

Harry A. Miller Club News



MILLERS ARE BACK AT THE TRACK!! 26th Annual Millers at Milwaukee- Vintage Indy Car Event July 9-10, 2021

We are excited to report that the Wis. State Fair Park has confirmed that our annual Millers at Milwaukee meet at the Milwaukee Mile is a go! It's time to get your entry applications mailed in for review! We have a number of great cars entered already, and with our 60 car limit, you don't want to miss out on a great weekend at the Mile!

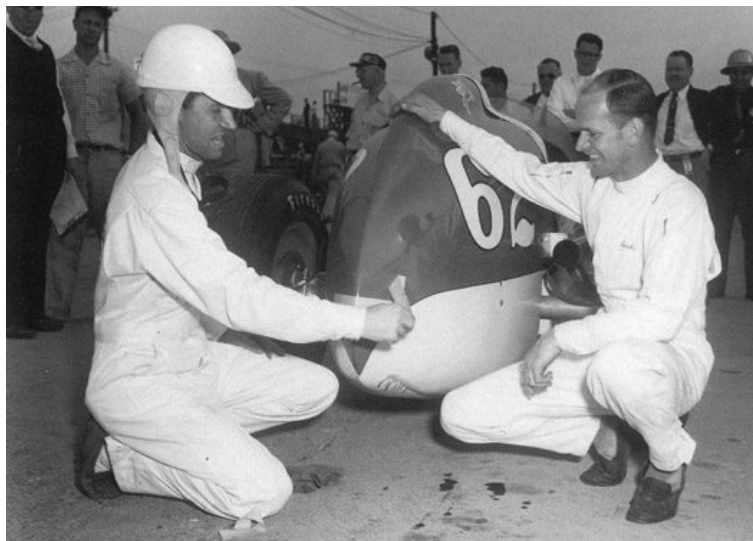
Our schedule of activity begins with the Thursday Welcome Social at 5:30 p.m. on July 8, at the newly named Sonesta Milwaukee West Hotel (formerly the Crowne Plaza). The gates open at 8 a.m. on Friday, with a group track photo of our vintage gems at 9:00 a.m. A Drivers' Meeting follows, and we welcome our historic cars back on the track at 10 a.m.!

Our Friday banquet and cocktail hour begin at 6 p.m. with the same wonderful food and service we have come to expect and

appreciate. Our Silent Auction has been put on hold this year due to space considerations. The number of people allowed in the banquet room has been limited, so all meal reservations must be made in advance and paid for, no later than June 30, 2021. No exceptions!! In place of the auction, we ask all members to consider making a donation to the *Friends of the Miller Club*. All donors will be recognized for their generosity in our track program. See you in July at the Milwaukee Mile!



Len Sutton – Racing's Nice Guy



In April of 1956, a young Len Sutton motored East from Clackamas, Oregon, to give the Indy 500 a try. "I had worked out all winter," he recalled. "I had a set of arms and shoulders I was proud of." He and his buddy Jack Turner, also from the Northwest, were three of the 17 to take the rookie test. Both passed and are shown here removing the "rookie stripe" from the tail of the Wolcott Spl. From MY ROAD TO INDY, by Len Sutton. Photo courtesy of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Following his discharge from the Navy in late 1945, it was obvious that 21-year old Len Sutton was not the typical race car driver. Unlike most of his racing buddies, he wasn't much for the party scene. In fact, throughout his career, Len tried to keep his family close, having his lovely wife Anita accompanying him whenever possible. There were those who thought that he was perhaps a bit too "mild mannered" to reach the top of his profession. A profession that by the 1950's was subjugated by hard-living free-spirits like Jimmy Bryan, Ed Elisian, Jud Larson, Andy Linden, Eddie Sachs, Shorty Templeman and Rodger Ward. However, when the need arose, Len Sutton proved to be as tough as any of them.

