



Vintage Views

**The official publication of the
Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club**

**Dedicated to the Preservation of Stock Car Racing History
July, August, September 2018**

Pioneer Driver and Builder Bob Rossell to Mod Hall of Fame

*by Buffy Swanson, as published in
Area Auto Racing News' June 5, 2018 Edition*

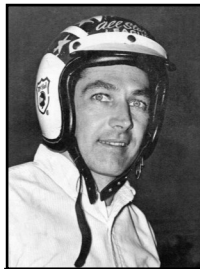
New Jersey ace Bob Rossell, a pioneer driver and builder of stock cars in the '60s and '70s, will be honored as a 2018 inductee into the Northeast Dirt Modified Hall of Fame. Driver inductions and special award ceremonies are scheduled for Thursday, July 26 at the Northeast Dirt Modified Hall of Fame and Museum in Weedsport, NY. That Saturday, Weedsport Speedway will host its Super DIRTcar Series Hall of Fame 100.

Rossell began racing on the paved New Egypt Speedway quarter-mile in 1958, in an old Chevy coupe with an engine out of a junk pile. Working out of NES champion Howard "Stubby" Stevens' nearby Jacobstown garage, along with his good friend Gil Hearne, Bob was just getting going when the U.S. Air Force took him out of the scene for a year in 1961.

When Rossell returned, he jumped back in with both feet — barnstorming up and down the Eastern seaboard, tagging along with the infamous "Eastern Bandits", holding his own with Ed Flemke, Dennis Zimmerman, Rene Charland, Red Foote and the like. In a typical week, the bunch would race Thursday at New Egypt, Friday at Virginia's Southside Speedway, Old Dominion in Manassas (VA) on Saturday, Marlboro (MD) on Sunday afternoon, and back in New Jersey at Old Bridge on Sunday night.



Lebanon Valley Hertico Photo



Bob Rossell, All Star
Racing League
Driver

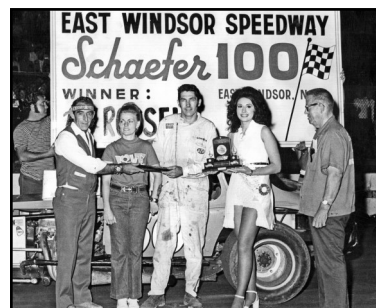
Bob's big scores include NASCAR's 200-lap Battle of Bull Run at Old Dominion in 1963, Wall Stadium's 300-lap Garden State Classic (which he won twice), Langhorne qualifiers at Flemington and Orange County Fair Speedway (passing Will Cagle for both of those victories), five extra-

distance special events at East Windsor (one a DIRT qualifier for Syracuse), and a 90-minute timed race on the 1-1/8 mile Nazareth National big track, where he beat the great Frankie Schneider on the last turn of the last lap. After dominating the 1963 New Yorker 400 at Utica-Rome, Bob's win was protested by Lou Lazzaro, who alleged Rossell's road buddy Rene Charland pushed him across the line when he ran out of gas at the finish. Many months later, NASCAR awarded the win to Lazzaro. "I was six laps ahead when I ran out. And yeah, Rene pushed me", Bob acknowledged with a shrug. "But nobody finished that race."



Victory Lane John Grady Photo

Rossell was also a regular in the elite All-Star Racing League, from 1967-71. He was racing for a living and loving it.



Bob Rossell celebrates in Victory Lane with (L-R) flagger Tex Enright, wife Carol, and Miss Schaefer after winning the 100-lap Syracuse qualifier at East Windsor Speedway in 1972.

Ace Lane, Sr. Photo

But he was also a much sought-after car builder and fabricator. Top drivers like Will Cagle, Billy Osmun, Tommy Corellis, Bob Pickell, Pee Wee Griffin, Leon Manchester and Bob Toreky, among others, found success in Rossell racers with their signature square tubing. Cagle ran Rossell cars almost exclusively from

1965-72, arguably some of his best years racing in the Northeast, and was quick to give credit to Bob. "With that square tubing, they were light but they were solid. They held up good", Cagle said. "Twice I got 'em upside down — and both times I walked away."

(continued)

GSVSCC meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday from January through November, 7:30 p.m. at the West Long Branch Firehouse, Rt. 71 (Monmouth Road) and Cedar Ave. West Long Branch, NJ.
For directions call 732-330-8349 or go to www.gsvscc.org.

Although he did travel to Florida more than once to build cars for Cagle in the off-season, and constructed a quartet of frames for car owner Ken Brenn, Rossell did not typically build cars specifically for others. "That was the key to the deal: do what I wanted to do with them, and then sell 'em", Bob explained his business model. "I had signs on all my cars: NOT FOR SALE. Then, when I was ready to sell them, I just taped over the word NOT."

It was a great existence until late July 1971, when Rossell was critically injured during an All-Star event at Lebanon Valley.

