



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

April, 2014

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, May 7, 2014

In This Issue:

A "Mudslinger" from the Midwest	1
Dora Continues to Shine at CCS	2
May Meeting Preview	2
The Great Race is Coming	
Welcome, New Members	3
Tom Horrmann's Excellent Adventure	4
Buster Burt Memorial Race	5
Marty Little—We've Lost Another Great	5
NASCAR Hall of Fame—Class of 2015	6
Local Racing Corner	6
Your Pit Crew	7
Conkle's Corner	7
Beech Ridge Speedway Comments on Buster	7

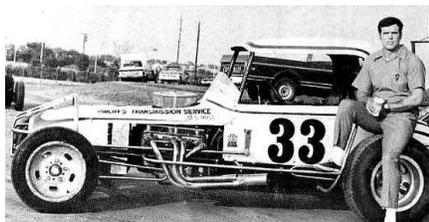
April 2—We broke a little bit of new ground with our April visitor (and soon-to-be club member) Grady Wade, an authentic dirt tracker from the Midwest. It's not too often that we have veterans from the country's heartland tracks, like Kansas, Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri, and so on, or as Grady put it, from the "Hamburger Trail of racing."

Grady shared the high points of a racing career that began at age 18 and continued for several decades. His career led to many victories and a spot in the Big Car Racing Association's Hall of Fame and the Highbanks Hall of Fame at the National Midget Auto Racing Museum, along with a warehouse of memories of conquering the half-mile fairground dirt tracks throughout the middle states.

During his remarks to us, Grady shared the start of his racing career (the purchase of his first car, a 1934 Ford that he acquired for \$6), as well as his fond memories of racing against some of motorsports' biggest names (for example the Unsers and many of the USAC greats of the 60s and 70s). He also gave us a feel for the hectic life of a real racer, describing a typical schedule that would have him and his team traveling from competition in Oklahoma City on Friday, to Knoxville to compete on Saturday, to Lincoln Nebraska to race Sunday, ending up in Wichita, Kansas to compete on Monday. Sleeping on rest stop picnic tables was their version of relaxing in comfort along the way!

Reflecting on a colorful history, Grady terms his career successful as a result of very few broken bones, and as a result of creating a great number of friends along the way. He put it this way, "In racing, you make millions of friends, and that's good because sometimes you need them!"

Here are some photo highlights of Grady through the years:



Dora Thorne—Keeping our Logo on the Podium!



April 5 & 19—If you’ve been able to make it over to Citrus County Speedway since the season re-started April 5, you’ve been able to see club Hall of Famer Dora Thorne competing enthusiastically in the track’s Street Stock class. She’s been carrying our logo prominently displayed on her car, fortunately at a spot high enough that it won’t easily be victimized by tire rub (CCS is a “bull ring,” after all!)

On February 2, Dora did us proud, winning her heat race, leading the first 12 laps of her feature and then hanging on to an ill-handling car to grab a third-place podium finish. That helped the Floral City speedster pad her second-place standing in the points race, where she sits 66 points ahead of third place J.D. Goff from Brooksville and a mere 32 points behind leader Tim Wilson, also from Floral City.

Dora is scheduled to compete at least the next two Saturday nights at CCS...let’s get on out there and cheer her on!

Getting Technical—Bob Bolles from Circle Track Set to Give Us the Circle Track Story at May Meeting

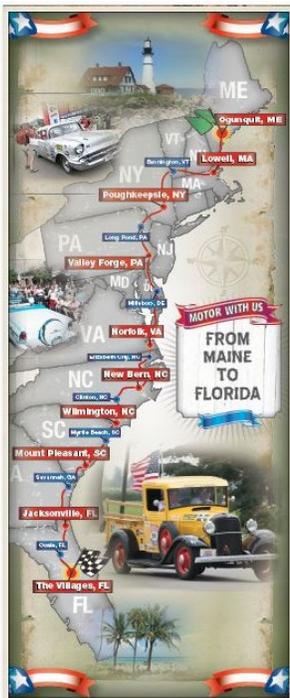
Circle Track Magazine’s Senior Technical Editor Bob Bolles will be our May 7 guest speaker, along with “Club God Father” Dick Anderson. As many of you know, Bob has been working with Dick for several years researching and testing a variety of Dick’s ingenious race car designs, including the current edition of New Dixie Racing’s famous number 92 Super Late Model.

Bob is a Florida native, growing up in Daytona Beach and graduating from a technical college in Tampa, where he studied mechanical engineering. Bob eventually moved to Virginia where he began developing his racing knowledge. There he worked with his first stock car teams. Over time he built a race team consulting business and began developing computer software that race teams could use to setup their race cars. He wrote the code for two programs and self-published a book on race car design and setup.

Bob accepted an offer to become a full time member of the Circle Track crew in 2002, and for over twelve years has continued to focus on the chassis engineering side of racing technology.



“The Great Race is Coming”



The Villages will take center stage this June, when the 2014 edition of “The Great Race” ends its Maine to Florida run at Lake Sumter Landing on June 29. This nine-day event will originate in Ogunquit, Maine and travel down the east coast to The Villages, with stops in between at places like Poughkeepsie New York, Valley Forge PA, and Wilmington North Carolina before hitting the square on the 29th.

