



# Allan Brown Speaks To The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

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## **THE VILLAGES, Fla.**

As anyone who has spent time in Florida knows, the entire state only has about three dozen natives. Everyone else came here from somewhere else, mostly from cold winter states.

Thus it was no surprise that when Michigan's Allan Brown spoke at The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club meeting this week, he was warmly received by members from the Midwest and Northeast.

Longtime readers know Brown as the former publisher of the "SuperFans Bible," the National Speedway Directory, as well as the author of the highly regarded History of America's Speedways, a comprehensive listing and history of tracks both past and present. But he also ranks among the nation's foremost racing fans, having seen and enjoyed racing from coast to coast and border to border.

Club members were blown away by the map that Allan and wife Nancy carry with them, showing where they've been. Allan tipped that they've logged more than two million miles in their travels selling the NSD and visiting the speedways of America.

Brown's father had been a race fan since 1928 and he took up the sport as a youngster and has never faltered in his quest to visit every track possible. At 17, he drove solo from Michigan to Oswego, N.Y., to watch Johnny Benson Sr. race in the International Classic, setting the stage for a lifetime of travel.

His quest was aided while in the Army, as he got sick during basic training in Fort Dix, N.J., and could not deploy to Europe with his unit. Once he recovered, an assignment to the Ft. Dix motor pool let him set his work schedule and he took full advantage, following the All-Star League's midweek schedule while catching weekend shows at 28 Eastern speedways during the 1968 season.

Allan worked as a carpenter after leaving the service, but spent his leisure time at speedways around the Midwest and in the early 1970s he became involved with Midwest Auto Racing Guide publisher Larry Yard. Together they expanded the publication and by the time it was a truly national publication, Brown had taken charge and, with Nancy's assistance, would publish the directory until he sold the business to Tim Frost in 2009.

"That let me become a full-time race fan instead of a carpenter doing the book in my spare time," offered Brown, who added that the other major change in his life came with the purchase of his first computer in 1983. This allowed the development of a true database and the ability to print the book yearly instead of every other season.

While he sold the directory from a table behind the stands at first, Allan soon learned that he would sell three or four times as many by hawking the NSD in the stands "the same way that Chris Economaki had National Speed Sport News sold." And by going to tracks in all parts of the nation, Brown got to update the directions and make it easier for fans to find the various speedways.

"We found that the directions the tracks themselves gave us were highly inaccurate, so we started doing our own," Brown said. "Most of them never considered using the safest route for the big haulers and some didn't even seem to know where their track was actually located."

Brown figures he has stopped by some 2,300 tracks in his travels and has seen racing at over 1,300 of them. Club members were awed when he told them he's seen racing at nearby East Bay Raceway Park some 60 times and had been to Williams Grove Speedway 30 times and Washington's Skagit Speedway 50 times.

“And I think I’ve probably been to more tracks that are now closed than most fans have been to that are operating,” he summed up with a laugh.

While he is a member of the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame, having been inducted in 2009, Brown told the fans that he loves all types of racing and has recently been enthralled with the off-road trucks.

While answering questions about his travels, he tipped that after travelling for years in a Ford Pinto, he and Nancy advanced to a series of Ford Aerostar mini vans with camping equipment in the back. They are currently working their way outward from their Midwest base, making sure they have hit every track in each state as they thoroughly enjoy “retirement.” 2013 saw them hit 54 races around the nation and 2014 will be bigger yet.

Allan also touched on the many great fans he has become friends with in his travels, among them the late Super Fan Gary Jacob of California. On a related note, we’re about to start writing SuperFans 2013, so get your last-minute entries to us at [rjhmedia@juno.com](mailto:rjhmedia@juno.com) immediately.

Keep an eye out for Allan and Nancy at your local speedway this year and if you see them, thank them both for their contributions to the sport. They more than deserve it!