway Park	Ocala (Zuber)	352-622-9400	bubbaracewaypark.com
New Smyrna Speedway	Samsula	386-427-4129	newsmyrnaspeedway.org
Orlando Speedworld	Bithlo	407-568-1367	orlandospeedworld.org
East Bay Raceway Park	Tampa (Gibson)	813-677-7223	eastbayracewaypark.com
Marion County Speedway	Ocala	352-812-3922	ocalamicrospeedway.com
Auburndale Speedway	Winter Haven	863-551-1131	auburndaleracing.com
Punta Gorda Speedway	Punta Gorda	941-575-7223	puntagordaspeedway.com
Desoto Super Speedway	Bradenton	941-748-3171	desotosuperspeedway.com
Bronson Motor Speedway	Bronson	352-486-2763	facebook.com/ bronson.speedway

Preserving Racing History

As our members know, we take great pride in our support of local racing. And, as you can tell from many of the speakers we've had visit us at our meetings, you know we take great pride in doing whatever we can to preserve (and celebrate) the history of racing, no matter what type of racing attracts your attention.

We've had some of the greats visit with us, from our own "Godfather" Dick Anderson to the incomparable Buzzie Reutimann and his brother Wayne, to Eileen Daniels of NHRA fame and our own Eric Jones, as well as some of the true pioneers of the golden years of stock car racing, like Buster Burt and Buddy Pearce. Along the way, we've even had the great pleasure of spending time with NASCAR greats like Marvin Panch and Geoff Bodine. As the saying sometimes goes, we've been around.

Through all of our events and activities, though, one thing has remained constant...we've supported local racing and we've provided a forum for racing historians to share their memories with us. At our 2013 Hall of Fame night on January 11, you'll recall we were fortunate to have Sport Fishing celebrity George Poveromo and distinguished film producer Steven Brack join us to reminisce about the glory days of stock car racing in South Florida, and to share a few stories about the antics and accomplishments of heroes like Bobby Brack and Dick Anderson. It was a great night for us, and it fell right in line with what we're all about.

We didn't know it at the time, but the Poveromo/Brack team had a historic venture on the drawing boards...and they just recently launched it. Their project is an initiative that will further preserve a major portion of Florida's racing history. It's titled the "South Florida Stock Car Archives," and it's a venture that showcases over a quarter million original negatives shot at Medley, Hollywood, Hialeah, Palm Beach, and Miami-Hollywood speedways between 1958 and 1986, as well as the Golden Gate Speedway Governor's Cup events from 1967 through 1982. The collection was acquired from the estate of legendary Florida racing photographer Bobby Day, and it's clearly one of the most prestigious assemblies of historical South Florida racing images in existence today.

Here's an excerpt from the South Florida Stock Car Archives website (www.southfloridastockcar.com) that explains the motivation behind their venture: "Preservation of South Florida's rich stock car racing history is our mission. For historical short track imagery in the state, South Florida Stock Car Archives is Paramount. The short tracks of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties were the breeding ground for some of the greatest stock car drivers in the United States. Bobby 5x5 Day, South Florida's foremost racing photographer of the times, was there week after week to capture all the action. For the first time, his sealed archives are being made available to the public. Our collection contains priceless photographs, some of which haven't been seen in nearly 60 years."

One of the first deliverables produced by the South Florida Stock Car Archives project is the "2015 Hialeah Speedway Calendar," an assembly of 12 classic photo images shot at the legendary South Florida short track. By the way, you'll find some of our own Villages Motor Racing Fan Club Hall of Famers included among the racing dignitaries gracing this historic document.

We salute George and Steven for their initiative...it's not that far removed from what we try to accomplish month after month as we invite racing pioneers to join us to share their history.



In photos: (Left) Hialeah Speedway, courtesy of Karnac; (Right) Steven Brack; (Far Right) George Poveromo in his usual environment.



Your Pit Crew

Jerry Conkle, President/Crew Chief (750-1185)
 Wendy Touchette, Vice President (303-9734)
 Silky Meegan, Corresponding Secretary (259-2029)
 Mike Anderson, Webmaster (217-714-2245)
 Gerry Greim, Recording Secretary (215-630-1402)
 Tom Horrmann, Treasurer/Official Photographer (430-0195)
 Gary Civiletti, Special Events (751-4030)
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)
 Gerry Hafer, Immediate Past President /Newsletter (751-3643)
 Glen Carter, Past President (751-6442)

Christmas Is Coming!

Each year, your Club newsletter tries to be of service to those members looking for unique, distinctive Christmas presents that appeal to the “motor head” or “gear head” in all of this. This year’s item appeals to that mindset, certainly, but it also leans toward the sweet tooth element. It’s a collection of edible chocolate candy gears made from fair-trade organic chocolate, with certified organic flavorings and organic starches. I’m not sure what that all means, let alone their claim that the candy gears are “completely devoid of cornstarch, hydrogenated oil, or artificial flavors or colors.” In any event if you’re looking to impress that certain someone (or maybe just your neighbors), you can find this peculiar item at [etsy.com/listing/109115937](https://www.etsy.com/listing/109115937).

So, if you want some of these goodies for Christmas morning, don’t mess around. The website advises that “Each item in our shop is MADE TO ORDER - TURN-AROUND TIMES VARY.”

By the way, here’s what they look like...you really can eat them!



Conkle’s Corner...

This has been a silly season in NASCAR, not just because Jimmy Johnson didn’t win, but because of the new format.

But it did make a comeback for boxing.

By the time you read this, the Chase will be over and we can all get busy bombarding NASCAR with suggested “tweaks” of the playoff format for next year!



Now, a little humor:

- A lady inserted an ad in the classifieds: Husband Wanted. Next day she received a hundred letters. They all said the same thing. “You can have mine.”
- Then there was a man who said “I never knew what real happiness was until I got married, and by then it was too late.”
- If you want your spouse to listen and pay strict attention to every word you say – talk in your sleep.
- First guy says, “My wife’s an angel.” Second guy says, “You’re lucky, mine is still alive.”

From the Vault



Dick Anderson, a few years ago at Palm Beach Fairgrounds Speedway—Courtesy of Henry McKenzie