



# The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

## Pit Report

January—2015

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, March 4, 2015

### In This Issue:

Jack Hewitt! Wow!	1&2
Dick Anderson Update	3
Detroit City Customs Trip	3
Skip Bryan Hot Laps	4
Ken Schrader and ARCA	4
HOF Update	5
Future Speaker Showcase	6
Welcome, New Members	6
Prediction Row - 2015 Edition	7
Local Racing Corner	7
Your Pit Crew	8
Conkle's Corner	8
A Ray of Hope on the Short Track Scene	8



### Jack Hewitt! Wow!



**January 7**—If you had the good fortune of being in the audience for our January meeting, you know you got to experience Jack “Do It” Hewitt in peak form. Steve Trivett, in his Daily Sun article, got it right with the comment that Hewitt had us “rolling in the aisles” as he shared just a few of the highlights of a career that many refer to as one of the greatest of all time. In fact, during my introduction of Jack at the meeting, I included some quotes that I picked up during my research

on this legendary racer, like “He’s one of the most beloved and respected drivers in the history of the sport” and “Jack is one of the greatest drivers to ever strap into a sprint car.” I also quoted some of the other comments I found, like “There are no filters between what Jack feels and what Jack says” and “There is not a drop of political correctness in him.”

Jack Hewitt’s career statistics speak for themselves...his two USAC Silver Crown Championships, his 1998 4-Crown Nationals sweep (the only driver in history to accomplish this feat), his recognition as one of the “24 greatest sprint car drivers of the 1900s), and his place in the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame, to cite just a few. But what really kept us spellbound was his recollections of his time at Indianapolis, and the events surrounding his magical participation in the 1998 Indy 500.

As he recounted many of his experiences at racing venues around the country and over in Australia, Jack’s descriptions and anecdotes were so real that each one of us felt like we were with him (although at a safe distance from the fisticuffs!) His remarks put us right in the action, and we know enough about Jack to know that he wasn’t just talking...he was sharing real events with the colorful commentary of one who “walked the walk.”

Jack’s time with us was extraordinary, to say the least, but what made his visit even more meaningful was witnessing him reminisce after the meeting with Billy and Kim Garcia and Grady Wade, club members who competed with Jack on the high banks “back in the day,” and who shared fond memories of their battles (well the memories, anyway, are fond).

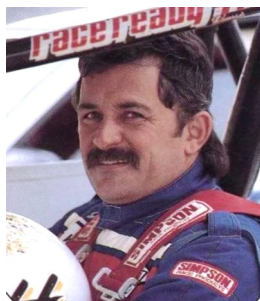
## More on Jack Hewitt's Visit

Jack's remarks included a recap of his return last September to Eldora for an appearance at the 2014 4 Crown Nationals. Despite a right arm that doesn't work well, and a severe limp resulting from multiple neck injuries, Jack posted some of the hottest laps of the weekend. His secret? He coated the steering wheel with honey so he could maintain a grip. Now that's a racer!

Here are some photo highlights of Jack's visit with us...



Our January 4 meeting also included a visit from Richard Golardi of Florida Open Wheel. Following the meeting, Richard provided a link to his online 10-minute retrospective on Jack and his Indy experience. The link can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/K2blgzc5ygM>, and here are some excerpts of "Do It" Hewitt "back in the day"...





## Dick Anderson's Comeback Takes a Setback!

January 24—The long-awaited return of the “King of the Florida Short Tracks” to Open Wheel Modified racing took a significant hit at New Smyrna Speedway. Taking the track in undoubtedly the best looking car in the field, Dick Anderson proved to the racing crowd that he can still lay claim to his title, driving a masterful race and executing moves that reflected his years of short track dominance.

Dick qualified 11th in the field of 25 Modifieds, starting inside of the sixth row. He ran in the top 10 through most of the first half of the race, until a mid-race skirmish forced him to the rear of the field. After spending a block of laps cooling his tires, the cagey veteran began to make his move, moving to the top five with roughly 10 laps to go. Then, disaster struck. In third place on a restart with seven laps to go, and poised to make the charge that would have given him the lead, he became the victim of a multi-car wreck that ended his night.

When the smoke cleared, Anderson's magnificent machine sat crumpled against the pit wall, after nosing headfirst into the outside wall and spinning across the track into the path of the rest of the field. It wasn't pretty.



