



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

December, 2013

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, February 5, 2014

In This Issue:

CCS Re-Visit	1
Dora Thorne— The “Real Deal” Driver	1-2
Sam Patrick’s Championship	3
Hall of Fame Preview	4
BO-Dyne Bobsled Update	5
Snowball Derby Recap	5
Member Update—Corky Eck	6
Local Racing Corner	6
Your Pit Crew	7
Conkle’s Corner	7
Miscellaneous closing thoughts	7
CCS 2014 Schedule	8



A Return Visit from Our “Home Track”



December 4—We had the opportunity at our December meeting to hear from the new Citrus County Speedway promoter, Gary Laplant. His remarks included a review of the schedule of racing activities for 2014, along with a discussion of changes they’re planning for racing format in 2014. A racing veteran himself, Gary reviewed his history at Gulf Coast tracks in Street Stocks, trucks, and other classes, along with the events that led to his acquiring CCS earlier this year from Mike Reed. Looking ahead to 2014, he reviewed plans to modify their rule packages to promote entries, improvements planned for the track, and steps that are planned to improve the efficiency of racing programs.

Gary noted that opening night is planned for Friday, January 31 and will feature the first major change in format—the incorporation of a two-night format in which half of the scheduled classes run on Friday, the other half on Saturday. He reviewed the highlights of the 2014 schedule, including such notable events as the Jack Smith Memorial SLM event in September; the Frank Riddle Memorial Winged Sprint event in November; the special admission prices for Mothers Day, Fathers Day, and Veterans Day; and the Florida State Championship races to close out the season November 14th and 15th. For a full review of all 2014 dates, see page 8 of this newsletter. Gary concluded with a Q&A session during which members posed a variety of items for discussion.



Dora Thorne...the Real Deal!

We all know from past experience that there’s nothing better than hearing from the folks who actually do the driving, and our second speaker, Floral City’s Dora Thorne, filled that bill extremely well. As the first American-born member of a Scottish family, and as a former tree trimmer, utility lineworker, veterinarian, and undefeated competitive mud wrestler,



(Continued on page 2)

Dora Thorne (Continued from page 1)

Dora gave us a true, no holds barred account of the rough-and-tumble world of bull ring stock car racing. From her first venture into motorsports (a demolition derby in a big old Cadillac prepared by a friend), to her first visit to Citrus County Speedway, to her stepping into a figure-8 school bus race, she kept our group spellbound as she shared the lessons she learned along the way.

After experimenting in Pure Stock ranks for a brief period, she took the leap three years ago to Street Stocks, an experience she calls her “baptism by fire.” Recounting her first race in that division and the directions by her crew “to start in the rear and try to keep up,” she reports that she completed the event without being lapped and the rest, as they say, is history. Her first full year of competition in Street Stocks was 2011, and she followed that rookie year with a track championship the following year, upending defending champ Curtis Flanagan and establishing herself as a force to be reckoned with. 2013 was another solid year for Dora, with a feature win and a second place finish in Street Stock standings.

Looking ahead, Dora explained that it’s her plan to continue racing as long as she is physically able. “It’s one of the most exhilarating, most liberating things I’ve ever done in my life,” she reports. And to make it even more exhilarating, she announced plans to dip her toe in the waters of Street Stock Figure 8 racing...a dramatic step, perhaps, but not for Dora!

In addition to sharing her on-track tales, Dora commented on the personal side of what the sport means to her, from the many friendships she’s made, to the support she’s received from her crew and from fans. She concluded her remarks by addressing a host of questions from the floor, covering topics like tire life, tire costs and tire sponsorships, her “day job” at a veterinary clinic (where she reports she’d much rather deal with an angry animal than an angry person!), her recent experience with a protest involving her car, and her one and only (ever!) disqualification resulting from an unapproved aluminum cross shaft (the offending part still hangs on the wall of her race shop).

Dora closed with an invitation to club members to come out to opening night at CCS and root for her—Friday night, January 31, 2014.



