



The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Pit Report

December - 2014

Next *Regular* Meeting—Wednesday, January 7, 2015

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A Vacation Trip to Mexico!

December 3—Some people go to Mexico for the beach, some go for the Mayan Culture, and some go for the wild resort nights. And then there are guys like club member Paul Barth, who made two glorious expeditions south of the border to participate in an event that encompassed all three of these destination reasons (well, maybe not so much the beach)...the Pan American Road Race!



For those of you who don't know, the Pan American Road Race was once considered to be the most dangerous race of any type in the world, and was held five consecutive years (1950-1954) with an original mission of commemorating completion of the Mexican section of the Pan-American Highway. With its mission declared complete in 1955, the event was mothballed until its resurrection in 1988, with various configurations of the race staged annually since then.

Being the consummate daredevil, Paul succumbed to the thrill of the race and signed to co-drive with Tom Silver in the 2000 edition of the race, and had so much fun he returned for an encore in 2001 with co-driver Robin Bazil. With visual support from a video of most of the 2001 event, Paul recounted his experience in detail, and shared many of the side-stories associated with what has come to be recognized as one of Mexico's premier sporting events. The 1965 Chevy Nova Paul drove in the race is shown below.

Paul also shared recollections of his days in Indy racing, including his participation with Roger Rager's race team and their experiences in Indy 500 competition and other Indy car events.

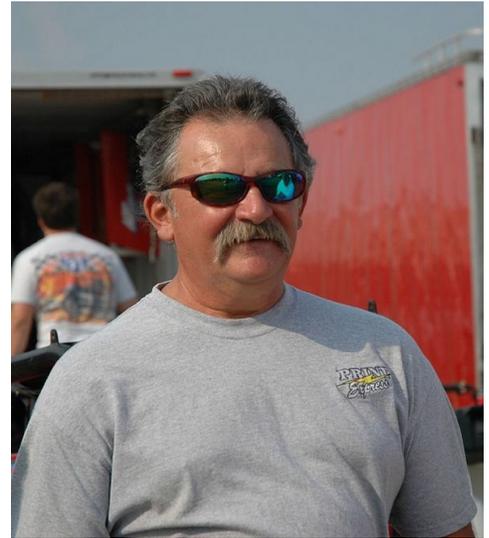


January 7 Meeting Preview Another Legend Visits The Villages!

You could say “the hits just keep coming” or you could say “we just keep bringing in the stars.” No matter what you say, though, we’re all looking forward to a visit from the legendary Jack Hewitt, a giant in the history of Sprint Car racing. Jack’s celebrated career brought him an induction into the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame in 2002, as well as a major racing event named in his honor at Waynesfield Raceway Park in Waynesfield, Ohio. Jack is a two-time USAC Silver Crown Series Champion, and has competed internationally, with wins in major events at Australia’s Liverpool Speedway and Newcastle Motordrom.

Jack’s career includes competition in the Indianapolis 500, where he finished a respectable 12th in 1998. In addition to his championships, Jack has scaled the heights of sprint car racing on a number of fronts, as indicated by this Wikipedia entry: *On September 26, 1998, Jack won the USAC Sprint, USAC Midget, USAC Silver Crown, and UMP Modified features at Eldora Speedway. By doing so he became the first and only driver to win all four divisions of racing at the 4-Crown Nationals held at Eldora Speedway in Rossburg, Ohio.*

Jack’s career was chronicled in an autobiography titled “Hewitt’s Law.” About that, Jack has said “the good, the bad, the sad, the funny, all that stuff is in the book.” No doubt it’s a classic read!



Destination, Ocala Detroit City Customs, Here We Come.

It’s field trip time again...this time heading north 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.

Mike Touchette has taken care of the arrangements for this trip, scheduled to depart Laurel Manor Recreation Center at **10:30 am on Saturday, January 10**. There is a fee for the tour (\$10), and that includes lunch to be served at the end of the visit.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the January meeting. For information please call Mike Touchette at 352-430-0239 or email Mike at mrmjt5018@yahoo.com. Here are some snapshots from their website showing the type of projects they specialize in...



It's Really Gonna Happen! Dick Anderson Announces 2015 Competition Schedule

The long-awaited re-entry of club Godfather Dick Anderson into Florida short-track competition is set to launch on January 24 at New Smyrna Speedway. Dick's website, www.ShortTrackKing.com, reports that the Wildwood legend is scheduled to compete in the 75-lap Open Wheel Modified race set as part of the Pete Orr Memorial event on that date. This will be the first competition for Anderson's newly-built No. 7 racing machine, and promises to be one of the biggest stories in Central Florida Stock Car Racing in a long time.