## A Great Day at Detroit City Customs!

On Saturday, January 10, a contingent of 16 club members made the trip up to Ocala to tour Detroit City Customs, a fascinating shop that specializes in ground-up customs, restorations, and resto-mods. Their services also encompass one-off motorcycle projects, drag cars, custom fabrication, and custom paint. The trip featured a catered lunch, followed by a review of the firm's history presented by owner Derek Tipton, and an opportunity to meet their staff. Following the introductions, the group (the total group size was over a 100, with other clubs and organizations participating) was given a tour of DCC's state-of-the-art body shop, paint facility, and restoration shop. In the photo below left, Bob Watson and Jim Boyd, along with Jim Hedlund from Spruce Creek South, examine one of the DCC creations, and in the center photo, the group meets the DCC staff. Trip Coordinator Mike Touchette called the trip a great success!



## Skip Bryan Continues to Burn Hot Laps in VDCA

**December 12**—Club member and soon-to-be-inducted Hall of Famer Skip Bryan once again placed The Villages name at the top of the list, this time in first-round qualifying in the Vintage Drivers Club of America season finale at Bloomingdale (Savannah), Georgia's Roebling Road Raceway. Skip blistered the 2.02 mile, nine turn asphalt road course with a lap of 1:24.818 to take quick time honors for that round. In the Saturday race (20 minute duration), he recorded the third fastest "best lap" with a 1:25.584, yielding the first and second spots to a Porsche and a Datsun 240z. Then, in Sunday's Enduro (one hour) race, he once again set third fastest lap time with a 1:24.214, this time following a Swift DB2 and the same Datsun 240z he trailed the day before. The Enduro event featured 36 vintage race cars.



Skip's 2014 season was highly successful, with competition in 16 individual races. Seven times, he achieved "first in class" finishes, plus six top five finishes in the total race run group, and three top 10 finishes in the total race run group. Not bad for a "seventy-something" Villager! In Skip's own words, "This is great fun, and it builds brain cells." Many of you will recall Skip's visit with us last August, and his sharing of the dream of racing.

## And, Speaking of "Old Guys," Ken Schrader Announces ARCA Schedule

January 21—Long-time NASCAR veteran and fan favorite Ken Schrader recently presented his team's 2015 Preview for competition in the ARCA series...and it's a pretty active one. You may recall that Schrader holds the honor of being the oldest ARCA winner in history, winning at DuQuoin in 2013 at age 58. In his ARCA career, he boasts 17 wins and 19 poles, proving that he's a force to be reckoned with in that series.

As reported by ARCA's Don Radebaugh in ARCA's press release, "The No. 52 Federated Auto Parts KSR Chevrolet Impala team, which finished sixth in 2014 owner points with three drivers, is expected to return in 2015 with much the same cast of drivers to include Schrader, Martinsville Speedway track president Clay Campbell and, more than likely, 18-year-old Matt Tifft."


"Right now, we've got Clay Campbell in for Daytona and Talladega," Schrader said. "I can tell you that I'll be driving in the first Salem race, Toledo, Winchester, IRP (Lucas Oil Raceway), DuQuoin and the last Salem for sure, maybe more. Outside of that, I'm confident that you'll see some Matt Tifft appearances in there too."



## The 2014 Hall of Fame Induction—Set to Go February 7

OK...we're just about there! Our **Class of 2014 Hall of Fame** inductions are just around the corner, and it's shaping up to be another grand night for our group. Janine Woodsford and her talented crew have put together a great event, and if you haven't signed up, get in touch with her quickly.





**2014 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION AND AWARDS NIGHT**  
 Saturday, February 7, 2015  
 La Hacienda Recreation Center  
 6 P.M.

Join us as we celebrate the induction of these  
 motorsports luminaries into our Hall of Fame

**The Class of 2014**

Tony Modica	Stan Butler
Allan E. Brown	Skip Bryan
Grady Wade	Tony Kennea
Bob Bolles	Richard Golardi
Steven Brack	John & Mary Ostdiek
George Poveromo	Paul Barth

**Keynote Speaker**  
 Eddie Roche, International Speedway Corporation

Doors Open at 5:30 p.m.  
 Reception and Dinner 6-7 p.m.  
 Induction ceremony begins at 7 p.m.  
 Dinner catered by Sonny's BBQ  
 Pulled pork, pulled chicken, sides, tea and coffee will be served.  
 BYO for other liquid refreshment.

Admission is \$5 per person  
 RSVP - Janine Woodsford, janinewoodsford@gmail.com

Casual dress. Members, no "yellow shirts" but wear your name tag!



