

# The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

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May, 2007



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## Message from the Crew Chief/President



Our club took a major step last month with the bus trip to New Smyrna Speedway. These types of outings are what we envisioned when we launched the club last fall, and we're all pleased that we were able to fill the bus for what was an exciting night of racing. It was also great to see so many of our members

step forward to join in the sponsorship of the No. 92...the names penned around the club's logo on the hood of the car looked absolutely great. They looked even better under the lights in *Victory Circle* at the race track!

I continue to be amazed and heartened at the way our club is growing. We've added 12 new members in the past month, and we're closing in on the 150 level. More important than the total number, though, is the fact that we've got a club in which everyone is actively involved, and that's a bit unusual for many clubs. From my vantage point, it looks like the sky is the limit on how great this club can be!

*Glen*

## The "Big Deal" in April ... we sponsored a Winner"!

Jeff Choquette, driving The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club-sponsored No. 92 entry, led over 80 laps en route to an impressive win in the April 28 Sunoco Sunbelt Super Series event at New Smyrna Speedway. After qualifying on the pole with a fast time of 17.228 seconds on the half mile asphalt oval, Choquette was awarded a fifth-place starting spot in the inversion draw. He patiently picked off the front runners until taking the lead on lap 44 and never looking back, building a 4-second lead over a highly-talented field of Sunbelt Series drivers.



The April 28 event marked a milestone for The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club, and 66 club members were on hand to celebrate with Choquette and car owner Dick Anderson. Anderson, Wildwood resident and long-time Florida stock car racing legend, welcomed the club into the Speedway's Victory Circle, thanking the club for its support of his racing programs. "We saw a great opportunity for The Villages Club to get closer to the action by joining in sponsorship of our car", he commented in his Victory Circle interview, adding that "New Smyrna Speedway and its General Manager Don Nerone did a great job in hosting the group."



By the way, your can read all about “our driver”, Jeff Choquette, at his website ([www.jeffchoquette.com](http://www.jeffchoquette.com)), and you can find out more about New Smyrna Speedway at ([www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org](http://www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org)).



## Special Events Committee Report

Our raffle tickets are selling pretty well, and we’re past the 100-ticket mark thanks to a surge in sales following Wendy’s reminder that club members can sell tickets to friends and neighbors. As a reminder, the winners will be drawn as soon as all 150 tickets are sold, and I know that many of you are focused on the big prize...the eight hot laps at Daytona. The second and third prizes are nothing to sneeze at either, especially the ride-along Richard Petty item—professional drivers will give you a high-speed perspective of life-on-the-track, and you’ll most likely get to see the wall up close and fast!

The next big event, of course, is the July trip to Daytona International Speedway. The Committee, working with professional travel agents, has organized a two-day package for the July 6 Busch Series race and the July 7 Pepsi 400 Nextel Cup race, including bus transportation to and from The Villages both days. The package includes a number of goodies, with welcome gifts, on-site assistance, and a “Fan Zone” add-on option. The most incredible thing about this package is the price: \$285 per person (\$305 with the “Fan Zone” option) for the whole two days. To make reservations, give Wendy Touchette a shout (430-0239 or email at [mrswmt@comcast.net](mailto:mrswmt@comcast.net)). Seats are still available.

## May Meeting – The Villages Daily Sun

Featured speaker for our next regular meeting (Wednesday May 2) will be Larry D. Croom, Executive Editorial Manager for The Villages Daily Sun. Larry is a long-time NASCAR advocate, and has been covering racing events as a journalist for ten years. The experiences he’ll be sharing with us will no doubt be entertaining, and will show us yet another view of motorsports—the reporter in the trenches. Larry’s indicated that he has organized reporting teams to cover Speed Weeks for several years, so we expect that he’ll have some good, colorful stories about things that go on behind the scenes in “the big leagues”!

Come on out and bring your questions. This is a good opportunity to thank The Daily Sun for its coverage of motor racing, as well as the coverage it’s given to our club.

