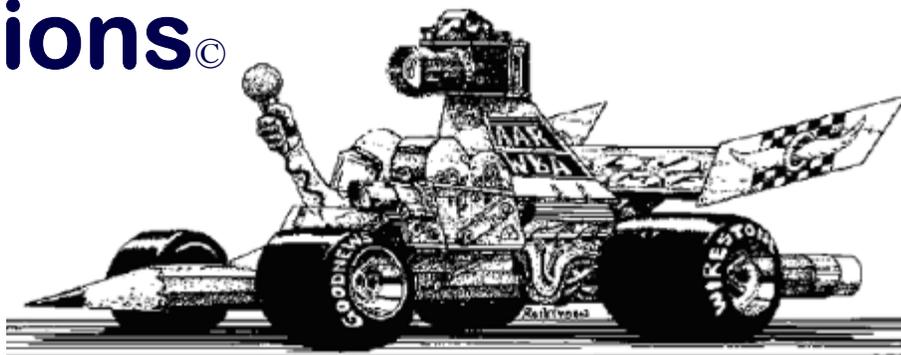


# ImPRESSIONs<sup>©</sup>



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

February 2008

Vol. 41 No. 2



**AARWBA  
Members To Vote  
On  
Champ Car  
Atlantic's  
35th Anniversary  
All-Star Team**

**Details on Page 3**

## **In This Issue:**

- Important Membership Survey - Page 2
- Vote For Champ Car Atlantic All-Star Team - Page 3
- News & Notes - Page 5
- Norm Froscher On Deke Houlgate - Page 8
- Member Spotlight - Page 9
- Valvoline Renews Ombudsman Sponsorship Page 10
- All-America Team Results - Page 11

**IMPORTANT Member Survey  
See Page 2**

# IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

**AARWBA needs your suggestions for the 2009 All-America Team ceremony presented by A1GP World Cup of Motorsport.**

**Please think about the following three questions and provide your comments.**

1. The dinner has been in Indianapolis three consecutive times. Where would you like the next ceremony to be? Back in Indy? Las Vegas? Charlotte? A California location: Long Beach? Los Angeles? Pomona? Or someplace "new" like Phoenix? New York/Northern New Jersey?
2. Specifically, what date would be best for you to attend? Keep in mind there ALWAYS will be some conflict with a race or testing and it can't be too close to the holidays.
3. Would you participate if activities were expanded, to include race shop tours or an on-track event of some sort? Would you come in a day early to be a part of such extra events?

**PLEASE RESPOND BY MARCH 1 TO:  
Dusty Brandel -- [aarwba@compuserve.com](mailto:aarwba@compuserve.com)  
Michael Knight -- [SpinDoctor500@aol.com](mailto:SpinDoctor500@aol.com)**

*And do please be specific about what you would like to see!*

---

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

**MAZDA SPEED**  
**MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

On any given weekend, there are more Mazdas on the road-race tracks of America than any other brand of vehicle. At the track, you'll see MX-5 Miata, RX-8, MAZDA3, MAZDA6, RX-7 and other vintage Mazda models competing, because every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car. In fact, the largest road-racing class in the world is Spec Miata, with more than 1,500 first - and second-generation Miatas tearing up America's racetracks, making it the most-raced production car in the world. Mazda's involvement in motorsports extends to its relationship with Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, one of the world's premier road-racing circuits, and the Skip Barber Schools for driving and racing.

## Vote Now For The Champ Car Atlantic 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All-Star Team

As announced during the inaugural Shav Glick News makers Forum at the 2008 All-America Team Ballot, all AARWBA members are invited to vote for the 10 members of the Champ Car Atlantic 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All-Star Team. Voting will begin on Monday, February 18 and will run through Friday, February 29, with the 10-member team being unveiled during the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach weekend. The Long Beach event will open the 2008 season for the Cooper Tires Presents The Champ Car Atlantic Championship Powered by Mazda.

A ballot of 25 nominees was determined by Champ Car Atlantic Managing Director Vicki O'Connor and a panel of Atlantic experts. A total of 72 drivers received at least one nomination, while only the legendary Gilles Villeneuve and Atlantic greats Jon Fogarty and A.J. Allmendinger were unanimous nominees. A full ballot with brief descriptions on the driver's Atlantic accomplishments follows.

Please select 10 drivers from this ballot and e-mail your selections to Champ Car Atlantic Communications Director Nate Siebens at [nsiebens@champcar.ws](mailto:nsiebens@champcar.ws). Votes may also be sent via Fax to (317-536-1093). NOTE: Please specify if you're voting for the brother or the son of Gilles Villeneuve if you're only voting for one of the drivers named Jacques Villeneuve.

Your participation in this program is greatly appreciated, and the Champ Car Atlantic Championship sincerely hopes that you can join us in Long Beach as we unveil the Champ Car Atlantic 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All-Star Team. Details on the unveiling will follow at a later time.

### Champ Car Atlantic 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All-Star Team Nominees (In Alphabetical Order)

**A.J. Allmendinger** – Only raced in Atlantic for one season (2003), but won the series championship with seven victories and his nine pole positions tied Gilles Villeneuve for the record for most poles in a single season. Allmendinger went on to win races in the Champ Car World Series and now competes in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

**Michael Andretti** – The second-generation driver's lone Atlantic season of 1983 yielded three victories, five pole positions and the series championship in a hotly-contested battle with Roberto Moreno. Andretti went on to become the winningest driver in Champ Car World Series history with 42 career victories.

**Alex Barron** – Barron claimed the Atlantic championship as a rookie in 1997 with five victories and four pole positions, topping drivers such as Memo Gidley, Alex Tagliani and eventual series champion Anthony Lazzaro. Barron parlayed that championship into a ride with Dan Gurney's All-American Racers in the Champ Car World Series, before moving onto the Indy Racing League IndyCar Series, where he won races at Nashville Superspeedway in 2002 and Michigan International Speedway in 2003. He returned to compete in Atlantic once again in 2006.

**Claude Bourbonnais** – In an Atlantic career that spanned from 1989-93, the Canadian racer claimed 13 career victories, tying him for second place on the all-time win list with Gilles Villeneuve. Bourbonnais also earned 11 pole positions during his Atlantic career, tying him for fourth on the all-time list with Jacques Villeneuve (the brother of Gilles) and Patrick Carpentier. He finished inside the top-three in the championship three times, including runner-up performances to David Empringham in 1993 and Brian Till in the Atlantic Division of the 1990 season. He went on to compete in the 1997 Indianapolis 500, Champ Cars and other forms of road racing.

**Bill Brack** – The Canadian competed in Atlantic from its inception in 1974 through 1979 and won the first two series champi-

onships in 1974 and 1975. He owns a total of eight career Atlantic victories and eight pole positions. He retired to open a Chrysler dealership in downtown Toronto.

**Patrick Carpentier** – Another popular Canadian racer, Carpentier competed in Atlantic from 1992 through 1996, and his nine victories in his 1996 championship-winning season tie him with Gilles Villeneuve for the most Atlantic victories in a single season. Carpentier owns a total of 12 career Atlantic victories, placing him fourth all-time, and is tied for fourth with Jacques Villeneuve (brother of Gilles) and Claude Bourbonnais for fourth on the all-time pole-winners list with 11 career poles. He went on to a successful Champ Car career that yielded five career victories before moving into the Indy Racing League IndyCar Series. This year, he will compete full-time in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

**Price Cobb** – The American racer competed in Atlantic events from 1975 through 1983, earning four victories and three pole positions and consistently running near the front of fields that included the likes of Gilles Villeneuve, Bobby Rahal and Keke Rosberg among others. Cobb went on to become a successful sports car driver, earning the overall victory in the 1990 24 Hours of Le Mans.

**Mark Dismore** – The Indiana native owns the Atlantic record for most career victories with 15 spread over a career that had two stints, 1989-90 and 1992-94. Dismore's most successful Atlantic season was 1990, when he won eight races and four pole positions en route to the SCCA/Toyota Atlantic Championship – Pacific Division title. He won at least one race in all but one of his five years in the series and also owns nine career pole positions. He went on to compete in sports cars, winning the 1990 24 Hours of Daytona, as well as the Champ Car World Series and the Indy Racing League IndyCar Series, where he won the 1999 season finale at Texas Motor Speedway.

**David Empringham** – In an Atlantic career that stretched from 1992 to 1995, Empringham was one of the most successful drivers in series history, taking 11 victories and five pole positions, as well as back-to-back series championships in 1993 and 1994. The Canadian bested drivers such as future Formula 1 World Champion, Champ Car champion and Indianapolis 500 winner Jacques Villeneuve, as well as Atlantic great Claude Bourbonnais eventual Champ Car and IndyCar racers Richie Hearn and Patrick Carpentier and 1999 Indy Racing League IndyCar Series champion Greg Ray. He went on to win the 1996 Indy Lights championship and also won the 2006 Grand-Am Cup Series Grand Sport championship. He is also a respected driver coach currently working with Sierra Enterprises in the Champ Car Atlantic Championship.

**Jon Fogarty** – One of only five drivers in the history of Atlantic to win multiple series championships, Fogarty is the only American driver to win the championship more than once, taking titles in 2002 and 2004. Fogarty owns eight career Atlantic victories and 10 pole positions while racing against drivers such as Michael Valiante, Alex Gurney, Ryan Hunter-Reay, Luis Diaz, Ryan Dalziel and Danica Patrick. Fogarty has become a star in sports car racing, co-driving to the 2007 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Daytona Prototype title with Gurney.

**Scott Goodyear** – The Canadian first competed in Atlantic in 1983, returned to the series and won the Atlantic Division title in 1986 and also competed in Atlantic in 1988 and '89, scoring a total of six career victories and seven pole positions. He went on to claim two career victories in the Champ Car World Series and three wins in the Indy Racing League IndyCar Series and is now a television commentator.

**Tom Gloy** – American driver competed in Atlantic from 1975 through 1980 and won the 1979 series championship ahead of drivers such as Kevin Cogan, Jeff Wood, Howdy Holmes and Bob Earl. Gloy owns a total of three career Atlantic victories and five pole positions. He went on to a successful career in road racing, taking the Trans-Am title in 1984.

## Vote Now For The Champ Car Atlantic 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary All-Star Team

**Richie Hearn** – American racer competed in Atlantic in 1994 and 1995, beating two-time defending series champion David Empringham and Canadian rising star Patrick Carpentier to the title in 1995. Hearn has a total of seven career victories and nine pole positions in Atlantic competition. He went on to take co-Rookie of the Year honors alongside Tony Stewart at the Indianapolis 500 in 1996 and also won an IRL IndyCar Series event at Las Vegas in 1996 before moving to the Champ Car World Series in 1997. He has 59 career Champ Car starts and 25 career IndyCar Series starts, his most recent appearance coming in the 2007 Indianapolis 500, which was his eighth “500” start.

**Howdy Holmes** – The American driver competed in Atlantic from 1974 through 1979 winning five races and five pole positions as well as claiming the series championship in 1978 ahead of future superstars such as Keke Rosberg, Bobby Rahal and Danny Sullivan. Holmes went on to make 72 Champ Car World Series starts and competed in the Indianapolis 500 six times.

**Anthony Luzzaro** – The American’s Atlantic career began in 1994, but he ran every season from 1996 through 1999, taking nine career victories and seven pole positions as well as the 1999 series championship ahead of drivers such as Alex Tagliani, Buddy Rice, Lee Bentham and Sam Hornish Jr. He went on to compete in NASCAR and regularly competes in sports car events.

**Dan Marvin** – American racer competed in Atlantic events from 1979 through 1987, with 11 career victories and eight pole positions and won the WCAR (West Coast Atlantic Racing) championship in 1984. In his Atlantic career, Marvin battled the likes of Michael Andretti, Roberto Moreno, Kevin Cogan and Jacques Villeneuve (brother of Gilles Villeneuve). He went on to a successful career in road racing.

**Roberto Moreno** – The personable Brazilian competed in Atlantic in 1982 and ’83, and his battle with Michael Andretti for the 1983 title—despite serious budget limitations—remains vivid in the memory of long-time Atlantic followers. He owns five victories and six pole positions in his Atlantic career. He has since gone on to a memorable career as “Super Sub” most notably in Formula 1 and Champ Car, and has won twice in Champ Car competition.

**Hoover Orsi** – Full-time Atlantic competitor in 2000 and 2001, the Brazilian owns five career race victories and four pole positions as well as the 2001 series title ahead of drivers such as Joey Hand, Rocky Moran Jr. and current NASCAR Sprint Cup Series star Kasey Kahne, who made three Atlantic starts in 2001. Orsi went on to compete in the Stock Car Brasil series and the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series.

**Bobby Rahal** – American open-wheel racing icon claimed three victories and seven pole positions in an Atlantic career that spanned from 1975 to 1978. Rahal battled the likes of Gilles Villeneuve, Elliott Forbes-Robinson, Bill Brack, Bertil Roos and Price Cobb in what many consider the “golden age” of Atlantics. Rahal went on to win the 1986 Indianapolis 500, a total of 24 Champ Car races, 18 Champ Car poles and three Champ Car World Series championships.

**Buddy Rice** – American racer’s full-time Atlantic career stretched from 1998 to 2000 and yielded a total of six victories and five pole positions as well as the 2000 series championship. During his Atlantic career, Rice competed against drivers such as Dan Wheldon, Hoover Orsi, Anthony Luzzaro, Alex Tagliani, Sam Hornish Jr. and Memo Gidley. Rice returned to the series for five starts in 2002 as a replacement for the injured Joey Hand. He went on to a successful career in the IRL IndyCar Series, which included a victory in the 2004 Indianapolis 500 among three career IndyCar wins, and five poles.

**Keke Rosberg** – Finnish racer competed in Atlantic in 1977 and 1978, earning a total of four victories. He finished second in the 1978 championship standings behind Howdy Holmes and ahead of drivers such as Price Cobb, Bobby Rahal, Tom Gloy and Danny Sullivan and battled Gilles Villeneuve as well as many of the aforementioned drivers during his rookie campaign in 1977. Rosberg went on to win the 1982 Formula One World Championship, a total of five Grands Prix and five pole positions in F1.

**Jimmy Vasser** – American driver’s Atlantic career began in 1987, but his career as a full-time driver in the series spanned 1990 and 1991. He earned a total of eight victories and 12 pole positions, placing him third on the all-time pole-winners list behind Gilles Villeneuve and Steve Shelton. His best result in the championship was second in 1991 behind the late Jovy Marcelo. Vasser went on to compete in the Champ Car World Series, taking the series title in 1996 and a total of 10 victories and nine pole positions.

**Gilles Villeneuve** – The driver who is perhaps the most celebrated Canadian racer in history competed in Atlantic from 1974 through 1977. He owns a total of three Atlantic titles, taking both the IMSA-sanctioned series and the CASC-sanctioned series in 1976, as well as the 1977 crown. He ranks second on the all-time Atlantic race winners list with 13 victories and still holds the Atlantic record for most pole positions with 14. He went on to drive for McLaren and Ferrari in Formula 1, taking six Grand Prix victories and two pole positions from 67 starts before his death in a crash during practice for the 1982 Belgian Grand Prix.

**Jacques Villeneuve (Brother of Gilles)** – Canadian driver with several stints in Atlantic. His first Atlantic stint, from 1979 through 1981, yielded Atlantic titles in 1980 and 1981 ahead of drivers such as Tom Gloy, Steve Saleen, Price Cobb and Geoff Brabham. After his second Atlantic title, “Uncle Jacques” went on to win the 1983 Can-Am title, as well as compete in Formula 1 and Champ Car events. He picked up his lone Champ Car race victory in 1985 at Road America. He returned to race in Atlantic events from 1989 through 1998 and owns a total of 10 Atlantic victories and 11 pole positions. He remains an active snowmobile racer and was the first three-time winner of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby in Eagle River, Wis.

**Jacques Villeneuve (Son of Gilles)** – Second-generation racer lived up to the previous Atlantic accomplishments of his father and uncle in a career that spanned the 1992 and 1993 seasons. He earned a total of five career race victories and seven pole positions, and finished second in the 1993 championship by just four points behind David Empringham, Villeneuve went on to a remarkable career that included an Indianapolis 500 victory and the Champ Car World Series championship in 1995 and the Formula One World Championship in 1997. He owns a total of 11 victories and 13 poles in F1 as well as five victories and six poles in the Champ Car World Series. He plans to compete full-time in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series in 2008.

### Voting Process Reminder

Please select 10 drivers from this ballot and e-mail your selections to Champ Car Atlantic Communications Director Nate Siebens at [nsiebens@champcar.ws](mailto:nsiebens@champcar.ws).

Votes may also be sent via Fax to (317-536-1093).

NOTE: Please specify if you’re voting for the brother or the son of Gilles Villeneuve if you’re only voting for one of the drivers named Jacques Villeneuve.

## More Dinner Photos And Video Links



Dario Franchitti shows off his Indy 500 winner's ring.  
Photo credit: Dan R. Boyd



Featured speaker Emerson Fittipaldi (left) gets acquainted with Tony Schumacher  
Photo credit: Dan R. Boyd

**ALL-AMERICA TEAM COVERAGE  
ON 1320tv.com**



Western VP Susan Wade provided great coverage of the All-America Team ceremony on her 1320tv.com site.  
Check out these videos:

Tony Schumacher, All-America Team presentation: [HERE](#)

Tony Schumacher interview (by AARWBA member Anne Heckman) [HERE](#)

Tony Pedregon, All-America Team presentation [HERE](#)

Dave Densmore, Jim Chapman Award presentation [HERE](#)

Dave Densmore, Jim Chapman Award winner interview (by Susan) [HERE](#)

Emerson Fittipaldi interview (by Susan) [HERE](#)

Scott Pruett interview (by Anne) [HERE](#)

Members are reminded to visit [www.A1GP.com/press](http://www.A1GP.com/press) to register for access to the media site of our All-America Team presenting sponsor.



