



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club Special Edition Newsletter

Hall of Fame—Class of 2015

Inside this issue:

The Class of 2015	1, 3-9
Rep. Bill Posey, Keynote Speaker	2
Glen Carter Crew Chief Award—2015	10
2015 Prediction Row Award	10
A Special Guest Drops In!	11
A look at the Trophy	11
Scenes From The Big Night	12-13

Class of 2015

(Row 1, from left: Eddie Roche, Jack Hewitt, Merle Bettenhausen, Paul Vitrano, Jim Chadwick, Charles Poindexter. Row 2, from left: Dave Dion, David Rogers, Mike Brewer, Kenny Brewer, Chuck Kidwell, Ford Easton. Row 3: from left: Larry Moore, Jim O'Connor, Art Fehrman, Pat Brack, Kim Garcia, Cheryl Brewer, Lisa LaJoie.



Our 2015 Hall of Fame Inductees

January 23—It was a bumper crop for us this year, with the induction of 19 new motorsports luminaries to our incredible Hall of Famers. From the legendary Jack Hewitt in January to the quintet of extraordinary racing wives in December, 2015 was another year of great speakers, all with great stories that they shared with us.

Our Hall of Fame is now 124 members strong, and a look at our rebuilt Hall of Fame trophy so skillfully maintained by Tom Hormmann will reinforce the fact that we've covered a lot of ground since we formed in 2006. All of the names engraved on our trophy represent motorsports-related personalities and friends of the sport that have taken the time to spend an evening with us, and our recognition of their interest in us is a small token of our appreciation to them.

The Class of 2015



2015 Hall of Fame Keynote—Rep. Bill Posey



This was our ninth annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, but only the fifth time we've had a Keynote speaker to highlight our event. You'll recall, of course, the first year we took that step, with the late and great Marvin Panch serving in that capacity. With the succeeding years featuring Bobby Brack, Tony Modica, and Eddie Roche, you can see that we kept the bar up pretty high, and this year's event is clearly no exception!

Congressman Bill Posey is renowned in racing circles as well as in the political arena, where he serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Motorsports Caucus and the Auto Racing Caucus. In fact, his unofficial nickname is "Our Car Guy in Congress," a tag bestowed on him as a result of his strong connection to the world of motorsports.

Rep. Posey's racing career began in 1963 at Melbourne's Eau Gallie Speedway and Orlando Raceway. He also competed at Orlando Speedworld, New Smyrna Speedway, Columbia Speedway, and Hialeah Speedway, recording an impressive record of wins. He was the driving force behind formation of Mid-Florida Racing Association, the group that eventually bought, renovated, and operated Eau Gallie Speedway in the 1970s.

Rep. Posey's racing-related Congressional acts include crafting and sponsoring the Earnhardt Family Protection Act, laws designed to protect the insured from abuse by insurance carriers, and passing of a resolution in 2005 declaring February 11, 2005 as "Chris Economaki Day" in honor of this motorsports journalist's career.

One of his greatest recognitions in a career that is outstanding in so many ways is his 2008 receipt of the Victory Lane Racing Association's Short Track Driver Achievement Award, an honor presented to him by Bobby Allison and the late Judy Allison in honor of their sons Davey and Clifford.

Rep. Posey was elected to Congress in 2008 and serves on the House's Financial Services Committee and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. He currently resides in Rockledge Florida with his wife of 47 years, Katie. They have two daughters and three grandchildren, and Bill's main hobby these days is tinkering with his 1966 Chevy Malibu classic...he's replaced the original power plant with a high performance 350 ci block and, among other tweaks, added a 4-speed transmission, a Corvette quick ratio steering box, and 5-spoke American Racing Wheels. What a way to relax from the pressures of Washington's political climate!



The Class of 2015

On the next few pages, we'll give you a recap of this year's inductees and their accomplishments. As noted earlier, our "Hall" now numbers 124 members, and if you have the opportunity to take a look at our trophy on display in the lobby of National Parts Depot in Ocala, you'll see one of the most vibrant collections of motorsports representatives ever assembled. Here are the newest members of our Hall of Fame.

