

# Harry A. Miller Club News

## It Gets Better With Age



*The HCS Special Miller 122 that Tommy Milton drove to victory at Indianapolis in 1923. The H.C.S. of Harry C. Stutz Motor Company on the hood was at the request of Stutz who commissioned Miller to build this car. Steve Zautke photo*



*Thanks to Clay Smith and Tim Matthews of Speedway Motors Museum for bringing the "Baby Blue" Blue Crown Special originally built by Lugie Lesovsky. Steve Zautke photo*



*Tim Coffeen pilots the 1960 Joe Hunt Magneto Spl. Offenhauser-powered Watson roadster around the Milwaukee Mile. Steve Zautke photo*



*Bob McConnell has supported the Harry Miller Meet for many years and usually always brings at least one example of Harry Miller's design. This year he brought the 1933 Red Lion Miller that was a topflight car on the West Coast in the 1930's. Steve Zautke photo*

On Friday and Saturday, July 8th and 9th, the Harry Miller Club celebrated its 27th running of the "Millers at Milwaukee" vintage Indy Car event with excellent weather, majestic race cars, and outstanding friends. Wait a moment, it seems every year we're able to write that. However, for only the second time in its history, the Miller Event had a weather delay (not counting a brief morning shower several years ago that briefly postponed the start of on-track activities). Consequently, for the first time since the inaugural event, a two-and-a-half-hour rain delay caused a pause in the on-track activities. During the respite, some members patronized a few of the fine restaurants that are available in downtown West Allis, while others took

advantage of the onsite WI State Fair Park food vendors enjoying brats, burgers, hot dogs and of course ample bench racing.

Track time. It's the precious commodity that separates this event from other vintage events. The Miller Meet gives members plentiful track time at the Milwaukee Mile, arguably more than any nationally known vintage event. Adding the "fast" and "slow" sessions gives an opportunity for some to drive or even ride in a variety of race cars that one may not see at other tracks and/or road courses. Miller Club president Tedd Zamjahn summed it up nicely to David Linden of Vintage Motorsport magazine, "Spectators are encouraged to mill about with the owners. The

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entrants get a great amount of track time over the two days and the low-key atmosphere is a positive. It is such an open event for the Miller Club members and spectators.”

Close to fifty cars were in the Harry Miller Club paddock this year and almost all of them were seen on the venerable one-mile oval. After the mandatory 10:00 a.m. driver's meeting at center pit conducted aptly by club president, Tedd Zamjahn; director, Rocky Hodges, and board member Bill Hoff, it was time to perform a final inspection of the cars, warm up the engines and do the same with the drivers.

Former HMC board member, Herb Lederer was one of the first on the track, which is significant since it's his 26th consecutive entry which is a HMC record. Herb's light blue Offenhauser-powered 1952 Dayton Steel Wheel Special along with his vibrant yellow Mercer Raceabout usually driven by his son Robert, saw substantial time on the track and continues to provide opportunities for attendees to get a feel of a classic “brass era” car on the track. Chairman emeritus, Dana Mecum had his squadron of pristine racing vehicles including a pair of Millers, the Tommy Milton Indy 500 winning 1923 HSC Special, the first 122' Miller and the iconic V-16 1931 two-seat Miller. Also included was the 1937 Thorne Sparks “Big Six” (the first race car to break the 130-mph qualifying barrier at Indianapolis). Dana's ever admired “500” pole-winning blue No. 33 Gilmore Special also made many laps. This year he surprised the railbirds with his addition of a stunning 1907 Renault Type A1 35/24 Vanderbilt Racer.



*Which car has the record for the most laps at the Miller Meet? We don't keep those records, but we all agree, Dana Mecum's exquisite 1934 Gilmore Special Indy 500 pole winning car is probably in the top-five. Rich Zimmermann photo*

It can't be a “Miller Event” without Harry Miller race cars. Thanks to Tom Barbour of Colorado (Granatelli Miller-Ford), Bill Hoff of Illinois (Miller-Ford), Maryland's Brent Castle in his family restored “Durant Baby Chevrolet” (1920 Durant-Miller 183) and Bob McConnell of Urbana, OH (Red Lion Miller) for bringing their beautifully prepared race cars.

