



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

June, 2011

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Retired Sprint Car Champ Tells His Story



Billy Garcia—Sharing his racing career

May 4— Our string of incredible speakers continued at our May meeting, this time featuring a series of fascinating real-life stories of the experiences of a true racing champion. Billy Garcia, retired sprint car competitor and two-time Central State (California) Racing Association champion and Bonnybrook Village resident, spent the evening with our members sharing his life story—at least the racing part of it!

From his initial experience around racing—helping his father work the local Sacramento— area racing venues as a track photographer, to his first time behind the

wheel competitively, to his first win, to his movement up through the ranks of modified stock cars, midgets, and sprint cars, Billy entertained a spellbound crowd with his anecdotes and tales of on— and off-track episodes. Racing as a “privateer,” Billy and wife Kim travelled coast to coast, racing with the biggest names in the business. He participated, for example, in ESPN’s Saturday Night Thunder in a USAC car, as well as the World of Outlaws. As an example of their extensive windshield time, he recalls that in 1981 they logged well over 100,000 miles, competing in 100 races in 27 states.

Billy’s remarks were a nostalgic tour through the life and times of a racer the way it used to be. “It was a tough life, in many respects,” he notes “But at the same time it was incredibly rewarding.” With Kim as his most dedicated crew member, the Garcias blazed an impressive trail through racing’s history before taking the checkered flag here in The Villages in 2005.



Next Up—Rat Rods!

Rat Rod builder and classic car owner Lee Krauss will make an appearance at our June 1 meeting, along with his 1949 International “rat rod” truck. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to check out one of these fascinating creations up close, and to hear first-hand the story of how he went about creating his personal work-of-art.

Lee’s story is a tale of a true hobbyist, starting with his discover of the abandoned truck body in a salvage yard in Floral, his task of hauling it home to Bushnell, and his log hours of restoring it to an operating “thing of beauty.” As many of you know, the phenomenon of “rat rodding” is fueled by the opportunity it gives builders to

apply their personal and individual creativity in pursuit of a vehicle that favors function over form. In other words, it’s a matter of just doing what one wants without regard for the critical opinions of others! The result is a truly unique product, something that reflects the design and mechanical improvisational talents of the creator!



Photos show various stages of Lee Krauss’s rat rod restoration process. Clockwise, from top left, As he found it, getting it ready to drag home, the interior with make-shift parts, the cab as he found it, and the final result. **See the article on page 8 for a reprint of a feature story about Krauss and his project.**

Some Helpful Hints for Club Members

A friend of mine “up north” sent me a few of these little tidbits that might aid you in navigating everyday life in The Villages:

- A mousetrap placed on top of your alarm clock will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep after you hit the snooze button.
- If you can’t fix it with a hammer, it’s an electrical problem.
- You only need two tools in life: WD-40 and Duct Tape. If it doesn’t move and should, use the WD-40. If it shouldn’t move and does, use the duct tape.
- Avoid cutting yourself when cutting vegetables by getting someone else to hold the vegetables while you do the chopping.
- If you have a bad cough, take a large dose of laxatives. You’ll be afraid to cough.

And, here are some headlines from church bulletins that make you stop and think:

- The minister unveiled the church’s new campaign slogan last Sunday: “I upped my Pledge...Up Yours!”
- Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things around the house not worth keeping. Bring your husbands.

R/C Update—The Duratrax Evader!

Dean Tillman, Bob Giles, and a host of club members anxious to jump into the sport of Remote Control (R/C) Model Car Racing have been busily planning for the start-up of what promises to be “the next big thing” for our group. Several meetings have been held to iron out the specs for the first competition class, visits to several potential vendors have been conducted, and field trips to the Ocala R/C Car Club’s race track have taken place, all with the intent of getting us off on the right foot.

One of the most significant “first step” has been the selection of a vendor-of-choice to supply the cars for us, and an equally important step was recently taken with the determination that the Duratrax Evader EXT would be the standard for the first round of competitive racing. Noell’s Hobbies on Main Street in Wildwood

has been selected to be our group’s supplier as we get the program off the ground, and the group intends to be leaning hard on the proprietor’s expertise to get started. So far, at least six members have acquired cars (actually, Buster now has two!), and practices have begun. It is expected that a full field of cars will be ready to launch a league sometime in June.

