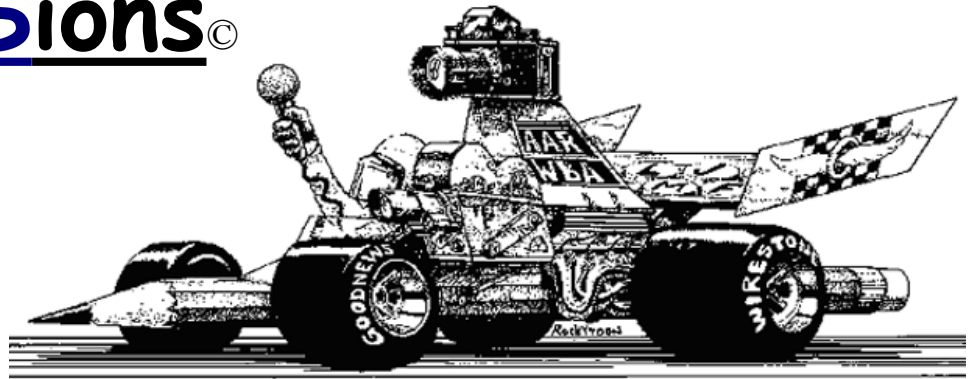


ImpRESSIONs[©]



The Official Newsletter Of The American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association

Feb. 2006



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AARWBA Announces Ombudsman Program; Process Will Help Members With Work Concerns Valvoline Is Founding Underwriter

Inside this issue:

- About the new Ombudsman program
- FORD Contest winners announced
- News & Notes from members



SAVE THE DATE: The next All-America Team dinner will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2007, in the main ballroom of the Hyatt in Indianapolis. Details to follow.

American Auto Racing Writers & Broadcasters Association, Inc. (www.aarwba.org)
"Dedicated To Increasing Media Coverage of Motor Sports"

AARWBA Announces Ombudsman Program; Process Will Help Members With Work Concerns

Valvoline Is Founding Underwriter



Jim Rocco, Valvoline Designated Team Owner for Valvoline Evernham Racing (left), displays Valvoline's founding underwriter check for the AARWBA Ombudsman Fund with VPs Mike Harris and Lewis Franck and Valvoline Dodge team owner Ray Evernham.

Building on the member-friendly initiatives created during the 50th Anniversary Celebration, AARWBA's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the new Ombudsman program, designed to assist media and the motorsports industry with an intermediary and a common-sense process to resolve legitimate concerns regarding work issues.

This important service places AARWBA in a similar position with respected and effective organizations such as the Baseball Writers Association of America, Pro Football Writers Association and the Professional Hockey Writers Association in terms of providing members with a process to work out legitimate concerns. Please refer to the information below for the formal Mission Statement and specific details on how the Ombudsman process will work. The Ombudsman is operational effective immediately.

AARWBA thanks Valvoline, which has stepped forward as the founding underwriter of the Ombudsman program. Jim Rocco,

Valvoline Designated Team Owner for Valvoline Evernham Racing, issued the following statement during the NASCAR Media Tour: "Valvoline has been involved in racing since the first race in North America -- in Chicago in 1895. J. Frank Duryea was the winning driver and he won with Valvoline. We've been at the races with the nation's motorsports media for almost as long. Instead of giving each of you a jacket or diecast -- which I'm sure you have plenty of -- we want to do something a bit more meaningful. Valvoline will donate to AARWBA for the establishment of its Ombudsman Fund. The fund will be administered by AARWBA for media with a legitimate 'working' problem with a driver, owner, team, track or sanctioning group who need advocacy. It is not a legal fund, but more an arbitration or mediation mechanism which they feel is needed to resolve issues quietly and professionally. Valvoline is proud to be Founding Underwriter of this fund for racing journalists."

