



# The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

## Pit Report - September, 2009

### In This Issue:

Betty Skelton Erde—A Giant Visits the Club!	1
Keith Chartrand—Hearing from a Media Pro	1
Welcome, New Members!	4
Special Events Roundup	5
Hot Dogs & Hot Rods	5
Special Announcement—Looking Ahead to	6
Local Racing Corner	6
Officer Contact List	7
So you don't have to look it up!	7
Website review—DAARA	7
Odds and Ends—Orlando Event, Items to Ponder	8
DAARA Event at Citrus County Speedway	9

### Next Club Event...

**'Hot Dogs and Hot Rods',  
September 23 (see page 5)**

## "The First Lady of Firsts"



It's difficult to put into a summary all of the accomplishments of Mrs. Betty Skelton Erde, world famous aviatrix and motorsports luminary. Betty graced us with a visit at our August 26 meeting, sharing numerous stories about her illustrious career in aviation and racing and providing many insights into her storied life in the public eye. Interjecting personal stories and anecdotes into a narrated recap of her achievements, she provided a riveting portrayal of a woman succeeding in male-dominated sporting arenas, defying the odds time and time again to accumulate an incredible list of records, firsts, and simply outstanding feats in airplanes and cars. The record books show that she started young, becoming the first woman ever to execute a solo flight at the age of 12 (by her own admission, and illegally!) From there, and with the support of her parents, Betty

(continued on page 2)

## The Media Viewpoint

Our August 26 meeting also featured a visit from The Villages Daily Sun's Associate Managing Editor, Keith Chartrand. As many of you know, Keith is an award-winning journalist with the Daily Sun, having received numerous commendations here in Florida after migrating from the north. His most recent accolades include the Florida Press Club 2008 Excellence in Journalism award for Sports Feature Writing and the 2008 Florida Society of News Editors Journalism award for sports writing. Keith is well known in local sports circles, and is recognized by our club as the guy that routinely reports our "Prediction Row" NASCAR forecasts!

What many of you did not know, however, is that prior to joining The Villages Daily Sun, Keith was an Associate Director and Assignment Editor at ESPN in Connecticut. During his seven year stay

(continued on page 3)



# "The First Lady of Firsts" (continued from page 1)

embarked on a long string of assaults on standing records in aviation and motorsports, guided by a motto that seemed to go something like this: "That looks interesting...I think I'll do it!"

Over the course of the several decades, Betty systematically established a worldwide presence in the aviation and automotive industries. One media quote reports that "Between 1948 and 1970, Betty Skelton Erde held more combined land records and more air records than any other woman."

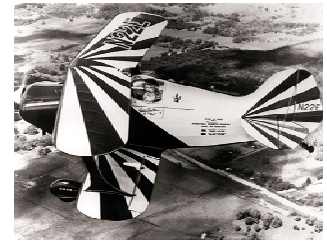
In addition to her daring exploits behind the wheel and in the cockpit, Betty also put together a stellar career in the business sector. As a successful business professional, she served General Motors, Chrysler Corporation, and other major companies as an advertising executive. In addition, she proved to be an accomplished real estate executive and founded her own firm.

I could go on and on, but I expect you get the picture at this point...she's something special. She's also a Villager, and has bestowed on our club the distinct honor of being the final organization from which she will accept a "Hall of Fame" invitation. We consider this to be high praise from someone of this stature, and look forward to our December 1 Hall of Fame night and Betty's induction.