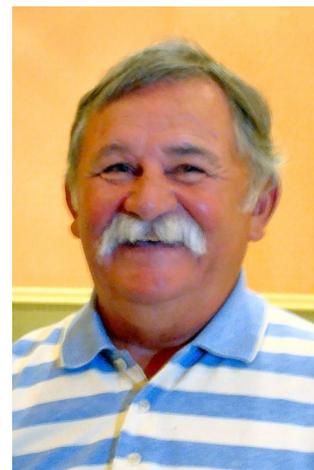


Eddie Roche

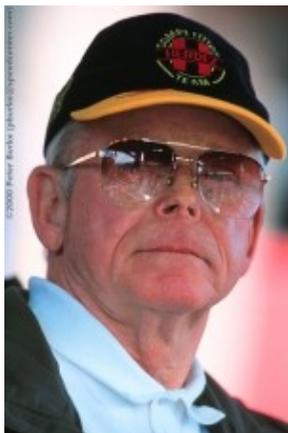
Eddie Roche has been involved in motorsports for over 40 years, serving as International Speedway Corporation's images and archives manager and before that as field editor for Stock Car Racing Magazine and motorsports editor for The Hollywood (FL) Sun. He's a noted author, having published numerous articles for Goodyear, the NASCAR Newsletter, and various racing event programs, and is perhaps best known for his critically acclaimed book Florida Motorsports Retrospective Pictorial Volumes 1 & 2 (Volume 1 was reissued late last year in its second printing). He is the 2015 recipient of the National Russ Moyer Media Award, representing excellence in journalism.

Jack Hewitt

Jack "Do It" Hewitt is widely recognized as one of the most beloved and respected drivers in the history of the sport, and as one of the greatest drivers to ever strap into a sprint car. From his first race (at Eldora) in 1975 to his last race (also at Eldora) he set a blistering pace in the World of Outlaws, the All-Star Circuit of Champions, the California Racing Series, the Midwest Outlaw Racing Series, and the USAC Silver Crown Division, to name just a few. He claimed the USAC "4 Crown Nationals" in 1998 and twice won the Silver Crown Championship, and in 1998 recorded a 12th place finish in the Indy 500. Along the way, he won the Grand Annual Classic in Australia in one of his international tours. This quote from NASCAR Champion Tony Stewart puts Jack in perspective, "If Jack Hewitt asks me to jump, I ask how high and how much hang time he needs."



Merle Bettenhausen



Our March meeting featured one of the biggest racing family names in motorsports. Merle Bettenhausen started his career driving Midgets, Sprint Cars, and Champ Cars, and in 1972 successfully passed his rookie test for the Indianapolis 500, but didn't attempt to qualify. Later that year (July) he was seriously injured in a racing accident at Michigan International Speedway in the Michigan 200. Up to that point he had competed in USAC events from 1969 to 1972, winning five USAC Midget events in his career. He later went on to assume various race team management duties with his family race team, and even completed a stint as manager of the Waukesha County Airport and then sales manager at the Wilde Automotive Group in Milwaukee.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

Paul Vitrano



In April, we heard from Paul Vitrano, Vice President of global Government Relations for Polaris Industries. Paul 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!)

Jim Chadwick

May's meeting brought us a motorsports trifecta, including Jim "Jimbo" Chadwick. Jim has a most varied background in motorsports, from wrench man to fabricator, from general mechanic to track manager, and from race car builder to NASCAR crew member. In addition to these roles, he spent considerable time in the promotional arena, building show cars and related items for NASCAR teams including Hendrick Motorsports, Roush Racing, and Penske Racing. He's also been behind the wheel, competing on many of the bygone tracks of Southern Florida. While kicking around places like Palm Beach Fairgrounds Speedway and Hialeah Speedway, he soaked up the history of those great venues, and is now recognized as one of the prime go-to guys for questions about racing history in South Florida.