Here’s an excerpt from a Hemmings Daily, “World’s Leading Classic Car New Source” press release that will give you additional background on this fantastic event: “...the Great Race has released the route for (this) year’s running of the event. Just as last year, the Great Race will be a north-to-south affair, this time traveling from Maine to Florida.

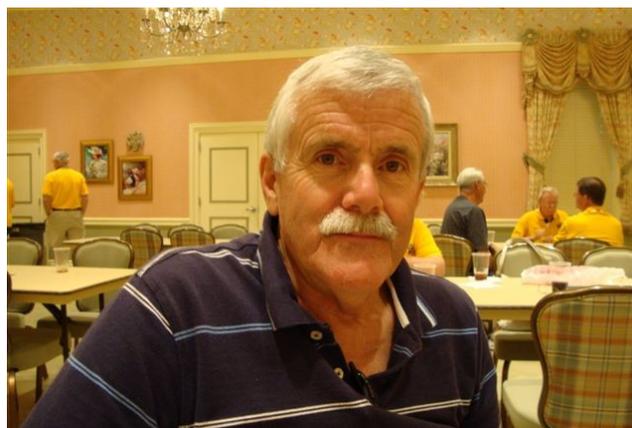
Beginning in Ogunquit, Maine, on

June 21, 2014, the Great Race will make overnight stops in Lowell, Massachusetts; Poughkeepsie, New York; Wayne, Pennsylvania; Norfolk, Virginia; New Bern, North Carolina; Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and Jacksonville, Florida. Lunch stops will take place in Bennington, Vermont (Hemmings HQ!); Long Pond, Pennsylvania; Millsboro, Delaware; Elizabeth City, North Carolina; Jacksonville, North Carolina; Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; and Ocala, Florida, before the Great Race wraps up on June 29 in The Villages, Florida. Visit www.GreatRace.com for more info.

The Great Race is supported locally by The Villages Region chapter of the Antique Automobile Club of America, and our group will be participating in the event’s conclusion festivities at Lake Sumter Landing on June 29...stay tuned!



Welcome, New Members



At our April 2 meeting, we welcomed two new members: Carlo Capra (left) from Florence Township, New Jersey; and Jerry Robinson (right) from Franklin, Connecticut. With these new members, our race team now consists of 157 “motorheads,” and Membership Chair Bob Sherman reminded all those who have not paid their 2014 dues that they will be dropped from the rolls unless they contact him by April 30.

Tom Horrmann's Excellent Adventure

Speedweeks, 2014—Our own Tom Horrmann found himself living large over at Daytona this year, after a friend from Long Island, who is also a NASCAR employee, came through with a full-week Hot Pass at the Speedway! Actually, he had a choice of the Hot Pass or tickets to the 500...Tom explains it this way: "Wow, hard choice.....let's see, one day to watch a race, one week of being in the garages and pits with drivers, cars, owners, pit crew, and media. Hard choice, right?" Not really...and you can see which way he went in the pictures below and at right.

In addition to the simple pleasure of being in the rare air at Daytona, Tom got to get close to some of the drivers. Here's a story he shared with me: "One funny story was how I got a picture with me and Brad Keselowski. I walked into the restroom there at the garages, and ran into one guy just leaving, Clint Bowyer. Just a passing, 'HELLO.' Just taking care of business and who walks in and stands beside me, Brad Keselowski. We looked at each other and he says, 'Bet you'll remember this the rest of your life.' Well, I laughed and asked if I could get a picture with him, and he says, 'Let's wash our hands and go outside first.' Witty guy."



May 24—Don't Miss the Buster Burt Memorial Race

May 24—Most of us recall Buster's role in the start-up of what has become a major force in Villages racing activities—the Radio-Controlled Car Racing Program now operated by The Villages R/C Racing Club. Always a racer, Buster accepted the health issues that relegated him to the sidelines on many physical fronts, but he did not let that stop his need for speed. He began to build R/C cars in his garage, and quickly assembled an impressive stable of competitive cars, even one closely resembling the Legends Series car he raced up in Maine in the late 1990s.

Buster was a fixture at many of the R/C club gatherings, actively monitoring the pit action as well as the on-track competition. He even slipped into the role of "car owner," brokering deals with independent drivers like Mike Heinke to represent his fleet in on-track performances.

In fact, in November of 2012, the R/C racing group honored Buster by appointing him Grand Marshall for The 2012 edition of The Villages Cup. This was the first running of this

annual event using R/C cars as the venue, so it was fitting that Buster be honored in this way. Now, as a memorial to his years as a racer, historian, and dear friend, the R/C club will be staging a Buster Burt Memorial race on Saturday, May 24 at Sea Breeze Rec Center. Here are the details:

- 9:45 am—Opening Ceremonies
- 10:00—Heat Races, with four classes (Stock, 2-wheel modified, 4 wheel modified, and NAS-CAR)
- Trophies will be awarded to all 1st place finishers

Let's all head out to Sea Breeze and remember Buster by watching some great racing!