In the meantime, Here's a **partial** list of Betty's major accomplishments during her career:

## First Woman:

- to execute a first solo flight at age 12
- test-driver in the auto industry
- to drive an Indianapolis race car
- to receive a AAA auto race driver's license
- to drive a jet car over 300 mph (actually, 315.72 mph)
- to undergo NASA testing for astronauts
- to compete in U.S. closed course pylon air racing
- to be inducted into the National Corvette Hall of Fame of the Corvette Museum
- to break an auto land speed record three times
- to fly a plane upside-down cutting a ribbon 10' above the ground
- to drive "jump boats" over ramps at Cypress Gardens
- to win International Feminine Aerobatic Championship three times



## Hall of Fame Inductions:

- Motorsports Hall of Fame
- International Council of Air Shows Hall of Fame
- National Aviation Hall of Fame
- National Corvette Hall of Fame
- Florida Sports Hall of Fame
- International Women in Aviation Hall of Fame
- Florida Women's Hall of Fame
- Tampa Sports Hall of Fame
- Tampa Bay Walk of Fame (Tropicana Field)
- International Aerobatic Hall of Fame



## Aviation and Automotive Records Held:

- World Land Speed Record for Women (Bonneville Salt Flats, 315.72 mph)
- World Land Speed Record for Women (Daytona Beach, 145.044)
- World Economy Record—Modified Division (Corvaire and Chevrolet Truck), plus three other class records
- Baja Peninsula Endurance Record (Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas)
- Transcontinental South America Automobile record (Argentina to Chile, roundtrip)
- Transcontinental United States Automobile Record (New York to Los Angeles)
- 24-Hour Stock Car Endurance Record (Darlington)
- World Closed Course Speed Record for Women (Chrysler Proving Grounds, 144.02 mph)
- Stock Car Flying Mile Record (Daytona Beach, 105.99)
- World Light Plane altitude record (set twice, 29,050')
- World Speed Record for Engine Aircraft (421.6 mph)
- Nine separate sports car records for speed and acceleration at NASCAR Speedweeks at Daytona in 1956



## The Media Viewpoint (continued from page 1)

with ESPN, Keith got a solid, behind-the-scenes look at the workings of NASCAR by serving as a liaison between the on-site production crews covering races and ESPN's home base in Connecticut. To the delight of our members, he described the intricate planning and coordination that goes along with covering a race, and provided a series of amusing anecdotes about the logistics of orchestrating multiple in-car cameras during a race.

Keith also shared his experience as a participant in NASCAR's Media Day at Daytona, describing his "rookie" performance during an interview with Dale Earnhardt Jr. and his most memorable encounter with the ever-gentle, media-friendly Tony Stewart. Despite these experiences (you had to be at the meeting to hear him tell it), he continues to progress as a developing race fan. He's even picked a favorite driver (Jeff Burton), and explained that his selec-

tion is based on his personal views on the importance of decorum and humility. Keith concluded his remarks with an entertaining recap of two events that drove him from the world of television--the coverage of Indiana Coach Bobby Knight's "third strike your out" performance, and the L.A. Lakers' first championship win with Koby Bryant and Shaquille O'Neill on the roster. These events, and the accompanying "all nighters," led him to leave the live TV arena and head for Florida.



Keith Chartrand (in blue shirt) and Betty Erde (center) debrief with club board members following August 26 meeting



## Welcome, New Members!

Five new members were added to our ranks at the August 26 meeting, bringing our full membership complement to a hearty 250. Next time we're all together, take a few minutes to introduce yourself to these new arrivals and help welcome them into the club!



Top row—Grace Johnson, Pat Miller

Middle row—Marianne Buchanan, Dave Waldron

Bottom row—Mike Sage



## Special Events Roundup



Well, here we are heading into the final months of 2009. But there's still time for some great trips and activities, and here's a recap of what we have on the books as of right now:

- **September 5**—Florida Champ Kart League event at Speedway Park in Fruitland Park (Car pool event). This will be a sponsorship event for Harold Bedell, who was featured in last month's newsletter (see page 9).
- **September 23**—Hot Dogs and Hot Rods at the Polo Grounds. See item below for more details. Please consider volunteering to help run the event.
- **October 7**—Ocala Gran Prix Race Day, car pool trip for a day of "you drive it" racing. Car pool will be leaving Laurel Manor at 10:00 am. Come on out and have fun racing a go kart on this great track.
- **November 7 (tentative)**—Annual club picnic at Dick Anderson's.
- **November 12-15**—Zephyrhills 25th Annual Fall Auto fest, collector car auction, and more.
- **November 21**—44th Annual Governor's Cup event at New Smyrna Speedway.
- **December 1**—Third Annual Holiday Hall of Fame Night at Colony Cottage.
- **December**—Watch for details on the club's participation in the annual Christmas parade! This is always a fun time to showcase the club.