Phil Reilly returned with his laydown Kurtis-Epperly Bowes Seal Fast Special originally driven by the legendary A.J. Foyt to his first USAC National Championship in 1960. Joe Freeman's crew were busy with the 1960 Joe Hunt Spl. Watson roadster, the upright John Fray Spl., a Hemi-powered Kurtis 500a and the 1939 Sparks-Thorne Special. The former Milwaukee winning Kurtis 4000 originally driven by the legendary Jack McGrath was back, thanks to Bob Ryan of Minnesota. Bob Sirna's 1958 D/A Lubricant Kurtis 500H also saw track time until mechanical woes shortened his weekend.

Several interesting Offenhauser-powered Indianapolis roadsters representations included the 1961 Johnny Boyd Leader Card Special of Mick Anderson, along with his other roadsters have



*Thanks to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum along with Ed Dalton of Classic Car Carrier for bringing up the Iconic Front Drive Miller 91. One of the nicest examples of a Harry Miller built car in the world. Rich Zimmerman photo.*

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Jack McGrath drove this car to victory at the Milwaukee Mile in June of 1953. It's good seeing the Hinkle Special Kurtis 2000 back at the Miller Meet with Robert Ryan. Rich Zimmermann photo



Tom Barbour is towed back to the pits after the popular frontstretch group photo. His ex-Granatelli Miller-Ford certainly has a fine patina. Rich Zimmermann photo

been a delightful addition. Chuck Jones and his 1962 Bill Forbes Spl., Florida's Bruce Linsmeyer 1962 Rodger Ward Leader Card Special and Tennessee-based Bob Receveur and his 1961 Foyt Bowes Seal Fast Special. Other good-looking roadsters that enjoyed track time included those of Dr. Robert Dicks, James McCabe, Ken Muller, Steve Noffke and John Safro.

Eric Anderson's 1933 Russell 8 Special Studebaker saw significant track time as did James Mills' blue No. 4 Hupp Comet. Several other cars which lapped the oval many times were Mike Lynn (Riverside Airport Spl.) and Carl Schultz/Tom McGriff (Boyle Special) whose entries were nice to see again. Thanks to Carl and Carroll Jensen (Stutz Speedster), along with Scott Larson

(Bugatti T-57), Robert Lederer (Stutz Bearcat), Lou Natenshon (1933 Ford Indy Racer), Shawn Thomas (Dreyer Sprint Car) and Tedd Zamjahn (Bugatti T37) for their entries too.

Special thanks to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum and Ed Dalton of Classic Car Carrier for transporting the legendary 1926 Miller 91 front drive originally driven Leon Duray. Likewise, the Museum of American Speed and Clay Smith for bringing the Lugie Lesosvsky-built Blue Crown Spark Plug Special originally driven by George Connor. Although both static displays, their appearance at the Miller Meet were well received and highly regarded.


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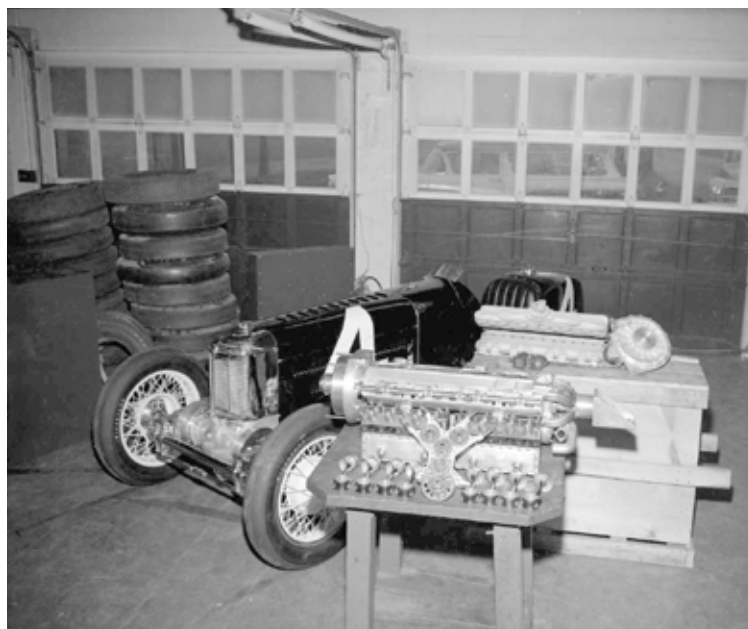
## It Gets Better With Age *continued from page 3*