The Oregon native cut his racing teeth in the upper Northwest first driving jalopies and then moved up to track roadsters and the popular speedy midgits. It was during this time Sutton first met Rolla Vollstedt. Sutton recalled in his book, *My Road to Indy*, "Now appearing on the scene was none other than Rolla Vollstedt. He had purchased a roadster racer, owned by his boss and when he showed up at the racetrack, his driver Frankie McGowen, decided he needed a different ride. Dick Martin, an owner with Bob Gregg as the driver, told Vollstedt that a guy by the name of Sutton had just lost his ride and with a little luck he might make himself into a driver. As luck would have it, I got the nod. We were unable to finish that race, but Rolla and I hit it off and I had a ride for the next season."

Success with Vollstedt caused the pair to travel outside of Oregon and venture into California where their winning continued. As the wins added up, other adventures presented themselves, including a

ride in the 1954 Pan-American race, a grueling road race that the Mexican government embraced to promote the near completion of the Mexican portion of the Pan-American Highway. From 1950 through 1954 the race included different classes of automobiles with a wide variety of drivers from countries around the world. Held as a five-day race with nine legs, "it tested driving ability, stamina, strategy, and the drivers' desire to win. In addition to being an exhausting race, it was incredibly dangerous as it was raced on the open roads, through the desert and the mountains." Sutton drove a 1954 Lincoln with co-driver and owner, Randal Ferguson of Bickleton, Washington. Ferguson had competed the previous year with Jack McGrath, but asked Sutton to co-drive. During the third leg, running well, they fell behind because they failed to change the spark settings on the Lincoln, having to stop to change the spark advance because of the altitude, thus, they had to finish their leg in the dark. Len explains, "...coming over an undulation my headlights caught maybe 10 or 15 cattle. Trying to miss them, I got too far onto the left shoulder of the highway and lost it in the gravel. We went ended up in a ravine (right side up) with the headlights still burning. Later we were helped out, but I had a broken vertebrae and Randal had cracked several ribs. ... (with assistance) we made it up the hill and they set me down. That's when the ants started crawling all over me. Yes, the biting kind. However, it did take my mind off my back."

Undeterred by his setback in Mexico and a four-month rehabilitation, success again found Sutton as he once again victories started to stack up. Eventually, Sutton and Vollstedt moved up to the championship car division in AAA and in 1955, raced the final two events of the year on the traditional 'west coast swing.' 27 cars attempted the Golden State 100 at Sacramento with Sutton making



Not a usual pose for a rookie driver, Len Sutton had just spun the Wolcott Lesovsky/Offy in turn 2 early in May. However, later in the week, he flipped it several times later. Photo courtesy of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway

the race (18 started) but he fell out after 21 laps. At Phoenix, he started the last ever AAA sanctioned race after out qualifying such notables as Jimmy Daywalt, Sam Hanks, Elmer George, and Jimmy Davies. Unfortunately, early mechanical woes caused another 'did not finish' - DNF.

For the 1956 Indianapolis 500, Sutton got a ride in the Roger Wolcott-owned upright dirt-car. Although outdated, Sutton was getting close to what was believed to be the speed required to make the race. His mechanic, Herb Porter asked Sutton to, "Take the car out and see if we could get it over the 140 mark. I was pleased to take the car out. The next thing I remember was waking up in the Methodist Hospital with my right hand bandaged and a real bad headache. I flipped coming out of the third turn, landed on my head and shoulder, grinding off the back of my helmet and scraping a quarter inch of my hide off my back and the back of my right hand."

Eventually, Sutton found victory lane, winning his first championship car race in 1958, the Trenton 100 in the Central Excavating Special. Qualifying for his first Indianapolis 500, Sutton was involved in the huge first lap accident that killed popular driver Pat O'Connor. In 1959, Sutton once again qualified for the "500" but spun out of the race early. However, he once again found victory lane on the championship trail winning the 100-mile race on the dirt at Springfield. In 1960, Sutton surprised a few railbirds by qualifying for the second row at Indianapolis. Unfortunately, once again early retiree due to engine woes.



