

Harry A. Miller Club News

The Novi Returns to Indianapolis and a Rookie Driver Starts His “500” Career



On Wednesday, May 1st, 1963, when the railbirds woke up in Speedway, Indiana it was a damp, windy 29 degrees. At noon, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway opened for practice as the weather had turned sunny and the temperatures warmed up a bit. Veteran driver Eddie Sachs was still wearing his overcoat but removed it when he stepped up to the shining new yellow and red trimmed Offenhauser-powered Watson roadster. Sachs, getting the attention local sponsor Phil Hedbeck wanted, was first on the track and took several laps around the 2-1/2-mile track in the Bryant Heating and Cooling Spl. - at just under 100-mph.

Andy Granatelli came to the Speedway with three supercharged Novi-powered cars, headlined by popular Jim Hurtubise in the #56 Hotel Tropicana Special. Some were skeptical, as Granatelli missed the show the last two years (plus his 1960 effort with Lew Welch). This time, the engines known for their deep throaty V-8 roar were quite different. Over the winter, Granatelli and his team made new blocks for the engine, using a shell molding process which was used to reduce weight. In fabricating the blocks, they provided more area for water flow around the cylinders and the area around the valves. Smaller valves were included in the heads, and reduced intake ports gave the engines more flexibility in the lower to mid-RPM range. The updated engines also included newly designed

Winfield cams, revised intake manifold and exhaust system from Hedman Heddners. The newly designed Bendix fuel injection system produced an estimated 740-horsepower. Andy's brother, Joe Granatelli and legendary mechanic, Jean Marcenac were listed as co-chief mechanics.

Andy Granatelli was quoted in the May 7th Indianapolis Star, "We know what the car (yellow Novi No. 6) can do, and we want an experienced driver." The car was originally assigned to Bobby Marvin, who was tragically killed the previous month in a USAC sprint car race at Langhorne, PA.

Meanwhile a rookie from Albuquerque, New Mexico was signing into the Speedway offices for the first time. Bobby Unser was a Pikes Peak champion who also won numerous sprint cars races out west, and was entered as the driver of the American Rubber & Plastics Special owned by John Chalik. That car was an Epperly laydown roadster which was originally built in 1959 for the Bignotti-Bowes Racing Associates. Fresno Californian Johnny Boyd drove it to a sixth-place finish with Boyd again making the race in the same car in 1960. Bob "Traction" Veith missed the cut in 1961 as Tiny Worley took over the car in 1962 with smooth Paul Goldsmith easily making the race. Chalik of LaPorte, Indiana

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sponsored the car in 1962, and later purchased the car and entered it for the rookie Unser with Barney Christiansen as chief mechanic.

On Friday, May 3rd Bobby passed several sections of his rookie test as he gained valuable track experience. The following week, after passing his rookie tests, Unser was unable to exceed 144-mph and fought handling issues.

On Tuesday, May 7th, Unser spun coming out of turn two. The car slid 1,080 feet and hit the inside retaining wall. Unser escaped injury as the car suffered damage to the left front of the car. The mis-handling five-year old car was burning through tires and Chalik told Unser, if he wanted more, he could buy them himself. Unser packed up his helmet bag and quit. Unser's pal, Parnelli Jones heard that Unser left the Chalik car and went over to speak with Andy Granatelli about availability of the No. 6 Novi. Parnelli had run a few shake down laps in it the day before, as did veterans, Cliff Griffith, Paul Russo, and Dempsey Wilson, none getting up to competitive speeds.

Hurtubise later went out to shake down the yellow Novi. Herk, the ever-popular driver was able to get it up to 149-mph, fast enough to make the field. Andy Granatelli later said, "I made up my mind I wouldn't change the setup of the yellow car from when Hurtubise shook it down. We had four different drivers in it, and they couldn't get it above 143."

Granatelli initially wanted no part of the rookie, however Parnelli, along with Bobby's father Jerry were quite persistent and Andy finally relented. On Monday after pole weekend, Bobby Unser took three "hot laps" in the yellow Novi. Unser who initially didn't quite fit right in the cockpit came in after his first run hitting 147, then upping it to 149. Andy Granatelli enthusiastically declared. "You've got yourself a ride." Bobby said a bit later, "I can hardly believe I went that fast. It seemed to be so easy."

It certainly was a change of fortune for the rookie from Albuquerque, "Wow! I was about ready to go home I was so discouraged. I thought maybe this place wasn't for me until this ride today. I'm sure glad I stayed around."