The AARWBA Ombudsman

Mission Statement: "To provide AARWBA members who have legitimate concerns (regarding issues such as credentials, access, and treatment by drivers, owners, officials, track and sanctioning organization personnel and other media sources), which affect their ability to perform their work assignments, an intermediary through which to address and attempt to resolve those concerns."

Process: An AARWBA member who believes he/she has a legitimate concern to bring to the AARWBA Ombudsman will follow this process:

...continued on next page



Shav Glick Retirement Event Planned

California Speedway plans to host a reception in honor of Shav Glick's retirement. Here is the information we have received from AARWBA friend Dennis Bickmeier:

Date: Thursday, February 23 (start of NASCAR weekend) **Time:** 6:30 p.m.

Location: Party Zone Tent, inside the tunnel in suite parking lot.

(Enter through the tunnel, turn right and it's the first and only tent in the suite lots to the right). Guests are asked to enter through Gate 6 off of San Bernardino Ave., turn left toward the tunnel by the Credential Building.

For more information: www.californiaspeedway.com/retirement

PLEASE NOTE: This information is for media/PR reps use only and not for public distribution. The party is private and not open to the general public.

AARWBA Ombudsman Program

1. The member will contact his/her appropriate regional Vice President, or a Vice President in attendance at the event.
2. The Vice President will review the situation and will have full discretion to determine if the matter falls under the Ombudsman Mission Statement. If so, the VP will attempt to quickly resolve the issue or achieve a reasonable settlement.
3. The VP will report back to the AARWBA Board. If necessary, the VP may request the President to activate the full Ombudsman Committee. The Committee will consist of three persons:
 - a) The VP who first reviewed the matter, who will lead the Committee;
 - b) A person, appointed by the President, who may have special knowledge of, or expertise in, the area of concern;
 - c) Michael Knight, who has experience on both the media and PR side of the motorsports industry, will serve as a permanent member of the Committee.
 - d) If, for any reason, it is deemed inappropriate for any Committee member to serve, the President will appoint a replacement.
4. The Committee will have complete authority from AARWBA to attempt to bring the member's concern to the best obtainable resolution.
5. The appropriate regional VP will keep the member informed of developments throughout the process. The Committee's on-going work activities will be considered "confidential" and not for the knowledge of anyone beyond the immediate parties and the AARWBA Board.
6. The Committee, upon completion of its work, will report back to the AARWBA Board. The Committee will then communicate its final report to all involved parties. The Committee will recommend to the Board what, if anything, to report to the full membership via the AARWBA newsletter. The Board will have the final decision on what information, if any, to make public.

AARWBA Ombudsman Contacts:

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Eastern Vice President: Lewis Franck, lfranck@ix.netcom.com

Southern Vice President: Mike Harris, msharris@ap.org

Midwest Vice President: Ron Lemasters, rlemasters14@comcast.net

Western Vice President: Susan Wade, susanw7754@aol.com

Secretary-Treasurer: Dr. George Peters, BarJean@prodigy.net

Ombudsman Committee Member: Michael Knight, SpinDoctor500@aol.com



David Poole of the *Charlotte Observer* wrote the following on January 24:
“Instead of giving ‘gifts’ to media tour members, Valvoline contributed \$2,500 to a writers’ group fund to hire an ombudsman to help members mediate issues that arise in their jobs. Every sponsor should use that as an example. Instead of handing out hats, computer bags or other freebies, donate the amount that would have been spent to an appropriate charity. Any tour participant who complains should not be invited back next year, because if you’re here to pick up trinkets you’re not here for the right reasons.”

FORD Motorsports Journalism Award Of Excellence Winners Announced!

1st Place:

Article Title: The Biff (Greg Bliffle)
by Dick Berggren, *Speedway Illustrated*.

2nd Place:

Article Title: Dear Old Dad (John Force)
by Susan Wade, *National Speed Sport News*.

3rd Place:

Article Title: Quarter Mile Thunder (Eric Medlen)
by Norm Froscher, *Racing Milestones*.



