



Jeff Burton No. 31 leads the field of 43 cars to the green flag Feb. 19, 2006, during the start of the 2006 Daytona 500. Bill Mitchell / Daily Sun

LET'S GO RACING

Villagers will be travelling to Sunday's
Daytona 500 to cheer for their favorite team

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By Katie Evans

George Schneider will be cheering for the Miller Lite car this weekend at the Daytona 500.

"I used to be a Rusty Wallace fan, always followed him," Schneider said. "So I'll be following the No. 2 car."

Besides, Schneider said, Miller Lite is his favorite beer.

Schneider and his wife are heading to the Daytona 500 on Sunday with Ted Cahalane, treasurer of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club.

It will be Schneider's first auto race, though he says he enjoys watching races on TV. He said Cahalane's enthusiasm following a trip to the 500 last year convinced him to go.



Submitted Photo
Wendy Touchette, special events coordinator for The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club, and Silky Meegan, club secretary, stand by a race car in January for preseason testing at Daytona International Speedway.

"They went down there, they had a good time, they came back and they were just thrilled with it," Schneider said adding, that he's looking forward to experiencing the atmosphere.

"Just the noise level at the track and the excitement of the people there," are reason enough, Schneider said.

Cahalane, unlike Schneider, never had much interest in motor racing until he moved to The Villages four years ago.

"Living so close to Daytona, we decided, 'Let's take a look at this thing and see what all the interest is about,'" Cahalane recalled. The first race he and his wife went to was the Pepsi 400.

Now, Cahalane and his wife are planning their third trip to the Daytona 500.

"It's an amazing event; there's a quarter of a million people over there," he said. "There's fast cars, there's about anything you could really ask for as far as having a good time."

Cahalane said he will be supporting Tony Stewart, while his wife roots for Dale Earnhardt Jr. He said it makes for a good-natured rivalry.

"You never know what we might bet," Cahalane said. "It might be a dinner or it might be something more exotic than that."

Cahalane said the Daytona 500 has something for everybody, and he always enjoys the racing.

"People going 200 miles an hour, and there isn't six inches between the front bumper of the car," he said. "They're amazing, amazing drivers to be able to do what they do."

"The worst of them is a great driver," he added.

Cahalane said the Daytona 500 is like the Super Bowl of racing.

"It's a terrific event and I wish a lot of people who've never tried it would go and take a peek at it," he said.

Several other members of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club are attending Sunday's race, said club president Glen Carter. However, it's not a club trip to Daytona.

"The club is so new that we really didn't have time to plan a trip for the 500," he said. "We just got formed in October."

Carter said the club is planning a trip to Daytona for a race in July.

As for the Daytona 500, Carter said he plans to sit in front of his big-screen TV and watch it.

Carter raced in the 1970s, which gives him a special appreciation of the sport.

"I know what it is like to get out there and race, and the excitement of it," he said.

Carter said he enjoys the rivalry of racing, though he doesn't have a favorite driver. He respects all of them.

"It really takes a lot to get out there and do that," he said.



The Associated Press
Members of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club attended the Winter National Blue-Gray Open Wheel Modifieds Championship Weekend at Ocala Speedway earlier this month.