

Harry A. Miller Club News



The 2023 Harry A. Miller Club group shot on the front straight of Indianapolis Raceway Park. Harry Miller built masterpieces grace the front row. Just under 60 cars were present for the event, the Harry Miller Club thanks the members and volunteers for their participation and Indianapolis Raceway Park for their hospitality. – Courtesy of Brian Hart Photography

The 2023 Harry Miller Meet Goes on the Road

The Harry A. Miller Club took it on the road for 2023 when the club celebrated its 28th running of Millers at Indianapolis. The move to Lucas Oil Speedway (Indianapolis Raceway Park) on July 6-7 this year provided many opportunities for the club.

What about the Milwaukee Mile? The Club moved the event due to much needed renovations and upgrades that were being undertaken at the track, thus ensuring the long-term outlook for venerable facility. The Club looks forward to returning to the 'Mile in 2024.

The move to Indianapolis provided opportunity for many whom in the past didn't want to make the four-hour + trek north through Chicago to Wisconsin. The rationale paid off as the meet provided the motivation for many IMS Oldtimers to see revered Offenhausers fire up and run up close. It also provided some members a shorter tow, and it showed as the biggest car turnout in several years with 56 cars on site for the event. Many thanks to Carrol Jensen and Tedd Zamjahn who thrived as the advance team that overcame the logistical challenges of moving the event to Indianapolis.

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We Need Your Email Address!

The Harry Miller Club newsletter provides a great tool for communicating with our members but currently, we can only afford to print it three times per year, Spring, Fall and Winter.

On Friday September 1, 2023, a membership email was sent to ALL members that have an email address on file. Check your email, check your SPAM and if you did not receive it, please send your email address to theharrymillerclub@gmail.com so we can update our membership records.

We will not sell your email address, we will not provide it to other clubs and/or organizations but we do want to provide club members with information and updates as they become available and not wait for those print deadlines of the Spring, Fall and Winter newsletter.





An exceptional photo as three rear-wheel drive Millers are reunited. The gold Louie Meyer #14 1928 Indianapolis 500 winner (courtesy of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum), the 1926 Miller Perfect Circle #2 (courtesy of Tom Barbour) and the Miller Boyle Valve Spl. #15 (courtesy of Rob Dyson). - Jim Debosik photo

The paved, mildly banked 5/8-mile track delivered as the perfect alternative as it provided great sight lines, and the track width offered many drivers opportunities for passing in a safe manner. Along with the recent upgrades to the track and the hospitality the track gave to the club, many were pleasantly surprised how smoothly the event went.

Thursday morning saw that many of the entrants had already arrived the evening prior as the pit and paddock quickly filled with gorgeous racing cars, some making their initial appearance. The expectant summer Indiana heat was felt by late morning as the driver's meeting was held at the north end of the pits. Tempered by partly cloudy skies and a nice breeze, opening remarks by Club President, Tedd Zamjahn, and further instructions by Board Member Bill Hoff reminded drivers about the new track, traffic patterns, speed limits, and most of all, courteous on-track driving. This year, the fast and slow sessions were extended to 30-minutes ending at the top and bottom of the hour.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum brought four cars, all "500" winners. The gold 1928 "Louis Meyer" Miller made its triumphant return to the Miller event after its 2019 appearance as well as the 1947-48 winner Blue Crown Special, 1952 Agajanian Special and the 1957-58 "500" winner, the Belond "laydown" roadster. It was a nice surprise to see how many laps they made and the many photo opportunities they generated.

Chairman emeritus, Dana Mecum brought his squadron of immaculate racing vehicles including a pair of Millers, the 122 Miller – the Tommy Milton Indy 500 winning 1923 HSC Special, along with the 1931 two-seat Miller V16 "Speedster." The 1937 Thorne Sparks "Big Six" along with his proclaimed favorite is the iconic blue Gilmore Special made famous by the legendary driver Rex Mays have been welcomed stalwarts at the Miller Meet for many years. Added this year was the iconic 1904 Barney Oldfield

Peerless Green Dragon which thrilled many state fair crowds across America during the halcyon pre-war years. The 1907 Renault A135 7.5L "Vanderbilt Racer" is also quite the key catcher too.