Berggren receives a cash prize of \$1,000 along with a framed artwork of Henry Ford's "Sweepstakes" race car. Wade and Froscher receive a gift package from Ford Racing.

AARWBA thanks Ford for sponsoring this contest in support of the 50th Anniversary Celebration. AARWBA friend Kevin Kennedy says Ford will offer this contest again. Watch for details in the newsletter later this year.



50th
Anniversary



AARWBA 50th Event VIDEO!

Did you miss the Awards Banquet for the AARWBA 2005 Auto Racing All America Team? Well we have great news! You can watch a video of the event on the internet! Click the headline above or the 50th logo to watch the video!

Many thanks to Mike Hollander for recording the event!



IMPORTANT NOTE TO ALL AARWBA MEMBERS!

By now everyone should be able to open the newsletter when it comes via email. If you can not open it, the reason is most likely that you still don't have the Acrobat reader software on your computer. This is easily remedied! Simply click on this word "ACROBAT!" and download the file.

It will not harm your computer! It is free! It is easy to install!
Help your AARWBA to contain costs by using email to distribute our newsletter!

There Is Something You Can (And Should) Do For The AARWBA!

From Mike Hollander, AARWBA Vice-President

Newsletter Editor Andy Hartwell recently had a great idea. He's a member who didn't "know what needs to be done" to support the AARWBA and keep us growing. Well, here's a list of things for which the AARWBA needs the help of its members. If you are reading this, you are a member.

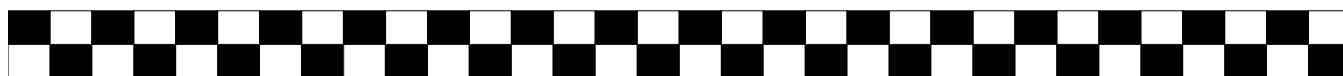
Please pick one or more items from the list that you can do to help us grow into an organization with the same kind of clout as other professional media organizations, such as the Baseball Writer's Association. If you drop us a note, together we can get the ball rolling. Write to our President, Dusty Brandel, or to me, Mike Hollander. And remember, if we all take just one item on the list, that will mean we have close to 500 people doing a little something each to build our organization's stature and membership.



Three things all of us can (and should) do:

1. Get information about AARWBA to others at each and every race you attend. If there's another reporter or photographer or P.R. rep at the race who's not yet a member, be sure they have an application. You already know why you're a member. Let the other folks know. You can print applications from the AARWBA Web Site at <http://www.aarwba.org>.
2. We need on-site help for our annual breakfast and annual Auto Racing All America Dinner. Dusty and I are both in California and we need some people to take the initiative and let each and every media outlet in Indianapolis know about our events. The number of TV stations and newspapers with AARWBA members on staff that didn't show up at the All America Banquet is embarrassing - especially when we had Mike Helton speaking at the banquet.
3. Producing and distributing flyers about the organization to all the sports reporters you know who cover any sort of racing would be great.

I know there are many more things to do, but let's see these three get done and watch the organization grow. Thanks for your support!



Member Dirato Offers Assistance With NHRA Coverage

AARWBA member Chris Dirato shares this information: "As you're quite aware, the 2006 NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series season is fast approaching. To that end, should you need any assistance as connected to U.S. Army drivers, Tony "The Sarge" Schumacher, Angelle Sampey and Antron Brown, please don't hesitate to contact me.

"Heading into the '06 campaign, Schumacher will be looking to become only the second Top Fuel driver in NHRA history to win three consecutive world championships. In Pro Stock Motorcycles, Sampey will be seeking her fourth world title, while Brown will be searching for his first crown after posting eight straight top-10 finishes in the points.

"I look forward to working with each of you as the season progresses. Chris Dirato, U.S. Army NHRA Racing PR (201) 750-3533 - office (917) 921-9070 - cell "

News & Notes

Belated Shav Comments And Special Thanks

"Due to travel, I missed submitting my thoughts on Shav Glick and his incredible career for the January newsletter. Regarding Shav, he has set a remarkable standard for all motorsports journalists to follow, and I wish him the best in his retirement, with lots of golf, good food, and an incredible life ahead".....

