

# Motor Racing Fan Club celebrates first anniversary

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By Katie Evans

Glen Carter didn't have high expectations for The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club when he started it; he just hoped to have 15 or 20 people to talk racing with.

"When I got here to The Villages, I missed going to the races, and being around people who liked racing," Carter said.

Well, 40 people showed up at the first meeting, and as the club celebrated its one year anniversary this week, it was getting close to the 200-member mark.

"I'm just really thrilled that it has gone this far," Carter said. "It's grown so much, I don't know if I could handle too many more."

In one year, the club has sold almost 120 club shirts and stood in the winner's circle at New Smyrna Speedway with Jeff Choquette, the first racer it sponsored.

Gerry Hafer still remembers the image of about 65 club members standing in the winner's circle, most wearing the club's yellow shirt with black-and-white checkered trim.

"As a race fan, it's a very gratifying experience," said the club's newsletter editor. "One of the things I value the most is the relationships we've formed with (racers)."

While Wendy Touchette is primarily a NASCAR fan, she said she loves getting to watch local racers.

"It's one thing to go to a NASCAR race and sit in the stands and see how everything is done," said the club's special events coordinator. "But to go to a small track – this is really grass-roots race car driving. They put their heart and soul and all of their money into their passion."

"And for the club to really be able to help those guys out, I really like that."

The club also tries to help various charitable causes when it can. For example, at this week's meeting, a \$200 donation to Operation Shoebox turned into more than \$700 after an anonymous club member donated an additional \$100 if people would match it.



Photos by Peter Travers / Daily Sun  
**Sue Gamertsfelder** cuts the cake Wednesday at the first anniversary meeting of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club.

“That’s truly what I like for this club to do,” Touchette said, in awe of club members’ generosity.

It’s been an “overwhelming” first year for the club, Hafer said, amazed by everything it has accomplished.

“It just keeps growing,” he said. “And the sky’s the limit. I think this is a club unlike many.”



**Glen Carter,** president of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club, speaks Wednesday at the club's first anniversary meeting.