It can't be a "Miller Event" without Miller race cars. Thanks to Tom Barbour of Colorado and Rob Dyson of New York for their tremendous rear-wheel drive cars. Let's not forget Charles Davis and Bill Hoff of Illinois along with Ohio's Bob McConnell for bringing their beautifully prepared Harry Miller race cars. Brent Castle's 1921 Miller-Durant Spl. is always head turner. L.A.'s Bobby Green was back with his 1930 Ralph DePalma Miller, his passion for the event is tremendous. Bill Miller's 1938 FWD Miller was another unique and appreciated entry. We look forward to Jeff Decker's Miller-Ford which made an appearance this year. It is currently under restoration we hope to see it on the track soon.

Both Gary Runyon of nearby Noblesville, IN and Mick Anderson of New Richmond, WI brought several entries. Anderson's trio of cars included several fine replica Indianapolis roadsters including an Offenhauser-powered 1961 Milwaukee-based Leader Card Racers 'Johnny Boyd' roadster making many laps. Runyon's impressive lineup included several new cars and some very familiar to previous

David Uihlein Weather

Due to a scheduling conflict with IRP, this year's HMC event was held on Thursday and Friday. For the past ten years this author has written about "David Uihlein weather" in which the Miller Meet has only lost a total of four hours of track time over the last 28 events. In Indianapolis on Saturday morning weather provided us with heavy rains which washed out the drag racing scheduled for that day.



The 1957 Belond Exhaust Special that Sam Hanks drove to victory at Indianapolis was also driven to victory the following year by Jimmy Bryan. Even though the car is restored to its '57 configuration, it still has the Bryan's postrace victory cigars and holders used in 1958. - Jim Debosik photo

attendees. The Kurtis 4000 former Ed Elisian driven car was popular with many railbirds along with Brock Yates commissioned 1956 Novi replica which made its return after a few years.

Tom Malloy was unable to attend but sent his fine 1909 Locomobile Model I roadster. Eric Anderson's 1932 Chrysler Riverside Spl. and Jim Mills' 1932 Hupp Comet Snowberger Indy Car was once again making numerous laps. Joe Freeman's entries included the 1960 Joe Hunt Spl. Watson / Ewing roadster, the upright Offy-powered John Fray Spl. and his Hemi-powered Kurtis 500A roadster. Bob Sirna and his 1958 D/A Lubricant Kurtis 500H was also entered.

Several interesting Offenhauser-powered Indianapolis roadsters representatives included the previously mentioned Leader Card Special of Mick Anderson, Chuck Jones and his 1962 Bill Forbes Special, Florida's Bruce Linsmeyer 1962 Leader Card Special and Bob Receveur of Tennessee and his 1961 Foyt Bowes Seal Fast Special. Other roadsters that enjoyed track time included those of Mike Bontreger, Dr. Robert Dicks, Duree LeClaire and Ken Muller.

Its always nice to see Mike Lynn, Carl Schultz / Tom McGriff whose entries are regulars. The Club recognizes Scott Larson, Robert Lederer Keith Majka Sr., Lou Natenshon, Steve Snyder and John Ullrich for their outstanding entries too.

Herb Lederer once again staked his flag as the most experienced entrant for the 27th time. His light-blue Dayton Steel Spl. is an excellent example of the pre-roadster era of the late-1940's and early 1950's. Dana Mecum is second in Miller Meet entries with 23, his exceptional fleet of race cars provided some club members a chance of a lifetime driving a car born by exceptional workmanship and many consider a work of art. Although unable to attend in person, Joe Freeman entered a trio of cars for the 21st time. We salute the trio as pillars of the Harry Miller Club.