Dean and his committee will be working next on the development of race procedures, inspection procedures, and physical track logistics. Anyone interested in joining in on the planning of this program are invited to sign on...just give Dean a call at 751-7353 and let him know. In the meantime, here’s a look at the Duratrax car, along with some snapshots of the Ocala track.



The Duratrax Evader EXT



Special Events Roundup



We've got a couple of great local carpool-type trips on the schedule for June, including a sponsorship deal over at Speedway Park on June 18 (see below). Our club's R/C Racing program is also beginning to take shape, and we're beginning to hear the first rumblings of trash talk among the participants. We expect that actual competition will begin to happen by mid-summer, so stay tuned for some intense action! As the article on page 3 of this newsletter notes, the group—headed by Dean Tillman and Bob Giles—has selected a standard car configuration and, at press time, scouting expeditions were underway to spec out a track.

Here's the current list of some club activities for the next few weeks...watch our website for changes and updates!

Wendy

Date/Event	Event Details
Saturday, June 4 Saturday, June 18 Speedway Park	Speedway Park's normal schedule for racing is the first and third Saturday of each month. Head over and watch the karts go at it, and cheer for club favorites Nic Fernandez and Aiden Turman as they compete in the Jr. Purple and Advanced Novice classes, respectively. We're planning a club trip over to Speedway Park on Saturday June 18. Our plan is to do a sponsorship deal jointly for Nic and Aiden, so save the date and let's see if we can fill the stands with our yellow shirts!
Wednesday, June 1 Colony Cottage	Our regular monthly meeting, featuring Rat Rod Builder Lee Krauss. Lee will be bringing with him his "beautiful" 1949 International Rat Rod Truck, and will give everybody a first-hand look at what "Rat Rodders" can do! We'll also have speakers from the Ocala R/C Raceway on hand for a demo.
Thursday, June 30 Camp Boggy Creek	We'll be traveling to Camp Boggy Creek on Thursday, June 30 to tour the facility and make the ceremonial presentation of our club's financial contribution. All club members are welcome to join the group...we'll be car pooling, so let Wendy know if you're going and if you can drive.
Thursday, June 30 New Smyrna Speedway	The Florida United Promoters series (the series that replaced FAST for 2011) will be running a 100-lap event titled the "13th Annual Clyde Hart Memorial." Our car (Dick Anderson's No. 92), with Jeff Scofield behind the wheel, will be competing. We'll be car pooling over there, leaving late afternoon. Let us know if you'd like to join us and, of course, if you can drive!
Saturday, July 2 Daytona International Speedway	Coke Zero 400. We're again working through Lake Limo for this trip, with an announced package price ranging from \$91 to \$139. Call Aimee @ 742-2808 for details...this trip is open to the general public. (See flyer attached for details).
Monday, July 11 O'Dell Recreation Center	We've been invited to attend a special meeting of The Villages Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America. Their speaker will be Ellen Daniels, Hall of Famer and Godmother of Drag Racing. Meeting is 7:00 pm. Email Harry Miller at harryelsucio@earthlink.net or call Wendy if you plan to attend.
Friday, July 15 La Hacienda Rec Center	The Villages Computer Club needs our help at the July 15 Camp Villages radio controlled car racing event. We're needed to fill in as timers, pit crews, judges, and track officials. Contact Gerry at 751-3643 for specific times and duties.
November, 2011 Zephyrhills	Annual David Reutimann Foundation Golf Tournament, Charity Auction, and Bar-B-Que. Details to follow.
Sunday, December 11 Colony Cottage	Save the date...our Fifth Annual Club Holiday Hall of Night and Awards Night

Prediction Row Getting Set for Segment Two

We're nearing the end of the first segment of the 2011 Prediction Row competition, with Gary Civiletti holding a slim one-point lead over Connie Scalzitti. Al Stone and Jim Carter are close behind at two points back, while Big Dave Bockman and Dave Colbert are slugging it out for last place. It's fascinating that the top four spots are separated by only two points and the spread from top to bottom is a mere nine points....further indication that "great minds" tend to think alike!