Marty Little—We've Lost Another Great One

April 20—The Florida racing community lost another icon with the passing of Plantation's Marty Little, a longtime track announcer and freelance motorsports journalist. Although he was never able to make it up to visit us here in The Villages, you should know that he was an avid fan of what we do to promote racing, and commented often on how much he wanted to pay us a visit. Marty and I spoke regularly, most recently about a month before his death in a discussion about Buddy Pearce's PBS Hall of Fame induction.

Marty had an almost infallible memory about Florida's stock car racing glory days, and many people relied on him for fact checking (as I often did!) Also, hitting close to home, it was Marty who years ago coined the name "New Dixie Racing" and bestowed on our club Godfather Dick Anderson's racing operation. The name is a permanent part of Dick's legacy, flying proudly on the signs at the entrance to the Anderson compound.

One of Marty's hallmarks was his concern for honoring the memory of Florida's racing pioneers, like our own Buster Burt. In fact, in January of this year, Marty bought a race program on eBay from the 1959 opening night at the original Orlando Speedway and sent it to Buster...simply because it had his name listed as one of the top competitors! I can tell you first hand it made Buster's day, not only to see the program, but to know that Marty cared enough to send it to him!



NASCAR Hall of Fame—Class of 2015

January 29, 2014—Five new inductees joined the NASCAR Hall of Fame this year, bringing the Hall's roster to 25 motorsports luminaries. The Class of 2014, you'll recall, included Tim Flock, Jack Ingram, Dale Jarrett, Maurice Petty, and Fireball Roberts, standouts selected from a pool of 25 candidates by the Hall's the 34 voting members. Whether or not you agree with the final selection, you have to agree that these names represent a lot of the history of NASCAR.

So, now let's look ahead to next year. The 21-member Nominating Committee has been busy, assembling another cast of names again representing substantial NASCAR accomplishments and contributions to the sport. This nominating step is just as critical as the final ballot, perhaps even more so, since not being nominated certainly eliminates any chance of being elected!

To date, the Nominating Committee has placed these names on the ballot for the Class of 2015:

NASCAR Hall of Fame – Class of 2015 Nominees	
Buddy Baker	Red Byron
Richard Childress	Jerry Cook
Bill Elliott	Ray Fox
Rick Hendrick	Bobby Isaac
Terry Labonte	Fred Lorenzen
Raymond Parks	Benny Parsons
Larry Phillips	Wendell Scott
O. Bruton Smith	Mike Stefanik
Curtis Turner	Joe Weatherly
Rex White	Robert Yates

Editorial Note: You have some time to think about it, but in my mind one spot already has a lock on it. Guess who? It will be "Awesome!" Just saying.

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 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	originalspeedwaypark.com
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	ocalamicrospeedway.com
Auburndale Speedway	Winter Haven	863-551-1131	auburndaleracing.com
Punta Gorda Speedway	Punta Gorda	941-575-7223	puntagordaspeedway.com
Desoto Super Speedway	Bradenton	941-748-3171	desotosuperspeedway.com
Bronson Motor Speedway	Bronson	352-486-2763	facebook.com/ bronson.speedway

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)
 Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (20-8503)
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)
 Gerry Hafer, Immediate Past President /Newsletter (751-3643)
 Glen Carter, Past President (751-6442)

Beech Ridge Speedway Comments on Buster

Those of you who have had the opportunity to read Buster Burt's biography (A Genuine Racer, A Genuine Racing Career), will recall that Beech Ridge Speedway in Scarborough, Maine was the place his career first took flight. The year was 1948, and the event was a 25-lap "invitational" where Buster chose to take his family car onto the track. He finished in the top five, but would pay a hefty emotional price on the home front after a spectator—his wife's uncle—ratted him out! All that aside, however, it was the beginning of Buster's long and storied career in motorsports.

As a result of his early affiliation with Beech Ridge, Buster built a long-time friendship with promoter Andy Cusack, who remains affiliated with the track today. I forwarded a copy of our March/April newsletter to Andy, since our tribute to Buster dominated the edition, and here is Andy's reply:

Thank you, Gerry. My front office gave me your email and the article on Buster, today. I was saddened and surprised to learn of his passing in February. He was a good man and good ambassador for the sport.

Your motor racing club within The Villages is impressive – glad you all have enough "motorheads" around there to sustain and entertain yourselves!

Best to all,

Andy Cusack



Conkle's Corner...

Greetings, Fellow Race Fans!

Once again, I'd like to thank all of you for your cards, thoughts, visits, and prayers during my recovery. I'm feeling better and better everyday, and at this point I'm hoping to step back into my role as your Crew Chief around mid-year. In the meantime, I can't say enough about the support the Pit Crew has given me, running the meetings and taking care of the logistics that make everything go so smoothly. And especially, I'd like to thank Mike Anderson for stepping in as temporary Crew Chief, while handling the duties of Webmaster so well.



So, while I'm on the mend, here are a few bumper stickers that I'll offer as proof that I'm getting my sense of humor back in gear:

