



Racers At Rest

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Under the Auspices of the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame - Knoxville, Iowa -

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MUSEUM LAUNCHES "RACERS AT REST" PROJECT

KNOXVILLE, IOWA (January 20, 2011) - The National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum Foundation is pleased to announce the launching of the "Racers at Rest" project to place markers on the unmarked graves of open-wheeled race drivers who have perished in racing crashes.

In the course of the research for "Buzz" Rose's book, *Racers at Rest*, there have been 31 drivers found to have been buried in unmarked graves. The "Racers at Rest" project is being initiated to help resolve this situation.

The National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum Foundation, Inc., will be administrating the overall project, while the day-to-day coordination will be done by the following volunteers: Steve Estes of Troy, Ohio (937-339-2784), Don Tash of Phoenix, Arizona (602-791-3983), Mike Thompson of Dayton, Ohio (937-219-5851), and Jim Thurman of

Palmdale, California (jim.thurman@att.net). All funds will be held in a restricted bank account by the 501(c)(3) non-profit museum foundation until payment for the markers is required.

All donations are to be sent to the National Sprint Car Museum, P.O. Box 542, Knoxville, Iowa 50138, and should be clearly noted in the memo that the restricted donation is for the "Racers at Rest" project.

Those individuals interested in the "Racers at Rest" project, or those with questions, are encouraged to contact one of the above-mentioned volunteer coordinators, or museum curator Tom Schmech at ttschmeh@sprintcarhof.com.

Note: Since this press release was distributed, four more open wheel drivers who died behind the wheel have been identified. Their names have been added to the project bringing the total to 35.

Racers At Rest is published from time to time and is available free of charge as a digital newsletter.

To subscribe, send an email request to racersatrest@gmail.com.

Racers At Rest welcomes your comments, articles, and photographs. Send submittals, questions or comments to racersatrest@gmail.com or by post to the Editor.

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COMMITTEE PROCESS EXPLAINED

Thirty-five drivers have unmarked graves. How will the volunteer committee decide in what order those drivers will receive markers?

There are two major variables in the decision process. The first is the level of difficulty we encounter in getting permission from each cemetery to place a marker. Cemetery policies vary widely. Some cemeteries seem to have little regard for when or where markers are placed or who places them. At the other end of the spectrum are cemeteries that

require a majority of the surviving relatives approve any marker or alteration to the gravesite.

The second variable is the cost of the marker itself. Here again, the cemetery requirements vary. Some cemeteries require that markers be purchased from their own supplier so that all markers are uniform.

Our intent is to place the markers as soon as the donations on hand match a particular marker cost and permission is received from that cemetery.

Honoring Our Racing Heroes in their Eternal Slumber

DRIVERS WITHOUT GRAVE MARKERS ARE IDENTIFIED

After careful research, we've recently added four more racing drivers who are buried in unmarked graves. That brings the total markers required to 35. The drivers are listed on the chart below, with their date of death and the place where they took their last checkered flag.

The driver who has been deceased the longest, "T.B." Dial, was killed in 1910. Recent information indicates that T.B. is buried with the rest of the Dial family in a family plot, but the location of the plot itself has been lost to time, so it may be impossible to place a marker for Mr. Dial.

Second oldest burial is William "Billy" Carlson who died behind the wheel in 1915.

Most recently deceased is Ron Lux who came to the end of his roaring road in a sprint car in 1966.

If you have information about any of these drivers, or photos, please contact us at racersatrest@gmail.com.

DRIVER	DATE OF DEATH	PLACE OF DEATH
Flagstead, Halsten	9/4/1928	North Randall, Ohio
Carlson, William "Billy"	7/5/1915	Tacoma, Washington
Lehman, Curt	10/12/1957	Chester, Illinois
Ford, Leslie	5/3/1931	Brazil, Indiana
Shelly, Howard	9/1/1947	Yakima, Washington
Speth, Al	5/31/1953	Des Moines, Iowa
Ferch, Walter "Speedy"	7/4/1923	Milwaukee, Wisc.
Reid, Gordon	4/20/1952	Dayton, Ohio
Henderson Garnet "Bud"	5/17/1939	Langhorne, PA.
Eldridge, Lynn	10/15/30	Los Angeles, Calif.
Lafon Clyde	8/20/1927	Akron, OH. Boards
Heisler, Bill	5/15/1932	Fresno, Calif.
Farmer, Earl	2/1/1931	Los Angeles, Calif.
Lux, Ron	7/16/1966	Tulsa, Okla.
Crane, Harvey	10/16/1920	Cincinnati, OH.
Russo, Joe	6/9/1934	Langhorne, Penn.
Baker Oscar "Kenny"	7/28/1935	Flagstaff, AZ.
Heid, Matt	6/29/49	Owosso, Mi.
Winn, Billy	8/20/1938	Springfield, Ill.
Craft, Jimmy	2/3/1924	Los Angeles, Calif.
Pettit William	7/23/1949	Council Bluffs, IA.
Clark, Loren "Red"	6/13/1935	Los Angeles, Calif.
Enterline Garner "Slim"	10/8/1938	Wilson, N.C.
Spanglo Charles "Dutch"	7/19/1925	Champaign, ILL.
Brown, Walt	7/29/1951	Williamsgrove, Penn.
Knox Francis Marion "F.M."	6/11/1933	Amarillo, TX.
Cipelle Steven "Dutch"	8/18/1939	Hays, KS.
Miller, Lee	9/11/1938	Middletown, Missouri
Lockwood, James "Speedy"	3/1/1935	Los Angeles, Calif.
Bray, Ray C.	9/1/1941	Oakland, Ca.
Harris Lawson	9/20/1939	Indianapolis Speedway
Van Steenberg Harry "Van"	8/11/1925	Kalamazoo, MI.
Maben Curtis "Curly"	8/21/1954	New Westminster, BC, Canada
Dial "T.B."	7/30/1910	Atlanta, GA.
Brucks Sherman	9/9/1928	Hamilton, OH.