As you read this, there is only one race left in segment one...Race No. 13 at Kansas Speedway. The panel for segment two (races 14-26) are prepared to spring into action and compete for a spot in the final segment (the Chase segment). The top three from each of the first two segments will be the predictors for the Chase segment, with an opportunity to take home all the marbles!

Here's a refresher on who the new set of predictors are for segment two:

- ⇒ Wendy Touchette
- ⇒ Syd Baker
- ⇒ Glen Carter
- ⇒ Jim Dunaway
- ⇒ Jerry Conkle
- ⇒ Corky Eck

Be sure to share your thoughts with them on the merit of their predictions. Don't forget that you can follow their progress via our website...just click on the item under "Important Information" on the homepage.

The 1941 Chrysler Thunderbolt

Since I'm always on the lookout for strange cars to include in our newsletter, many of my friends "up north" frequently send me information I can use here. This one is a truly unique car, one I knew nothing about before I received this email....

The Chrysler Thunderbolt Concept introduced a new wave of designs and industry technological accomplishments. The body was comprised of aluminum and the roof was a retractable, electrically controlled hardtop. There were no door handles; rather they were operated by the push of a button. The windows were controlled by hydraulic power. The headlights were also carefully concealed in the bodywork. The aerodynamic design continued to the fully enclosed wheel wells. There were no A pillars.



The design was courtesy of Alex Tremulis, an individual who introduced many inspirational industry designs such as the Tucker. Based on the Chrysler Crown Imperial and named after Captain George Eyston's land speed record accomplishments, the Thunderbolt was a masterpiece. Eyston had captured the Land Speed record in 1938 at the Bonneville Salt Flats by traveling at a speed of 357.53 mph. Using a specially designed vehicle that was over 30 feet in length and weighed an astonishing seven tons, it was powered by two Rolls-Royce 12-cylinder engines. The retractable top was so revolutionary; it would not be until 1957 before another manufacturer had a similar feature. The vehicle was the Ford Skyliner.

The interior of the Thunderbolt was adorned in leather. The two-seater was powered by a 323.5 cubic-inch straight-eight engine capable of producing 143 horsepower. Power was sent to the rear wheels courtesy of a Chrysler Fluid Drive transmission.

A total of six examples were produced with four existing in modern time, one residing at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum located in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Each Thunderbolt was given their own unique color scheme. *By Daniel Vaughan | Dec 2005 (Source: <http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z1900/Chrysler-Thunderbolt.aspx>)*

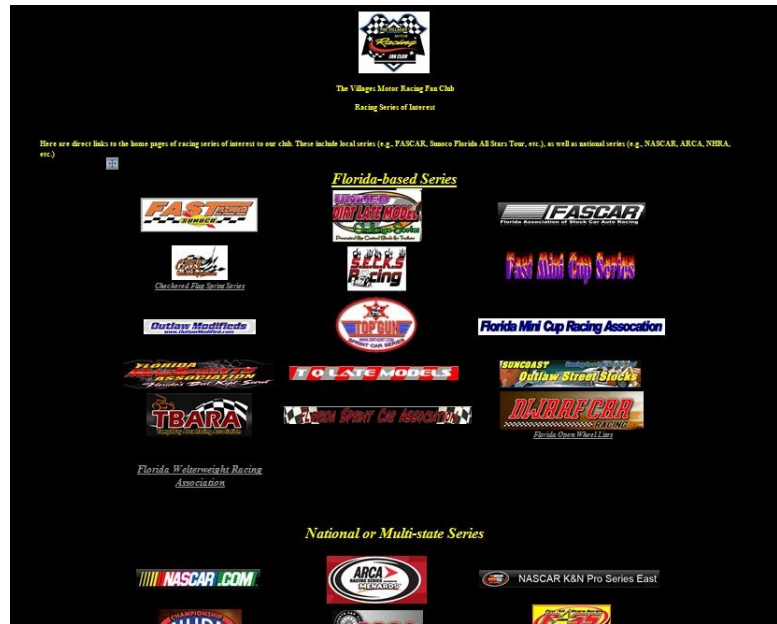
Club Website Continues to Evolve

As we mentioned a few months ago, our website team has been working to make www.villagesracingclub.com the “go to” place for racing information in the state of Florida. In addition to our club information, you’ll recall that some time ago we added an inventory of Florida’s 100+ race tracks, including track contact information (where available), configuration data, physical address (for GPS purposes), and driving distances from The Villages.