The move to Indianapolis offered a unique opportunity for several social events. A welcome party and barbeque kicked off Wednesday

evening in Brownsburg at Duman's Turn 4 Restorations partnered with the Vintage Indy organization. We appreciate Rick Duman and Mike Lashmett for their hospitality. The Dallara facility on Main Street in Speedway provided a unique dinner experience and atmosphere that had accomplished driver and motorsports ambassador Lyn St. James as featured speaker. A late Friday afternoon / early evening open house at Ray Skillman's exceptional private museum in Greenwood amazed many with the variety and quality of the collection. Ray's genuine hospitality and enthusiasm for the event was a welcome addition.

The Miller Meet always delivers one of its most treasured customs: track time. "There was an inordinate amount of track time," Mike Lashmett mentioned in an interview to Vintage Motorsport. "They did 30-minute sessions which were longer than usual and they kept it moving the whole day. It was phenomenal. It was a huge privilege to drive a few cars I'd never driven before. Overall, just a spectacular event." It is the track time, more than any other vintage event, that has members coming back year after year. – Steve Zautke

Don't Forget to Pay Your Dues!

Many of you paid your dues in conjunction with our 2023 annual event but if you haven't paid yet, this will be your last newsletter. The club's financial support is provided by our sponsors and member dues so don't forget to remit your \$50 membership fee to the address on the back page of the newsletter.

WI State Fair/MKE Mile



Track improvements included replacing expired components of the existing barrier impact wall system and installing new energy absorbing sand barrels. Repairs to concrete bases of the existing outer catch fence system were completed as well repainting of walls, victory lane and billboards. Photos courtesy of Scott Krueger and Bob Tretow

The Milwaukee Mile has been undergoing a substantial upgrade and improvements as it strives to regain its presence on the national motorsports stage. Phase one of three has recently been completed. It was a \$3M investment that prepped the racetrack for NASCAR's successful return that occurred the weekend of Aug. 26-27th, 2023.

Specific areas of repair/improvement include:

- Replacing expired components of the existing barrier impact wall system
- Installing new stretches of barrier impact wall
- Replacing existing turf with asphalt
- Modifications to existing pedestrian and vehicle gates
- Installing new energy absorbing sand barrels
- Repairing concrete bases of the existing outer catch fence system

Earlier this year the State of Wisconsin Building Commission

officially approved a second phase of repairs/improvements racetrack.

As part of a separate Wisconsin State Fair Park improvement project that was approved the bleacher sections WW and XX outside of turn 4 will be removed prior to the 2024 race season.

The "North Point Improvements" project will focus on upgrading the north end of Grandstand Avenue for use during the annual State Fair and non-fair events. Removal of the two bleacher sections as part of this project will allow Grandstand Avenue to be widened at a pinch point outside of the Agricultural Coliseum. The area formerly occupied by the bleachers will be paved with asphalt for parking during non-fair events, which also allows flexibility in how the space is used during future race weekends.

The removal of Sections WW and XX mark the first time that permanent seating has been removed since 2016. Several bleacher sections were removed over the last few years. Permanent seating capacity following the removal of the latest two sections will remain more than 32,000.

This also clears the way for temporary suites to be installed on race weekend in the north end of the grandstands. Suites that may be used would be like those seen at Iowa Speedway earlier this year and have been used at the Miami Grand Prix and in the future at the upcoming Las Vegas Grand Prix Formula One rounds.

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Message From Club President – Tedd Zamjahn

Hello fellow Harry Miller Club Members

Looking back on the Indianapolis Raceway Park Meet, although it was fun and enjoyable to be in Indianapolis, I think we can all agree the Milwaukee Mile is home. The people at IRP went out of their way to accommodate us with the facility they had. Our guest speaker, Lyn St. James, was very entertaining and fun to have with us. Those of you who attended the Wednesday night barbeque at Turn 4 Restoration may have seen Al Unser Jr. visiting us, and he also came to the track on Thursday. The weather definitely cooperated! Those of you who stayed over until Saturday know how lucky we were with the weather when a deluge of rain came on Saturday morning.

