



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

January-June, 2016

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, July 6, 2016

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The Return of the Newsletter

We're back! After a several-month absence, our retired Newsletter Editor has resumed his post, temporarily anyway, and has compiled a catch-up edition to bring our archives up-to-date. As our Social Media Coordinator has observed while combing our archives for throwback material during our rolling, 10-year Club retrospective, none of us can rely on memory, so we need the historical account provided via our newsletter files.

For those of you who are new to us, we direct your attention to the page on our website titled "Newsletters (Pit Reports)". There you'll find a fairly complete history of the ground we've covered in our first decade.

So, even though we're back in production, we are still seriously searching for a volunteer to fill the position of "Newsletter Editor." It's certainly a fun job, but it's also an important job...it's one of the ways that we communicate with the Motorsports world outside of our own community, and it does serve as a permanent record of many key aspects of our group's history. We certainly have some great communicators in our diverse membership, so we're hoping that the right person (or people, for that matter) will step to the plate for this important Pit Crew position. Give it some thought and, if you might have an interest, see any Pit Crew Member for details!

Now, let's move on to the recap of what's happened so far in 2016. We've had six monthly meetings, and we once again covered some new ground. You'll see that we dived in (get it?) to some water-oriented subjects with our January and February meetings, and we've had the opportunity to hear from a real insider about some of the amusing things that go on in the tech inspection process at NASCAR events. We also heard from a Congressman, and we learned some of the details about the new Bushnell Motorsports facility down in Sumter County. As we've mentioned at several meetings, we're planning for the third edition on our "Villages Cup" competition to take place this fall, after a five-year hiatus. More about that later.

The next few pages will recap the first half of the year...

January 6 – The Story of Miss Canada IV



Our quest for information on different forms of racing is alive and well, as evidenced by our January guest speaker, Jamie Smith of Ontario, Canada (by way of Mr. Dora). Jamie gave us a fascinating review of the project to restore Miss Canada IV, a record-setting Canadian Unlimited Hydroplane.

Jamie is Manager of the BG Vintage Racing Team and a Director of the Classic Race Boat Association, and has enjoyed a career as a retail and wholesale supplier to the automotive industry. As a former owner of several auto franchises, and as a former representative of Hertz, Ryder, and General Motors, he's been in and around motorsports at a depth that enables him to speak with extensive credibility on many related subjects.

In discussing the Miss Canada IV restoration project, Jamie began with a review of the film/DVD titled "Harold & Lorna Wilson, World Record Speed Champions" their multiple attempts to restore the original Miss Canada, originally built in 1948. He recapped the Wilsons' race team efforts through the years to bring the iconic vintage race boat back to life, and gave us an insider's view at what goes in to rebuilding a vessel as renowned as Miss Canada IV and as important to the history of Canadian sports.

In listening to Jamie's accounts of the problems, challenges, and triumphs of the restoration project, we got a clear sense of his obvious pride and his shared sense of accomplishment. We'll look for Jamie and Miss Canada IV at future Vintage Raceboat events, most likely Classic Race Boat Association regattas in nearby Tavares, Florida.



February 3 - Jet Ski Racing With Tim Ducat



Our February meeting continued our exploration of "wet" racing, this time with a Personal Watercraft Racing veteran from nearby Belleview, Florida. With a resume spanning over 20 years of competitive Jet Ski racing, Tim Ducat has reached the upper levels of the sport, and is capturing accolades locally, nationally, and internationally.

Tim is a 2001 graduate of Bellview (FL) High School, and has been racing personal watercraft since age 6. He competes locally, nationally, and internationally, and can be seen at speed venues like Tavares (FL), Panama Beach (FL), and Lake Havasu (AZ).

A partial list of his accomplishments *so far* include:

- Multiple local championships (Novice through Pro Runabout)
- At one point was ranked top 3 nationally
- And 6 times ranked in top 10 and 4 times ranked in top 5 worldwide
- Multiple championships:
- Florida state
- Slalom world champion
- Closed course world champion
- 2015 Broward Motorsports World Champion – Runabout 800 Superstock class

Tim's current plans include participation nationally in the Pro Runabout GP & Pro Runabout Box Stock classes, as well as Aqua-X Endurance Series and the World Finals. He's also planning to run internationally in the King's Cup in Thailand later this year.