"I also want to compliment Mike Hollander in his new position as our National Vice-President, and Susan Wade as our Western Vice-President. Mike and Susan are both fully dedicated to the continued promotion of motorsports, and will do their usual excellent jobs.

"Kudos to Dusty, and Mike Knight on putting on the wonderful AARWBA banquet at Indianapolis. I know their staff worked equally as hard, but Dusty and Mike did a superb job of spearheading the project, and utilizing all their wonderful contacts in the motorsports and automotive industries.

"Also, kudos to Rocky Enriken, for making it much easier for us to submit our votes for the AARWBA All-America team, and giving us a concise summary of the votes every year. "

Warmest regards, Kay Presto, past Western Vice President, AARWBA

Barbara Parks

A highlight of the AARWBA 50th Anniversary Celebration came when Wally and Barbara Parks attended the January 2005 All-America Team dinner in Pomona. Wally was announced that evening as one of 12 nominees for our Newsmaker of the Half-Century award. Barbara, Wally's wife, died of cancer Jan. 25 at age 82. She was an important force in NHRA's early years and remained active to the end with the Wally Parks NHRA Motorsports Museum. AARWBA extends its sympathy to Wally and everyone at NHRA.



Wally and Barbara Parks
(Photo provided by the Wally Parks
NHRA Motorsports Museum)

Glessner To Reveal The Mysterious Power Of Airflow

Aerodynamicist and automotive enthusiast, **Paul T. Glessner**, will conduct his well regarded eight hour seminar to explain and expound on the mysterious powers of airflow over vehicles at the infamous HMS Motorsport of Peabody, Mass. It will take place March 4th, 2006, Saturday. Anyone registering before February 4th will receive a \$50 discount. Paul would be most appreciative to spread the word to friends and colleagues in that neck of the country. 24 clients attending PRI enjoyed their seminar November 30th. www.aeroseminars.com Call 562 714 6686

Note to all AARWBA Members: This is YOUR newsletter.

Your editor, **Andy Hartwell**, would love to hear from you. Write in and let him know what you are up to in the world of motorsports. We need good news content from professionals like you that we can share with all the other professionals in the AARWBA. And this newsletter is a great vehicle for announcing your recent successes with your peers! And you can even have your company or organization sponsor an issue!

Send your words and photos to ashartwell@att.net.

**For issue sponsorship information,
contact Michael Knight at spinductor500@aol.com
or our President, Dusty Brandel at aarwba@compuserve.com**

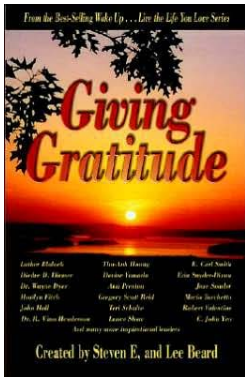
Auto Imagery to Provide Photo Coverage to NHRA.com in 2006; Selected 'Photographer of Year' by Competition Plus.com Readers

CARLSBAD, Calif., Jan. 4, 2006 - It's already been a good year for AARWBA member Richard Shute, founder of Auto Imagery's professional drag racing photographic services. Shute said that NHRA.com will partner with Auto Imagery to provide photographic coverage of the 2006 POWERade Drag Racing Series for the official website of NHRA. He also was informed that Auto Imagery was voted 'Photographer of the Year' by the readers of Competition Plus.com.

"We are very excited to be in partnership with NHRA.com," said Shute. "We are looking forward to working with (NHRA.com senior editor) Rob Geiger and having the opportunity to put together a comprehensive photo package for each NHRA race. We'll be shooting the events with a goal of providing photos that catch the eyes of the readers. We have had a good relationship with NHRA for more than 20 years and currently provide NHRA.com with Sportsman racing photo coverage during each national event."