"We had been to Weedsport the night before. I had spun out and backed into the grader sitting in the infield", Bob recounted. At the Valley, the right rear housing broke. The car stopped sideways on the backstretch and was hit by Gil Hearne, Bobby Malzahn and Merv Treichler. The impact drove Rossell's right leg through the floorboard, pinning him inside the coupe for 40 minutes while rescue workers tried to free him. "He had to be in terrible pain while we were trying to bend the metal away from his leg, yet he never whimpered or groaned or let on to anyone that he was suffering", said Kenny Shoemaker, one of the first drivers on the scene. "I've never seen anyone with more courage than Bob."

The initial assessment was that the mangled foot would have to be amputated. "I was lucky", Rossell considered. "The surgeon on call had just come back from Vietnam. He had dealt with a lot worse during his tour of duty, and this didn't faze him."



Still recuperating from the devastating crash at Lebanon Valley, Bob waves to the fans who voted him Wall Stadium's Most Popular Driver in 1971.
Charles Taylor Photo

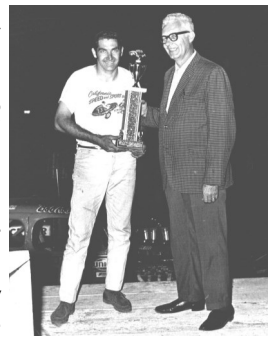
Rossell was laid up in Albany Medical Center for 29 days. Lebanon's "top cat" Tommy Corellis had become friendly with Bob, while running the All-Star League. At Tommy's insistence, Bob's wife Carol stayed with the Corellises the entire month; they gave her a car to get back and forth to the hospital, and "were wonderful to me", she said. Bob had just completed a new race car prior to the accident, and afterwards he all but gave Corellis that car. "He had built the car for himself, but he wanted me to have it, for all I did for him when he was hurt", Tommy said. That was the famed Leto #50 that Corellis claims was one of the "most perfect" cars he ever drove. He ran it to two championships at Lebanon Valley. Walt Schwinning, in fact, used that same Rossell car as a template when he started his chassis fabrication business.

Tough and stubborn, Bob was back driving the following spring. By July, he was back in the winner's circle. According to Cagle, the extensive injuries Rossell suffered at the Valley didn't slow him down. "He still ran it wide open after he came back. He was always right there. He impressed me", Cagle marveled.

Although he did a handful of stints for car owners (and won one of his Garden State Classics in Dick Barney's renowned red #14), "I never drove another car I was happy with", Bob firmly stated. "Other people's cars didn't feel good to me. They had to be mine."

The powerplants, however, were another story. "All the motors I ever ran were Stubby's. I never had a store-bought motor", Rossell said of the 427 c.i.d. Chevys he raced. "Stubby Stevens was the most important guy in my racing career. I wouldn't say I couldn't have done it without him. But he was key."

Rossell never officially retired — "I put the car on the trailer after a rough night at East Windsor, and just never took it off." — but went on to a second career, building sulkies for Standardbred horses for more than a decade. "Whatever I did, I always knew where I fit", Bob finally reflected on his life in racing. "I didn't fit above the line, or below the line. I was right *there*." He continued the thought: "racing for a living wasn't about winning. It was about keeping the car together and making money", Bob concluded. "I never got mad when I finished second or third. Because, on whatever night that was, that's probably where I should've been."



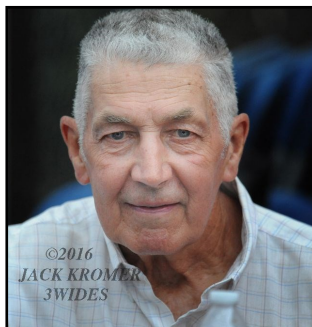
Rossell accepts the Geiger Ford trophy at Wall Stadium.
GSVSCC photo



Bob Rossell wins at Wall Stadium in Dick Barney's #14. *GSVSCC Photo*



Rossell was inducted into the GSVSCC Hall of Fame in 2003. *Ace Lane, Jr. Photo*



Bob Rossell in 2016
Jack Kromer Photo



Bob Rossell signs autographs at the GSVSCC Hall of Fame Night at Wall Stadium in 2017.
L. Cooper Photo

MODIFIED REUNION

Does anyone look forward to winter? They do if they attend the Modified Reunions held at New Smyrna Speedway during Speedweek! This year's event was held on February 16 and drew more than 300 attendees, who each received one ticket to the Evans Memorial race held that night. Over 40 vintage race cars were on display. Some Modified notables in attendance this year were: Dick Berggren, Frank Cozze, Gary Gollub, Billy Harmon, Gil Hearne, Jimmy Maguire, Ray Miller, and Greg Sacks. Organizer Geoff Yoder reported that it was a great day. From noon until 5:00 p.m. fans, racers, promoters and others gathered in small groups to talk about the good old days, renew acquaintances, tell stories and have some laughs. The event was sponsored by the Living Legends of Auto Racing club in Daytona. No doubt there are plans for the 2019 event. If you are interested in attending and need more information, contact Linda Cooper. Here are some photos from this year's event, courtesy Geoff Yoder:



HOW NOT TO GO RACING, CIRCA 1957

by Bob Emmons

First, you have to not realize how dumb you are about racing. My best friend and I had gone to Wall Stadium on a Saturday night and seen an ex-high school student we knew win the Novice feature. That looked like fun and we were hooked.