The historic Milwaukee Mile once again provided another outstanding backdrop for these historic race cars. The track, although to some, thought to be closed or on its way out appears to be showing life again as NASCAR returns to the track in 2023 and IndyCar has been rumored to be returning in 2024. With these developments and the health of the Club, hopefully there will be

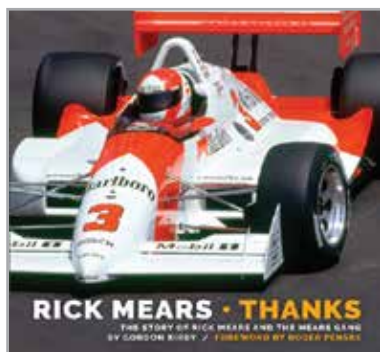
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Thanks to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum for releasing the Leon Duray Miller, one of the finest examples of Harry Miller's genius to the come to the Harry Miller Meet. Rich Zimmermann photo

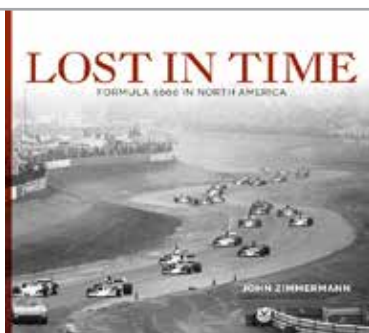


A compelling photo of the front drive Miller 91 in which Leon Duray set a track records at Indianapolis in 1928 (122.391-mph) and Montlherly (139.6-mph) in 1929, which far exceeded the sophisticated European racing cars of the time. This photo taken at the restoration shops at IMS in 1962. Author and researcher Griffith Borgeson gave the Duray car to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum where it was also restored. Indianapolis Motor Speedway photo



### **Rick Mears - Thanks** The Story of Rick Mears and the Mears Gang

Racemaker presents a second edition of Gordon Kirby's biography of four-time Indy 500 winner Rick Mears. Rick announced his retirement from racing in 1992, just after his forty-first birthday. He went out a winner with four Indy 500 victories, three CART Indy Car World Series championships, twenty-nine individual race victories and forty pole positions. He was the most successful Indy car driver of his era.



### **Lost In Time: Formula 5000 In North America**

During the 1960s and 1970s, American road racing flourished, with hard-fought championships for the Can-Am, the Trans-Am and last but not least the Formula 5000 series. Formula 5000 attracted excellent entries from well-known teams such as Dan Gurney, Jim Hall, Carl Haas, Parnelli Jones, Roger Penske and Carl Hogan. The series led manufacturers to develop relatively affordable chassis designed to compete on the road courses across the U. S. and Canada.



### **The Cellini of Chrome** The Story of George W. Walker / Ford Motor Company's First Vice President of Design

In the same flamboyant vein as design greats such as Harley Earl, Gordon Buerig, Vergil Exner, Raymond Loewy and William "Bill" Mitchell, Walker developed the standard for key Ford Motor Company Products for the 1950s and '60s. Beginning with the enormous success of the 1949 Ford, George elevated Henry's company to one of the all-around best-selling automotive operations in the world.



### **Chris Pook & the History of the Long Beach GP**

When Chris Pook declared his intention to run a Grand Prix race through the streets of Long Beach many people thought he was out of his mind. But with the support of racing legend Dan Gurney, and many other enthusiasts, Pook built the most successful street race in American history. Pook's crazy idea turned into a model for bringing racing to the people and using the surrounding event to rebuild a flagging community.



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## Message From Club President – Tedd Zamjahn

Hello fellow Harry Miller Club members:

I expect some of you are preparing to travel to Hershey, PA, for the big swap meet but by the time you read this, Hershey will be over. As you all know, our long time, loyal and excellent club secretary, Lenore, has retired. We are fortunate to welcome Carrol Jensen, a very competent replacement. I have known Carrol and her husband Carl for many years. Those of you that know them as I do will agree they are a very knowledgeable automotive couple. They are also a long-time member of our club.

This past month, fellow board member Brian Brunkhorst, and I enjoyed a very special garage tour and lunch at Dana and Patty Mecum's spectacular home. Dana's health seems to be improving and he was in very good spirits. He is looking forward to driving some of his fabulous cars next season.

I hope you all have a success with servicing and maintaining your cars for next year. I look forward to seeing you next summer at our Harry Miller's Club Meet.