*Wendy*

## Hot Dogs and Hot Rods—Set to go!



*The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club*  
Presents

### Hot Dogs & Hot Rods

September 23<sup>rd</sup>

4 to 7 PM

**Saddlebrook Complex**

**Free Admission**

Come see the wide array of motor-driven units; from a motor bike to motorcycles, street rods, drag cars, race cars, classics and new.

Contact Mike Touchette 352-303-9734  
Peter Tetrault 352-250-9030

**Plus  
Drive-In Movie**

@ The Polo Grounds  
Sponsored by The Villages Rec. Department  
(Movie tickets available at box office ticket windows  
only \$10.00 per golf cart)

Plans are coming together well for the September 23 event at Saddlebrook Complex. The flyer shown at left was distributed to members at our August 26 meeting, and event organizer Peter Tetrault reported that we've been successful in arranging for a diverse selection of motor-driven vehicles to be on display. Mike Touchette, co-chair for the event, also reported that this event will be the first time the club has joined hands with The Villages Recreation Department to put on a major event, and that cooperation between the two organizations has been great.

Peter asked for volunteers to be on-hand at the event to assist in traffic control and display placement, and to assist in staffing the food area. Based on the expected turnout, he indicated that roughly 25 volunteers will be needed to effectively run the program.



Peter Tetrault presents the "Hot Dogs and Hot Rods" details

## Looking Ahead to 2010

Those members present at the August 26 meeting heard Wendy Touchette's report on the formation of a Nominating Committee for officers for the club in 2010. As Wendy mentioned in her report, "...good succession planning is what keeps you on track for a long time, and all of us see this club continuing to grow and serve its members for many years." Please take this advice to heart, and give us your thoughts on officer candidates for the year ahead. The club has completed three solid years of growth and progress, and has solidly accomplished its initial goals of creating a forum for idea exchanges and activities in all forms of motor racing, and all of us feel that our potential is virtually unlimited. With emphasis on the term "*potential*," though, we can't continue to build without new and innovative input.

That's where all of you come in! The Nominating Committee, consisting of Wendy Touchette, Barbara McLaughlin, and Camille Sherman, is eagerly awaiting your suggestions of candidates. If you have any thoughts, please get in contact with any of these committee members so that a solid slate of officers can be presented to the membership at our October meeting. Also, as Wendy mentioned, self-nominations are perfectly ok. So if you have a personal interest in helping to steer the club through the coming year, please don't hesitate to step forward.

You'll also recall from Wendy's remarks that we're soliciting candidates for two "apprentice" positions—one for Special Events, and one for the Newsletter/Website production crew. These two areas of responsibility have had a lot to do with the level of success we've achieved, and with the creation of our reputation as a quality club in The Villages. In fact, the successful events we've conducted, and the publicity our newsletter and website have produced, have gotten us recognized in many local racing quarters and by several NASCAR sources, as well. But we all feel it can be even better, and that's why we want to begin grooming some new people to participate in these key positions. These apprentice positions will serve as learning opportunities for the right people, so that we have a higher degree of bench strength in these key logistical tasks. In the next few weeks, watch the website for specific "job descriptions" outlining the type of work these two apprenticeships entail.

## Local Racing Corner

As we've said many times before, one of the great things about living here in central Florida is the access that we have to so many great racing venues within a reasonable driving distance. As we've also said many times before, we need to support these local tracks as much as we can so that they can continue to operate. It's been said that the most expensive seats any race track has are the ones that are empty. So, let's fill them up, and let's wear our yellow shirts and make a statement!