Here are some photos of Tim in action:



March 2 – Checking the Pulse of our Members

This month we were faced with the unexpected absence of a featured speaker, a gentleman who was called out-of-state on business matters. As we all know, these things happen from time-to-time, and it takes a well organized Pit Crew to react and make the show go on, as the saying goes. We did just that, with Mike Anderson leading the way on a spirited review of our club's highlights from 2008. Actually, Mike has been doing these year-by-year recaps for a few months now, giving us all the opportunity to reflect on the memories we've accumulated in our 10-year run and giving our newer members a retrospective on the ground we've covered.

While we had a captive audience, we also took advantage of the time we had to poll those at the meeting on what types of activities should be investigated for the Club, with two primary suggestions quickly gaining favor: (1) a return visit to National Parts Depot in Ocala to tour their incredible display of collector vehicles (there are quite a few newer members who have never had this experience, so the idea quickly gained traction, leading to a car pool trip there on April 26...another huge success!); and (2) a race shop tour of Reutimann Racing in Zephyrhills and Devin McLeod Racing, also in Zephyrhills. The Pit Crew took this second idea under advisement, and will be arranging a tour later in the year.

April 6 – A Visit from “Inspector Gadget”

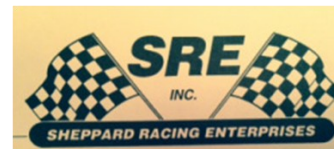


Our April meeting gave us a true “inside” perspective on the intricacies of stock car racing’s technical inspection process, with commentary from a long-time NASCAR official affectionately known in the garage area as “Inspector Gadget” (well, it’s probably not always affectionate...and sometimes he’s referred to simply as “Gadget”). Alan Sheppard served 15 years as a NASCAR technical and safety inspector, a sideline occupation he undertook in addition to operating his own business, Sheppard Racing Enterprises, formerly in Rockford, Illinois and now in Deland, Florida. Alan works with local drivers in stock car set-up and maintenance, and specializes in tool and part manufacturing services.

Alan is also a former race car driver, competing in ARCA, USAC, and the Winston Racing Series, running cars that he built and maintained. Earlier this year, he was tapped by ARCA to be their Lead Inspector, so he’s upped the ante on his involvement in motorsports.

During his time with us, Alan shared a variety of amusing and insightful tales of the mischief that goes on in big-time racing, and recounted many of the anecdotes from his time in the NASCAR garage. He described incidents involving overly inflated fuel cells, offsetting trailing arm bolts, the use of a cable from the center of the rear-end housing to a winch inside the car to make adjustments on the fly, use of a magnet stuck to the back of the gas pedal to fool with chassis dyno readings, use of unapproved double-threaded jackbolts, hollowed-out trailing arms, and the list goes on.

Overall, an informative and entertaining night of technical revelry!



May 4 – Nostalgia Night

For the second time in 2016, we were faced with a situation in which our featured speaker fell ill and was unable to join us. Not to worry, though, as our renowned Pit Crew was able to fall back on its incredible array of talent to produce yet another invigorating night of nostalgia as we reflected on our history from the year 2010. Led by Webmaster Mike Anderson, we shared a few laughs and fond recollections over the highlights of the year, the most notable of which was the launch of our “Villages Cup” event in April.

June 1 –The Annual Picnic, and a Visit from Congressman Webster

The weather always seems to be incredibly hot when we do our mid-year picnic, but at least it didn’t rain. Despite the heat, we had a spirited group of about 50 club members take part in a cookout and mini car show, with the BrewCrew Racing team once again leading a hands-on clinic on the composition of MiniSprint cars and a recap of their highly successful racing program. Also in attendance before and during the regular meeting was U.S. Congressman Daniel Webster, who not only shared some remarks about the political side of motorsports, but had the courage to actually climb into the cockpit of Kenny Brewer’s No. 45.



And Then There's the Special Events...

Darren Ivey, our Special Events Coordinator, has been busy this year organizing and carrying out a series of trips and activities in between regular meetings. Here are recaps of some of the major items undertaken in the first half of the year...some of these are repeats of trips and events that we run each year, and they're some of the most-anticipated activities we organize.

