

Harry A. Miller Club News



Harry A. Miller Club Wakes Up Sleeping Milwaukee Mile Racetrack

The historic Milwaukee Mile racetrack on the Wisconsin State Fair Grounds was once again the location for The Harry A. Miller Club Vintage Indy Car event, "Millers at Milwaukee." For its 24th year, near 'Chamber

of Commerce summer weather' presided as many friends reacquainted with each other and many more friendships started.

A field of just over 50-cars gathered at the track, as many were first-timers or "rookies"

at this event. Thankfully event steward, Rocky Hodges, did not have them run with yellow rookie stripes on the car's tails such they did 'back in the day' at Indianapolis. Rookie

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owners/drivers at the event included John Bianchi of Seattle, Paul Mondo of Stuart, FL and Elliott Reitz of Johnson City, NY. Although the owners may be new, in some cases their cars were here at previous events under different ownership.

The backbone of the Miller Club originally founded by David V. Uihlein along with Chuck Davis and Robert Sutherland, are the members that support the HMC with their attendance year-in-and year out. Members like Herb Lederer, who has entered cars for 22-events, Dana Mecum for 18-events, Joe Freeman and Dick Dittman for 17 events. Supporters, Lou Natenshon has over 16 events under his belt and Bud Taylor has 15 events.

The one recurring story told over and over are the first time attendees and fans who are overwhelmed with the hospitality of the club and the car owners. Many newcomers speak about seeing race cars they saw when they were kids, and inspecting the cars up close is a precious moment.

Numerous "Brass era" Pre-WWI cars attended HMC event, these gorgeous hulks

are always welcome. They show the roots of championship racing, when horsepower initially came from size. Thanks to Herb Lederer and Ted Davis for bringing their remarkable yellow Mercer Raceabouts which have delighted fans for many years. Robert Lederer brought his 1915 Stutz Bearcat, which spent a large amount of its life in South America. Eldon Eby's Tribute to the Bob Burman Cutting race car is always a head turner. Glenn Miller's red No. 6 EMF made buddies by turning a lot of laps with passengers. These entrants, along with Carl and Carrol Jensen's 1930 Stutz Model-M, made a lot of friends over the weekend by taking riders on the famous Milwaukee Mile.

A remarkable number of the iconic 1950's and 1960's-era "Indianapolis roadsters" also were at the event, the glossy black Joe Hunt Magneto Spl. Watson-Offenhauser and the Hemi-powered Kurtis 500A of Joe Freeman were a hit. Larry Pfitzenmaier of Arizona once again brought his outstanding deep blue Lindsey Hopkins #16 Watson-Offenhauser. Phil Reilly of the Bay area in California and his 1960 Kurtris-Epperly Bowes Seal Fast laydown roadster saw significant track time, as did Herb Lederer's Dayton Steel Special. Although not technically a roadster, the Dayton Steel car outstandingly shows the early transition from upright dirt cars to the more streamlined roadsters, which started to dominate the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in the early-1950's.



Several other "roadsters" were certainly getting attention such as the impeccable Offenhauser-powered Bill Forbes Special of Chuck Jones of Michigan. Mick Anderson's two other Watson tribute cars (1960 Dowgard #2 and #41 Leader Card) were admired by many of the railbirds. We also appreciate Lou Burmeister, Dr. Robert Dicks, David Schreiner and Bud Taylor for their nicely turned out roadsters too.

Dana Mecum brought his magnificent fleet of cars, including his Sparks-Thorne Big-Six along with the three-time Indy 500 pole winning car, the Gilmore Sparks-Weirich originally driven by the great Rex Mays. His Blue Crown and Springfield Welding Specials are especially noteworthy for their history. His gorgeous Fred Frame 1933 Ford V8 racer also made many laps on the venerable Mile.

The Miller race cars are the headliners at the HMC Meet and Dan Davis of Jacksonville, Florida is a invaluable contributor to preserving this valuable history.



The 1929 Gar Wood Miss America VIII Boat – Two-time winner of the British International Harmsworth Trophy, the top prize for unlimited power boats. Features 1931 specially designed Harry Miller V-16 1,113/930 HP (without original superchargers currently installed) one-off engines, with 6,000 RPM double overhead cam, aluminum block and heads. This extraordinary boat is owned by Dana Mecum.



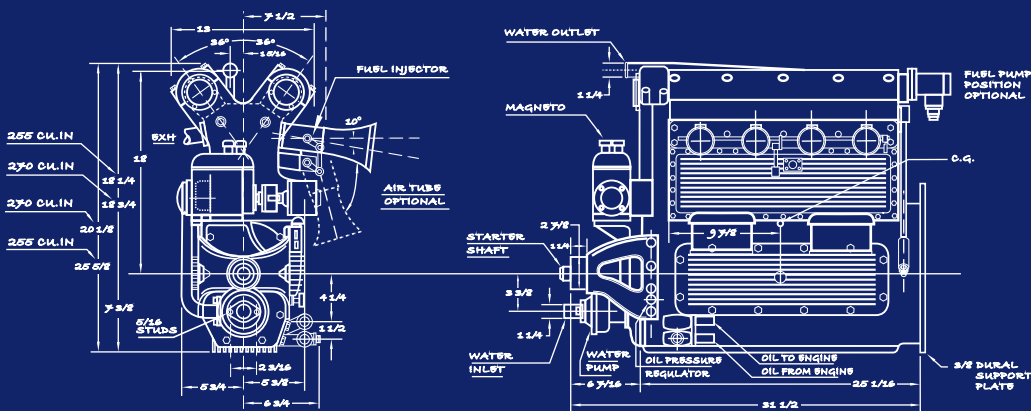
- Steve Zautke -

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Jerry Unser Paved the Way for the Family at Indianapolis

By the beginning of May 1959, things were looking up for race car driver Jerry Unser. Unser had won the 1957 USAC Stock Car championship and already had a start in the prestigious Indianapolis 500. The month prior he had his first top-10 at Trenton (8th in the Leitenberger Spl.).

Life was tough for rookies at Indianapolis, the year prior, it took three cars before Unser qualified the McKay Special on the second weekend. Like many that day Jerry only made it to the third turn after Ed Elisian and Dick Rathmann crashed at the front of the field causing a multi-car pileup not seen before at the Brickyard. Unser took evasive action and climbed over Paul Goldsmith's Kurtis KK500G and exited over the third turn wall dislocating his shoulder.

Finding more success in stock cars, Unser won the stock car championship in his 1957 Ford. Wrenched by his twin brother Louie,

the duo became a formidable team against the likes of Bryan, Hanks, Ruttman and Norm Nelson.

The beginning of May of 1959 saw Jerry entered for the "500" in H.H. Johnson's Helse Special. The San Diego developer had a new car for Unser, an Eddie Kuzma-built roadster. However on the first day of practice, May 2nd, Unser spun the car backwards into the T-4 wall and slide into the inside wall, the second hit caused the fuel tank to rupture splashing fuel on the driver. Briefly trapped, Unser suffered serious burns to 35-40% of his body.

Blood transfusions were very common in medicine in the 1950's, apparently as his brother Bobby has said, "he got some bad blood" sadly, uremic poisoning set in and Jerry died of kidney failure on May 16th. Other accounts have mentioned pneumonia and complications of his burns as cause of death.

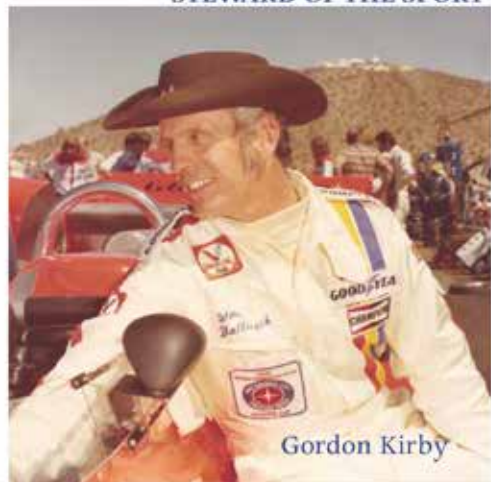


After Unser's accident, fire-resistant driving suits, already used by most drivers, became mandatory by USAC.

Although not the first, Uncle Louie Unser took a rookie test at Indianapolis in 1940, Jerry Unser certainly helped paved the way for younger brothers, Bobby, Al, and his eventually his son, Johnny.

— Steve Zautke —

Wally Dallenbach STEWART OF THE SPORT



Gordon Kirby



Coming Soon

A new biography of racing driver and CART Chief Steward **Wally Dallenbach**.

Celebrated author **Gordon Kirby** traces the long and significant life of Wally D. whose contributions to the sport of automobile racing have been enormous over the 50 years of his remarkable career.

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The Twenty-Fifth Annual Millers At Milwaukee Event! July 12-13, 2019

This Would Be An Especially Good Year to Become a Sponsor!

The Harry Miller Club appreciates all of the support provided by our event sponsors, and we encourage all members to consider one of the levels of sponsorship listed below. Without the various levels of organizational and personal support, we would be unable to continue our annual event at the historic Milwaukee Mile.

If you know of a vintage racecar related business that might consider a sponsorship opportunity to take advantage of the promotional benefits offered, we would be happy to provide additional information.

Executive Sponsorship - \$5,000

**Full page ad in Miller event program and 3 newsletters. Also link on Miller Club Website.

Associate Sponsorship - \$2,000

**One-half page ad in Miller event program and 3 newsletters. Also link on Miller Club Website.

Corporate Sponsorship - \$1,000

**One-quarter page ad in Miller event program and 3 newsletters. Also link on Miller Club Website.

Friends of the Miller Club - \$100 and up

**Name listed in Miller event program and one newsletter.



The advertisement features a red background. At the top, a pile of loose coins is shown with the text "good state" below it. Below that, a brown leather wallet is shown with a stack of US dollar bills sticking out, with the text "better state" below it. At the bottom, the State Farm logo is displayed. Text at the bottom of the ad reads: "Real savings should fold, not jingle. Make sure you get all the discounts you deserve. Talk to a State Farm® agent about a FREE Discount Double Check®, or go to statefarm.com® today and keep your savings crisp. Get to a better State®. Get State Farm."

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From the President:

Another Great Weekend at the Mile!

I would like to say "thank you" again to all who attended the 2018 Harry Miller Club event this year. I'm sure all of you had as good of a time as I did. It was really great to see Dan Davis' great Miller cars back- especially the newly acquired Golden Submarine, which is always a crowd pleaser! Miller designed this car for race driver Barney Oldfield, and it made its first appearance at the Maywood Speedway near Chicago in June 1917.

Looking ahead to 2019 – it's hard to believe that we will be celebrating OUR 25th YEAR on the Milwaukee Mile!!! I'm looking forward to getting even more Millers out for our 25th anniversary event. I spoke with Phil Reilly, and he has agreed to be a speaker at our Friday Banquet next year! His vast and long experience restoring fantastic vintage racecars will undoubtedly lead to many great stories! That said, get your entries in early, **especially for the Friday night banquet**. We were oversold this past July, and in order to accommodate late requests, some had to eat in the hallway. We do have some other surprises that we will unveil as we get closer to our 2019 event

I am also pleased to announce we have added a new Board Member, Bill Hoff, to our ranks. His background and passion for Harry Miller make him a great addition to our leadership team. Please see his bio following in our newsletter! Welcome Bill!

- Tedd Zamjahn -

From the Racing Archives

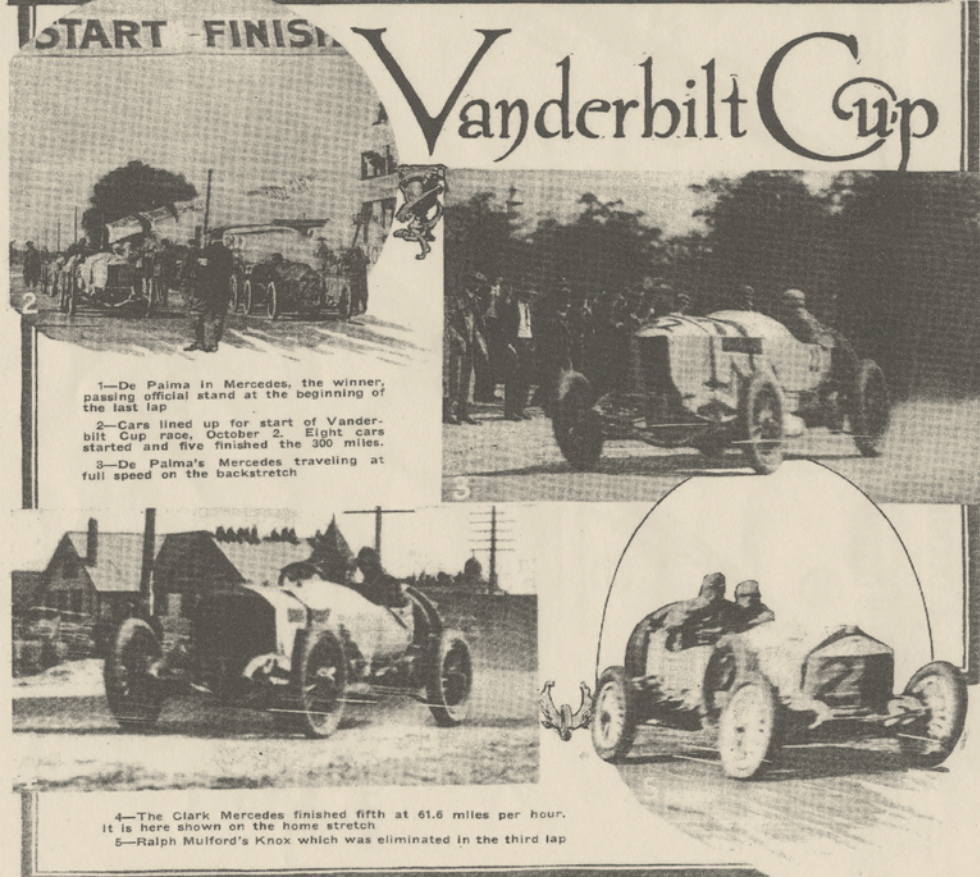
The 1912 Vanderbilt Cup Races in Milwaukee

Automobile racing in Milwaukee dates from early in the 20th century. In 1903, one year before the first Vanderbilt Cup race was held on Long Island, automobile racing began at the Wisconsin State Fairground Speedway, now known as the Milwaukee Mile. The first Vanderbilt Cup Race held in Milwaukee occurred in 1912. The selected site in the rural Township of Wauwatosa, was primarily farmland. An apt description of the roads, after improvement, would be "oil soaked dirt or gravel."

It has been said that the 1912 annual international road races held in Milwaukee were lacking in numbers of cars entered, but not in highly talented drivers. The field included the first superstars of racing: Barney Oldfield, Ralph De Palma and Ralph Mulford. Ralph De Palma won the race in a Mercedes, despite trailing Teddy Tetzlaff for most of the race. De Palma completed the 38 laps (approximately 300 miles) in an overall time of 4 hours, 20 minutes, 31.54 seconds. *(Excerpts taken from The 1912 Vanderbilt Cup, by John Haydon)*

The Harry Miller Club honored the 100th anniversary of this great Milwaukee Race during our July 6-7, 2012 event at the Milwaukee Mile. We invited cars of that era to join our usual group of vintage race cars for a special celebration. This year, as we begin our celebration of 25 years at the Milwaukee Mile track, we will highlight some of these special events at the Mile.

— Lenore Heinzlmann —



New Board Member – Bill Hoff

Let me start by saying how honored I am to be chosen to be on the Miller Club Board. I've been a club member for almost 10 years now and have a great respect for Harry Miller, his team and the magnificent cars they created. The ongoing work of the club to further the appreciation of everything



Miller is an important task and I take that responsibility seriously.

My background and college degrees are in Mechanical Engineering and machine building and I think I can honestly say I've been an engineer since I was 11. The photos attached show me at age 12 with my first home-built go-cart, and my '35 Miller Ford which I got from Dana Mecum and have had at Milwaukee the past two years. (In looking at the go-cart paint job and the Miller Ford paint scheme I was struck by how similar they are – must have been destiny!) My Dad was a huge Indy fan and I accompanied him to the 500 for the first time in 1968 and have only missed a few races in the last 50 years. I read his copy of "The Golden Age of the

American Racing Car" many times and was smitten by the Miller story and the pictures of the beautiful engines and sleek bodies.

My current project is the recreation of the 1923 Miller GP car driven by Jimmy Murphy. I'm scouring the globe for the few remaining pieces of the car, and working with a great group of other Miller Club members to faithfully reproduce the rest. Without their willingness to share resources and let me measure and document the remaining GP car, the project would be difficult at best. Instead I've made genuine friends with people who share my passion for vintage race cars. That's what makes the Miller Club a great group!

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A Glimpse of the first annual Millers at Milwaukee Event

1995 Miller Historic Races

Excerpts taken from Vintage Motorsport – 1995 ANNUAL, photos by Roy Query.

Perhaps the most remarkable new vintage racing event in the world during 1995 took place at the venerable Milwaukee Mile in Wisconsin over the weekend of July 15-16, an event celebrating the genius of the late Harry A. Miller and pre-WWII Indianapolis cars in general.

Miller collectors David Uihlein, Bob Sutherland, and Chuck Davis joined forces to present the inaugural Miller Meet at Milwaukee, and the setting couldn't have been more perfect, as the Milwaukee oval has been in use since 1903 and still hosts CART Indy cars today. Despite a record-breaking heat wave, with temperatures well over 100 degrees, a small but incredibly high-quality field of cars appeared to instantly whisk bystanders away to a bygone era.

The combined efforts of Messrs. Uihlein, Sutherland and Davis produced a stunning new event for our sport, one that we hope grows



into a long-running tradition. Some thought is being given to adding post-WWII Champ

cars and Indy roadsters to the mix for 1996, making an already great event even better.

About The Harry A. Miller Club



Harry A. Miller

Harry Miller is quite simply the greatest creative figure in the history of American auto racing. He created the great school of American thoroughbred engine design, which was faithfully followed by those who sought to outdo him. Miller was the first U.S. designer who viewed the racing car as an art object. Miller had a passion for metalwork and machinery that soared above and beyond all other designers. **From The Miller Dynasty, By Mark Dees, The Hippodrome Publishing Co. 1994*

David V. Uihlein, Sr., founder of the Harry

Miller Club, sought to bring recognition to Harry Miller and his vast accomplishments, by sharing his great race car and engine designs with younger generations.

Miller based cars and engines dominated championship competition in this country during the 1920's, winning 39 Indianapolis 500 races!

To Join the Harry A. Miller Club

Membership renewals for members who have held continued membership for more than five years is \$25.

Please mail your check (made out to The Harry Miller Club), along with your name, address, phone, and e-mail to:

The Harry Miller Club
P.O. Box 541
Germantown, WI 53022

New members may complete the membership application found on the Harry Miller Club website: harrymillerclub.com, or call 262-388-5221. The fee for new members, or members renewing after 2011 is \$40.

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This newsletter welcomes contributions, photos, and suggestions. We hope to feature stories about members' car restorations or other news pertinent to vintage auto collectors. All items submitted for the newsletter shall be considered an expressed warranty by the author that said material is in no way an infringement upon the rights of others. Editor : Lenore Heinzelmann

The Harry Miller Club News is published three times per year, and is printed for the auto racing enthusiast interested in open wheel history. The next deadline for submission is December 1, 2018.