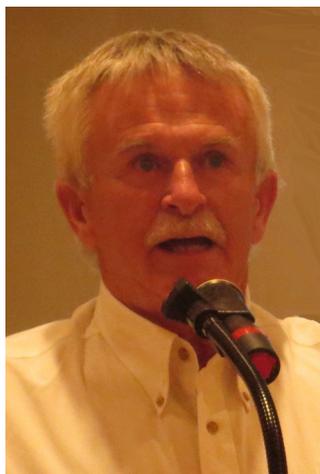
Charles Poindexter



Also with us in May was noted racing historian Charles Poindexter from Tennessee who calls Sevierville, TN his hometown. He's widely recognized for his work in capturing the history of stock car racing in many areas of the country, with a focus on the 1955-1980 era. His publications cover Tennessee's Ashway Speedway and Florida's Gainesville Speedway, and he's currently affiliated with the Living Legends of Auto Racing in Daytona. In 2013, he was inducted into the Jacksonville Stock Car Racing Hall of Fame, where he's often referred to as their "traveling billboard." His home these days is in Gainesville, Florida although his constant travels in connection with motorsports cause us to suspect that he actually lives in his car.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

Dave Dion



Our third guest in May was “Dynamite” Dave Dion, an authentic motorsports legend from the Northeast. His incredible list of accomplishments include 5 series championships and 11 track championships, and he was named NASCAR Busch East Series Most Popular Driver in 1999 and NASCAR Busch East Series Busch Pole Award Champion in 1997 and 2004. In addition to his northeast accomplishments, he competed in the NASCAR Nationwide and Sprint Cup series with 21 starts, and the K&N East Pro series, with over 200 starts. Dave was inducted into the New England Auto Racing Hall of Fame in 2007, and is a Board Member of the Living Legends of Auto Racing.

David Rogers

Stock Car veteran David Rogers from Orlando joined us at our June meeting and gave us a riveting account of a career that began in 1973 in a dirt late model at Ocala Speedway and is continuing today (literally!) David won his first major race in 1974 at Florida State Fairgrounds and went on to become a fan favorite locally, regionally, and nationally as NASCAR’s Whelen All-American Series Champion. His single season record of winning 22 of 22 events at Volusia Raceway Park still stands, and his record of 57 wins in 83 starts at Volusia is unmatched. He competed in NASCAR’s Nationwide series in 1982 and 83 and again in 1992, and has won the Florida Governor’s Cup 200 twice. One of the records he’s most proud of though, is his 31 consecutive starts in the legendary Snowball Derby. David carried our club logo on his car at the 2015 edition of the Derby, making him one of 37 notable drivers who have carried our logo in competition.



Mike Brewer



Mike Brewer, patriarch of the BrewCrew Racing team, joined us in July and traced his career from his start in dirt bikes in the early 1980s and his first race in the “Oh My God 100,” to his brief entry into stock cars and then to sprint cars. Mike shared his World of Outlaws experience (he made the A Feature in both of his first WoO events, collecting a massive \$450 purse in each!) and recapped his experience at the fast half-mile Manzanita Raceway in Phoenix, Az., where he had the opportunity to put into play many of the tips he’d received from the likes of Al Unser Jr. and the crew of Johnny Herrera. Mike’s racing career continues today in the mini-sprint arena, although mostly serving as wrench man for son Kenny.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

Kenny Brewer



Kenny Brewer is the second third of BrewCrew Racing. Kenny began his motorsports career on dirt bikes at age 6, moved to Quarter Midgets at age 9, and from there to his first Mini Sprint paved track race at age 14. Incidentally, he scored a win in his very first Mini Sprint event. At age 18, Kenny moved to dirt track Mini Sprint racing, winning in his second time out. In 2010 and 2011, he followed in dad Mike's footsteps by being named New Mexico Mini Sprint Champion. In fact, in 2011, driving a Hyper Chassis 15, Kenny recorded the most wins in the country in that type of car. Another milestone that year was his earning a spot in "A" Feature at the Tulsa Shootout, the largest event in the country for cars of this class.

Chuck Kidwell

In August, midwesterner Chuck Kidwell advised us that "You're never too old to do it" and backed that up with a recap of his Micro Sprint win—at age 75—at Marion County Speedway a few weeks prior to his visit. Chuck traced his racing roots back to age nine, when he and several friends launched a soapbox derby racing circuit in Wayne, Nebraska in the late 1940s. From there, he stepped up to go-karts in the late 1950s and from there to roadsters stock cars at South Sioux City. After a brief stint in Midgets he turned to the design and building of cage-karts, Junior Dragster cars, and Mini Cup Series 1 cars. Chuck shared a few stories about racing with drivers like Doug Wolfgang, Roger Rager, and (of course) our own Grady Wade. He also shared some memories of racing at Bellville High Banks in Kansas, his experiences with Dwarf Car inventor Ernie Adams, and his stint in the IndyCar ranks, wrenching the cars of Chuck Hulse, Lyn St. James, Jimmy Kite, Scott Harrington, Memo Gidley, and Phil Giebler.