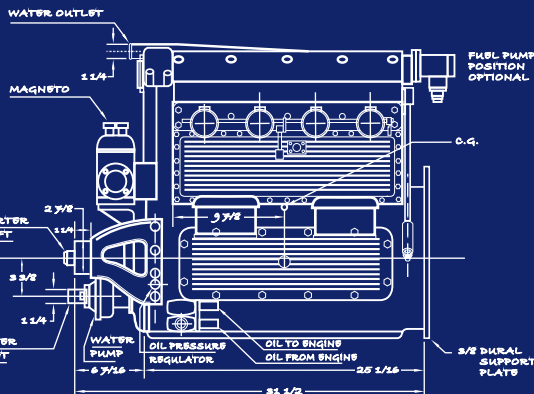
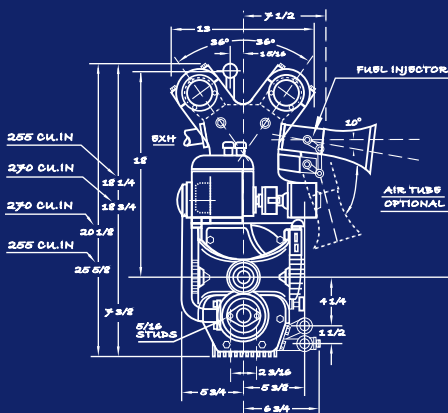
Sutton's biggest payday was race he didn't win. A.J. Watson, Rodger Ward, Len Sutton and Chickie Hirashima celebrate back in their garages in Gasoline Alley after Leader Card Racers teammates Ward and Sutton finished 1-2 in the 1962 Indianapolis 500. A.J. Watson Family Collection photo.

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Arguably Len Sutton's greatest victory was the annual Milwaukee 200 during State Fair week. Qualifying 11th in his beautiful S&R Watson-Offy roadster Sutton felt he had a good car since he already had seen what it could do at Milwaukee. "In June, ...I had passed my idol, Tony Bettenhausen to take the third-place finish away from him."

The race turned into a classic. During the first 60 miles, Rodger Ward and Bettenhausen battled for the lead, following were Sutton, A.J. Foyt and a young rookie named Parnelli Jones who fought tooth-and-nail for third place, swapping the positions among themselves several times. From the 60th lap on, Bettenhausen managed to hold the lead and appeared headed to victory.

Behind the leader nothing was settled. Foyt, Jones, Ward and Sutton continued to display the skill and daring that made the crowd rise to their feet. Everything changed on lap 182 as Bettenhausen's leading Dowgord Spl. let him down and burned up a rear-end housing. Bettenhausen heroically drove the smoking car to the pits sitting on the roll bar.

Foyt, gunning for his first Champ Car win, assumed the point, led for three laps, and was passed by rookie Parnelli Jones in the No. 45 laydown Epperly with only 14 laps to go. Jones, also seeking his first Indy Car victory, managed to lead only three laps before being forced to pit for a quick splash and go fuel stop. Before another lap was completed, Sutton roared past Foyt to assume the lead on lap 189.



Sutton at Speed in the beautiful Bryant Heating & Cooling Watson roadster at Milwaukee in 1961. Photo courtesy of Gene Crucean

Eleven laps later, Len Sutton waved as he accepted the checkered flag, ahead of Foyt. The fans in attendance that day finally let out their collective breath, as a grinning Len Sutton rolled into victory lane. Foyt would have to wait another week before he won his first Indy Car race.

Sutton wasn't through winning auto races, but no one in attendance that day in Milwaukee that they had witnessed Len's third and final Indy Car victory. Interestingly, Rodger Ward, Eddie Sachs and Sutton, were the only three drivers to win championship car races in the previous three Indy Car seasons, 1958, '59 and '60. Sutton continued to be a front runner wherever he chose to compete until his retirement in 1965, proving nice guys can be winners on and off the track. – Steve Zautke



Chris Pook & the History of the Long Beach Grand Prix

In Gordon Kirby's latest Racemaker Press biography, Chris Pook relates the story of his life. Born and raised in England, Chris emigrated to the United States in 1963 and founded the Long Beach Grand Prix in 1975. Since that time, the event has established itself as America's longest-running, most successful street race. Kirby and Pook tell many tales about the difficulties Chris faced on the way to making the race succeed. The book also covers Pook's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to help promote the Indy Lights and Toyota/Atlantic series, as well as the Laguna Seca racetrack. Finally, the book details Formula One's FISA/FOCA war in 1979–1980 and the CART/IRL war twenty years later. Pook tells this story very frankly and in considerable detail, providing a rare look inside the business and politics of big-time automobile racing in the United States.