Most recently, we’ve begun to add links to a wide variety of racing-related websites, including specific race tracks, racing-related media sources, racing series operating in Florida and nationally, a handful of driver information sites, and even a collection of sites containing historical information on all types of motorsports.

Over the past month, we’ve been working on further expansion of the links to racing series, and we’ve separated Florida series from those that operate regionally or nationally. Did you know, for example, that there are 16 individual series that operate in Florida? These include series like

The United Dirt Late Models, several mini-cup series, several karting series, and so on. The “Links” page on our website provides direct access to any of these sites, as well as a variety of national series sites. As we’ve said before, this is a “work-in-progress, so check back often!



Local Racing Corner

Here are the web addresses for these local (and relatively local) tracks. Within each website, you can browse to a “Schedule” page to see what shows they have planned for the month.



<http://originalspeedwaypark.com>



<http://www.ocalaspeedway.com>



<http://www.ocalamicrospeedway.com>



<http://www.citruscountyspeedway.com>



<http://newsmyrnaspeedway.org>



<http://orlandospeedworld.org>



<http://thevolusiaspeedway.com>



<http://auburndaleracing.com>



<http://www.eastbayracewaypark.com>

Your Pit Crew

Gerry Hafer, President (751-3643)
 Mike Touchette, Vice President (430-0239)
 Silky Meegan, Corresponding Secretary (259-2029)
 Gerry Greim, Recording Secretary (215-630-1402)
 Tom Horrmann, Treasurer/Official Photographer (430-0195)
 Wendy Touchette, Special Events (430-0239)
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)
 Dave Bockman, Member at Large (751-0381)
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)
 Buster Burt, Technical Consulting (751-4643)
 Dave Colbert, Technical Planning (408-3712)
 Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (205-8503)
 Glen Carter, Immediate Past President (751-6442)

100 Years Ago

The Model T pictured at right is 100 years old this year. What a difference a century makes! Consider these statistics:



1911 Ford Model T

- In 1911, the average life span for men was 47 years
- Fuel for this car was sold in drug stores only.
- Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub.
- Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.
- There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower !
- The average US wage in 1910 was 22 cents per hour.
- The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year
- A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.
- More than 95 percent of all births took place at home .
- Ninety percent of all doctors had no college education.
- Sugar cost four cents a pound., eggs were fourteen cents a dozen, coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

So You don't need to look it up...

There's been a lot of hype lately about Kyle Busch overtaking Mark Martin as the winningest driver in the Busch/Nationwide series. That's ok, but did you know that there are 22 NASCAR drivers who have won in all three of the sport's top levels (Cup, Nationwide, and Trucks)? Here they are:

Driver	
1.	Ken Schrader
2.	Terry Labonte
3.	Mark Martin
4.	Bobby Hamilton
5.	Kevin Harvick
6.	Greg Biffle
7.	Jimmy Spencer
8.	Jamie McMurray
9.	Tony Stewart
10.	Steve Park
11.	Carl Edwards
12.	Bobby Labonte
13.	Kasey Kahne
14.	Kyle Busch
15.	Ricky Craven
16.	Kurt Busch
17.	Johnny Benson, Jr.
18.	Clint Bowyer
19.	Ryan Newman
20.	David Reutimann
21.	Elliott Sadler
22.	Michael Waltrip

Also, Terry Labonte (1995), Kevin Harvick (2003, 2010) and Kyle Busch (2005–2010) have accomplished this feat in the same season. With his win in the Cup race at Bristol on August 21, 2010, Busch became the first driver to win a race in all three series on the same weekend.

Rat Rods...What's In a Name?

