



# The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

## Pit Report - July, 2009

### Inside this issue:

The "Ringmaster" Speaks!	1-2
First Club Scholarship Awarded to Matt	1 & 3
Club Members Take a Wild Ride	3
Club Members in the News	4
Special Events	5
2009 Golf Scramble Recap	5
Local Racing Corner	6
Officer Contact List	7
So you don't have to look it up!	7
Another New Car for The Villages?	7
Odds & Ends:	
• An explanation	8
• 1909 vs. 2009	

### Next Club Trip

*Saturday, August 1 to Volusia Speedway Park. See Page 5 for details, and call Wendy to Reserve your seat.*

## The "Ringmaster" Speaks!



We've all seen the video clip many times. In fact, many of us were even watching the race way back in 1979, when NASCAR made a

giant leap into mainstream televised sports with the February 18, 1979 live coverage of the 21st Annual Daytona 500. What we didn't know at the time, though, as we watched the brawl in the mud that would become a part of NASCAR's history, was that we would eventually come face-to-face with one of the central figures in this legendary drama. As those of you who were with us at our June 24 meeting know, Spruce Creek South resident **Jim Hedlund**, pictured with Crew Chief Carter in the photo at left, had the best seat in the house for the "big fight" and had the opportunity to spend a few minutes of quality time in the Daytona infield

(continued on page 2)

## Scholarship Program Launched

The inaugural edition of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club Scholarship was presented July 4 to **Matt Bowers** (a.k.a. "Our Driver). As many of you know, Matt has enrolled at Lake-Sumter Community College to continue his education while building his racing career. The award presentation took place at a combination birthday/high school graduation party arranged by Matt's parents at their Mt. Dora home attended by a contingent of club members.



Scholarship recipient Matt Bowers (holding plaque), is surrounded by, from left, Rich Freed, parents Deb & Ned Bowers, Glen & Linda Carter, Wendy Touchette, Gerry & Gary Greim, Zoe Ann & Buster Burt, Mike Touchette, and Barbara Freed

(continued on page 3)

# The “Ringmaster” Speaks! (continued from page 1)

with the key players in this drama: Bobby Allison, Donnie Allison, and Cale Yarborough. In fact in the photo at left below, you see Jim (the guy on the left in the orange uniform suit) preparing to engage in conversation with one of the Allison brothers, a move which subsequently cost him a broken finger! Track officials today just don't know how

good they have it! Anyway, Jim was gracious enough to join us for a club meeting to share his recollections of this famous event, and to discuss his long and storied involvement in racing as a NASCAR track worker, track operator, and motorsports journalist. In addition to sharing his memories of Rockford Speedway, where he directed race operations, Jim spoke about his assignments with such well-known publications as Speed Sport News, Stock Car Racing Magazine, and others and his contacts with many of today's prom-

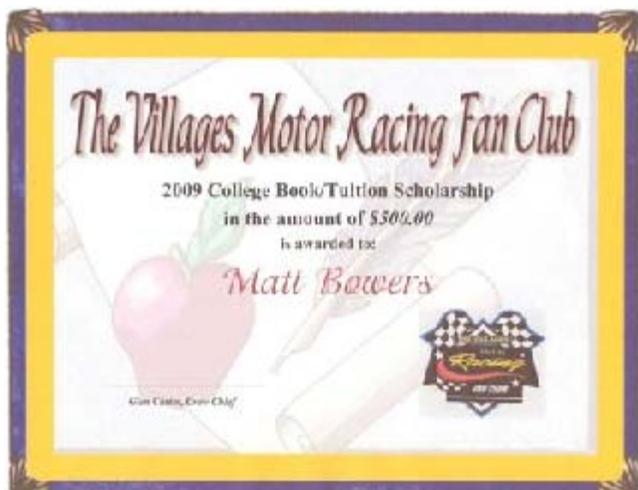
inent NASCAR (like Mark Martin and Matt Kenseth), as well his connections with the stars of yesteryear (like A.J. Foyt, Dick Trickle, Ramo Stott, and, of course, Cale, Donnie and Bobby). He also covered his work as on NASCAR and USAC safety crews at such tracks as Daytona, Riverside, Michigan, Atlanta, Texas, Darlington, Rockingham, and Talladega.

But the Big Story, of course, was his blow-by-blow recap of the last-lap crash and fight in 1979, often referred to as the most pivotal event in NASCAR's history. Here are a few more photos from the June 24 meeting, compliments of Official Club Photographer Tom Horrmann. It was another great night for the club!



Upper Right, a collection of photos from “The Big Fight” that appeared in national publications. Above Left: Jim Hedlund sharing his thoughts with the club; Above Right, Jim and his wife, Lynn; Left, snapshot of an early-career acquaintance of Jim's. Yes, he was young at one time!

## Scholarship Program Launched (continued from page 1)



In presenting the award to Bowers, Crew Chief Carter explained that the scholarship program has been created by the Club as a way to encourage young people with racing interests to continue their education in a field related to the sport. Beginning in 2010, applicants from the Tri-County area will be eligible to apply for the scholarship, as will graduating applicants from outside the area who are related to an active member of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club. The scholarship amount will be set at the beginning of each year depending on projected club finances, and will be published on the club's website along with the programs eligibility criteria and application forms. In the meantime, anyone wanting a copy of this material is asked to contact **Wendy Touchette**, Special Events Coordinator.

## Club Members Take a Wild Ride

Many club members have taken the step of driving a "stock" car, NASCAR-style, at one of the many venues around the country. I think all of you who have done that will agree that it gives you a new perspective on the sport in general and on the talents of the drivers who strap themselves into these awesome machines. If you haven't done this yet, make sure it gets on your bucket list for the near future.

Club Members **Dave Allen** and **Richard Pitts** did just that on June 1, but they took it in a bit of a different direction, taking a ride in an Indy car at Disneyworld Speedway. In addition to experiencing a "great ride," Dave reports that, "It was a lot different than riding in a Sprint Cup Car!" Here are some photos from their day on the track:



Top row, left to right: (1) Heading out on the track (that's Dave in the rear seat), (2) Dave taking part in pre-race ceremonies; (3) Richard, Paul Holtz, and Dave posing for a Sports Illustrated photo shoot. Photo on left: Yeah, they are fast!

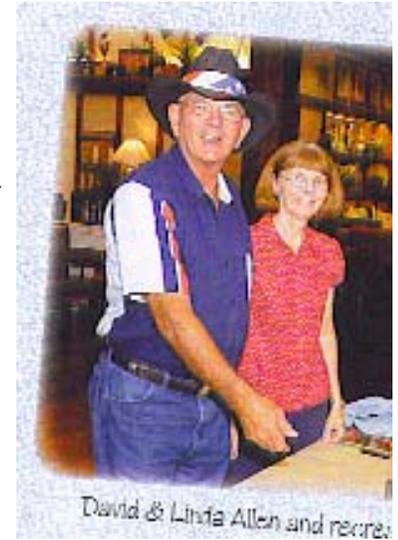
### Club Members in the News...



#### LINE DANCE

Lake Miona Recreation Center  
May 30, 2009

The “Red, White and Blue Line Dance” event May 30, 2009 at Lake Minoa Recreation Center looks like it may have been a wild and crazy night, and the club was well-represented by **Diane and Richard Pitts** (left photo) and **Dave and Linda Allen** (right photo). I’m wondering if there may have been some Richard Petty–edition hats in attendance? In any event, we’ll look to Richard and Diane and the Dave and Linda to give us all some line dancing instruction, perhaps at a future meeting or maybe even while we’re on one of our bus trips!



David & Linda Allen and recrea...



Photo Illustration by Mike Orton / Daily Sun  
Above: Ronald Reagan, the first sitting president to watch a NASCAR race, congratulates Richard Petty on his 20th win following the Firecracker 400 on July 4, 1984. Right: Buster Burt is seen before the first race at Daytona International Speedway in 1959.  
**25 YEARS AGO, BUSTER BURT WITNESSED RICHARD PETTY'S 20TH WIN**

And, who could have missed the photo of **Buster Burt** standing tall, right next (well, not literally, anyway) to The King, The President, and Ned Jarrett in the July 4 edition of the Daily Sun? Rumor has it that Buster was standing by as a relief driver in the event that President Reagan needed Petty for government business.



Here’s our Special Events Coordinator **Wendy Touchette** explaining the new Guest ID Policy to a Villager. (Wendy: Perhaps The Villages should consider having a driver’s meeting to cover these types of things?)



#### Cruising on the Square

Owners show off their classic cars, convertibles

BY ADA LI FORRESTER

THE VILLAGES—once they hear the rumormongers of the engines spectators show it was time to celebrate the Villages 12th annual Cruise-In on Saturday at Spanish Springs Town Square showcased some of the best classic cars and convertibles owned by participants.

Sitting next to each other were Villagers Frank Latocha, Steve Haumann and Bob “Coke” Lee showing off their vintage beauties.

Sitting pretty in pink—and purple—was Latocha’s 1939 Chevy Master Deluxe.

After six years of driving it up and down the coast, the Village of Mianima resident is selling the car to free up more garage space.

“It’s really once on the road,” he said. “It’s actually more like a road car.” Latocha said selling his car is

Steve Haumann of the Village of Sabal Chase stands beside his 1932 Ford Club Convertible at the Car Cruise in

“Big Blue” also has a power trunk, power seats and a flip-down lecture plate.

