

# Villages Resident's Passion for Auto Racing Still Going Strong

John Angiolo has been a regular at tracks in the region since moving to the Village of Glenbrook.

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By Cody Hills

John Angiolo's life has practically revolved around motor racing.

The Village of Glenbrook resident attended hundreds of races at local short tracks growing up, worked at a handful of them, and even met his wife of more than 50 years at one.

So, when the Wisconsin native moved to The Villages a decade ago, joining The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club and finding any reason to visit tracks across the region was an easy decision.



Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

**John Angiolo, of the Village of Glenbrook, shows some of his racing memorabilia at his home in the Village of Glenbrook. Angiolo is an avid racing enthusiast and longtime member of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club.**

"I'm not even sure where to begin," Angiolo said when trying to describe his passion for racing. "I think it's the competition and it's the people. It seems like anywhere you go or any track you attend a race at, you've got a chance to meet some interesting people – whether it be a driver or spectator – and that can make the whole experience."

Angiolo serves as the local fan club's "rear tire carrier," a racing-themed title for the group's hospitality coordinator, in charge of organizing various facets of the club's meetings. He also spearheads group outings for members to watch racing at local short tracks across Central Florida, including Citrus County Speedway in Inverness and Volusia Speedway in De Leon Springs.

"We like going for some racing if not every week, then probably every couple weeks to tracks in the area," Angiolo said. "I think the club, as a whole, loves supporting these local tracks and the drivers that race in them. NASCAR, IndyCar and all of the major stuff is great, but these little hometown tracks are where it all starts — and that's where I like to go and support."

Angiolo's lifelong passion for racing formed after years of attending short-track races back home in Wisconsin, where he eventually worked as a pusher – utilizing his truck to help push-start race cars or clear them off the track after a crash – at Hales Corner Speedway in Franklin, Wisconsin.

"I first started going when I was younger with a couple of friends, thought it was neat, and I really just got hooked on it right away," Angiolo said. "Then once I started helping out as a push truck, you start getting a little personal with some of the drivers and getting to know people around the track."

The time spent around racing has led Angiolo to meeting some of the sport's greats, including the likes of Richard Petty, Al Unser and Bobby Allison. Although Angiolo's favorite race-track encounter admittedly wound up being his wife of 52 years, Carol, as the couple met – and had their first date - during a night at the races, later traveling nationwide to attend races together.

"Racing has been something that's been with us our entire lives," Carol said. "We used to go all over the country for races, but I've kind of slacked off a little bit these last few years. But not John, he's always just loved it and it's something he's really passionate about."

And with Angiolo's passion for the sport still at full throttle, he plans to continue attending races so long as he's able, while passing along the fervor to the next generation.

"I've even got a granddaughter now that's really showing a love for racing just like me," Angiolo said, referring to his 14-year-old granddaughter, Maya. "I don't what it is, but a race track is like a magnet or something. You never know what you'll see. You could be watching a 15-year-old kid on some Friday night that a few years down the road might be in NASCAR."

"It's stories like that and the people you meet along the way that make going to the track special."