The term "rat rod" is one that to most people is not likely to conjure up images of beauty, but to an automotive enthusiast, that's exactly what it does. To the automotive purist, and especially to a hobbyist or backyard mechanic, a rat rod is like an open canvas on which a collection of cast-off parts, spare pieces, and jury-rigged components can be put together to make a custom car that is, in many cases, a reflection of their own personality and creativity.

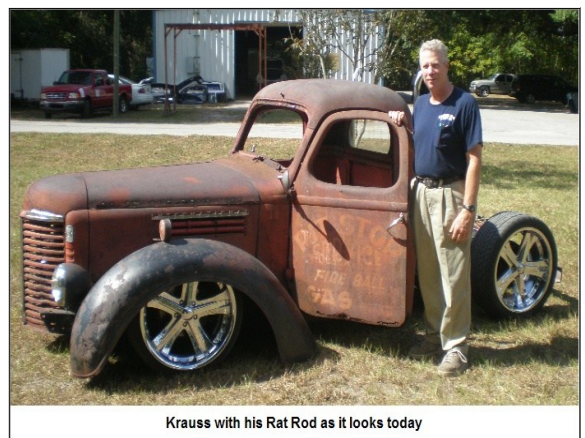
Rat rods are not glossy show cars. Rather, they are built to drive, and are intentionally left largely unfinished to enhance their appeal as a pieced-together work of art. They exude form over function, and are meant to be used rather than displayed (even though car shows featuring Rat Rod displays are becoming more and more prevalent), and unlike most expensively restored show cars, they're usually rode hard and put up wet (so to speak). The core of a rat rod is usually a salvaged coupe, roadster, or even a truck body from the 1930s through the 1950s which has been subjected to extensive chopping, channeling, shaving, and other forms of alteration, although they are typically left with unfinished exteriors to maintain a rough edge in their appearance.

In recent years, rat rods have become somewhat of an automotive phenomenon. If you're handy with tools and have access to some basic equipment and parts, you're ready to go find a car body to be your starting point. Lee Krauss, owner/operator of Bushnell Paint & Body, is a perfect example of someone with the right credentials to build a rat rod. A few years ago, while strolling through a junk yard in nearby Floral City, Krauss literally stumbled into a perfect starting point...a 1949 International truck cab that he couldn't pass up. The vehicle was originally a full-size fuel delivery truck, and was later used as an automotive service truck, but all that remained was the cab and the front portion of the frame. After hauling it to his shop in Bushnell, he set the cab on a 1981 Chevrolet half-ton pickup frame, cleaned up and refurbished the engine from the pickup and installed it, fitted a scrap 1967 Mustang radiator, added a 1960s-vintage air compressor to drive the air ride that came with the Chevrolet frame, and added a few spare parts here and there, like an old wrench for a gear shift, discarded chrome pickup truck bed rails as side pipes, and he was in business. The resulting rat rod is licensed and insured and is fully street capable. In fact, he recently drove the vehicle to a "Rats & Rods" show at Don Garlits' Museum of Drag Racing in Ocala.

Where he goes from here with his project is uncertain at this point, Krauss notes. "The objective of a rat rod," he commented, "is to retain an unfinished appearance. The body work I've done so far is simply aimed at making sure the thing doesn't fall apart on the road!" When asked about the allure of rat rodding, Krauss suggested that it is relatively inexpensive when compared to building custom cars, making it more affordable for the hobbyist. "It doesn't take a \$100,000 investment to get something put together," he commented, "so it appeals to a wider range of people."

Asked what advice he'd give to anyone considering undertaking a rat rod project, Krauss succinctly says "Go ahead and do it!" But, he quickly points out, do it for the fun of it, not necessarily to produce a show car or a trophy winner. The fun, he notes, is in using the project to show your personality and to have the finished project be a reflection of how you see yourself. Krauss, naturally, sees himself as a "car guy" through and through, and it shows. By the way, the rat rod is not the only toy in his toy box. His garage also includes a 1962 Cadillac Park Avenue (yes, **Cadillac** Park Avenue), a 1966 Oldsmobile Cutlass, and a 1972 Corvette. Perhaps the term "car guy" is a bit of an understatement?

Gerry Hafer
Sumter Express



Krauss with his Rat Rod as it looks today