Haumann has owned it for eight



Bridgeport Recreation Center representative Wendy Touchette explains the guest policies to Allage of Bridgeport at Lake Minoa resident Bob “Coke” Lee as he picks up a guest ID pass for a visiting daughter.

And, once again, Steve Haumann caused heads to turn at the Cruise-In

## Special Events Roundup



Things are heating up for the second half of the year, and we're putting together some exciting and fun-packed trips and events for you. Here are some of the upcoming items:

- **August 1**—We're now taking reservations for our bus trip to Volusia Speedway Park for the Annual Barberville Weiner Nationals. \$25 gets you transportation and admission to what promises to be a great night of good old dirt track racing!
- **Thursday, August 20**—We've been alerted to an event being planned for Hacienda Hills Country Club titled "NFL Players Against Animal Abuse." As we under-

stand it, it's a benefit for local animal rights advocates, and we've made arrangements for several race cars to be on display, along with "our driver" Matt Bowers. Stay tuned for more details!

- **September 5**—Florida Champ Kart League event at Speedway Park in Fruitland Park (Car pool event).
- **October 7**—Ocala Gran Prix Race Day, car pool

trip for a day of you-drive-it racing.

- **November 21**—44th Annual Governor's Cup event at New Smyrna Speedway. **We're still trying to get this event moved to Sunday, 11/22; please help us by writing to the Speedway to express the importance of this schedule change. Contact Gerry Hafer for details.**

*Wendy*

## Second Annual Golf Scramble— A Huge Success!

A total of 60 club members set their racing interests aside for the afternoon of June 20 and took to the links out at the Bacall course. Despite the intense heat (heat index of 114), it was a highly competitive event, with the team of **Richard & Mary Kepsel, Richard Pitts, and Bill Tharp** taking top honors with a tie breaker score of one under. Second place honors went to the team of **Jerry Conkle, Joyce Stone, Jerry Bell, and Ted Cahalane** (also one under), while **Penny Whitt** took closest-to-the-pin honors in the ladies bracket and **Lee Cotton** taking closest-to-the-pin in the men's bracket. Finally, Mulligan drawings went to **Jerry Conkle, Lee Cotton, Richard Kepsel, and Bill Tharp**.

Special thanks need to be expressed to **Dave Colbert** and his team for putting together this great event, and for their quick thinking in arranging to move the picnic indoors! We might be Floridians,

but 114° is 114° no matter what kind of a breeze you have!

Anyway, here are a few photos of the action, thanks to Wendy...



Jerry Conkle, combining the best of both sports!



Inside...cooler is better!



C'mon, Linda...we know the pavement is hot!



Weatherman Mike, checking (hoping?) for rain

## Local Racing Corner

As we've said many times before, one of the great things about living here in central Florida is the access that we have to so many great racing venues within a reasonable driving distance. As we've also said many times before, we need to support these local tracks as much as we can so that they can continue to operate. It's been said that the most expensive seats any race track has are the ones that are empty. So, let's fill them up, and let's wear our yellow shirts and make a statement!

Here's the contact information for many of our local tracks...be sure to check their website for specific schedules.

Location	July Event Schedule
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Ocala Speedway  
 9050 NW Gainesville Rd  
 Ocala, FL 34482  
 (352) 622-9400  
 (www.ocalaspeedway.com)

Racing every Friday night for regular classes



Citrus County Speedway  
 U.S. Highway 41 Two miles  
 south of Inverness at the Citrus  
 County Fairgrounds.  
 (352) 726-9339  
 (www.citruscountyspeedway.com)

Racing every Saturday night for regular classes



New Smyrna Speedway  
 Corner of State Route 44 and 415.  
 P.O. Box 1500  
 New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170  
 (386) 427-4129  
 (www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org)

Racing every Saturday night for regular classes



Orlando Speedworld  
 19164 East Colonial Drive (Highway  
 50 just west of 520 Cocoa cut-off)  
 Orlando, FL 32833  
 407-568-1367  
 (www.OrlandoSpeedworld.org)

Racing every Friday night for regular classes;



Volusia Speedway Park  
 1500 E. State Rd. 40  
 DeLeon Springs, FL 32120  
 386-985-4402  
 (www.volusiaspeedwaypark.net)

Racing every Saturday night for regular classes



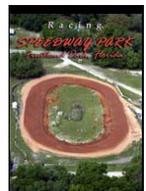
Auburndale Speedway  
 5640 State Road 542 West  
 Winter Haven, FL 33880  
 863-551-1131  
 www.auburndalespeedway.com

Racing every Saturday night for regular classes



Speedway Park- Fruitland Park (Micro  
 Race Track Road and Rt. 466A near  
 The Villages  
 352-326-0303  
 (www.speedwaypark.net)