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Have You Considered Club Sponsorship?

The Miller Club appreciates all of the support provided over the years to help sustain our annual event at the Milwaukee Mile. There are various levels of sponsorship participation, which are outlined below. Please consider one of these opportunities, or if you know of a related business that would like to take advantage of the promotional benefits offered, we would be happy to provide additional information.

Executive Sponsorship - \$5000

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3 newsletters, and link on Miller Website

Corporate Sponsorship - \$1,000

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3 newsletters, and link on Miller Website

Friends of the Miller Club - \$100 and above

**Name listed in Miller Event Program and (1) newsletter

It's Time to Pay Your Club Dues

Harry Miller Club membership fees are now due for 2021. If you have not yet mailed your check to cover the cost of your newsletters and annual event discounts, please do so today.

Please send your check to:

Harry Miller Club,
P.O. Box 740762,
Boynton Beach, FL 33474.

New members are asked to complete the membership application found on the club website: harrymillerclub.com. The fee for new members or members who joined after 2011 is \$40 per year. The loyal member fee is \$25 – the rate for long term members of over nine years.

Thanks for your commitment to the Miller Club!

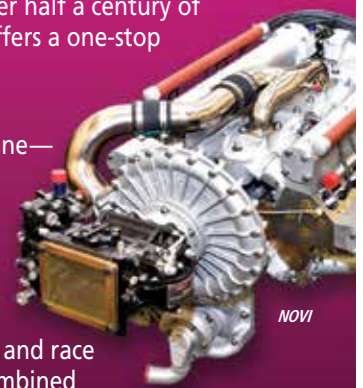
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From the Racing Archives



To say Mike Nazaruk was tough is an understatement. The former Marine saw action Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima. For many former soldiers, auto racing was an outlet and those who were successful were able to make a living. One who did was "Iron Mike." Here we see Nazaruk in victory lane after winning the 100-mile championship car race at Milwaukee on June 8, 1952. Photo courtesy of Russ Lake



Albert Karnatz of Detroit Michigan in the Richards Brothers Miller. The 24-year old was a rookie in 1929, driving a front-wheel drive Miller originally built in 1925. Standing next to Karnatz is speed boat pilot, Stanley Reed who served as mechanic. Karnatz qualified the Miller at an average speed of 104.749-mph. The car ran 50-laps in the "500" before retiring due to a fuel leak. After participating in the single "500" Karnatz returned to Detroit working for Chrysler and running the dirt tracks. Tragically, Karnatz was killed at the VFW Speedway in Detroit in 1934. Thanks to Billy Dunbar and Kem Robertson for contributing research.



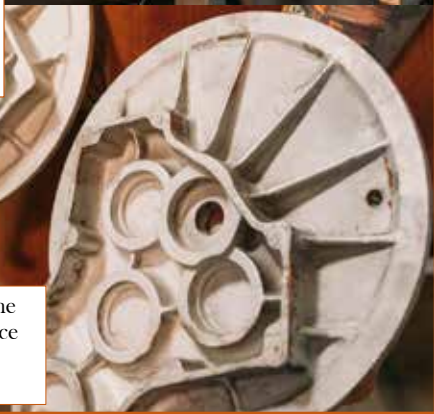



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Message From Club President – 26th Summer At The Mile

I know we are all looking forward to a summer with a bit more normalcy and hopefully a lot more car events. As some of you have probably heard, we finally received a contract from Wisconsin State Fair Park for this year's Harry Miller Club event. Now is the time to please submit your entries to Lenore so we further plan.

We are working with our hotel to create a safe environment for both Thursday's barbeque and Friday's Social Dinner. More information to come on those two events. Of course the main event is Friday's and Saturday's track time at the Milwaukee Mile. As you know this will be our 26th year of our gathering to talk about, analyze and drive the cars we love. Hope to see as many of you as possible, and please send in your registration form as soon as possible.