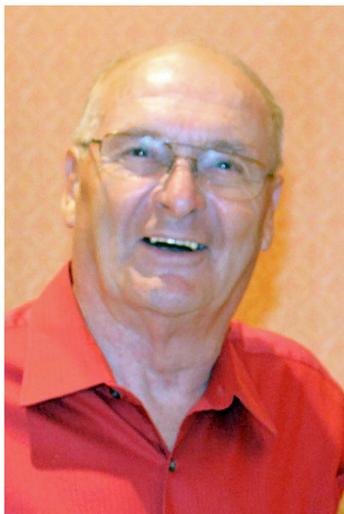
Ford Easton



Noted motorsports journalist Ford Easton joined us in October for a discussion of his most recent publication, a 230-page history of race tracks in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. Ford reported that the book, published in 2012, is the result of an eight-year project documenting facts and stories from 48 individual race tracks. In discussing the content of "Stock Car Racing in the '50s," Ford explained that the book includes sections on various racing associations, track officials during the time, racing before the 1950s, and, a brief history of Dirt Modifieds. While it is a book about race track happenings, he noted, it is primarily a book about racing and the culture of drivers and fans during the era of the 1950s.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

Larry Moore



Our October meeting also included a decorated veteran dirt track stock car racer, Larry Moore. Moore is a multiple winner of the most prestigious dirt late model event in the U.S.—the World 100 at Eldora Speedway—as well as the 1987 winner of the Dirt Track World Championship at West Virginia's Pennsboro Speedway. Often regarded as one of the greatest dirt racers in history, Larry Moore's career was recently showcased in a colorful biography titled "On Top of the World." National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum curator Tom Schmeh provided these words on Larry's celebrated career: "Larry Moore was the first driver to win the World 100 at Eldora Speedway three times. In addition ..., he was quite the pavement racer, too, with the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA), the American Speed Association (ASA) and the United States Auto Club (USAC)...."

Art Fehrman

Club member Art "Fireball" Fehrman is the embodiment of what racing is all about. With a record that started in 1968 with Rookie of the Year honors at Santa Fe Speedway in Illinois, Art went on to compile an incredible racing resume at many tracks in the Midwest, from Quarter Midgets to Stock Cars. During his tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force, he raced at a variety of tracks in the Midwest, and in the early 1970s won 18 feature events at Chicago's Sante Fe Speedway, at one stretch finishing top five 17 times in a row driving for a variety of car owners. Art competed continuously in the Midwest through the 1970s and 1980s, taking a break early 1990s. In 2004, he came back to the track in a modified entry at Crown Point Speedway. After three not-so-good experiences, Art founded the Illinois Vintage Racing series and served as its President from 2006 on. In 2009 he took on the task of forming the Illinois Stock Car Hall of Fame, another venture that has reached prominence under Art's leadership.



Jim O'Connor



Jim O'Connor shared the podium at our November meeting, recapping his experiences as current owner of Kokomo Speedway and his experiences as a racing veteran with a 42-year resume. Jim is recognized for his expertise as a promoter, but also as a nine-time champion and all-time leader in feature wins (88) at Kankakee Speedway. Jim is a 2013 inductee in the Illinois Stock Car Hall of Fame, and his career was profiled in an article published in the Kankakee Valley Daily-Journal. Here's an excerpt: "With more than twice as many feature wins as any other driver ever to compete at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds dirt track, O'Connor easily was the most dominant driver here. And hall of fame voters across the state recognized that talent." Jim is also owner/operator of Crown Point Speedway and former owner/operator Kankakee Speedway.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

Pat Brack



Our final meeting of the year was somewhat of a departure for us, and it featured the “better halves,” so to speak, of some of the male motorsports veterans we’ve had the pleasure of getting to know. Here in no particular order, are the wives of some of the racing luminaries we’ve interacted with over the years, beginning with Pat Brack. Pat is the wife of Bobby Brack, South Florida racing legend and former NASCAR competitor. Pat's stories about traveling as Gypsies on the New Jersey circuit with Bobby and an infant son (with another son on the way) provided a pretty good look at “life on the racing trail,” and her anecdote about leadfooting it to make a race deadline, with her and Bobby changing drivers on the highway without stopping, was just one of the stories that entertained us.