Night Golf – March 8

Report from Wendy Touchette: Had a great night for golf with 32 golfers and a nice pot luck at the picnic pavilion at Saddlebrook Recreation Center. The winners were, 1st place Barb & Jim Pappas and Woody White and Bob Joho with 26, 2nd Marcos Saenko, Dan Famulara, Cindy & Lou Senerchia, 27, 3rd Mike & Wendy Touchette and Barb & Barry Irish with 29 and the group who got to swing the most was Darren & Tina Ivy, Gary Seyler and Lance Silvia. 50/50 was won by Lance Sylvia. Bob and Janine Woodsford stepped up and did a great job with the putting contest with a plastic 3-foot putter. The winner with a hole in one was Deni Ellwood. I would like to thank everyone who helped out from the putting contest to selling 50/50 tickets to those groups who helped others when they had someone in their group who was Night Golfing for the first time. See you next year.



Top Row, left to right: 1st place team; 2nd place team; 3rd place team.

Bottom row, left to right: The winners of the swing frequency challenge; Some fun with putting!

And Then There's the Special Events...

NHRA Gatornationals – March 18

Report from Darren Ivey: Yesterday went about as good as you could get. We left just like a few minutes late (one lone straggler), not bad considering we had 51 total on the bus. A couple of the guys drove up their selves, because they had to leave earlier. Weather played just a small part, but it wasn't rain, it was the morning fog for gosh sakes. When we arrived, if on schedule, we would of been there for the start of the "Big Boy/Big Girl" Pro classes, but instead was just really seeing the start of the day. Around noon, someone blew an engine and there was a good hour, hour and a half delay to clean that up. When all was said and done, we got to see most all of the classes, except for a few lower tier classes, run their first qualifying runs. If we wouldn't have had to start heading back to the bus around 5:30, we would have gotten to see all the Pro classes their second run. They had us parked in lot 8, a pretty good walk for us all, the law enforcement was just concerned in getting everyone in, no curbside service, but everyone made it ok. The bus was on property all day, so that wasn't a issue if someone was feeling bad and had to go back. The bulk of all comments was A-1. So many people thanked me for putting the trip together, for having great seats, it was flawless. We left about ten minutes late, 6:10, had a group of five stragglers. If it wouldn't had been for the fog, the long clean up, I believe we could have gotten a whole complete program in. Also, a positive, we should be getting at least two new members to join the Club that I know of. It was truly a flawless trip, I was so nervous about something going wrong. Because of having more than enough excess money left over, I bought 5 event t-shirts to raffle off. Great, Great, Great Success....!!!!



(Top right and bottom photos courtesy of NHRA Gatornationals Facebook page)

And Then There's the Special Events...

National Parts Depot Trip—April 26

For the sixth time in our club history, we were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the fantastic classic car collection housed at National Parts Depot in Ocala. NPD's Chief Operating Officer Rick Schmidt, himself a member of our Hall of Fame (Class of 2013) graciously hosted a contingent of about 30 club members and guests for another close-up look at one of the most thorough and well-organized collections of unique automobiles in the country. It's an opportunity not available to the public, so we always are doubly appreciative of Rick for his hospitality.

By the way, the visit also gave us an opportunity to check up on our club Hall of Fame trophy...it's been on display in NPD's lobby for many years, and we appreciate the attention they (and their customers) pay to it!

Here are some photos of the trip, courtesy of Tom Horrmann:



An Update on One of Our Own Skip Bryan Continues to Tear Up the Vintage League!

Some of you may recall our August 2014 meeting, where we heard from club member Skip Bryan, “an honest-to-goodness race car driver, still burning up the tracks in the Sportscar Vintage Race Association ranks at the age of 73.” He’s now two years older, of course, but not slowing down at all! In fact, he’s still burning up the tracks in Vintage Sports Car Racing, and this year competed at Sebring (twice), Amelia Island, Virginia International Raceway, Summit Point (West VA), Road Atlanta, entering roughly 10 events this year with just one concession...he’ll be wearing his cool suit for the July competition at Road Atlanta!

Last year, he participated in nine VSCR Sprint races, capturing first in class four times, second in class three times, and third in class twice. Overall, with multiple classes competing together, he scored two top five finishes and seven top ten finishes.

It’s great to have “one of our own” out there on the track, and it’s even greater to have our club logo in competition. The photos below will give you a feel for Skip’s World in VSCR, and will even show you our logo in action!



The Passing of the Wrench!

