



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

April—2015

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, May 6, 2015

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Getting to Know Polaris



April 1—Many of us knew that Polaris was a major name in the world of snowmobiles, but few of us were really aware of how far they had evolved in development of “The Way Out” for motorsports enthusiasts. At our April meeting, we had the opportunity to hear a first-hand account of the extraordinary Polaris story from their Vice President of global

Government Relations, Paul Vitrano (son of club member Chuck Vitrano).

Paul traced the history of Polaris, from the time their first snowmobile rolled out of their Roseau, Minnesota facility in 1955 to their present-day product lines. His remarks covered the Polaris story from snowmobiles, to ATVs, to 4X4s, to commercial and military support vehicles, with some heavy emphasis on his personal passion, motorcycles. In discussion of their motorcycle lines, Paul covered their Indian and Victory products, using fascinating videos of their Victory Factory Racing team in action and their pursuit of a 2014 land speed record at Bonneville (174.414 mph, by the way!)

Also using dramatic video, Paul showcased the Polaris RZR off-road in competition in the Baja 1000, and it was like virtually participating in the experience. His presentation concluded with a video recap of Polaris equipment in the Parker (Arizona) 250 and, again, it was just like being there!

Polaris Industries, Paul noted, has grown tremendously in recent years, and now maintains a U.S. workforce of nearly 4800, with more than 1500 dealerships in the U.S.

Paul came to us from Washington, DC along with his wife Diana and son Pierce, and was joined for the evening by his dad and mom, Villagers Chuck and Donna Vitrano, and an entourage of neighbors. Paul is Vice President of global Government Relations for Polaris Industries, and is former General Counsel for the Motorcycle Industry Council and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, two of the most influential organizations in the world of motorcycling. His service to the motorsports industry, especially in the motorcycling area, has been recognized with a number of distinguished awards. ==>

Getting to Know Polaris (cont'd)

By the way, in addition to describing the Polaris side-by-side motorcycle line, Paul provided some interesting visuals. He recruited some friends to drop in with their spectacular “Slingshot” motorcycles, and it caused quite a stir in front of Colony Cottage. Many movie fans made comparisons to the “Batmobile” vehicles of several years ago, and the undercarriage lighting made the machines stand out even more. Here are some shots of the vehicles on display...



New Board Member—Darren Ivey

April 1—As we announced at the last meeting, club member Darren Ivey (pictured a right with wife Tina) has taken over the duties of Special Events Coordinator previously handled by Gary Civiletti. With Darren’s addition, and with the addition announced in last month’s newsletter of John Angiolo, our Pit Crew now stands at 15 members, including Past Crew Chiefs Glen Carter and Gerry Hafer, and our hard working Hospitality Coordinators, Syd and Nancy Baker.

Darren hails to us from Elgin, Illinois by way of Leesburg, Florida, and is (like the rest of us) an avid fan of racing of all sorts. His motorsports pedigree includes several years of Street Stock competition over at Citrus County Speedway, and he and wife Tina have aspirations to join the RV set in the near future and tour short tracks around the country, as well as NASCAR venues they haven’t yet experienced. Darren is a six-year Army veteran, the father of two sons and a daughter, and grandfather of two grandsons.



Welcome, Darren!

CRA Spring Thunder Regatta

March 21-22—Our group was represented at the Classic Raceboat Association's 2015 Spring Thunder Regatta in Tavares, with Vice President Wendy Touchette and husband Mike flying the club colors (actually, as you'll see in the photos here, they substituted "event colors" in order to assume an official role in the event!)

Wendy reports that the event featured Small Hydros, Small Outboards, Allison & V-Bottom Outboards, Mid Hydros, Flat Bottoms, Speedsters & Runabouts, Big Hydros and Unlimited Hydros, along with a section reserved for RC Boats.

Highlighting her in-depth experience with the crew, pilot, and mechanic of Miss US-36 Vintage Unlimited Hydroplane, Wendy showcased the history of an incredible racing machine, from its 1957 construction, through its 40 years in mothball, to its present day participation in events like this regatta.

Wendy also reports that through contacts made at the event, it looks like we'll have our very first competitive boat racer on hand at a future meeting...more on that later. The next regatta, Wendy noted, is November 14-15...she suggested contacting Mike Roemer for more information on this upcoming event.



Welcome, New Members



Next time you see them, please welcome Steve and Debbie Jones and engage them in their racing interests. Steve and Debbie joined us at our April meeting, and we look forward to their participation in club events in the future.

Another Fantastic NHRA Trip in the Books

March 13—It's become a regular event for us, and each year it just seems to get better. This year, our annual visit to the NHRA Gatornationals Gainesville included 61 members and guests leaving at 8:30 am from The Villages and returning at roughly 7:00 pm—a full day of racing entertainment. Once again, the motorsports gods smiled on our contingent, giving us ample opportunity to tour the pit area, hang out with the crews and drivers, and even spend time with our own Hall of Famer Eileen Daniels in her “vintage car corral.” We even observed another of our Hall of Famers, NHRA veteran Eric Jones (he was there as a spectator, not competing this time around), who was spotted at the venue wearing his “yellow shirt.”

