



Inductees into The Villages Motor Racing Club's Hall of Fame are, from left, Willie Burkhalter, Dave Colbert, Chuck Burkhalter, Angie Clifton, Matt Bowers, Buzzie Reutimann, Derek Putnam and Mary Anderson. George Horsford / Daily Sun

## BEST OF THE BEST

Motor Racing Fan Club inducts new members into its Hall of Fame

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By Azia Li Forrest

Tuesday night was a special night for The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club.

It was their second annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at Colony Cottage Recreation Center, and the club honored guests who had attended meetings throughout the past year in recognition of their impact on the club.

Glen Carter, club president, said what made the night so memorable was the attendance of legends like Dick Anderson and Buzzie Reutimann.

"We've got some real famous people here," said Carter, a resident of the Village of Summerhill. "Buzzie is a star and Dick has won so many races."

Reutimann, of Zephyrhills, has been racing since he was 13 years old. To him, being inducted was like winning a race, he said.

“At 13, I never imagined I would be honored by my peers,” he said. “Racing teaches you a lot – the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. I race because I enjoy it, and you think about it touching people’s lives.”

Anderson, a Wildwood resident and past inductee, was at the ceremony to support his wife, Mary, who was being inducted.

“I’ve been racing since dirt, and women are so important in the sport,” he said. “If you took her (Mary) out of my team, it wouldn’t be able to function.”

“I’m very honored,” said Mary Anderson. “I’ve never been inducted before, and the people here are wonderful.”

The youngest inductee of the night was 17-year-old Matt Bowers of Mount Dora, who has been racing since he was 5 years old, and is now on Anderson’s team.

“The adrenaline rush gets your heart pumping at the beginning of the race,” Bowers said. “The thrill of victory is like nothing else.”

Other inductees were Donna Davis, Chuck Burkhalter, Willie Burkhalter, Angie Clifton, Dave Colbert and Derek Putnam.

Larry D. Croom, content director for The Villages Media Group and a past inductee, presented the first Glen Carter Crew Chief Award to Gerry Hafer, a club member, for his dedicated work on their monthly newsletter.

“Gerry puts out an outstanding newsletter,” Croom said. “He puts a lot of time into it. It’s one of the best newsletters I’ve ever seen.”

Croom was asked to present the award because of his 12 years of experience covering auto racing in California, Las Vegas and Florida.

The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club is not all about racing, Carter said. Throughout the year, the club supports charities including Operation Shoebox.

Carter said club members tend to stay active because the group is so active.

“They are real rabid race fans,” he said. “They love racing and they like to have fun.”