A1 Team USA driver Jonathan Summerton addresses media at the Forum.  
Photo: Steve Snoddy

# News & Notes

## Willard Ritchie Passes

Willard Ritchie's family - Marion, Karen, Gail and the rest of the Ritchie family - sent word to Dusty Brandel that Willard had passed away just one day shy of his 81st birthday.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to the Flight Test Historical Foundation P.O. Box 57, Edwards, CA 93523 or to the Elks' Major Project or a charity of your choice.

Ritchie was a charter member on the Foundation board and a lifetime member of the Elks.

## Pearce's Helmet Effort Continues

Member Al Pearce has been on a campaign to collect as many autographs as possible from Formula One drivers on a single helmet. When ready, the helmet will be auctioned off. Pearce sent us this update on his efforts.

"I recently went to Paris and London for three signatures from Formula One World Champions, the 8th, 9th and 10th living F-1 champions to sign a racing helmet. The helmet then will be auctioned, all proceeds going to the Victory Junction Gang Camp/Kyle Petty Charity Ride.

"I got Alain Prost at his home in Paris and Fernando Alonso at Renault's F-1 "launch" in Paris, both on Wednesday, Jan. 30. The next day, I got Jody Scheckter's signature at his Laverstoke Park farm south of London.

"Previously, I got signatures from (in order) Phil Hill, Jacques Villeneuve, Emerson Fittipaldi, Mario Andretti, Damon Hill, John Surtees and Sir Jackie Stewart.

"If I confirm that Nigel Mansell will be at Sebring next week during his sons' test, I may dash down there. Otherwise, my next helmet-related trip likely will be to Austria and Germany in the spring for Niki Lauda and Michael Schumacher.

"After that, I'll try to get another handful at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal the first week-end in June.

"Thanks for your interest and support."

Keep us posted Al!

## Deke Houlgate Up For Surgery

Olga Houlgate recently sent us this note about Deke.

"Deke was going to have surgery on his left leg/foot Tuesday, Jan. 29. But he got a reprieve. He has had an open wound just above the heel that has not gotten any better for a couple of months, maybe more. He is not diabetic, however, he has a circulation problem. They have found blockage in the artery in that area,

"He has been in a lot of pain, as you can understand. Now that we know what the problem is, it will hopefully, be corrected.

(This is an update from Olga that we received shortly after the initial news)

"Deke is in a much better mind set since they said no surgery on the 29th. He is at a skilled nursing home just down the hill from our house in Carlsbad.

"They plan to get him walking ASAP. Monday intense therapy began and his wound treatment is being upgraded. He should be there 2 weeks, then he goes as an out patient to the wound center down the road. With blood thinners, etc, the arteries should start working as soon as this ulcer he has developed dries up.

"The surgery would have been bypass type and his arteries would have been in jeopardy and he could have lost his foot. Now we don't want that, so this is the alternative. "

Cards to:

Deke Houlgate  
4559 Picadilly Court  
Carlsbad, CA 92010-2895

### 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 to 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 [spindoc500@aol.com](mailto:spindoc500@aol.com)  
or our President, Dusty Brandel, at  
[aarwba@compuserve.com](mailto:aarwba@compuserve.com)**

# News & Notes



Barbara Peters, Toni Meyers, Marie Hall and Karen McQueeney, enjoying the banquet reception at the All-America banquet.  
Photo by Kay Nichols



Past President Jim Wilson and wife Barbara attended the banquet. Jim is still recuperating from heart surgery in November.  
Photo by Kay Nichols

## Larry Henry Now Available

Longtime Detroit-area radio man Larry Henry recently was informed his broadcast position had been eliminated. Larry is available for multi-media work or a PR assignment. He can be reached at [LarryHenry@pitpassusa.com](mailto:LarryHenry@pitpassusa.com)

## Member Spotlight?

We are always looking for members to be the subject of our next Member Spotlight feature. Why don't you volunteer to be next?

This kind of exposure to your peers and the movers and shakers of the motorsports world is something that other publications would make you pay for! Here, we welcome your contributions.

Why not send the Editor, Andy Hartwell, a quick email saying you are interested. Andy will then contact you and a telephone conversation will follow at a mutually acceptable date and time. You will have an opportunity to review the final version before it goes to print. Easy, right?