Race Track	Telephone	Website	Race Schedule
Ocala Speedway	352-622-9400	<a href="http://www.ocalaspeedway.com">www.ocalaspeedway.com</a>	Friday Nights
Citrus County Speedway	352-726-9339	<a href="http://www.citruscountyspeedway.com">www.citruscountyspeedway.com</a>	Saturday Nights (some special event nights)
New Smyrna Speedway	386-427-4129	<a href="http://www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org">www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org</a>	Saturday Nights
Orlando Speedworld	407-568-1367	<a href="http://www.OrlandoSpeedworld.org">www.OrlandoSpeedworld.org</a>	Friday Nights
Volusia Speedway Park	386-985-4402	<a href="http://www.volusiaspeedwaypark.net">www.volusiaspeedwaypark.net</a>	Saturday Nights
Auburndale Speedway	863-551-1131	<a href="http://www.auburndalespeedway.com">www.auburndalespeedway.com</a>	Saturday Nights
Bronson Motor Speedway	352-486-2763	<a href="http://www.bronsonmotorspeedway.com">www.bronsonmotorspeedway.com</a>	Saturday Nights
Speedway Park- Fruitland Park	352-326-0303	<a href="http://www.speedwaypark.net">www.speedwaypark.net</a>	Check website for schedule
Sumter Motorsports Park	863-286-9456	<a href="http://www.sumterracing.com">www.sumterracing.com</a>	Oval racing 3rd Saturday nights; special events on 2nd and 4th Satur-



Visit our website: [www.villagesracingclub.com](http://www.villagesracingclub.com)

### The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club—Officers

Glen Carter, President (751-6442)  
 Gerry Hafer, Vice Pres./Newsletter (751-3643)  
 Ted Cahalane, Treasurer (751-2638)  
 Silky Meegan, Secretary (259-2029)  
 Wendy Touchette, Special Events (430-0239)  
 Bob & Camille Sherman, Membership (751-1771)  
 Linda Carter, Historian (751-6442)  
 Mike Touchette, Member at Large (430-0239)  
 Dave Bockman, Member at Large (751-0381)  
 Wayne Nolan, Member at Large (750-9082)  
 Bill Wilkie, Member at Large (350-2080)  
 Dave Colbert, Technical Planning (751-3851)  
 Buster & Zoe Ann Burt, Senior Advisors (751-4346)  
 Tom Horrmann, Official Photographer (430-0195)  
 Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (205-8503)

### A Website for Fans of Old-Time Racing!

For those of you who are fans of the “good old days” of stock car racing, this site is worth a visit. Just like our club, this group is a vibrant, active assembly of veterans in all sorts of racing venues, and they have a mission. Their official name is “Daytona Antique Auto Racing Association” (DAARA), and this excerpt from their website will put their mission in perspective: *“...to preserve the history of automobile racing by ... by restoring antique race cars (primarily midgets, sprints, stock cars, and modifieds) thirty years and older, displaying these cars at race tracks and other shows, to inform the general public of this period of automobile history and to provide the opportunity to run your antique race cars within a controlled, safe program.”*

On Saturday, August 22, DAARA appeared at Citrus County Speedway and, as their mission states, they do offer members an opportunity to actually race their restored vehicles in competition, and I mean *race*! They were not holding back, and put on a tremendous show. (See the article on page 9 for additional information about the Aug. 22 event)

Scroll through this site ([www.daararacing.com](http://www.daararacing.com)) and you'll find a schedule of their appearances, along with a great collection of photos of the vintage race cars maintained by their members. You'll also find a brief history of the club, as well as directions if you're interested in joining their group.