Top: Dora signals another successful return from competition; Middle left, Dora relaxes with crew members while her car sits in inspection; Middle right, Dora shares some experiences with Tom Horrmann at the break; Bottom, Dora's race car from the rear...note the “Don't Make Me Turn the Flying Monkeys Loose” on the roof!)

Sam Patrick's Championship Year (Or, "Old Guys Rule!")



December 4—At our March, 2011 meeting, club member and Hall of Famer Sam Patrick (Class of 2011) gave us a great overview of his participation in the Indianapolis-based Nostalgia Drag Racing League's Pro Gas Division. You'll probably recall his enthusiasm for the sport and the competition, and his optimism for his future participation behind the wheel. Well, as you might expect, Sam's enthusiasm and optimism paid off with another championship this year, and he was gracious enough to share the highlights of his 2013 season at our December meeting. Sam accumulated a total of 74 championship points in the 17-competitor division, easily outdistancing the second place challenger by 21

points. Always low-keyed and understated, Sam took us through the highlights of his performance in his 1937 Steel Chevy Coupe with the 406 Chevy small block ("Burning Money"), providing an extensive display of action photos and a video showing the NDRL in action.

Here are a few of the great shots from Sam's 2013 collection...

2013 NDRL-IAM PRO Gas Champion
Sam Patrick



2013 Hall of Fame—See You on Saturday, January 11

We're only a few weeks away from what promises to be another great event for our group—the induction of the 2013 class of our Hall of Fame. This year, we're recognizing the contributions of 15 motorsports luminaries, from South Florida racing legend Bobby Brack to up-and-coming stars like Devin McLeod and Jake Perkins, along with many other friends of racing who spent time with us this year. We're honored to induct these great folks into our Hall of Fame, and we hope you'll be with us to join us in welcoming them back to The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club! Come on out and join us for refreshments and a chance to see these Hall of Famers one more time! See the details below and on our website.



2013 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION AND AWARDS NIGHT
Saturday, January 11, 2014
COLONY COTTAGE RECREATION CENTER
7:00 P.M.

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

The Class of 2013

Bobby Brack	John Peters
David Gourley	Gerri Prusko
Elaine Harrold	Jane Route
Bill John	Rick Schmidt
Gary LaPlant	Dora Thorne
Mark Lutes	David Vanderwall
Devin McLeod	George Wagner
Jake Perkins	

Keynote Speaker – Radio Personality Tony Modica

Doors Open at 6:30 pm

Reception 6:30-7:00 pm, followed by the induction

at 7:00 pm. Light refreshments, finger foods, and

non-alcoholic drinks will be served. (BYOB for other liquid refreshment.)

Casual dress (members...no "yellow shirts", but wear your name tag!)

RSVP TO BARBARA NOLAN
AT 352-750-9082
BY SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2014

Bo-Dyne Bobsled Project Update—2013

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. (Dec. 15, 2013)- Steven Holcomb (Park City, Utah) continued his dominance of the men's bobsled World Cup circuit after winning today's 4-man bobsled event in Lake Placid. Holcomb teamed with Curt Tomasevich (Shelby, Neb.), Steve Langton (Melrose, Mass.) and Chris Fogt (Alpine, Utah) to finish the first half of the season 7-for-7. It was also Holcomb's 50th World Cup medal.

"If you told me that I would have won everything a month ago, I would have thought you were crazy," Holcomb said. "It is surreal and a little overwhelming."

The USA-1 push crew powered the Night Train2 off the start with the fastest push times of the event, 4.96 and 4.97 seconds, to give Holcomb a head start down the hill. Holcomb put the team 0.20 seconds ahead of the field with a first run of 54.97 seconds. Bo-Dyn Bobsled founder Geoff Bodine was on hand and could not be more proud of the result. "Steve is a great driver no doubt but his push team are awesome athletes. To watch the way they meld as a team on and off the ice is impressive." Bodine also presented the medals at the awards ceremony. "It was a little emotional for me, these are very special american athletes and I'm so proud of them." (Source: <http://www.bodynobsled.com/>)



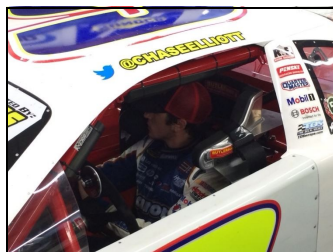
Chase Elliott Takes the 2013 Snowball Derby (For a few hours, anyway!)

