

Villages Motor Racing Fan Club Hears from Young Racing Phenom

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By Villages-News Staff



Kenny Brewer enjoyed discussing the intricacies of race car steering with club members.

A big event for The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club took place at Colony Cottage Regional Recreation Center Wednesday evening — beginning with an outdoor cookout for about 60 club members in the shade of the Colony Cottage picnic pavilion.

Gerry Hafer, who writes the club's newsletter, described the great group as old, die hard motor heads.

"A lot of members are away right now, but during the winter, our meetings usually have up to 130 people. We're getting ready to celebrate our tenth anniversary in 2016 — and hope to entice some of the elites in motor sports to speak at our meetings."

"This is a very active club," President Jerry Conkle said. "We go to small- and large-track races; we've had famous racing champions as speakers, and are involved in charitable activities."

Instead of yelling "play ball" after the Star Spangled Banner was played, "gentlemen, start your engines" was heard.

The group expected to welcome guest speaker, Mike Brewer, of Brewer Racing — and were pleasantly surprised to also see Mike and Cheryl Brewer's son, Kenny, 24, the team's primary driver.

Kenny had been seriously injured in a racing accident at North Florida Speedway on June 13, and is rehabilitating from surgery to repair broken bones in his arm. Club VP, Wendy Touchette, didn't expect Kenny to be at the picnic at all.

Despite a thick cast, surgical wires and screws, and a sturdy arm sling, Kenny appeared cheerful and enthusiastic, despite being sidelined from racing for at least the next seven weeks.

"The doctors say I have youth on my side, and it should heal up good," Kenny smiled. The mishap occurred on turn three of the final lap of the feature race, just after Kenny had executed a successful pass for third place.

After the picnic, the father and son explained the dynamics of driving two mini-sprint cars they brought for members to examine up close. One race car, #38, with neon yellow wings, was in race-ready form — and the other mini-sprinter, #45, was stripped down, for a close look at what's under the skin.



Club founder and first president, Glen Carter, met up with fellow Summerhill Village resident, Jerry Hafer, at the club picnic.



Mike and Cheryl Brewer, and son, Kenny, of mini-sprint car racing fame, visited The Villages Motor Racing Club's July picnic.

The two championship drivers explained the role of the shocks and different size tires in steering the mini-sprint cars.

"There are brakes on the front left and rear right wheels only, and there is no rear axle differential," Mike Brewer revealed. "This helps us hug the curves without having the car lift up, or the rear of the car spin out — if we do it right. People who have lived up north and driven in snow understand what this means — when they have had to steer in the direction of a skid. These cars also have four different size tires."

The father and son team have often raced together, and Kenny won his first championship at age 14. Kenny also holds a black belt in three kinds of martial arts — which he

credits with the intense discipline and focus he applies to his racing.

"There's a lot of adrenaline going when you're racing," Kenny Brewer said. "You're working real fast, doing everything on the fly — with no time to stop and think about what you're doing. You just do it. It's great!"

The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club's bright gold shirts and caps have won them recognition at many sporting events, and their club logo is currently on 33 race cars — which means 33 major drivers know about the club. "It's much more fun when you watch races with this group of fans than just sitting at home," Tamarind Grove Villager, Mike Anderson, said.

The club's scholarship application review committee selected Jardine "Jake" Perkins as their 2015 recipient — with a certificate of recognition and \$750 toward his studies. Known affectionately in racing circles as "No Brake Jake," Perkins graduated from Belleview High School with a strong academic record and an equally impressive record of participation in high school sports programs (specifically golf and tennis). But club members know Jake best as a racer — a field where he's distinguished himself as well. Among many other noteworthy accomplishments, he was the 2011 Rookie of the Year in the Super Late Model FUPS series.



At age 14, Kenny Brewer won his first championship.