Kim Garcia

Kim Garcia, wife of Billy Garcia—midget, modified, and sprint car driver and California Racing Association champion—was another one of our “racing wives panelists.” Kim described the grind of a several-nights-a-week racing schedule and the accommodations a young couple needs to make to survive in the lifestyle. For example, using car parts as furniture. Kim also shared an amusing (not to Billy, of course) story about supplying a brand new set of driving glasses to Billy that, unfortunately, were tinted so that white looked yellow, and of course a white flag and a yellow flag mean two entirely different things, especially to the leader of the race.



Cheryl Brewer



Cheryl Brewer, wife of dirt bike, sprint car, and mini sprint car driver Mike Brewer and mother of mini sprint car driver Kenny Brewer, added a lot of commentary as one of our “racing wives panelists,” recapping her duties as the third member (Crew Chief, actually) of the BrewCrew Racing team mentioned earlier. Cheryl spoke about fun times at an “Oh My God 100” dirt bike race, where her responsibilities focused on bringing the Gatorade, gas, goggles, and gum. She also recapped her duties on the race team in detail, right down to her assignments as “official mud scraper” and record keeper.

The Class of 2015 (continued)

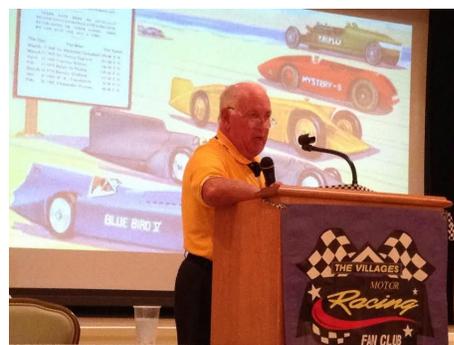
Lisa LaJoie



As an added bonus for the December meeting, we added Lisa LaJoie (wife of two-time NASCAR Busch Series champion Randy LaJoie, mother of rising motorsports star Corey LaJoie and ace crew member Casey LaJoie, and daughter of club member Ernie Battee) to the mix using the magic of the Internet and the services of Skype. Lisa shared a number of fascinating stories about the LaJoie racing career, including a lively account of the legendary feud between Busch Series driver Roy “Buckshot” Jones and Randy and the necessity of arranging for a police escort in order to leave Bristol Motor Speedway. She also discussed the stresses of being a racing wife and a racing mother.

Also in 2015...

Our 2015 meeting schedule also brought us two speakers who were inducted previously into our Hall of Fame. Tony Kennea (Class of 2014) took the podium in September to share his knowledge of Land Speed Records, and it was another spell-binding look at a form of motorsports with which we previously did not have a great deal of familiarity. Tony’s remarks traced the evolution of land speed record competition from the first mark (a blazing 39 mph set in 1898), to the eclipsing of this mark in 1909 by Sir Malcolm Campbell’s grandson, Don Wales (148 mph). Tony covered the entry of jet and rocket propulsion engines into the land speed record competition, with names like Craig Breedlove and Art Arfons taking center stage, and presented a variety of thoughts and statistics about land speed record cars.



Also on our panel for “racing wives night” in December was Mary Anderson (Class of 2008), wife of Dick Anderson, one of the winningest and best known short track drivers in Florida racing history. Mary shared her memories of many career highlights during their six decades of racing, most memorable of which was her sitting on pit wall at New Smyrna Speedway following Dick’s 1989 Florida Governor’s Cup victory, totally alone and with no way home...it seems the entire team took off and left her stranded.

Camille and Bob Sherman—2015 Glen Carter Crew Chief Award Recipients



Club Founder and former Crew Chief Glen Carter presented the 2015 “Glen Carter Crew Chief Award” to Camille and Bob Sherman. “This award,” Carter noted, “recognizes individuals who have stepped to the plate for us and who have used their time and talents to help The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club become a truly well-respected organization in the Florida racing community, and that certainly describes Camille and Bob. They’ve been valuable, long-standing members of our Pit Crew and they’ve worked hard to manage our membership records, collect our dues, and ensure that our guest speakers are properly recognized. They’re an example of those “behind the scenes” people who we rely on constantly to make us look good. The Shermans are the eighth recipients if this award, instituted in 2008.