(Report by Mike Anderson) Members who attended the June meeting had the opportunity to witness the "passing of the baton" to a new Crew Chief. Vice president Wendy Touchette read a letter of resignation from Crew Chief Jerry Conkle. After three years of service as club president, Jerry has decided to step down from his leadership position. Conkle stated that he will continue as a member of the club's Board of Directors, and plans on joining former Crew Chiefs Glen Carter and Gerry Hafer on the pit wall. We are pleased to announce that Tony Kennea (ken' ah) accepted the nomination for Crew Chief and was approved by the members present at the meeting. Many of you know Tony well...he's conducted two presentations for us through the years—one on Formula 1 and one on Land Speed Records.



Local Racing Corner

These tracks represent the local roots of racing and they need our support! If you've been to an event at any of these tracks recently, you'll no doubt agree that attendance is down. Car counts are down as well, and it's easy to see that either of these facts represents a cause-and-effect situation. If the cars don't come, neither will the fans, and it's becoming a downward spiral that can only lead to the closing of tracks here in Central Florida. Let's do our part to keep the sport alive!

By the way, Citrus County Speedway is on the threshold of a re-birth...see the article on the next page.

Track	Location	Telephone	Web URL
Auburndale Speedway	Winter Haaven	863-551-1131	auburndalespeedway.net
Bronson Speedway	Archer	352-486-4998	bronsonspeedway.net
Bubba Raceway Park	Ocala	352-622-9400	bubbaracewaypark.com
Citrus County Speedway	Inverness	352-634-5953	citruscountyspeedwayandtrack.com
Desoto Speedway	Bradenton	941-748-3171	desotaspeedway.com
East Bay Raceway Park	Tampa (Gibsonston)	813-677-7223	eastbayracewaypark.com
Marion County Speedway	Ocala	352-812-3922	marioncountyspeedway.com
New Smyrna Speedway	Samsula	386-427-4129	newsmyrnaspeedway.org
Original Speedway Park	Fruitland Park	352-787-4968	originalspeedwaypark.com
Orlando Speedworld	Bithlo	407-568-1367	orlandospeedworld.org
Putnam County Speedway	Satsuma	386-649-6969	putnamcountyspeedway.org
Showtime Speedway	Pinellas Park	727-561-9646	showtimespeedway.us
Volusia Speedway Park	DeLeon Springs	386-985-4402	sportsvolusia.com

Your Pit Crew

Tony Kennea, President/Crew Chief (603-9197)
 Wendy Touchette, Vice President (303-9734)
 Silky Meegan, Corresponding Secretary (259-2029)
 Mike Anderson, Social Media Coordinator(217-714-2245)
 Gerry Greim, Recording Secretary (215-630-1402)
 Tom Horrman, Treasurer/Official Photographer (430-0195)
 Darren Ivey, Special Events Coordinator (552-1977)
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership Coordinators (751-1771)
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
 John Angiolo, Member at Large (414-305-8094)
 Mike Touchette, Member at Large (603-5077)
 Tina Ivey, Member at Large, Asst. Speaker Recruiter (552-1977)
 Janine Woodsford, Member at Large, HOF Coord. (430-5804)
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)
 Jerry Conkle, Immediate Past President (750-1185)
 Gerry Hafer, Past President (396-9961)
 Glen Carter, Past President (874-8152)

June Meeting Preview

Citrus County Speedway Gearing Up for July 16 Re-Opening

As many of you are aware, our “home track” is undergoing massive renovation in preparation for a mid-July re-opening. The scheduled date for Opening Night is Saturday, July 16, and we’re organizing a car pool trip over there to stock the stands with a blanket of “yellow shirts!”

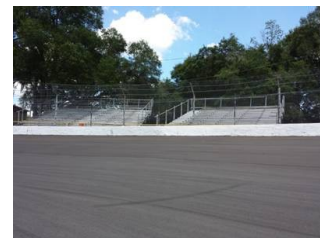
This is a pretty big deal for Florida Stock Car Racing, coming at a time when the trend has been for tracks to fold their tents in the face of a declining fan base, limited car counts, and intra-track scheduling problems. Our group is ecstatic about having a re-furbished facility so close (the Inverness location is roughly 26 miles from our normal starting location at Laurel Manor Rec Center), so we need to support their efforts.

As part of the run-up to the July 16 date, we’ve made arrangements with the new General Manager, 18-year old Camron Ray to be with us on July 6 to give us an update on the track and to share his plans for the future.



June Meeting Preview (cont'd)

Here are some recent photos of the track renovation project as it nears completion:



And, here's Camron...