The highlight of the event for me was the four Indianapolis 500 winners the museum brought and ran at our event. Thank you Jason Vansickle and your crew of people for making this happen.

Our club's administrative director, Carrol Jensen, has been in contact with the people who run the Milwaukee Mile and I'm pleased to announce we are planning to return in 2024. Due to the unknown construction dates, we can not commit to dates but most likely looking at Friday June 21 and Saturday June 22, 2024. We are working closely with the track and as soon as we have the dates locked, we will let you know (all the more reason to provide us your email address as requested on the cover page). I think we can all agree it will be good to be back at the Milwaukee Mile.

I want to take a minute to welcome Ed Dalton onto the Harry Miller Club board. You all know Ed and his involvement in our event is long standing and he is eager to be of assistance.

Enjoy the rest of your season with additional car activities.

Tedd Zamjahn

Have You Considered Club Sponsorship?

The Miller Club appreciates all of the support provided over the years to help sustain our annual event. This year's location in Indianapolis is a little more expensive than normal and we would appreciate any additional support. 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

**Full page ad in Miller Event Programs
3 newsletters and link on Miller Website

Associate Sponsorship - \$2,000

** ½ page ad in Miller Event Programs
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

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Ray Crawford - WWII Ace and Indianapolis 500 Driver

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 1956 saw the cars of Ray Crawford and Sam Hanks that featured almost identical paint schemes. Crawford ran #49 and Hanks was in the #4. Crawford added the crash test symbol to the front of his car, partially as a joke and partially to help tell the two cars apart. Hanks and Crawford were buddies at the track and later in the life too.

During World War II, Crawford became a U.S. Army Air Forces ACE, while flying P-38 Lightnings in the Pacific theatre, he was credited with shooting down 6 enemy aircraft in aerial combat. After the war he gained fame by winning the 1954 Carrera Panamericana Road Race and drove in the Indianapolis 500 in 1955 and 1956.

Crawford crashed on lap 49 when he thought he could pass Johnny Boyd and his smoking engine. As he pulled up "for the kill" Boyd's engine blew spewing oil causing Crawford to spin and crash into the inside guardrail, he was uninjured. Serious injuries received during a crash in the 1959 Indianapolis 500 curtailed Crawford's driving career.



Color photo courtesy of Bob Gates. B&W photos courtesy of the IMS Collection

Harry Miller Quits Racing – To Build Stock Cars – Part 1

The Los Angeles Times carried this startling story on December 16, 1923.

"MILLER TO QUIT SPEED CAR FIELD

Builds fastest buggies in the world, but market is too limited

Harry Miller, builder of the world's fastest racing car, is about to retire from the field in which he has reaped unparalleled success. Lack of a market is given as Miller's reason for retirement. He is completing four new cars in his Long Beach-Boulevard plant at the present time, and these will mark the wind-up. One is for an unnamed purchaser and the other three will go on the stock shelves.

Miller's motors for the past two years have swept the boards. Every race in the United States this year was won by a car powered by a Miller motor. The same was true last year with two exceptions, Bordino winning a heat race at Beverly Hills and another at Cotati. But the racing car market is limited, and now that all the boys are supplied with 122-cubic inch cars Miller is turning to other fields.

The home-bred engineer has been commissioned by Cliff Durant to build three 183-cubic inch engines and shortly after the first of the year he is to jog East with these products under his arm, and they are to be put in stock cars. It is broadly hinted that Miller is to become an advisory engineer for the huge Durant factories, but neither he nor anyone connected with the Durant interests has made any announcement to that effect.

However, Miller is not to be lost entirely to the speed bowl sport. He has three drivers bearing his colors entered in the Indianapolis race next year – Jimmy Murphy, Ralph de Palma and Bennett Hill."