Darren Ivey Takes Possession of the 2015 Prediction Row Trophy

NASCAR's emphasis on winning a Sprint Cup race was the model used for our scoring. Standings were determined by wins, with points used as a tie breaker.

Six club members competed in the Spring Segment - races 1-13. They were Dan Gammon, Kim Garcia, Darren Ivey, Tony Kennea, Jim Pappas and Lois Taylor. Six more members competed in the Summer Segment - races 14-26. They were Don Day, Tina Ivey, John Kitowicz, Dave Monahan, Wendy Touchette and Bob Woodsford.

The Top 3 in each segment transferred into the Chase Segment - races 27-36. The competitors in the Chase Segment were Don Day, Darren Ivey, Tina Ivey, Jim Pappas, Lois Taylor and Bob Woodsford.

For the first time in Prediction Row history, we had a husband and wife competing against each other, and they took it down to the wire. Darren Ivey earned the honor of having his name engraved on the traveling trophy. When accepting the trophy, Darren launched the next wave of trash-talk by suggesting that his name be added as the 2016 Champion right away.



The final 2015 standings were:
 3 wins, 383 points Darren Ivey
 2 wins, 329 points Tina Ivey
 1 win, 333 points Lois Taylor
 1 win, 301 points Bob Woodsford
 1 win, 223 points Don Day
 0 wins, 263 points Jim Pappas



Ernie Battee Makes a Return Visit



For the second consecutive year, club member Ernie Battee made the trip up from Lake Harris Health Center in Leesburg. Many of our longer-time members are aware of Ernie and the circumstances of his December 2012 auto accident at the intersection of Buena Vista Blvd. and CR 466. Ernie had very severe injuries, including a severed spinal cord and 120 lacerations, including part of his scalp. As a result, he remains paralyzed from his neck down.

Ernie's daughter, Lisa LaJoie, was inducted into our Hall of Fame earlier in the evening, and in her closing remarks she thanked the club for its continued visits to Ernie and for helping to brighten the days for him down in Leesburg. These days, despite being confined to a wheelchair and pretty much restricted in

travel, Ernie takes great pride in following his interests in racing. His daughter, Lisa, is married to two-time NASCAR Busch Series Champion Randy Lajoie, and she and Randy are the proud parents of race car driver Corey and budding sports broadcaster Casey. Corey and Casey were on hand at the 48th Annual Snowball Derby in Pensacola and spent time with a contingent of club members at the event. Corey is pictured in the photo at right in black tee shirt. Others in the photo include (L-to-R) Gerry Hafer, Lou Palmer, Glen Carter, Jeff Burton, Jim Hedlund, and John Angiolo.



Our Trophy...And We're Proud of it!



As pointed out earlier, our Hall of Fame trophy now has 124 names inscribed on it. Tom Horrmann has been responsible for maintaining the trophy through the years, and after last year's class was inducted, he faced a dilemma...no more room for names! But Tom's a crafty guy, and the lack of space for new names was only a temporary setback. He solved the problem by building a second base that sits beneath the original trophy base and, if you didn't know otherwise, you'd swear it was always a part of the original. And while he was at it, he added an acrylic insert that really enhances the overall appearance of the trophy.

Kudos to Tom on this, and a note of appreciation to National Parts Depot in Ocala for their willingness to display it in their lobby. By the way, as a historical note, the trophy was donated to us by the legendary Dick Anderson (Class of 2007)...it was one he earned by winning the 1981 Space Shuttle 100 at Orlando Speedworld.

Some Scenes From The Big Night!



Clockwise from top left: The crowd listening intently to Rep. Posey; Merle Bettenhausen; Mike Brewer; Lisa LaJoie presenting commemorative plaque to the Club; Glen Carter presenting award to Camille & Bob Sherman; Wendy Touchette and Dave Dion

Some Scenes From The Big Night!



Clockwise from top left: Kenny Brewer; Art "Fireball" Fehrman; Pat Brack; The crowd (again); Kim Garcia; our First Class MC for the evening, Mike Anderson