And what a great addition to your resume to say: "I was interviewed for the AARWBA newsletter!"

Contact Andy at [ashartwell@att.net](mailto:ashartwell@att.net)



Nan Martin, Ron McQueeney and Jack Martin, at the banquet reception.  
Photo by Kay Nichols

**Like To Talk?**  
**Like to talk motorsports?**  
**Like to talk with people like you?**  
**Then sign in to the**  
**AARWBA Forum!**  
<http://aarwba.org/smf/index.php>

# Norm Froscher on Deke Houlgate

Many of us longtime AARWBA members treasure friendships made years and years ago. You might say, borrowing from the print lingo of the time, that they are Hot Type Friends.

No need to elaborate. You know who you are, from Hot Type and Night Press Rate Collect, the way our dispatches used to travel. Friends, B.C -- before computers.

Such a friend is Deke Houlgate, newspaperman, writer, public relations man and now that treasured word, author, because he's written a book of fiction, about Indy in the 70s entitled "Blood on the Wall". More on that in a minute.

First, friend Deke in his own words.

Deke is known one way by a group of journalists and another by a different group of journalists. To the Old Farts Society, an informal bunch of former L. A. Times reporters and editors -- some still live, believe it or not -- Deke is a reporter who transferred at the height of his journalistic career to the Times special events department. He was assigned as assistant to the former Army All-America, Glenn Davis (Mr. Outside to Doc Blanchard's Mr. Inside) known as the Touchdown Twins of the mid-40s, when Army beat Notre Dame 59-0, but was denied a Rose Bowl bid.

Deke writes: "The backroom politicians were too intent on forming an alliance between the Big Ten and the Pacific Coast Conference to invite the team with a local high school hero to play in the Rose Bowl--Davis. I knew about the backroom controversy because my father, Deke Houlgate Sr., was a famed football expert in the 1930s and 1940s who helped expose the Big Ten-PCC conspiracy and its unfairness to the local athletic hero." When I came home from army hiatus in 1952, I went to work in the Times sports department until school started in the fall.

After graduation from USC's J-school in 1954 while working full time, I couldn't get a promotion from office boy. So I left Times sports for Hank Green-spun's Las Vegas Sun. After a one-day trial I was hired as a news reporter and the next two years were spent covering the best stories in Las Vegas. I was welcomed back as a reporter at the Times. By 1959 I was recruited out of the city room into a management training program and came out of there as Glenn's assistant. By 1962 I left special events to start a publicity business and wound up

helping to make Carroll Shelby's Ford Cobra popular. Along the way I worked for Andy Granatelli's STP and Mickey Thompson, who wanted to popularize off-road racing. In 1978 Pennzoil came calling, and I began 20 years of flacking for that company in its Indy car and drag racing programs.

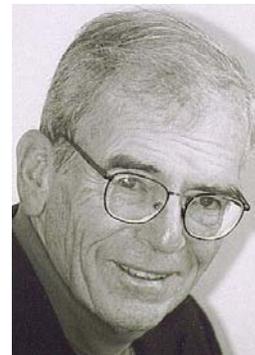
"That's how most of the modern day journalists remember me. From 1958 to 1977 I added the job of motor sports writer for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner to the resume. Many of our contemporaries remember me in that role, but unfortunately many more recall me only as a press agent.

"So when I finally accepted retirement in 1997 and moved from Redondo Beach to Carlsbad, I decided to upgrade my act from public relations to novel writing and went back to school. The first night in class the professor, Michael Wolf, said I would be called on to read some of my work the next week. So I wrote about a fatal accident in Indy 500 practice back in 1972, a mysterious accident that nobody had yet solved. The professor was no racing fan, and I figured that if he graded me I would earn a C-minus for that read. But I stuck to it and discovered a few things about Indianapolis I hadn't previously known. That knowledge provided the conflict that moved the plot along. I hadn't known how to be an author before, but in the immortal words of rookie promoter Les Richter, who studied under Big Bill France to learn the secrets of his new profession, "...and now I are one."

Yes--many longtime Indy followers will recognize some of the individuals and locations in his book "Blood on the Wall." It's a good read and Jim Chethead, the PR guy is probably the late Jim Chapman (Deke won the award named in Jim's honor). In the novel Jack's haunt at Indy was at Frank's Champion suite. There he could get away from the noisy press room. The suite strikes especially home to this writer. I frequently directed subjects over to hospitable Fred Agabashian's Champion suite to keep them away from the other ink-stained wretches.