December 8—You could call this event the premier showcase for the future of NASCAR, with young drivers like Chase Elliott, Erik Jones, John Hunter Nemechek, Steve Nasse, and Ross Kenseth mixing it up with NASCAR talent like Landon Cassell and David Ragan and well-known short-trackers like Augie Grill, Johanna Long, and David Rogers. Winning the Snowball Derby is considered by many to be the pinnacle of Super Late Model racing, and many of us have it on our Bucket List to make it up to Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola someday to catch the event.

The 2013 Derby was all it was hyped up to be, with rising stars like Elliott and Jones set to do battle in the 300-lap event.

Elliott pretty much dominated most of the laps, holding onto the lead during a late-race caution, and then sprinting to the checkers ahead of the hard-charging Jones. It looked like Elliott had captured his second Derby, until the Ricky Brooks-led tech crew tore the car down and found an illegal weight (a tungsten block where a lead block should have been) and handed the No. 9 crew a DQ, moving Jones into the winner's circle. Elliott was looking for a sweep, after winning the Snowflake 100 the day before.

By the way, our group has some "connections" to the Derby...Hall of Famer Wayne Anderson won it in 2001, and one of the drivers on our list of drivers who have piloted our logo was in the field (Cale Gale, finished 15th).



(Photo source: Speed 51 and Racingboys Broadcasting Network)

Members Parked in the Pits

We're all of an age where many of us are sometimes prone to lengthy pit stops, while our medical pit crews work on our chassis set-ups and internal parts, and sometimes we need a new set of tires and refueling. One of the problems we have with a group our size is staying aware of when fellow members are going through a pit stop, so we're asking that any of you who know of someone in a situation like this notify the pit crew so we can keep everybody posted on their progress.



In the meantime, here's a report on one of our members—Bob "Corky" Eck—who's getting set to leave the pits and get back up to full speed: Corky had a complete right knee replacement in August of 2012, and was scheduled for a left knee replacement in March of 2013. During his preoperative exam, his chest xray uncovered something that needed further evaluation, and an abdominal scan was done with the result being detection of a malignant tumor on his right kidney. The left knee replacement was deferred, and he underwent surgery in March at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. The tumor was removed, along with about 15% of his right kidney. Physicians were able to get everything and all he now needs is an annual blood test to make sure the kidneys are functioning properly. His left knee replacement was rescheduled for August 6, 2013 and he's now doing well. If you're counting, that was three surgeries in one year, and he's working hard to get back to full speed...he's now at about 90%, but getting better every lap! Next time you see him, be sure to wish him well!

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)
 Dave Allen, Vice President (205-7985)
 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)
 Buster Burt, Technical Consultant (751-4346)
 Peter Tetrault, Member at Large (205-8503)
 Syd and Nancy Baker, Hospitality Coordinators (750-2126)
 Gerry Hafer, Immediate Past President (751-3643)
 Glen Carter, Past President (751-6442)

10 Facts To Make You Smile :^)

1. You CAN tune a piano.
2. You CAN'T tuna fish.
3. You CAN'T breathe through your nose while sticking your tongue out.
4. You just tried #3.
6. When you tried #3, you discovered it IS possible, BUT you look like a dog.
7. You're smiling right now!
8. You skipped #5.
9. You just checked for #5.
10. You're going to share this with friends!



Conkle's Corner...

Can you believe it? We're in the closing laps of 2013, and I'm already looking ahead to the opening of the 2014 racing season. It's been another good year for our group, with great speakers and activities and many great trips to our local tracks. I want to thank all of you for making my first year as Crew Chief a memorable one for me, and I want you to know that I appreciate everyone's assistance. With that said, here are a few nuggets...