Best wishes,  
Tedd Zamjahn

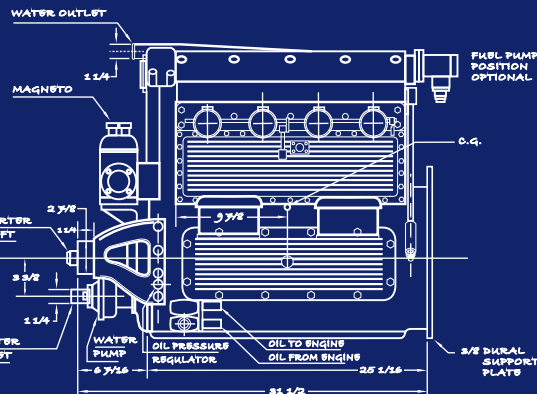
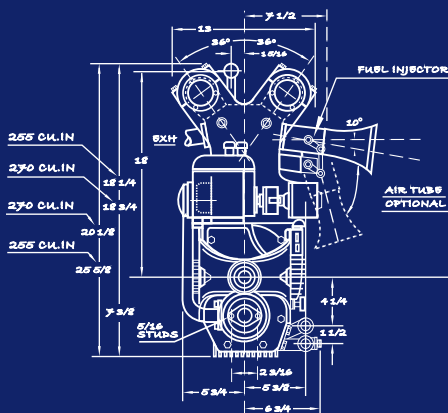


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## Charlie Van Acker

For the Harry Miller Club Newsletter we like to focus on championship car history pre-dating 1965. Additionally, since the membership has a high level of knowledge of racing history, we like to focus on those cars, events and personalities that may lurk in the shadows of auto racing. One personality that fits that measure is Charlie Van Acker. Born in Brussels, Belgium in 1912, his AAA career may have been brief (1946-1950), however his gregarious presence was around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for many years. A frequent visitor to the Indy 500 Oldtimers Bar-B-Q every May, he was one driver that loved to bench race with his friends. Charlie passed in 1998.



Charlie Van Acker gives us a big smile while sitting in the Preston Tucker Partners Special at Milwaukee in 1947. Driving this Myron Stevens-built chassis powered by Joe Lencki's six-cylinder engine, Charlie drove it to a top-5 finish on June 8th in a race won by Bill Holland. The following month in July, he won the 100-miler over the likes of Duke Nalon, Paul Russo and Ted Horn. Horn led 70-laps but had motor issues and nursed the car around several laps. Horn had to drop out on the 97th lap. Van Acker would go on and drive to his first and only AAA Championship win finishing the 100-miles in one hour, nine minutes and 47.88-seconds. Three championship car races were held at Wisconsin State Fair Park Speedway in 1947, only other time that occurred was in 1965. Ted Horn got his revenge the next race at Milwaukee on August 24th, leading the final ten laps to win over Nalon, George Connor and Tony Bettenhausen. Armin Krueger Photo



For the 1949 Indianapolis 500, Van Acker qualified 27th for in which over twenty cars made attempts or practiced at speed but failed to make the race. On Race Day, on lap-10 Van Acker spun when exiting turn four and slid the No. 10 Redmer Special into the inside wall which made the car do a slow roll ending on it's top. He was not injured. Indianapolis Motor Speedway photos



Van Acker was a popular driver from South Bend, IN, with his infectious smile and personality he always made time of the fans. He remained active in racing after his driving days running the South Bend track and crewed as a mechanic. Charlie was frequent visitor to the Indianapolis Motors Speedway seen here in 1950 with three time "500" winner, Mauri Rose and former board track driver, Harry Hartz. Indianapolis Motor Speedway photos





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many Miller events at the revered track in the future. Make a note of it, next year's HMC event is set for July 7-8th, 2023.

Board Member Bill Hoff summed it up nicely when he was speaking to Linden when asked what makes the Miller Meet so special: "The people. It's a great group of people, drivers and car-owners. We have a lot of characters, and they all have hearts of gold." – Steve Zautke



Tedd Zamjahn and Bill Hoff conduct the driver's meeting prior to cars getting on the track. Rich Zimmermann photo

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# 28th Annual Millers at Milwaukee Scheduled for July 7-8, 2023



## 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 is \$50 US, \$60 Canada. 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 539  
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**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](http://harrymillerclub.com), or call 414-403-7697. The fee for new members and renewal, is \$50 US and \$60 Canada.

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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: Carrol Jensen.

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 20, 2022.