Parnelli had actually spoken to a pair of car owners, Granatelli and Gordon Van Liew. The latter, had an open seat in the Vita Fresh



Orange Juice Spl. However, Bobby kept his word and accepted the Novi ride.

Shaky hands almost caused a disaster as a mechanic dropped a penlight into the engine and bent a valve. They had to work most of the night prior to qualifying, tearing down the engine to repair the damage and they didn't finish till early Saturday morning.

Bobby was fastest on day 3 of time trials, qualifying at 149.421-mph. It certainly was redemption for Andy Granatelli who spent \$238,000 buying the Novi assets from Lew Welch in April of 1961. After missing the "500" twice, finally in 1963, the team placed all three Novi-powered cars in the show. Hurtubise on the front row, Unser fastest on the third day and drag racer Art Malone sticking the ancient Kurtis which was built in 1956 in the show too.

After qualifying Andy spoke to the media, "They were backfiring and blowing off hoods when the superchargers coughed. But I loved the Novis. Everybody does. I could never get the sound they make out of my head. You know I used to drive here, and I'll never forget being passed by the Novis. You've never been passed at all until you've been passed by a Novi. The noise alone is enough to scare you to death. And the hot carbon from the tailpipe hits you in the face like a thousand needles."

Parnelli Jones who broke the 150-mph barrier that year started on the pole with the popular Novi of Hurtubise alongside. Don Branson filled out the front row in the Leader Card roadster. Parnelli and "Herk" battled through turns one and two with Parnelli in the lead. However, Hurtubise wound up the supercharger on his Novi and passed Parnelli down the backstretch to lead the first lap. For the first quarter of the race, Hurtubise ran second to eventual winner, Jones.

Sadly, Unser would crash after two laps, and Hurtubise eventually was black flagged for an oil leak just past the halfway point in the race. Malone had only lasted 18 laps due to clutch trouble.

Although it would take time to gain experience and success, Booby Unser was embarking on a fruitful Indianapolis 500 career and the Novi was back and the fans rejoiced. Granatelli entered the popular Novi for several more years, enduring heartbreaking defeat, however like Bobby, Andy did finally make into victory lane at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

– Steve Zautke



Photos taken at 2021 event.

27th Annual Millers at Milwaukee – Vintage Indy Car Event – July 8-9, 2022

A new year has begun, and it's time to mark your 2022 calendars for a July trip to the Milwaukee Mile! Get your applications completed early so you don't miss out on the opportunity to run your prized cars for **two full days** on the Mile. Entry forms can be found on the club website, or if a past entrant, an entry brochure was included with this newsletter. We are adding a new group of eligible cars to our event, the Pre-WWII open-wheel Grand Prix race cars.

Your weekend of fun and vintage cars begins on Thursday, July 7. Entrants can park cars and trailers at the track from 11-4 p.m. Then, check in at the Sonesta West Hotel (previously the Crowne Plaza West) and get ready for great food and a relaxing evening of catching up with old friends, as well meeting new ones!

Friday action begins on the Mile – with gates opening at 8 a.m. The traditional photo on the track is taken at 9 a.m. followed by the Drivers'

Meeting. Cars will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Our Friday festivities will include a cocktail hour beginning at 6 p.m., the Silent Auction and delicious banquet! Please take time to look through your books and collectibles to find a few items to share for our Silent Auction. Our three entrée dinner begins at 7 p.m. The fee remains at \$50 per person, and is payable no later than July 1. We will not be able to add reservations after that date.

A complete breakdown of entry and meal fees can be found on page 7 of this newsletter. Due to increases in many of our costs, we have had to increase our entry fees slightly. We strive to maintain our high standards for the Miller event, and keep our fees as low as possible.

We are all looking forward to another great weekend at the Milwaukee Mile, and your early entry ensures your place on the roster! See you in July!

– Lenore Heinzelmann



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Message From Club President –
Happy New Year!

Happy 2022 Miller Club members! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season, and we look forward to a happy and healthy new year.

Our Board of Directors held a zoom meeting in late December, and we reviewed a number of issues. We are happy to announce that we asked Brent Castle to join our Board of Directors. For those of you who do not know Brent, he is a third generation Miller enthusiast. His grandfather, Bill Castle, built what we know of as the oldest Miller race car in existence. Brent's father, Terry, took over the car, and now it has been passed on to Brent. It was an unanimous decision to add him to our Board of Directors, and we are so pleased he was happy to accept this important position.