### So you don't need to look it up...

The 2009 NASCAR season is hurtling toward its “Chase” playoff, and all eyes are on the regular season finale at Richmond. Given the excitement that is expected as the 12-car field gets set, we thought we'd give you a little help in handicapping the results of the “Chevy Rock n' Roll 400” at Richmond. The chart below, courtesy of [www.driveraverages.com](http://www.driveraverages.com), will give you a perspective on who runs well (like Stewart and Gordon) and who doesn't (like Edwards and Biffle) at Richmond. Note: these stats reflect racing results since February 2007 or, in other words, the last five races at Richmond). This list includes the top 30 average finishers; the only other Chase contender not on this list is Juan Pablo Montoya, who has an average finish of 27.80.

Richmond Results—Last Five Races

Driver	Avg Finish	Races	Wins	Top 5's	Top 10's	Top 20's	Laps Led	Bonus Pts
1 Tony Stewart	3.60	5	0	4	5	5	51	15
2 Jeff Gordon	6.60	5	0	2	5	5	407	30
3 Kyle Busch	8.00	5	1	3	3	5	133	15
4 Denny Hamlin	10.00	5	0	2	3	4	562	35
5 Mark Martin	10.20	5	0	3	3	4	2	5
6 Clint Bowyer	10.40	5	1	1	2	5	24	15
7 Marcos Ambrose	11.00	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
8 Ryan Newman	12.00	5	0	1	3	4	79	15
9 Kevin Harvick	12.60	5	0	0	4	4	185	10
10 Jimmie Johnson	13.80	5	3	3	3	3	241	15
11 Kurt Busch	15.60	5	0	1	3	4	35	10
12 Jeff Burton	16.20	5	0	1	2	4	0	0
13 Travis Kvapil	16.50	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
14 Martin Truex Jr.	17.20	5	0	1	1	3	28	10
15 Dale Earnhardt Jr.	17.80	5	0	1	1	3	105	10
16 Casey Mears	18.20	5	0	0	1	4	6	5
17 David Ragan	19.00	5	0	1	1	3	0	0
18 Joey Logano	19.00	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
19 Bobby Labonte	19.20	5	0	0	0	3	0	0
20 J.J. Yeley	19.33	3	0	0	1	2	0	0
21 Carl Edwards	20.00	5	0	0	1	3	15	5
22 David Reutimann	20.20	5	0	0	1	2	104	10
23 Greg Biffle	20.60	5	0	0	0	4	0	0
24 Kasey Kahne	21.20	5	0	0	2	3	0	0
25 Regan Smith	22.00	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 Reed Sorenson	22.20	5	0	0	0	2	0	0
27 Sam Hornish Jr.	22.33	3	0	0	1	1	0	0
28 Matt Kenseth	22.80	5	0	0	1	3	5	10
29 Sterling Marlin	24.00	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 Kyle Petty	25.25	4	0	0	0	0	2	5

Looking ahead to the races in the Chase (especially Talladega), you'll hear a lot of moaning and groaning about the restrictor plate issue. In case you need a refresher on how this rule came about, type the following URL into your browser and the magic of YouTube will fill you in...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yt5XCCgwulA>

Visit our website ([www.villagesracingclub.com](http://www.villagesracingclub.com))

## Some “Odds and Ends” For You...

### Coming Event—Festival of Speed in Orlando

For those of you with an interest in exotic cars, vintage automotive designs, and Speed Channel’s “Supercars Exposed” series, the October 25 edition of the “Festival of Speed” at Orlando’s Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes just might be for you. The event will feature a display of some of the rarest engine-powered machines in existence. This excerpt from the Festival’s website puts the event in total perspective: “...attendees enjoy a gathering of the worlds finest automobiles, motorcycles & watercraft. Vehicles are placed for display on the perfectly manicured grounds of this magnificent property. Attendees will enjoy on site cafes serving the finest culinary offerings, VIP Cafes, smooth jazz in the gardens, wine tastings, cigar smokes, luxury lifestyle displays, Fashion shows and more.”

The Festival is actually a three-day event, beginning Friday, October 23 with a “Jetport Reception” and a Saturday, October 24 “Wine Dinner” at the hotel. The actual car, motorcycle, and watercraft show runs 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday, October 25. Admission for the Sunday show is \$12.00 (and there is a 20% discount available to AAA members...just show your card at the door.)