- **With the Holidays upon us I would like to share a personal experience with my friends about drinking and driving. As you may know some of us have been known to have brushes with the authorities from time to time on the way home after a "social session" out with friends.**

Well, two days ago I was out for an evening with friends and had several cocktails followed by some rather nice red wine. Feeling jolly I still had the sense to know that I may be slightly over the limit. That's when I did something that I've never done before - I took a cab home. Sure enough on the way home there was a police road block, but since it was a cab they waved it past.

I arrived home safely without incident. This was a real surprise as I had never driven a cab before, I don't know where I got it, and now that it's in my garage, I don't know what to do with it.

- **Did you ever wonder why wearing earrings became so popular with men? A man is at work one day when he notices that his co-worker is wearing an earring. The man knows his co-worker to be a normally conservative fellow, and is curious about his sudden change in "fashion sense." The man walks up to him and says, "I didn't know you were into earrings." "Don't make such a big deal, it's only an earring," he replies sheepishly. His friend falls silent for a few minutes, but then his curiosity prods him to ask, "So, how long have you been wearing one?" "Ever since my wife found it in my truck."**



CONGRATULATIONS!

Jimmie Johnson
 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup
 Series Champion



Practice is every
Friday night 6 - 10 p.m.
unless we are racing
on a Friday !
\$10



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2014 Schedule

(This schedule may be changed at tracks discretion)

Revised: 12/11/13

Grand Opening Weekend - Season Points Begin

Friday

January 31st - Pure-Stock, Street Stocks, Pure/Street Stock F-8, Flag Pole Race, Boat & Trailer Race

February

1st - Race #1 - Pro-Truck Super 8 Series 50, Non-Wing Sprints, Sportsman, Mod Mini-Stock, Mini-stock
Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie

8th - Super Late Model 50, Mod Mini-stock, Street Stock, Pure Stock, Mini-stock, Pure/Street Stock F-8,
Fan Participation Racing

15th - Race #1 Sportsman 6 Pack 50, Pro F-8, Legends, Bando's, Street Stock, Pure Stock, Mini-stock

22nd - Race #1 Modified 6 Pack 50, Street Stock, Mod Mini-stock, Pure Stock, Mini-stock, Hornet Pro,
Hornet Rookie

March

1st - Race #2 Pro-Truck Super 8 Series 50, Non-Winged Sprint Cars, Champ Karts, Street Stock, Pure Stock,
Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie

8th - Sportsman, Pro F-8, Modifieds, Street Stock, Mod Mini-stock, Pure Stock, Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie
15-29th - CLOSED FOR FAIR

April

5th - Race #1 Modified Mini Fab 4 Series 50, Non-winged Sprint Cars, Street Stock, Pure Stock, Mini-stock,
Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie, Cars of Yesteryear

12th - Race #3 Pro-Truck Super 8 Series 50, Pure Stock 50, Sportsman, Pro F-8, Mini-Stock

19th - Legends, Bandoleros, Modifieds, Street Stock, Pure Stock, Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie,
Pure/Street Stock F-8 - **Easter Egg Hunt for the Kids**

26th - Race #2 Sportsman 6 Pack Series 50, Super Late Model 50, Street Stock, Mini-stock, Hornet Pro,
Hornet Rookie

May

3rd - Race #2 Modified 6 Pack Series 50, Non-Winged Sprints Cars, Street Stock, Pure Stock,
Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie, Pure/Street Stock F-8

10th - **Mom's just \$8** Race #2 Modified Mini Fab 4 Series 50, Street Stock 50, Pro F-8,
DAARA Antiques, Mini-stock, Pure Stock

17th - **Active Military FREE with ID** Mini-stock 50, Modifieds, Legends, Bando's, Sportsman,
Hornet Pro, Hornet Rookie, Fan Racing

24th - Race #4 Pro-Truck Super 8 Series 50, Super Late Model 50, Street Stock, Pure Stock, Hornet Pro,
Hornet Rookie, Pure/Street Stock F-8

31st - Race #3 Sportsman 6 Pack Series 50, Modifieds, Street Stock, Mod Mini-stock, Pure Stock, Mini-stock