

Villages resident shares passion for speed, stock car racing

Racer fell in love with sport after first event in Maine in 1949

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By Amanda Drapiewski

Dale Earnhardt Sr. once said, "You can't let one bad moment spoil a bunch of good ones." That's the way one avid racer looks at his career.

Arthur "Buster" Burt of the Village of Santo Domingo has been into stock car racing since he was a teenager growing up in Maine.

Back in 1949, Burt explained, he and a few friends had traveled to Norway Fairgrounds Speedway in Oxford, Maine, for a regular night of racing. Burt's attention was piqued when the announcer said that since only a few cars were signed up for the race, anyone in the stands willing to run their car in the feature was welcome to join the field.

"We were young and foolish," Burt said.

With this in mind, Burt said he wheeled his 1940 Ford Coupe to the starting line and roared to a fifth-place finish. From then on, he was in love with stock car racing.

"We built a race car not knowing what we were doing," Burt said.

Burt said on that same day, on his way home from the track, he purchased his first stock car – a 1935 Ford that he set up to run on a variety of Maine dirt tracks. He compiled a record at these tracks from 1949 to 1951.

"We had a slot of success," Burt said. "We did things that you can't do now."

When 1951 approached, Burt said his racing season temporarily ended. He had joined the Air Force - Strategic Air Command, and his racing career took a major turn.

When the Air Force transferred him to Florida, Burt said he raced on the old Daytona Beach course and even qualified for the Daytona 200 when the speedway opened in 1959.

"It was fun racing," Burt said. "You had fun doing it."

Burt retired from competitive stock car racing in the late 1980s, but he didn't retire from the sport.

While on a show stop, Burt said he laid his eyes on something called a "Legend Car," and once again the race was on. He bought a Legend Car and competed in the Maine Legend Circuit for several years and in 1996, after a serious accident and substantial injury, he knew he was finished, he said.

Burt assumed the position of race director for the Maine Association of Legend Cars and Racing, a position he held for several years. In 2006, he was inducted into the Maine Motorsports Hall of Fame.



Tina Russell / Daily Sun
Buster Burt of the Village of Santo Domingo sits with his radio-controlled cars in his home on Sunday. He is a member of the Villages Racing Club. Burt also raced old stock cars in Maine and was inducted into the 2006 Maine Motorsports Hall of Fame.



Buster Burt of the Village of Santo Domingo takes his model car out for a spin Sunday outside of his home.

Tina Russell / Daily Sun

Now, Burt can be found still active in racing, serving on the board of directors of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club. He races radio-controlled cars several times a month on the side parking lot at Colony Cottage Recreation Center with members of the club.

"They don't cost a lot to run," Burt said. "You catch on real quick."

Even though he cannot drive actual stock cars anymore, Burt said he considers racing the radio-controlled ones a way of "staying young."

"We have fun," he said.