The original debut for the car, the 100-lap event built into the 2014 Governor's Cup schedule on November 22, was rained out, so Dick has been fine-tuning his car since that time. It was "race-ready" then, so we can only guess at how much better it will be by the January 24 event.

Dick plans to follow this inaugural appearance with entries in the Sunday, February 8, 2015 Ice Breaker event at DeSoto Speedway in Bradenton, and he's planning on competing in the World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing at New Smyrna Speedway February 13-21. In early March, plans are to enter events at Showtime Speedway in Pinellas Park, with a regular schedule to be established for the remainder of 2015.

Here are some photos of a recent testing session from New Smyrna, courtesy of Circle Track Magazine...



The Perfect Cure for a Hangover Bronson Schedules a 100-lap Enduro Event

Many of you may have noticed that Bronson Motor Speedway, Archer, Florida, has begun to schedule regular events under the leadership of Leroy Davidson, Director of Operations and Promotions. The Speedway, located 15 miles southwest of Gainesville on SR 24, has announced tentative plans for an Enduro event set to launch at 2:00 on New Years Day. It had been rumored that the event was to be rescheduled, but this Facebook post from Davidson indicates that it's still on: *I never did like to start something that I said I was going to do and not do it, so cancelling it has really been bothering me. It will stay on New Year's Day at 2:00 ...*



So, all of you adventurous club members, here's your chance to take part in a competitive short track event! Go get yourself a good solid car, modify it according to the specs posted on the Speedway's website at <http://bronsonspeedway.net/PDF/2015EnduroRulesBronsonSpeedway.pdf>, complete a registration form, have a good breakfast, and show up at the Speedway by 11:00 am and you're all set. It's likely that some of your fellow club members will be on hand to cheer you on!

The 2014 Hall of Fame Induction—Coming Up Fast

Planning for our annual Hall of Fame Induction event is progressing quickly under the strong and capable leadership of Janine Woodsford and her talented crew. This is shaping up to be another great event in a continuing series of great events, and we're proud to be welcoming the Class of 2014 into our esteemed Hall!



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!

Club Shows Up In Style for the 2014 Christmas Parade

Our group was well-represented once again at the annual Villages Christmas Parade at the Polo Grounds. Special Events Coordinator Gary Civiletti reprised his role as overseer of our participating members and, with a little help from his friends, pulled off another excellent showing for us! With a six-cart contingent led by a pair of incredible banner carriers, we once again served notice that we're one of the best organizations in The Villages. Here are some of the highlights of the event:



Welcome New Members



We welcomed these three new members at our December meeting: (Left to right) Ron De Graaf, from Frankfort, Illinois; Art Fehrman, from St. Charles, Illinois; and Joe Kavalaukas, from Tipp City, Ohio. At the next meeting, please look for these racing fans and chat them up a bit. You'll be interested to note that we've already roped Art "Fireball" Fehrman in as a speaker for our May, 2015 meeting...he's President and Founder of Illinois Vintage Racing (www.illinoisvintageracing.com), so this promises to be another great night for us!

Prediction Row—2015 Edition



It's that time of the year again! We're gearing up for another round of "Prediction Row"—that NASCAR season-long competition in which our club members have the opportunity to put their superior racing knowledge to the test by forecasting the winner of each Cup race. It's a spirited competition, with race-by-race exposure in The Villages Daily Sun and a chance to be recognized as a well-informed authority on motorsports. 2015 will mark our seventh year of participation in this venture, and will once again offer the opportunity for a club member to have their name engraved on the trophy along with our prior Champions:

2008—Dave Bockman

2009—Silky Meegan

2010—Bill Tharp

2011—Alan Stone

2012—Wayne Nolan

2013—Syd Baker

2014—Shirley Birchwale

Prediction Row Coordinator (and 2009 Champ) Silky Meegan has begun recruiting for 12 participants (preferably first-timers) to throw their hats in the ring for this prestigious opportunity.

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	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

2015 NYSSCA Hall of Fame Induction Set for January 24

Ron Hedger, of National Speed Sport News and a somewhat regular visitor at our club meetings, has advised us of the upcoming New York State Stock Car Association's upcoming Hall of Fame Induction scheduled for January 24 at the Saratoga Automobile Museum. Here's an excerpt from the NYSSCA announcement that announces the 2015 class:

"Four outstanding drivers and two highly respected promoters will comprise the 2015 Hall of Fame class of the New York State Stock Car Association. Dirt track heroes Pete Bicknell and Kenny Brightbill will be joined by the late asphalt star Charlie Jarzombek and Wes Moody, who was equally adept on dirt or asphalt, on the driver's side. On the non-competitor side, Marcia Wetmore and Howard Commander were elected for their accomplishments in speedway management and promotion."