Shute and Dave Kommel were the only photographers when Shute started the company in 1979. Auto Imagery's veteran drag racing staff now includes Bob Hesser, Ron Lewis, and Gary Nastase. These five individuals have a combined total of over 150 years of drag racing photography experience. "We are thrilled to further align ourselves with the talented team from Auto Imagery," said National Dragster editor Phil Burgess. "We've had a great working relationship for more than two decades that I'm pleased to see expanded."

The Competition Plus.com award caught Shute "totally by surprise," he said. "It's a very nice honor because it comes from the drag racing fans. It is exciting to have people recognize your efforts, especially when we weren't competing for anything, just trying to provide the best photos possible. "I think I've surrounded myself with absolutely the best photographers you can find. Their talent speaks for itself," continued Shute. "Aligning with Rick Green, Larry Sullivan and Drag Race Central was an integral part of our success, too. Working with Rick and Larry helped us get name recognition."



Presto Published To #6 Best Seller

Kay Presto, past AARWBA Western Vice-President and an award-winning book author, is published in the new "Wake Up...Live the Life You Love — Giving Gratitude" book which skyrocketed to No. 6 on the Barnes & Noble Best Seller list on January 10, 2006. Notables also published in this latest book in the successful "Wake Up" Series are Dr. Wayne Dyer, Dr. Deepak Chopra, Gregory Scott Reid and many more.

For members who would like to order a copy of this "Giving Gratitude" book from Kay, please contact Presto Productions at 909-985-3041 or e-mail: prestprod@juno.com.

George Bignotti Celebrates His 90th Birthday

Mary Mendez is the daughter of George Bignotti, a man who spent a lifetime in auto racing as a mechanic and team owner. Mary let us in on a secret recently; her dad turned 90 years old on January 12th. A surprise birthday party was held in Las Vegas and AARWBA members are invited to send George a note or a card at this address (No gifts please.):

**George Bignotti, 9413 Steeplehill Dr.,
Las Vegas, NV 89117**

George earned 87 victories during a distinguished career behind the wrenches. A. J. Foyt won 27 races in cars prepared by Bignotti while other drivers who scored wins for him included Al Unser, Gordon Johncock, Tom Sneva, Joe Leonard, Wally Dallenbach, Rodger Ward, Graham Hill and Jud Larson. He started as a race car owner in the San Francisco area and in 1954 made his debut as a crew member at Indianapolis. In 1956, teaming with co-car owner Bob Bowes, he scored his first Indy Car win in the 100-miler at the Arizona State Fairgrounds in Phoenix. George also holds the record for most victories for a chief mechanic in the Indianapolis 500-Mile Race - seven! His cars won in 1961, 1964, 1966, 1970, 1971, 1973, and 1983 driven by Foyt, Hill, Unser, Johncock and Sneva.



Standing: Rafael Perez (Maria's father), Kay Bignotti (Louie Meyer's youngest daughter, George's second ex-wife), Bob Fouts (previous owner of Earl's Performance Products), Wilma Catania (Frank's second ex-wife), Maria Perez (Mary's friend, partially visible), Maureen Fouts (Bob's wife), Jim Dilamarter (mechanic on Vel's Parnelli Jones racing team), Carol and Miles Catania (son of Frank) Sitting: Mary Mendez (daughter), George Bignotti, and Frank Catania (long time friend and was part of the team for George's first Indy 500 victory in 1961 with AJ Foyt as the driver.

Riggs Offers 2006 Classic Racing Calendar

Long time AARWBA member L. Spenser Riggs has a new Classic racing calendar out for 2006. It contains over 30 pictures, many which have never been seen in print. It sells for \$14.95 at retail but Riggs is offering it to his fellow AARWBA members for just \$10.00 each, which includes postage.