Even more remarkable was that this was but one announcement in a series of Miller's new-venture announcements in 1923. It was a lost story discovered in my twelve-year search for the "...special road chassis designed for the previously mentioned 151 cu. in. version of the 122 engine. It had a much more massive radiator and grill shell than the racing cars and a cast aluminum dashboard-cum-firewall assembly. So far as is known, it was never built; more's the pity." The Miller Dynasty (Dees, 1994, p. 122)

It begins on July 1, 1923, with this LA Times headline.

"Harry Miller to Build Vertical Eight Car

STOCK MODEL IS UNDER WAY – Engine to be Known as the Vertical Eight – Body Designs are to be of the Classiest – Guarantee Will be Good for a Whole Year

Harry A Miller, automotive genius of Los Angeles and builder and designer of the world-beating eight-in-a-row racing cars... has begun work of production on a stock motor car which will be powered with a 183-cubic-inch speedway engine.

It will be known as the "Miller Vertical Eight" and will sell from \$10,000 to \$20,000 and will be produced here in the Miller Engine Works at East Adams and Long Beach Avenue and – actually custom-built – not more than twenty-five will be made per year. The first one will probably be finished and delivered not sooner than January 1, 1924.

SECRET IS OUT

This is the announcement made here yesterday by Mr. Miller who has had the plan in contemplation for some time and who, he states, actually had designs drawn for bodies before he left for Indianapolis in May. With the exception of a few personal friends, however, none knew that he purposed entering the stock-car manufacturing business.

Designs for the bodies – both open and closed models – have been drawn and submitted by the Walter M Murphy coach-building works of Los Angeles and Pasadena. This company, it is stated, will be given contracts for some of the first bodies.

The engines of the cars will not, as in the usual type of stock car be patterned after racing motors, merely be of that "type" Mr. Miller says, but they will be precisely like the famous 183-inch motors which were used in speedway nonstock machines prior to the introduction of the present 122-inch displacement babies.

CLASS CAR

'This car will be a strictly a 'class car' and the bodies will be literally custom-built in that orders placed ahead by buyers will be filled to their own specifications,' Mr. Miller said today. 'We already have a number of orders for such a car and I would get into production sooner where I not planning to go to Europe for fall races in Italy and Spain just before the big Thanksgiving Day race year.

The car will be absolutely guaranteed for one year's performance was at cost for any repairs or adjustments. This warranty will hold good the same as that of some of the finer foreign cars, and the owner's first-year expenses will be limited to tires, oil and gasoline. It will have three speeds forward and, while I am not prepared to give out gear ratios, I can say that the powerful engine and relatively lightweight body – about 3000 pounds – will give it a speed between 80 and 90 mph on high gear.'

Later Mr. Miller said he plans to put out a car just half that size – a popular priced vehicle of four cylinders and 91 cubic-inch displacement. It will have a wheelbase of but 100 inches and will make, he anticipates, between 40 and 50 miles to the gallon of gasoline. The production of this also will be limited. He expects to price the car about \$2000 for closed models and less for open types."

In the next newsletter, Part 2 will present more announcements, specifications, drawings of the chassis, and the name for this new venture.

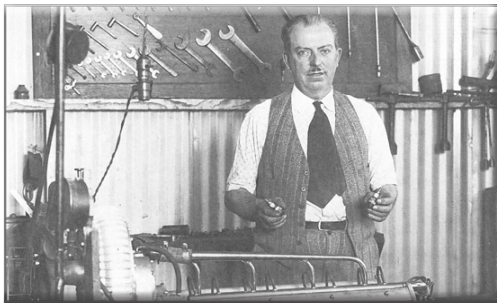
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We are back to Milwaukee at the Milwaukee Mile Exact dates TBD



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 1920s, 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
Big Bend, WI 53103**

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 414-403-7697. The fee for new members and renewal, is \$50 US and \$60 Canada.

Harry A. Miller Club Board of Directors

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Bill Hoff
Carrol Jensen
Tom Malloy
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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 15, 2023.