We're honored to have the formidable Eddie Roche, recently retired International Speedway Corporation images and archives manager (2003-2014) as our Keynoter. Eddie is a well-respected and much-honored member of the motorsports journalism community. His impact on the profession is recognized locally, regionally, and nationally, as evidenced by the prestigious awards he's received during his storied career.

Eddie's career began in 1971 with National Speed Sport News, and the following year he became Motorsports Editor for the Hollywood (FL) Sun daily newspaper. A year later, he was named Field Editor South for Stock Car Racing magazine, and held the position of PR Director for the World Series of Stock Car Racing at New Smyrna Speedway from 1973 to 1977. In 1974, he joined the PR Dept at Daytona International Speedway, beginning a 40-year working relationship with the France family companies.



Eddie's first of a two volume set of Florida Motorsports Retrospective Pictorial books was published in 1997 (and Volume 2 in 2002). In 1990, he was inducted into the International Race Officials Hall of Fame, and he received the Russ Moyer Media Award and Daytona International Speedway President's Award in 2013.



## Future Speaker Showcase

If you've been a member for some time, you know that we've been blessed with an extraordinary list of speakers at our monthly meetings (well over a hundred in our more than eight years as a group). For you longtime members, if you want to take a stroll down memory lane just go to "Speaker Roster" on our website's Newsletter page (<http://www.villagesracingclub.com/index.php/newsletters-pit-reports>), find the speaker you're interested in, and click the active link to be taken to the Newsletter/Pit Report showcasing their visit with us. For newer members, this is also a good way to see the ground we've covered since Glen Carter had this fantastic idea way back in 2006.

So, while we've covered a lot of ground, we're not slowing down, as evidenced by our recruiting of Jack Hewitt as our January guest. In fact, we're hard at work forming up our schedule for the rest of 2015, and here's what's in store for the next three months:

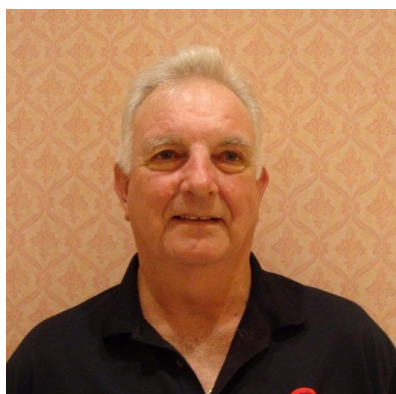
**March**—Art "Fireball" Fehrman, founder of Illinois Vintage Racing ([www.illinoisvintageracing.com](http://www.illinoisvintageracing.com)), will speak to us about their group and their upcoming Hall of Fame induction.

**April**—Paul Vitrano, Polaris Industries' Vice President of Global Government Relations, will share an overview of their companies' racing programs

**May**—Jim "Jimbo" Chadwick, South Florida racing historian, former Busch Series crew member, and operator of a variety of motorsports services, will share remarks on the history of Florida racing.

And that's just for starters. We're also in scheduling negotiations with 1994 NASCAR Winston Racing Series National Champion David Rogers; up-and-coming short track racer, Snowball Derby veteran, Southern Super Series competitor, PASS South and CRA competitor Steve Nasse; former NASCAR Cup-level competitor Rick Wilson, Sprint Car veteran Larry Moore; Tim Ducat, local Ski Mobile Racing competitor; and several others. It's gonna be another great year!

## Welcome New Members



We welcomed these new members at our January meeting: (Left to right) Bill and Kim Garcia, from Elk Grove, California (Bill is a member of our Hall of Fame, Class of 2011); Dan Gammon-Indianapolis, Indiana (where they have a big race track); and Scott Trumball, Sioux Falls, South Dakota (another one of those Sprint Car guys).

**By the way, if any of you haven't renewed your membership for 2015, please contact Bob or Camille Sherman as soon as possible.**

## Prediction Row—2015 Edition



Prediction Row Coordinator Silky Meegan has announced an outstanding list of racing experts from the club ranks to take on defending champion Shirley Birchwale. The roster for this year's edition of the program, which call for club members to predict the winner of NASCAR Sprint Cup points events, includes the following:

Spring Segment—Races 1 through 13	Summer Segment—Races 14 through 26
Dan Gammon	Shirley Birchwale (Defending Champ)
Kim Garcia	Don Day
Darren Ivey	Tina Ivey
Tony Kennea	John Kitowicz
Jim Pappas	Dave Monahan
Lois Taylor	Bob Woodsford

For a complete description of the program and its organization, check out the "Prediction Row" page on our website ([www.villagesracingclub.com/index.php/prediction-row](http://www.villagesracingclub.com/index.php/prediction-row)).