All in all, another great trip experience for the group, as evidenced by these photos courtesy of Wendy Touchette:



May 6 Meeting Preview

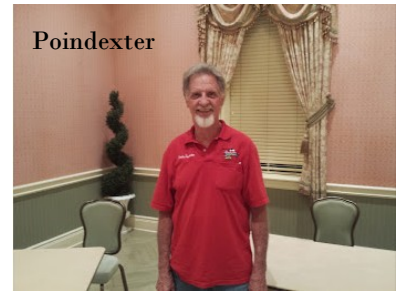
Our May 6 meeting is shaping up to be one for the ages, with a legendary wheelman from the North and two well-known racing historians from the South. It won't be a Civil War rematch, but rather a night of what we expect to be a series of fascinating stories, memories, and anecdotes about racing as it once was.

First up will be Gainesville, Florida's Charles Poindexter, a noted historian in southeast U.S. racing circles. Charles will recount his work in capturing and reporting the history of stock car racing during the 1955-1980 period, as well as his work with Tennessee's Ashway Speedway and Florida's Gainesville Speedway.

Next, Jim "Jimbo" Chadwick will share stories about his operation of Chadwick Race Cars in Pompano Beach and his work with several NASCAR teams and local racing venues back in the day.

Third on the agenda will be "Dynamite" Dave Dion, a celebrated racing veteran from the Northern short track battle-grounds. Dave is in the motorsports record books as the 1976 Northern NASCAR Champion, and was a frequent competitor in the NASCAR Sprint Cup and Busch Grand National series. His multitude of awards and honors in ACT Coors Tour, Busch East, and his multiple wins in the NASCAR North Series have made him a recognized icon in Northern racing circles. Dave is also a member of the Living Legends of Auto Racing Board of Directors.

This is gonna be another wild night for the group...hang on to your seats for this one!



Poindexter



Dion



Chadwick

Open Wheel Modified Action at Showtime

April 11—Our club logo was front and center once again at Clearwater's Showtime Speedway on April 11, with Hall of Famer and club favorite Devin McLeod taking the honors in the 100-lap feature. After setting fast time, Devin started inside row 3 and locked into 4th place through the first half of the race. Taking the lead on lap 44, Devin never looked back and survived a variety of potential catastrophes on repeated restarts, bringing his Dick Anderson-prepared No. 21 home as the class of the field.



By the way, Devin also ran the Legends event earlier in the evening, starting 2nd and finishing 3rd.



Also in the April 11 Showtime event was Dick Anderson's restored No. 7 Open Wheel Modified racer, driven by Polk City, Florida's Josh Todd. With Dick wrenching the car, they were considered a major factor for the race, and ran near the front until a wreck near the finish took them out of contention. Josh started 2nd and finished 16th in the 19-car field.

It's fair to say our club was well-represented for the night!

Prediction Row—2015 Edition



Well, we're getting close to the end of the Spring Segment of our Prediction Row competition, with the West Coast Swing and the Spring Short Track tour now behind us. We've got three predictors already positioned for the Chase Round, with Jim Pappas leading the way in both wins and points. With the exception of the struggling Tony Kennea, all of our Spring Segment predictors have registered wins.

There are four events remaining in this segment, and in the words of Coordinator Silky Meegan, "anything goes." Here's what the points look like after Richmond, with Pappas, Ivey, and Taylor looking like Chase contenders.

Remember—if you want to keep current on the program, all you need to do is visit our website (www.villagesracingclub.com) and select the "Prediction Row" tab at the top of the home page.

| Predictor | Points | Wins |
|-------------|--------|------|
| Jim Pappas | 329 | 4 |
| Darren Ivey | 326 | 3 |
| Dan Gammon | 270 | 3 |
| Lois Taylor | 314 | 2 |
| Kim Garcia | 290 | 2 |
| Tony Kennea | 279 | 0 |

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) seems to be 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 Address |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Original Speedway Park | Fruitland Park | 352-348-4336 | speedwaypark.biz |
| 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 | marioncountyspeedway.com |
| Auburndale Speedway | Winter Haven | 863-551-1131 | auburndaleracing.com |
| Three Palms Speedway | Punta Gorda | 941-444-9461 | threepalmsspeedway.com |
| Desoto Speedway | Bradenton | 941-748-3171 | desotospeedway.com |
| Bronson Speedway | Archer | 352-486-4998 | bronsonspeedway.net |

Prehistoric NASCAR—Long Before Speedways and Stock Cars

(Editorial Note: The following is the first in a series of general interest articles designed to cover motorsports topics that you generally don't think about. Future editions will explore the evolution of racing before and during NASCAR's rise to racing dominance. Stay tuned...Gerry)

It seems like NASCAR has been around forever, and indeed its nearly 70-year place in American sports consciousness supports this notion. That's why many of today's fans tend to be a bit surprised that there is a Florida racing history that predates the December 14, 1947 NASCAR official creation and the February 15, 1948 running of the first official NASCAR-sanctioned event.