Honoring Our Racing Heroes in their Eternal Slumber

PROFILE: LOREN "RED" CLARK

Loren "Red" Clark was California-born, but lived most of his life in Texas, and that's where he was first drawn to the racing game. He was also a pilot who wasn't afraid of taking a risk here or there, and that's what the Hollywood movie industry was looking for in the early 1930s. It was that combination of flying and racing that pulled Red back to Los Angeles.

He was soon doing stunt flying for the movies and spending his free time at the fabled Legion Ascot Speedway. He started driving at Legion Ascot during the 1933 season and did well enough to finish seventh in the 1934 Pacific Coast Championship.

On the afternoon of June 12, 1935, Red was at Legion Ascot prac-

ticing. For reasons that have been lost to time, his racer shed a wheel and went out of control. Clark smashed through the guardrail and down the embankment, and when the machine finally came to a halt rescuers quickly arrived and dragged the driver to safety.

At the hospital doctors determined that Clark had suffered a broken leg and unknown internal injuries, but was expected to survive. The doctors were wrong. Loren "Red" Clark died the evening of June 13, 1935.

He left behind a wife and three small children.

His grave remains, 76 years after his death, unmarked.

DRIVERS LINKED

In what can only be described as an amazing coincidence, two of our 35 drivers remain connected even in death.

When driver Joe Russo was critically injured during a race at Langhorne Speedway in 1934, his bride of five months, Helene Yockey, was at his side at the hospital when he died.

Four years later in 1938 when driver Billy Winn died from injuries during a AAA big car race at the Illinois State Fairgrounds he left behind a widow, Helene Yockey Russo Winn, the girl he'd married after her first husband, Joe, was killed in a race car!

Both drivers' graves remain, after more than 70 years, unmarked.

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

The world's only museum dedicated to preserving the history of "big car" and sprint car racing is located in Knoxville, Iowa.

Sprint cars are small, high-powered race racers designed primarily to race on short dirt or paved tracks. Sprint cars have a high power-to-weight ratio making sprint car racing exciting with speeds in excess of 140 MPH on some tracks.

This speed also makes it very dangerous, though improved safety measures have greatly improved a driver's chances of cheating injury or death.

In the early days of open-wheel racing drivers faced almost

certain injury or death if they continued in the game long enough. Drivers raced without helmets or seatbelts and fire was a constant threat.

Seat belts were actually seen as a hazard. If the driver was strapped into a race car and it rolled over it would likely crush the driver. The cars had no roll bars and drivers hoped to be thrown clear in order to survive a crash. As you might imagine, many drivers died as a result of being thrown out of their racers.

The National Sprint Car Museum and Hall of Fame is located behind Turn 2 of the famous Knoxville Raceway. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from Noon to 5 p.m. on weekends. The hours

change beginning in April of each year.

Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and seniors (over 60) and children under 5 are admitted free. The museum also offers many classes of membership beginning at \$25 a year and members are admitted to the museum free. Members also receive discounts at the museum store and various other benefits.

For more information, visit www.sprintcarhof.com or call (641) 842-6176.



BLACK SUNDAY REMEMBERED

Sunday, July 29, 1951 has gone down in auto racing history as “Black Sunday.” On that day, three drivers died on two separate tracks within hours of each other, and all were driving open-wheel cars in AAA-sanctioned events.

At Winchester Speedway in Winchester, Indiana, driver Cecil Green died when he lost control of his race car during a qualifying attempt and plunged through the railing at the top of the high-banked track’s first turn.

Qualifying was delayed while the wreckage was cleared and Cecil Green died on his way to the hospital.

When qualifying resumed,

the very next driver on the track, Bill Mackey, lost control of his car in the same place that had proved the undoing of Green, with the same results. Mackey’s car vaulted the wall in the first turn and landed in the field beyond. Mackey was dead.