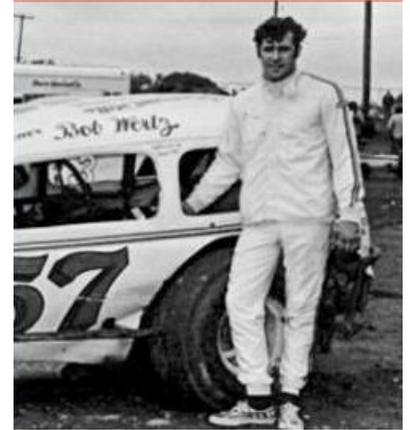
The racers to be inducted with this class are well-known to many of us, but there is one name of particular interest to your newsletter editor...that's Kenny Brightbill, one of my all-time racing heroes! I grew up in the Reading, Pennsylvania area, and had frequent access to the Reading Fairgrounds' beautiful half-mile track, where Friday

and Sunday night racing was the pinnacle of sports entertainment in the Reading/Berks County area. I developed my

racing interest in the late 1950s watching the old "flatheads" run, and honed that interest even further when the Modifieds took over. I had the great pleasure of watching the likes of

Al Tasnady, Gerald Chamberlain, Buzzie Reutimann and so many others compete there, but I always rooted for the hometown boy, Kenny. And I wasn't disappointed, since he won more than 500 features at Reading. (Photo courtesy of readingfairgroundsracing.com).

By the way, Kenny also competed in NASCAR Winston Cup events in the 1974-78 period, finishing as high as 7th in 1975 driving a Junie Donlavey Ford. I wasn't there for that one, but my ear hurt from being pressed to the radio!



Breakfast with Ernie's Family

Our regular Thursday morning Breakfast group had a special event on Christmas Day, with a visit from Ernie Battee's family. Ernie's daughter and son-in-law, Lisa and Randy LaJoie, along with Randy's sons Corey and Casey, Corey's girlfriend Kelly, and Randy's sister Linda and husband Tim invited our group to join them at the Waterfront Inn at The Villages. The family was in town for a Holiday visit with Ernie—a visit that included a "field trip" later in the day for Ernie. Arrangements were made to transport Ernie from his Leesburg rehabilitation facility to The Waterfront Inn to be with his family, resulting in an uplifting time for all concerned.

(For those unfamiliar with Ernie's situation, refer to page 6 of our Feb., 2013 newsletter at <http://www.villagesracingclub.com/images/newsletters/02-13.pdf>).



From left—Tim and Linda, Lisa and Randy, Jim Hedlund)



From left—Corey, Kelly, and Casey

(See full group photo on page 8, bottom right)

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)

Ernie's Family and Friends at The Waterfront, 12/25/2014



Back row, from left: Dave Monahan, Lynn Hedlund, Casey LaJoie, Corey LaJoie, Fred Coenen, Lisa LaJoie, Randy LaJoie, Randy's sister Linda, Jim Hedlund, Randy's brother-in-law Tim. Front row, from left: Judy Monahan, Corey's friend Kelly, Mike Anderson.

From the Vault

Photo Courtesy of Henry McKenzie



Conkle's Corner...

On behalf of the Pit Crew, I'd like to thank all of you for your support and participation during 2014—another great year for our club! We're all looking forward to continuing our momentum into 2015, and as you can see our January meeting is picking up where we left off!



Now, a little humor:

During his physical examination, the doctor asked his patient about his physical activity level.

The man said he spent three days a week, every week, in the outdoors. The doctor asked, "Doing what?"

"Well, yesterday afternoon was typical.... I took a five hour walk through some pretty rough terrain.

I waded along the edge of a lake.

I pushed my way through 2 miles of brambles.

I got sand in my shoes and my eyes.

I barely avoided stepping on a snake.

I climbed several rocky hills.

I went to the bathroom behind some big trees.

I ran away from an irate mother bear and then ran away from one angry bull elk. The mental stress of it left me shattered. At the end of it all I drank a scotch and three glasses of wine.

Amazed by the story, the doctor said "You must be one hell of an outdoorsman!" "No," he replied, "I'm just a really, really, piss poor golfer."

Sometimes, life in The Villages can be a bit humdrum. However, there's something you can do to liven things up on trash day. Pack your garbage up like this:



Then watch through your window when they come to pick it up!

The very first senior moment...