Pre-event publicity for the event notes that SPEED CHANNEL is scheduled to be on-hand to film portions of the Sunday show. Also, the website for the Festival ([www.festivalsofspeed.com](http://www.festivalsofspeed.com)) indicates that “manufacturers will be operating special ‘Ride and Drives’ for qualified drivers....” Now I ask you, who would be more qualified than a member of The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club? Anyway, it sounds like this might be an event worth taking a look at.



### Stuff to ponder while you’re waiting for the race to start

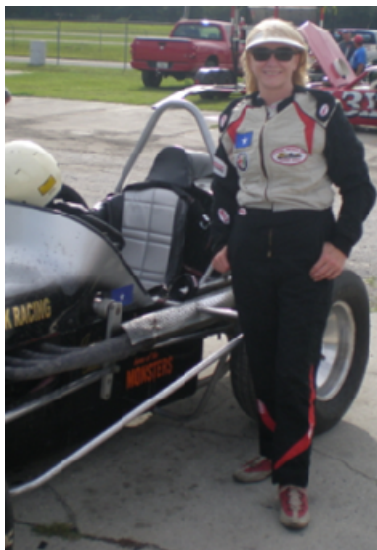
- ***Why does a round pizza come in a square box?***
- ***What disease did cured ham actually have?***
- ***Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?***
- ***If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?***
- ***Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog’s face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?***
- ***Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?***



## DAARA and Citrus County Speedway... An Exciting Combination!

It wasn't your typical Saturday night stock car racing over at Citrus County Speedway in Inverness on August 22. In fact, race fans who braved the threatening skies were treated to not only the fierce competition that comes from the speedway's regular schedule, but a bonus class as well—a visit from the Daytona Antique Auto Racing Association (DAARA). Touring in its Southern Vintage Series, DAARA brought a field of about two dozen cars to the speedway to present a competitive display of racing the way it once was—in the cars that routinely ran local tracks in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. And this was no exhibition-type event—they were really racing, banging and trading paint just like any other stock car racing series!

On hand for the evening of racing was current DAARA president Bill Wendt, fresh off a trip to Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats earlier in the month to take on the world speed record for midget cars. On August 13, he and his race team set a new world record of 136.094 in a 1956 Offy-powered midget vintage oval track car, competing in a field of more than 500 entries. Bill, a former NHRA Funny Car competitor, brought his 1946 Hilligas V8-60 midget to Citrus County to take part in the night's events, and to participate in the display of vintage cars set up in the speedway's pit area. The car was restored by Bill in 2004 and, at the tender age of 64, he launched his career as an oval track racer! Now 69 years young, Bill continues to compete in the Southern Vintage Series, and was one of the on-track competitors at Inverness on August 22.



As you would expect with a group of racers like DAARA, there are many stories like Bill's that provide a colorful backdrop for the sport of auto racing. The DAARA contingent that arrived at Citrus County Speedway on August 22 had several, one of which involves a racing grandmother, former school teacher, and current blueberry farmer named Janis Strickland. A native Floridian currently living in Plant City, Janis began her racing career a mere three years ago on local road-racing circuits, but stepped up to oval racing this year when her husband, Fred, re-built a midget car for her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. "I'm having the time of my life," quipped Janis as she climbed into the cockpit of the Alpha-Romeo powered car to run in the first heat race of the night.



Christened the "Blonde Comet" and numbered 60 in honor of her reer-starting age, both driver and car made an impressive showing Citrus County Speedway's asphalt track. By the way, she's looking ward to competing in drag racing events, as soon as husband Fred completes the conversion of a 1972 Opal GT to track-ready form!

Be sure to catch the DAARA contingent next time they're in our area. It's "old time" racing at its best. And if you like this sort of thing, DAARA oversees the Zephyrhills AutoFest scheduled for vember 12-15 at Festival Park in Zephyrhills .



ca-  
on  
for-  
  
No-