The title is: **Bud Williams' Runnin' on the Edge 2006**

The calendar is printed on glossy paper, featuring over 30 spectacular black and white photos. Drivers featured are: Vuky Sr., Hinnershitz, Horn, Mays, Foyt, McCluskey, O'Connor, Crockett, White, Daywalt, Bufkin, Warriner and many others.

If you would like a copy for yourself, or to give to friends, you can order them a the special member-only price by sending a check or money order to:

Belmont Publishing
1224 S. Belmont
Indianapolis, IN 46221-1532

Hacker New NHRA Media Relations Manager

Brian Hacker has been named media relations manager for the National Hot Rod Association, NHRA Director of Media Relations Anthony Vestal announced. Hacker, 37, comes to the NHRA with 10 years experience as an elementary school teacher. Prior to that, he worked for Brener Zwickel & Associates, a premier Los Angeles-based sports PR firm, for two years, and also worked in the publicity department for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

In his new position, Hacker will primarily provide national event media relations for the NHRA Xplod Sport Compact Racing Series and support the NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series as well as other NHRA racing programs. In addition, he will maintain relationships with national media outlets and contribute to NHRA media guides and other NHRA Communications Department publications.

AARWBA Member Updates - January 2006

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Budweiser, Bernstein Sponsorship to Be Racing's Longest

Budweiser, the leader in the U.S. premium beer category, has extended its contract with Kenny and Brandon Bernstein of the Budweiser King Racing team through 2009. This 30-year partnership eclipses Richard Petty's 29-year STP sponsorship to become the longest consecutive major team sponsorship in motorsports history.

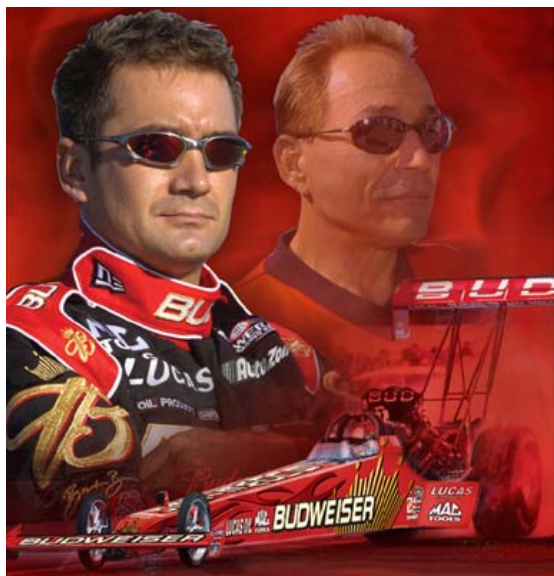


Image from
www.kennybernstein.com

The relationship began in 1980 with the sponsorship of Kenny's Funny Car, which became known as the Budweiser King Funny Car. Anheuser-Busch then further capitalized on the growing popularity of NHRA drag racing by establishing the Budweiser Shootout in 1982, a special race-within-a-race bonus event that has grown into an annual affair with a purse of more than \$147,000. The Budweiser Shootout awards the eight quickest Top Fuel drivers in the NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series and offers \$5,000 to the No. 1 qualifier in the Top Fuel racing series, in each of the 23 races.

"Kenny and Brandon have been outstanding ambassadors for Budweiser and professional drag racing for more than 25 years," said Tony Ponturo, vice president, global media and sports marketing, Anheuser-Busch, Inc. "Our longstanding and successful history with the team, as well as our status as the 'Official Beer of the NHRA' for more than 20 years, has allowed us to reach a diverse range of adult racing fans, and has been instrumental in establishing Budweiser as a leader in all forms of motorsports."

"We are thrilled with this four-year extension, and are proud of our unprecedented water mark for the longest consecutive partnership in all of motorsports," said Kenny Bernstein. "Our 30-year tenure with Budweiser says a lot for the sport of drag racing, and we are grateful for the contributions they have made to our sport."



This month's issue of **ImPRESSions** is presented by



America's Beer...America's Fastime!