Deke always kept us up with everybody as a PR rep. From Johnny Rutherford to Rick Mears and in drag racing to Eddie Hill (First in the Fours) and Madame President, Hill's wife, Ernie. That last is a story for another day. But right now, take time to read "Deke's" effort. You'll be glad you did.

Respectfully, Norm Froscher



# Member Spotlight

While he's only been an AARWBA member for two years, sportswriter and motorsports columnist John Bombatch has been covering motorsports in the Dayton-Cincinnati area for 15 years. The late Dayton Daily News writer and AARWBA member Leal Beattie was a friend of his when Bombatch first began writing auto racing stories as a stringer for The Middletown Journal in 1994.

Bombatch graduated from The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in News-Editorial Journalism major with an English Composition minor in 1989. While still a Buckeye student, Bombatch assisted motor racing veteran Jan Shaffer in the media room of several of the Columbus Ford Dealers 500 IMSA road races in the mid-80s. He wrote a feature on Bobby Rahal before the 1986 Indy 500 that gained the attention of then-Truesports team owner Steve Horne.

At Horne's request, Bombatch volunteered with TrueSports for two years and wrote the press release designed to gain sponsorship for the team's "Made In America" car, which was driven by Scott Pruett and Raul Boesel. He also wrote race program features on the likes of A.J. Foyt, Mario, Michael, John and Jeff Andretti, Hiro Matsushita, Tommy Kendall and Chris Kneifel among others for The Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, and later did a stint with then series PR boss Adam Saal and Jim Hyneman doing press releases for what was then the Firestone Indy Lights Series.

"My interview with Matsushita has to rank as one of my most challenging so far," Bombatch said. "I stutter on occasion when I'm doing my interviews. But that didn't stop the kind folks at Mid-Ohio from sending me up to the Cleveland race that year to do a story on Hiro. He and I were in his racing trailer, with the crew tuning his car's engine just outside. It became kind of comical. I'd stutter out a question. Hiro would say "What you say?" The engine would rev. I'd say "Huh?" ... more engine. It's kinda tough doing an interview when *neither* of you speak the language very well!"

Bombatch was awarded the Duke Dinsmore Award by the Dayton Auto Racing Fan Club, in recognition of his area auto racing coverage in 2002. While he regularly covers local high school, college and professional sports in the Cincinnati-Dayton area, Bombatch says his first love will always be auto racing.

"My family always made the long trip over to Indy every May for the Indianapolis 500 Time Trials each year, ever since I was 5-years old. I guess that early interest has carried over to today," Bombatch, now 46, said. "There's more than meets the common spectator's eye in regards to the challenges and skills involved in virtually every form of auto racing. I try and do what I can to portray those abilities, and the unique personalities that exist within the sport, to my readers. Sometimes I can pull it off, sometimes maybe not!"



Each week, Bombatch writes a motorsports column which runs in several publications within the Cox Southwest Ohio Group of Newspapers. He covers circle track racing at Kentucky Speedway, Lawrenceburg Raceway, Kil-Kare Raceway, Moler Raceway Park, Union County (Ind.) Raceway, G&J Kartway and sometimes Eldora. You'll often see him at National Trail Raceway, Tri-State Dragway or Edgewater Race Park as well.

"Maybe someday I'll be able to return to working a beat for a major racing series or even a major publication, I really enjoyed those days. But for now I'm doing what I can close to home," Bombatch said.

He and his wife, Christy have a son, Andrew, and live in Kettering, Ohio. There's a unique racing story that led to the naming of his son, too.

"Drew was born the day after Kenny Brack won the Indy 500 for A.J. Foyt's team in 2000," said Bombatch. "Christy and I couldn't decide on a good Christian name, so I threw out a suggestion that, well, since he was born so close to the race itself, we might as well try and get the initials 'A.J.' into his name somehow, even if the name wasn't exactly like A.J.'s. And she somehow agreed!"

Drew's full name became Andrew Joseph Bombatch. And he has his dad's racing blood in him too. He tells all his friends at school that his girlfriend's name is: Danica Patrick.