## Meet Your Fellow Club Members – Bill Wilkie

Our continuing series of exposés this month covers one of our newer Pit Crew members—Bill Wilkie. As we’ve been doing for the last several months, our guerilla reporting team has been systematically revealing the personalities of selected club members, beginning with the Pit Crew/Executive Committee. This month is no exception, as we paint a picture of Bill for you on page 5 of this newsletter. He’s a #48 fan, so he’ll probably sign autographs with a Lowe’s pen (I guess blue and white?)

## Local Racing Corner

Local short track racing is moving right along! Here's the May schedule at our three closest local tracks:

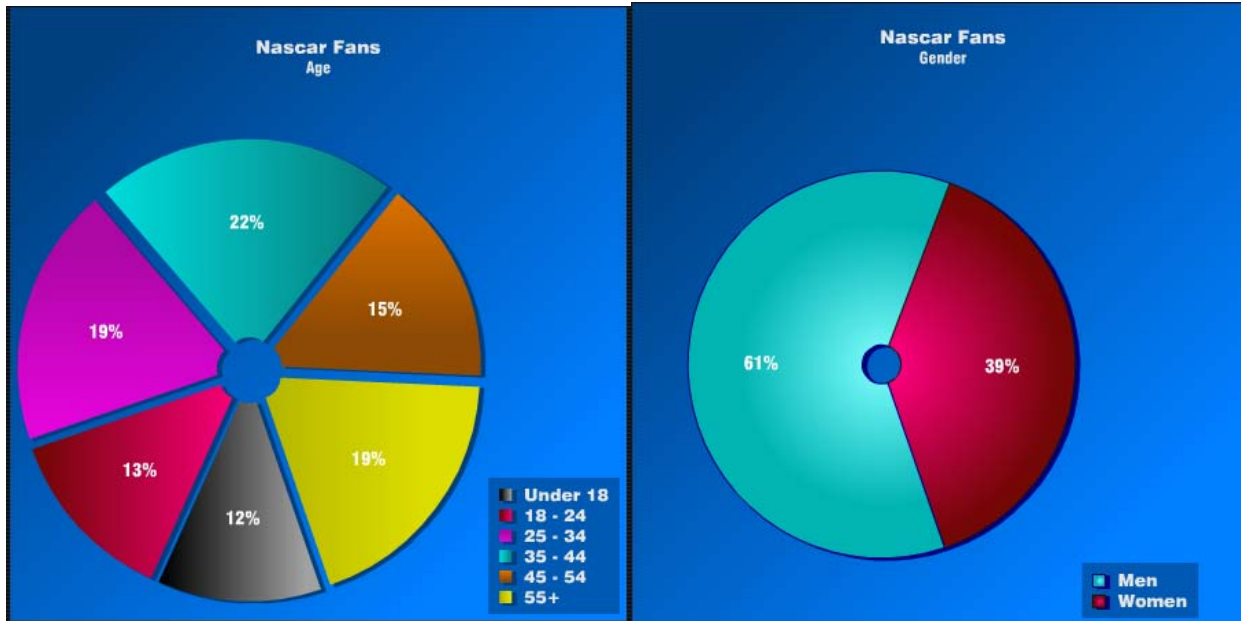
- **Ocala Speedway**
  - **Friday, May 4 – Sunday, May 6, 2007 – Racing starts at 7:30 pm**  
MONSTER TRUCK EXTRAVAGANZA (no regular racing)
  - **Friday, May 11, 2007**  
Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Thunder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock, Street Stock) PLUS – Florida Mini Stock Challenge & Southern Sportsman Series & Kids Bike Races (at half time)
  - **Friday, May 18, 2007**  
Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Thunder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock, Street Stock, Sportsman & Modifieds) PLUS – FAST Pro Truck & Kids; Street Car Challenge & Figure “8” cars
  - **Friday, May 25, 2007**  
Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Thunder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock, Street Stock, Sportsman, & Late Models) PLUS – Florida Mini Cup & (Tire Race)
  