## Local Racing Corner

As we've mentioned quite a few times in the past, 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. We've already lost two this year (Columbia and Putnam County), and our "home track" (Citrus County Speedway) is in trouble. Most of the others are struggling. So, let's do our part to keep the sport alive! These tracks are where the future big-league drivers cut their teeth, and they need us in the stands. Remember...without these tracks, there'd be no NASCAR!

Track	Location	Telephone	Website URL
Original Speedway Park	Fruitland Park	352-348-4336	speedwaypark.biz
Citrus County Speedway	Inverness	352-726-9339	citruscountyspeedway.com
Bubba Raceway Park	Ocala (Zuber)	352-622-9400	bubbaracewaypark.com
New Smyrna Speedway	Samsula	386-427-4129	newsmyrnaspeedway.org
Orlando Speedworld	Bithlo	407-568-1367	orlandospeedworld.org
East Bay Raceway Park	Tampa (Gibson)	813-677-7223	eastbayracewaypark.com
Marion County Speedway	Ocala	352-812-3922	marioncountyspeedway.com
Auburndale Speedway	Winter Haven	863-551-1131	auburndaleracing.com
Three Palms Speedway	Punta Gorda	941-444-9461	threepalmsspeedway.com
Desoto Super Speedway	Bradenton	941-748-3171	desotospeedway.com
Bronson Speedway	Archer	352-486-4998	bronsonspeedway.net

## Your Pit Crew

Jerry Conkle, President/Crew Chief (750-1185)  
 Wendy Touchette, Vice President (303-9734)  
 Silky Meegan, Corresponding Secretary (259-2029)  
 Mike Anderson, Webmaster (217-714-2245)  
 Gerry Greim, Recording Secretary (215-630-1402)  
 Tom Horrmann, Treasurer/Official Photographer (430-0195)  
 Gary Civiletti, Special Events (751-4030)  
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)  
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)  
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)  
 Gerry Hafer, Immediate Past President /Newsletter (751-3643)  
 Glen Carter, Past President (751-6442)

## A Ray of Hope on the Florida Short Track Scene

**Bronson Motor Speedway** seems to be settling into a regular schedule, and **Citrus County Speedway** is showing signs of re-grouping and restarting, so there may yet be some hope for a resurgence of short track stock car racing in Florida. This recent news article from nbc-2.com is also a welcomed announcement, even though it's a bit (about 150 miles) out of our group's Saturday night reach...

*A year after the Punta Gorda Speedway shut down, the facility has reopened as **Three Palms Speedway**. The new operators will lease the 22 acres from the Charlotte County Airport Authority for \$6,500 a month. It's a three-year deal.*

*"It is a large investment, and we look to make it very successful here in Southwest Florida. We feel like this is a great area and community for racing, and we want to be part of it for a really long time," said speedway operator Andy Haase. After negotiations with the previous tenant went sour, Airport Authority vice chair Pam Seay says the track needed some serious TLC. The new operators were happy to step in.*

*"It definitely needed a lot of work. It had been run down from previous owners for almost the last 20 years. This place has really had a rough go," said Haase. Haase and his team poured more than \$100,000 into track repairs. In order to attract more visitors, the speedway is offering weekend "bring your own seat" ticket prices for only \$5.*



## Conkle's Corner...

We're all looking forward to our upcoming Hall of Fame night and the opportunity to see some of our guest speakers again. It's that time we take out of the year to thank all of them for spending an evening with us, sharing their stories and their experiences. Their support of our monthly meetings is one of the things that makes our group great, and we appreciate every one of them. Don't pass up the chance to come out on February 7 and help honor them!



\*\*\*\*\*

Now, a little humor:

### Jack Daniel's Fishing Story

I went fishing this morning but after a short time I ran out of worms. Then I saw a cottonmouth with a frog in his mouth. Frogs are good bass bait.



Knowing the snake couldn't bite me with the frog in his mouth I grabbed him right behind the head, took the frog, and put it in my bait bucket.

Now the dilemma was how to release the snake without getting bit. So, I grabbed my bottle of Jack Daniel's and poured a little whiskey in its mouth. His eyes rolled back, he went limp. I released him into the lake without incident and carried on fishing using the frog.

A little later, I felt a nudge on my foot. It was that snake, with two more frogs.

\*\*\*\*\*