What many historians believe led to the eventual creation of NASCAR took place in 1895 in Chicago, with what's been labeled by historians as "America's first motor vehicle race." The event featured a scant field of six cars—Duryeas, a couple of Benz machines, two electric vehicles, and a car built by H. Mueller and Company—and covered about 50 miles, point to point. The winner's race speed was just under 10 mph.

This "successful" event was followed in September of 1896 by what is recognized as the first recorded closed course race in Rhode Island. It also contained a small field of cars, although there are no records available of the event's speed or distance. The significance of

the event is that it signaled, in conjunction with the Chicago event the preceding year, the anchoring of auto racing into America's sports psyche.

Over the next few years, competitive auto racing gradually emerged as a sport of interest to many, and it was quickly recognized that the warm southern climate made states like Florida ideal for nearly year-round racing. So, in 1903, the first official beach race in Florida was held in Ormond Beach and, although not well-attended, it did help nearby Daytona Beach launch itself as a speed Mecca.

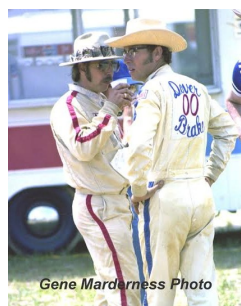
The phenomenon of beach racing grew rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century, and by the 1930s had become an international destination for daredevils pursuing land speed records. In 1935, the 300 mph barrier had been breached by England's Sir Malcolm Campbell (although the official recorded speed on the full beach lap was a mere 276.8 mph). Rough conditions on the shoreline were cited as a deterrent by many of the competitors, and the speed trials were subsequently moved to Bonneville, Utah where the historic salt flats offered better, more stable surfaces.

But that wasn't the end of beach racing in Daytona. In fact, the best was yet to come!

From the Vault



The Changing of the Guard, courtesy of Elliott Racing



Two of the greatest Legends on Dirt, both Hall of Famers



Another of our Hall of Famers, The Chief (Henry McKenzie photo)

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)
 Darren Ivey, Special Events (552-8714)
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
 John Angiolo, Member at Large (414-305-8094)
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)
 Gerry Hafer, Immediate Past President /Newsletter (751-3643)
 Glen Carter, Past President (751-6442)

July Picnic Event Shaping Up

As we mentioned at the last meeting, we're planning something different for our July meeting. More details will be presented at the next two meetings, but we're making arrangements for a "mini car show" to accompany a pre-meeting picnic outing at the Colony Cottage pavilion. We expect to have several race cars on display, with their owners/drivers on hand to talk about their racing programs.

As always, we'll need volunteers to not only set up the event, but to assist in the preparation and serving of the filets mignon, prime rib cuts, and lobster we'll be providing (OK...that's not true. It'll be standard picnic fare). So, see Mike Anderson to sign up for the project team.

In Memoriam



Steve Byrnes

April 14, 1959 – April 21, 2015

"In a field of many, he was one of the great ones"

Conkle's Corner...

I don't know about you, but NASCAR is getting boring to me. When I hear the word NASCAR I begin to yawn. This year they changed the rules to reduce the speed, so now it's like restrictor plate racing. Maybe next year they will do away with Sprint Cup and have two xfinity Classes. Or go to four cylinder engines. And they might pass out water bottles to each driver so they can have more cautions.



Now, a little humor

An old geezer who had been a retired farmer for a long time, became very bored and decided to open a medical clinic. He put a sign up outside that said. "Get your treatment for \$500, if not cured get back \$1,000."

Doctor Young, who was positive that the old geezer didn't know beans about medicine, thought this would be a great opportunity to get \$1,000. So he went to Dr. Geezer

This is what transpired. Dr. Young: "Dr. Geezer, I have lost all taste in my mouth. Can you please help me?"

Dr. Geezer: "Nurse, please bring me the medicine from box 22 and put 3 drops in Dr. Young's mouth."

Dr. Young: "Aaagh!! ...this is gasoline!"

Dr. Geezer. "Congratulations! You've got your taste back. That will be \$500."

Dr. Young gets annoyed and goes back after a couple of days figuring to recover his money. Dr. Young: "I have lost my memory. I can't remember anything."

Dr. Geezer: "Nurse, please bring medicine from box 22 and put 3 drops in the patient's mouth."

Dr. Young: "Oh no you don't—that is gasoline!"

Dr. Geezer: "Congratulations! You've got your memory back. That will be \$500." Dr. Young (after having lost \$1,000) leaves angrily and comes back after several more days.

Dr. Young: "My eyesight has become weak—I can hardly see!!"

Dr. Geezer: "Well, I don't have any medicine for that so here's \$1,000."

Dr. Young: "But this is only \$500."

Dr. Geezer. "Congratulations! You got your vision back! That will be \$500."

Moral of story—Just because you're "young" doesn't mean that you can out smart an "old" Geezer!