Best wishes,
Tedd Zamjahn

Many Thanks For Your Support!

The Miller Club extends special thanks to the individuals and organizations that are helping to support our 26th annual event at the Milwaukee Mile. This funding makes it possible for the Club to continue to offer our wonderful open air museum of Millers and other unique vintage race cars at the Mile each year.

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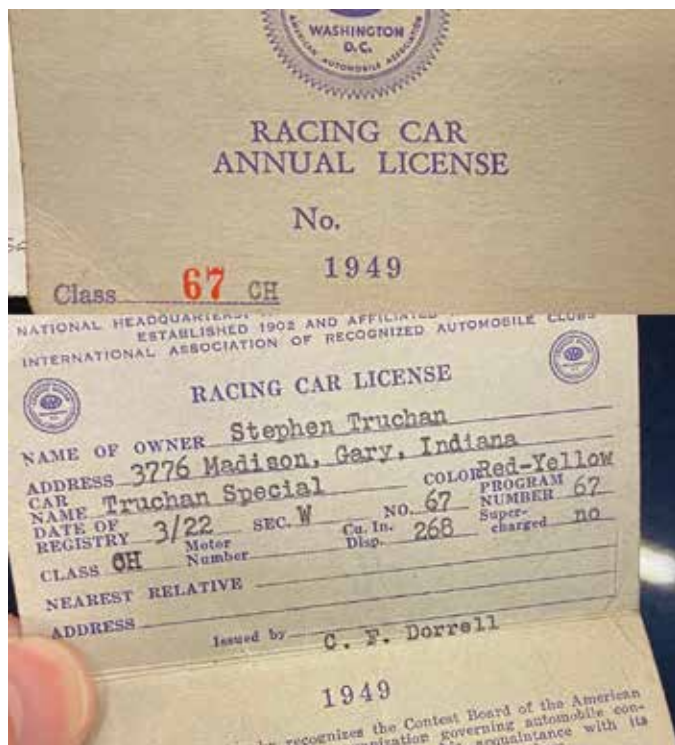
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A Member's Great Discovery



Club member Steve Truchan, Jr. was going through his father's desk drawer when he came upon some papers he had never gone through before. In those papers he found out unbeknownst to him, his father had registered his car in 1949 as number 67. Thus, he changed the number on his car to correct this hidden data nugget. - Steve Zautke



Millers at Milwaukee - Vintage Indy Car Event July 9-10, 2021

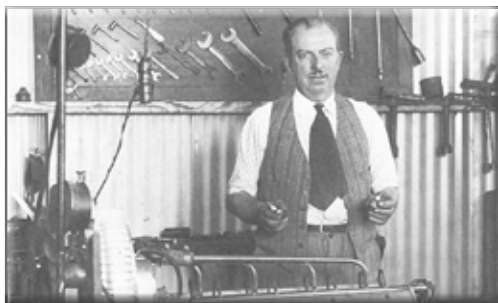
We are all looking forward to once again joining friends and fellow vintage racing enthusiasts at the Milwaukee Mile! As to be expected, we will all follow the requested protocols at the track and at the hotel. Please remember, we have a 60 car limit for our event. All entry applications must be received no later than June 20, 2021, or a \$50 per car late fee will be added to your total entry payment. The final cut-off date for car entries to be reviewed is June 30. No entries will be reviewed after that date.

The Sonesta Milwaukee West is again our host hotel.

This is simply a name change from the Crowne Plaza (same owners). They promise to provide the same excellent service and quality dining that we have come to expect during our weekend stay. Please call **414-475-9500** to reserve your room. The deadline for the group room discount is June 7.

All banquet reservations must be made and paid for by June 30, 2021. No reservations will be taken after that date. There are space limitations in our banquet hall, and we will do our best to accommodate the reservations we receive by June 30.

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:

**Harry Miller Club
P.O. Box 740762
Boynton Beach, FL 33474.**

PLEASE NOTE there is a new mailing address for the Miller Club - listed above.

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 who began membership 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 Heinzelmenn

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 August 20, 2021.