Several hundreds of miles away, at Williams Grove Speedway in Pennsylvania, New York resident Walt Brown was warming up his Wetteroth Offenhauser “Jack Robbins Special” when his car suddenly started a series of slow tumbles in the second turn. Brown was pulled from the wreckage but died soon after he arrived at local Carlisle Hospital. Brown was 39 years old.

Walt Brown’s grave remains, 60 years after his tragic death, unmarked.

NOT ONE PENNY....

Not one penny.

That’s how much your donation to the “Racers at Rest” will be reduced by administrative fees or overhead!

Every dollar you donate will go directly towards placing a marker on the grave of one of the 35 open-wheel drivers whose graves are currently unmarked.

All Racers at Rest Committee labor and related fund raising costs (including the cost of this newsletter) are being donated.

So why not take a moment right now and write out a check for whatever amount you think appropriate and send it to the National Sprint Car Museum. You’ll find the address elsewhere in this issue of *Racers at Rest*. And don’t forget to write “Racers at Rest” on the memo line!

PROFILE: HARVEY CRANE

Few patrons of Fort Wayne, Indiana’s Strand Theater could have imagined that the nice young man playing in the orchestra spent his free time behind the wheel of a roaring race car, but that’s exactly what fresh-faced Harvey Crane did, and had been doing since sometime around 1918.

In the 1920 season he managed to get in races at Winchester, Indiana, and Sandusky, Ohio, and had raced in the nine-day meet in Elyria and Hicksville, Ohio. Now, just two weeks after competing at the high-banked Fort Wayne track near his home, Crane found his way to the event at the Carthage County Fairgrounds, now known as the Cincinnati Fairgrounds.

The track was a dusty dirt bowl with extremely sharp turns. Allegedly, Crane had already been warned by a fellow Fort Wayne race driver, Ralph Ormsby, that Crane’s car was not up to the challenge of 200 laps of the speedway. If there was such a warning, Crane ignored it.

There were only a dozen cars in the 200 lap grind and with the dust and the approach of darkness it’s not surprising that there was a crash on the fourteenth lap involving six racers.

Walt Higler hit his brakes and Hugh Rife following close behind rammed Higler’s car and then smashed into the wall. Crane was

not far behind and was unable to stop before smashing into the wreckage of Higler’s and Rife’s machines. Carl Summers crashed behind Crane and Summers was thrown over the fence.

Both Crane and Summers were rushed to Cincinnati’s General Hospital. Summers wasn’t badly injured. Harvey Crane, orchestra musician and race car driver, died the same day, leaving a wife and four-year-old daughter.

Harvey Crane’s grave remains, 91 years after his death, unmarked.



CURIOSITY LEADS TO RESEARCH, PROJECT

What began as simple curiosity for long-time racers Don Tash and Steve Estes turned into a major research effort, and that in turn has become the Racers at Rest project.

While assisting Buzz Rose with the research for his latest book, *Racers at Rest*, Tash and Estes helped identify over 1500 open-wheel drivers who had been killed behind the wheel of race cars. Part of that effort involved locating the final resting places for all 1500+ deceased racers.

The discovery that at least

thirty-five drivers lay in unmarked graves surprised and dismayed Tash and Estes.

“It’s a shame,” Don Tash noted. “But a lot of these drivers left the world with little or nothing in the bank and their families simply couldn’t afford to pay for a proper grave marker.”

The Racers at Rest project of the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame hopes that in time and with the generosity of the racing community these drivers will finally get this small recognition that they so deserve.

THINKING OF DONATING?

Thinking of donating to the Racers at Rest project? We need every dollar bill that you spare!

Mail your donation to National Sprint Car Museum, P.O. Box 542, Knoxville, Iowa 50138, and make your check payable to the “National Sprint Car Museum.”

In order for your donation to go to the Racers at Rest project, you must write “Racers at Rest” on the memo line of the check.

Thank you in advance for your kind support of this very worthy project!

PROFILE: WILLIAM “BILLY” CARLSON

(Right) Billy Carlson and his riding mechanic in #10 lead a closing Ralph DePalma in the 1914 Vanderbilt Cup race in Santa Monica, California. DePalma in his Schroeder-Mercedes was the eventual winner of the contest.
-- Library of Congress photo.



William Henry “Billy” Carlson wheeled huge Maxwell race cars at the dawn of auto racing, a time of riding mechanics and spindly wire wheels and speedways built of wood. On the Fourth of July, 1915, Carlson and his riding mechanic, Paul Frantzen, took the green flag for the 250-mile AAA National Championship race on the 2-mile high-banked board track in Tacoma, Washington. Late in the race, with the checkered flag just miles away, the Maxwell blew a tire. Carlson lost control and the car rocketed off the top of the track. Frantzen died in the accident; Carlson was rushed to a local hospital but died soon after arrival. He was 25 years old.

Billy Carlson’s grave remains, 96 years after his death, unmarked.