# The AARWBA Ombudsman

## How to Get Help Resolving Work Concerns

**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:

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:**

President: Dusty Brandel, [aarwba@compuserve.com](mailto:aarwba@compuserve.com)  
National Vice President: Mike Hollander, [racing@motorsportsforum.com](mailto:racing@motorsportsforum.com)  
Eastern Vice President: Lewis Franck, [lfranck@ix.netcom.com](mailto:lfranck@ix.netcom.com)  
Southern Vice President: Mike Harris, [msharris@ap.org](mailto:msharris@ap.org)  
Midwest Vice President: Ron Lemasters, [rlemasters14@comcast.net](mailto:rlemasters14@comcast.net)  
Western Vice President: Susan Wade, [susanw7754@aol.com](mailto:susanw7754@aol.com)  
Secretary-Treasurer: Dr. George Peters, [BarJean@prodigy.net](mailto:BarJean@prodigy.net)  
Ombudsman Committee Member: Michael Knight, [SpinDoctor500@aol.com](mailto:SpinDoctor500@aol.com)



**AARWBA Once Again Thanks  
Valvoline for Renewing Its  
Founding Sponsorship  
Of the  
Ombudsman Program**

# 2007 AUTO RACING ALL-AMERICA TEAM

As selected by the American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association



**JERRY TITUS AWARD:**  
Dario Franchitti, Indianapolis 500 winner,  
Indy Racing League Champion

## FIRST TEAM

OPEN WHEEL: Dario Franchitti, Sébastien Bourdais  
STOCK CAR: Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon  
ROAD RACING: Jon Fogarty/Alex Gurney, Scott Pruett  
DRAG RACING: Tony Schumacher, Tony Pedregon  
SHORT TRACK: Donny Schatz, Jerry Coons Jr.  
TOURING SERIES: Ron Hornaday Jr., Frank Kimmel  
AT LARGE: Alex Lloyd, Jaime Melo/Mika Salo

## SECOND TEAM

OPEN WHEEL: Tony Kanaan, Scott Dixon  
STOCK CAR: Carl Edwards, Clint Bowyer  
ROAD RACING: Rinaldo Capello/Allan McNish, Timo Bernhard/Romain Dumas  
DRAG RACING: Jeg Coughlin Jr., Greg Anderson  
SHORT TRACK: Levi Jones, Joey Saldana  
TOURING SERIES: Joey Logano, Bobby Gill  
AT LARGE: Randy Pobst, Frank Manzo

## HONORABLE MENTION

(At least 5% of the vote)

OPEN WHEEL: none  
STOCK CAR: none  
ROAD RACING: Olivier Beretta/Oliver Gavin, Max Angelelli  
DRAG RACING: Bruce Litton, Dale Creasy Jr.  
SHORT TRACK: Steve Francis  
TOURING SERIES: Mike David, Donny Lia, Michael McDowell  
AT LARGE: Carl Renezeder, Raphael Matos

*\*NOTE: In Road Racing, co-drivers with identical records are now voted as one.*

## VOTE TOTALS

### Open Wheel

95 Dario Franchitti	68 Sébastien Bourdais
17 Tony Kanaan	16 Scott Dixon
3 Justin Wilson	2 Will Power
1* Helio Castroneves	1* Scott Hamilton

### Stock Car

87 Jimmie Johnson	57 Jeff Gordon
34 Carl Edwards	14 Clint Bowyer
4 Matt Kenseth	3 Kevin Harvick
1* Marcos Ambrose	1* Denny Hamlin

### Drag Racing

85 Tony Schumacher	58 Tony Pedregon
22 Jeg Coughlin Jr.	13 Greg Anderson
7 Bruce Litton	5 Dale Creasy Jr.
2* Robert Hight	1* Ron Capps
1* Ashley Force	1* Rod Fuller
1* Peggy Llewelyn	1* Eric Medlen

### Touring Series

74 Ron Hornaday Jr.	54 Frank Kimmel
36 Joey Logano	8 Bobby Gill
7 Mike David	7 Donny Lia
5* Michael McDowell	

### Short Track

62 Donny Schatz	49 Jerry Coons Jr.
28 Levi Jones	24 Joey Saldana
12 Steve Francis	3* Jon Stanbrough
2* Eddie Martin	1* John Blewett
1* Dave Darland	1 Chub Frank
1* Tony Jones	1* Frank Kreyer
1* Brad Kuhn	

### Road Racing

57 Jon Fogarty/Alex Gurney	31 Scott Pruett
30 R. Capello/A. McNish	
28 T. Bernhard/R. Dumas	
24 O. Beretta/O. Gavin	15 Max Angelelli
1* David Donohue	1* Bryan Herta
1* Darren Law	1* Patrick Long

### At Large

52 Alex Lloyd	30 Jaime Melo/Mika Salo
29 Randy Pobst	25 Frank Manzo
19 Carl Renezeder	18 Raphael Matos
2* Andy Lally	1* Charlie Kimball
1* Rob MacCachren	1* Travis Pastrana
1* Al Teague	

\* = Write-Ins Total Vote: 105