Schedule is intermittent...see website for specific event dates



Visit our website: [www.villagesracingclub.com](http://www.villagesracingclub.com)

**The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club—Officers**

- Glen Carter, President (751-6442)
- Gerry Hafer, Vice Pres./Newsletter (751-3643)
- Ted Cahalane, Treasurer (751-2638)
- Silky Meegan, Secretary (259-2029)
- Wendy Touchette, Special Events (430-0239)
- Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)
- Linda Carter, Historian (751-6442)
- Mike Touchette, Member at Large (430-0239)
- Dave Bockman, Member at Large (751-0381)
- Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
- Bill Wilkie, Member at Large (350-2080)
- Dave Colbert, Technical Planning (751-3851)
- Buster & Zoe Ann Burt, Senior Advisors (751-4346)
- Tom Horrmann, Official Photographer (430-0195)
- Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (205-8503)

**Another New Car for The Villages?**

It's being called "the most economical car in the world," but it's not yet available here in "The States." Rumor has it that you'll be able to buy one in about a year, at a price of \$600...yeah, \$600. That's even way less than a golf cart! I may buy one just for the heck of it! I don't yet have many of the specs on it, other than the promotional stuff that says it has a 1.7 gallon gas tank that will deliver a range of 404 miles! (That's 258 mpg, folks.) It's top speed range is 74.6 mph, so it's no slouch. It is, though, only a single seat car. Here are some promo shots of it...



You can bet I'll be keeping an eye out for more announcements of this one! In fact, here's a web URL for you to check <http://www.seriouswheels.com/cars/top-vw-1-liter-car.htm>

**So you don't need to look it up...**

Statistics can be equally fascinating and meaningless, depending on your point of view and how you're using them. For instance, if someone said to you, "Hey...over the last ten years, who among active NASCAR drivers has the best finishing record on Super-speedways?" If there's a bet involved, it would be fascinating (and profitable) for you to say Marcus Ambrose. If there's no money involved, then this is just another meaningless (and skewed) piece of trivia.

Name	Races	Avg Start	Avg Finish
Marcos Ambrose	3	25.0	9.0
Brad Keselowski	2	22.5	12.5
David Ragan	11	20.6	13.9
Kurt Busch	35	22.7	14.7
Geoff Bodine	4	25.8	14.8
Dale Earnhardt Jr.	39	14.3	14.9
Tony Stewart	39	14.5	15.6
Kevin Harvick	34	20.3	15.9
Jimmie Johnson	31	10.2	15.9
Jeff Gordon	39	12.2	17.4
Jeff Burton	39	24.5	17.8
Matt Kenseth	39	23.3	17.9
Max Papis	1	43.0	18.0
Clint Bowyer	15	24.9	18.7
Terry Labonte	24	27.8	18.7
Mark Martin	35	15.6	19.2
Ryan Newman	31	18.3	19.7
Elliott Sadler	38	22.3	19.7
Robby Gordon	33	25.7	19.8
Bill Elliott	20	15.8	19.8

But, how about the short (less than one mile) tracks over the past ten years?

Name	Races	Avg Start	Avg Finish
Denny Hamlin	22	12.7	10.0
Jeff Gordon	57	6.4	11.5
Marcos Ambrose	3	19.3	11.7
Kyle Busch	27	15.0	12.1
Dale Earnhardt Jr.	57	16.5	12.4
Tony Stewart	57	14.4	12.5
Clint Bowyer	21	19.8	12.6
Jimmie Johnson	45	13.4	13.5
Kevin Harvick	50	16.8	13.6
Jeff Burton	57	18.5	14.8
Ryan Newman	45	9.0	15.1
Mark Martin	49	16.5	15.4
Matt Kenseth	57	21.2	15.5
Bobby Labonte	57	21.5	16.9
Greg Biffle	40	16.8	17.0

This really is fascinating (and probably meaningless) stuff, but it's fun to look at! These stats are courtesy of Yahoo! Sports.

## Odds and Ends...

This may have happened right here in The Villages...I'm not sure.



*Did you hear about the 83 year old woman  
who talked herself out of a speeding ticket  
by telling the young officer  
that she had to get there  
before she forgot where she was going?*

*Makes perfectly good sense to me.....*

What a difference a hundred years can make! Here are some interesting factoids from 1909...

The average life expectancy was 47 years. Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub. Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone. There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower. The average wage in 1909 was 22 cents per hour. The average worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year. A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year. More than 95 percent of all births took place at HOME. Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee was fifteen cents a pound. Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo. The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30!!!! Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school. Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores. Back then pharmacists said, "*Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health.*"



The 1909 Ford Model F



The 2009 Ford Edge