- **Citrus County Speedway (Inverness) – Racing starts at 5:30 pm**
  - **Saturday, May 5, 2007** - 50 Lap Sportsman, FMRA Midgets, Super Late Model, Mini Stock, Street Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers
  - **Saturday, May 12, 2007** - Happy Mother's Day, Central FL Sprints, Street Stock, Pure Stock, V8 Thunder Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers, Fig 8
  - **Saturday, May 19, 2007** - 50 Lap Mini Stock, Super Late Model, Sportsman, Street Stock, Pure Stock, V8 Thunder Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers
  - **Saturday, May 26, 2007** - Open Wheel Modified, Sportsman, Mini Stock, Street Stock, Pure Stock, V8Thunder Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers, Fig 8
  
- **New Smyrna Speedway**
  - **Saturday, May 5, 2007** - STRICTLY STOCK 25, Late Model, Pro-Truck, Sportsman, Super Stock, Mini Stock
  - **Saturday, May 12, 2007** - Mom's Night Out - All Moms Get in FREE (Front Gate Only), SPORTSMAN 50, Late Model, Modified, Super Stock, Mini Stock, Strictly Stock
  - **Saturday, May 19, 2007** - Armed Forces Day presented by Volusia Pennysaver - All Military Personnel get in FREE with ID Card (Front Gate Only), Kids' Bike Races, Kid's Race Car Rides, Enduro 100, Sportsman, Super Stock, Mini Stock, Strictly Stock
  - **Saturday, May 26, 2007** - LATE MODEL 50, Modified, Pro-Truck, Sportsman, Super Stock, Strictly Stock





## So You Don't Need to Look it up!

This month, we're going to look at some demographic stats that I know are keeping many of you awake at night. For example, how many people in your age bracket are NASCAR fans? Or, what is the ratio of male fans to female fans in NASCAR? You know...weighty questions like that.



More from New Smyrna...



**Club Contact Information:**

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## Meet your fellow Club members This Month – Bill Wilkie



This month, we're going to take a "behind-the-scenes" look at the life and times of Bill Wilkie. Bill, as you all know, is one of our newer board members, and has quickly become a valued asset in the formation of our club. His energy level and enthusiasm have been a welcomed addition to our club's "over the wall gang". Let's get to know him a bit better.

Bill and his wife, Marlene, are residents of Poinciana in The Villages, having selected our community after checking out other retirement areas and reaching the same conclusion we all have: there's no place like this to drift through your "golden years". Bill and Marlene moved here in March of 2006, after Bill retired from Sears Holding Corp, (formerly Kmart Corporation) following a 36-year stint in various management and district management positions. Like a lot of us, though, he elected to refrain from full retirement, and is presently well into his next career as Receiving Manager for The Villages Regional Hospital. This, of course, will position Bill well to be the safety director for the yet-to-be-announced "Villages International Speedway" (let's get *that* rumor going!)

Bill and Marlene have been married for 34 years and she, too, has not yet fully embraced retirement life. Marlene works from home for a New York Title Company. One of the things that keeps her (and Bill) occupied is the three grandchildren they've been blessed with (Joshua, 4; Hannah, 1; and Braden, 3 months). You probably recall Bill's son—Buzz—making an appearance at our December meeting to share his experiences as a marketing representative for International Speedway Corp. Bill and Marlene also have a daughter—Michelle—a Real Estate/Estate Planning Attorney in Massachusetts.

Prior to "finding" The Villages, Bill and his family lived in many different parts of the country, from the California Coast to New Hampshire, and somehow along the way became a passionate Pittsburgh Steeler fan. His interest in racing began—as it did with so many folks—when the Daytona 500 was first televised live. Bill became an avid short track fan while living in Massachusetts and Connecticut, going to the weekly Saturday night races at Riverside Park Speedway (which, due to an expanding amusement park, no longer exists). He also regularly visited short tracks in Stafford Springs, Connecticut, and the Lernerville and Jennerstown Speedways in the Pittsburgh area. Bill attended his first NASCAR event at Pocono International Raceway in the early 1980's, and has been hooked ever since. In addition to following the sport, he collects 1:24 scale diecast cars—Marlene's office doubles as their NASCAR room. Incidentally, the room is being redecorated since the February 2 tornado blew out the window and took some cars off the shelves.

Bill's Favorite driver is Jimmie Johnson, and he's been following his career closely since his rookie year. You can imagine how excited he was with the Championship outcome last year!

So, all of you #48 fans—look Bill up at the next club event and shake his hand!