Another new development is the addition of Harold Peters as co-club historian. Many of you know Harold from his wealth of knowledge on “everything Harry Miller”. We can all look forward to his articles in upcoming newsletters. He will join Steve Zautke who has been a valued historian for the Miller Club and the Milwaukee Mile, for many years.

The board also decided we'd like to reach out to owners of Pre-WWII open wheel Grand Prix cars. We all feel including these automobiles to our meet would be exciting for both our club members as well as spectators.

Please remember to help Lenore by promptly sending in your annual dues.

I hope your projects are going well, and I look forward to seeing you at our event in July.



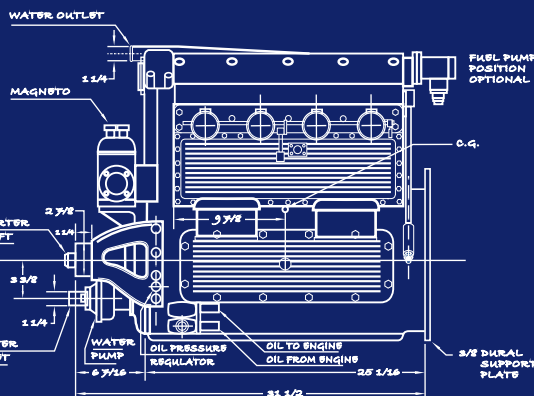
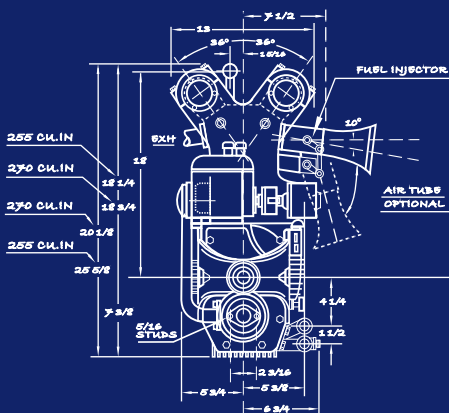
Photo taken at 2021 event.

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Board Welcomes Brent Castle



Growing up less than a mile from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in a vintage car family it was easy to catch the bug. In 1996, we helped our friend Gordon Barrett trailer his 1911 Mercer to the Miller Meet and I was immediately hooked. Like many in my generation I grew up with supercar posters on my wall, but a couple rides around the Milwaukee Mile in the Mercer and in David North's Bugatti Type 45 quickly shifted my interest to vintage race cars.

Anxious to start on a project of my own, but (at 14) lacking a driver's license, I was encouraged to start small and rebuild a single cylinder 1919 Briggs and Stratton Flyer engine. This project quickly expanded to building a replica buckboard with my grandfather. This project culminated in one of my more memorable moments at a Miller meet. In 1998, Joyce Watson (AJ's wife) came over to me while I was sitting behind our trailer with the Briggs and Stratton Flyer and said her husband was too shy to ask, but he was really interested in a ride. At the time, I had no idea who she or her husband were, but my dad was awfully quick to give me the nudge and tell me I should let him drive (see photo above with AJ Watson)!

In 2004, my grandpa embarked on a project that would further my own interest in vintage race cars and cement my continued involvement in the Harry A Miller club. That straight eight twin cam engine that sat for decades against the wall in his basement was soon the basis for a six year faithful reconstruction of the Miller 183 powered Durant Special. We have brought the Durant Special to most of the Miller meets since the car was completed in 2010.

I recently found a 1985 letter from Dave Uihlein to my grandpa and others remarking that "we ought to have a Miller Club honoring the late Harry A. Miller" and that there is "the opportunity to further his renown as we collect and restore his incredible masterpieces". This club has such incredible membership ranging from hobbyists and enthusiasts to world class restorers, drivers, and historians and many folks I consider friends and mentors. In fact, a couple of the recipients to that 1985 letter are still active members in the

club! Now 36 years after that letter, I'm very proud to be a third generation involved in the club and I am greatly honored to serve as a Director of the Miller Club board to further these goals and the goals of the club.

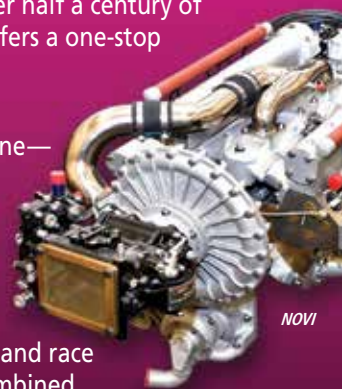
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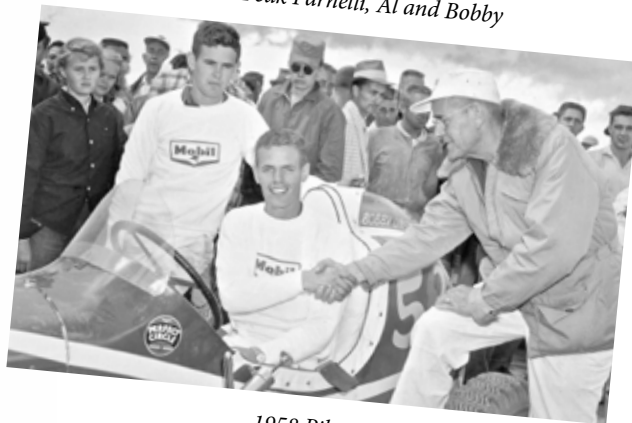
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From the Racing Archives

We Remember the Unser Brothers—



1964 Pikes Peak Parnelli, Al and Bobby



*1958 Pikes Peak Al, Bobby and Daddy
Al and Bobby with Borg Warner Trophy*

LOST IN TIME

FORMULA 5000 IN NORTH AMERICA



Lost in Time

\$85 plus shipping, available now!

Formula 5000 in North America

By John Zimmermann

During the 1960s and 1970s, American road racing flourished, with hard-fought championships for the CanAm, the TransAm and last but not least the Formula 5000 series. Built around the idea of a standard engine size for American V-8s, Formula 5000 attracted entries from well-known teams such as Dan Gurney, Jim Hall, Carl Haas, Parnelli Jones, Roger Penske and Carl Hogan.

Drivers in Formula 5000 represented a who's who of available talent, including a host of stars from Europe, Canada and the United States. Mark Donohue, Mario Andretti, Brian Redman, Peter Gethin, both Al and Bobby Unser, Sam Posey and numerous others all went nose to tail for the Championship.

In this volume John Zimmermann's excellent round-up of Formula 5000 provides the first comprehensive overview of all the elements of this great racing series. Fully researched and extensively illustrated provides an essential history for students of racing history and fans alike, a must for the true enthusiast.

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The Club Appreciates Your Support Annual Fees Now Due

It's time to mail your annual membership dues for 2022. Your annual support allows us to print and mail your club newsletter! If you have not yet mailed your check, made out to The Harry Miller Club, please send to the address below:

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

The fee you pay is based on how long you have been a loyal Miller member. If you joined at least 10 years ago – prior to 2011 – your fee is \$25. If you joined after 2011, and are a more recent or new member, your fee is \$40.

We thank you in advance for your continued support of our unique and important vintage Indy car group!

Millers at Milwaukee Vintage Indy Car Event July 8-9, 2022

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Spouse _____

List car(s) entered:

Include description, color and number on side of car – if any. Include photo.

Car Entry Fee For First Car- \$450 _____

(Includes two pit passes, tent, and two Thurs. Social tickets)

Each Additional Car - \$400 per car _____

(Includes 2 pit passes)

Thursday Social (number of people attending) _____

additional persons are \$25/each _____

Friday Banquet - \$50 per person _____

Membership Fee - \$25-\$40 (see Pg 8) _____

Total Due: _____

All entry applications must be received no later than June 20, 2022 or a \$50 per car late fee will be added to your total. Final cut-off date for entries to be reviewed is June 30. NO entries reviewed after that date. Please be respectful of our time line to ensure you receive meal reservations and appropriate signage for your entry.

**Mail your entry application,
car photo and check to:**

The Harry Miller Club

P.O. Box 740762, Boynton Beach, FL 33474



27th Annual Millers at Milwaukee July 8-9, 2022



Entry forms
and information
can be found
at harrymillerclub.com

Photo of 2021 entries

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.

Harry A. Miller Club Board of Directors

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Office: 262-275-5050

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Miller Club

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Directors:

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Brian Brunkhorst
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Dan Davis
Lenore Heinzelmenn
Bill Hoff
Tom Malloy
Bob McConnell
Phil Reilly
Bill Warner

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 April 15, 2022.