We found a '37 Ford Coupe racer for sale for \$125. Pooling our meager money, we became racers. Since we couldn't drive it on the highway, the first problem was how to get it home. My buddy borrowed his boss' wrecker and we were in business (temporarily).

Not wanting to work on this thing in the rain, we went looking for a garage to rent. It didn't have to be fancy, as we didn't have any tools to speak of. The only power tool we had was a half-inch drill.

Prior to going racing, I think the only thing we did was paint (by brush) and letter our beauty. Picture this: a flathead Ford V-8, flex pipe for headers dumping into two Ford torque tubes tied to the running boards. We did have a Floater rear (but we didn't know that) which almost kept us out of our first race at Old Bridge. They thought we had a quick change rear (whatever that was).

Fortunately, the guy that sold us the car didn't have any money either, and the car was set up with a tow bar. Towing flat was as common then as an enclosed trailer is now. This led to some exciting adventures (a whole story in itself). On the way to the races, my buddy's kid brother rode in the race car many times, and his friend sat on a milk crate next to him.

That first year in the Novice division was pretty uneventful (I drove like a little old lady) until one night the throttle stuck and I found out how fast you can really go through the corners. Racing then became a lot more fun. I never won anything, and destroyed the car in the last race at Old Bridge. Now I could fix it in one night. I was still dumb.

We swapped off driving and made every race at Wall Stadium on Saturdays and Old Bridge on Fridays and Sundays. There were no track licenses, and pit passes cost \$4.00. Sunoco 260 fuel was less than a dollar a gallon. The fenced-in pit at Wall was much smaller than now, and the Novice cars had to park outside the fence, except the last time they tried to run on Wednesday night. So short of cars that night, we got to park with the Big Boys.

I have learned a little over the last 60-odd years, and it's still fun.



Ray Liss (R) presents Bob Emmons with the Bob Thomas "Spirit of the Sport" award at the club's 2016 banquet. Photo by Jim Smith

[Editor's Note: Our guest columnist is far too modest. Club member Bob Emmons of Brick, NJ received the club's Bob Thomas "Spirit of the Sport" award in 2016. Just over 80 years young, Bob is a man of many talents. His regular job was as a mathematics teacher at Manasquan (NJ) High School for 35 years, with some high school football coaching on the side. Outside of the classroom, he was a stock car driver and car owner, starting in the late 1950s through the 1970s. He had his own speed shop ("MNO") during the 1970s and 1980s. He is an author of 3 racing tech books and wrote a tech column in Stock Car Racing magazine for 10 years. He has run in 4 marathons. A lover of history, he has traveled to 50 countries. He has been on a variety of pit crews over the years, most notably the multi-time ATQMR championship team of car owners Lenny & Donna Boyd for many years.]



A GOOD CAUSE

Club members Stan Hawk, Paul Ielmini, Connie Joyner and Gino Murin displayed their cars at the **RJC Charities Car Show Fundraiser** on June 17. Member Matt Badessa also brought his Factory Stock, which he races at Wall Stadium. Club members Bob and Rich Caramella held this year's fundraiser for Mike Clarke. The event raised \$4,800. 96 cars turned out for the event! The Nancy Shea Award went to Paul Ielmini and Connie Joyner received an appreciate award. Sadly, Mike Clarke succumbed to cancer on July 13.



Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club

2018 Schedule

DATE	ARRIVAL TIME	LOCATION	EVENT
August 18	3:00 p.m.	Wall Stadium	Regular Show
August 25	3:00 p.m.	New Egypt Speedway	Regular Show
September 9	8:00 a.m.	Warren Twp. Municipal Grounds	Car Show
September 22	3:00 p.m.	New Egypt Speedway	Regular Show
September 22	3:00 p.m.	Wall Stadium	Regular Show
October 14	9:00 a.m.	Patterson Farms, Freehold	Family Fun Day Car Show
November 3		Bridgeport Speedway	Regular Show
November 23	9:00 a.m.	Wall Stadium	Regular Show
<i>Events listed in BOLD are static display events</i>			

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

In August of 1991, the first gathering of what would become the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club took place at Bill Erbe's house in Allenwood, NJ. 2018 marks the club's **27th** anniversary. **THANKS** to all of our members, past and present, and to those who have served the club, whether as project helpers, in leadership roles and anything in between.



Flemington, NJ May 25 - OVER EASY - C.D. Coville of Scotia, NY flips over Alan Johnson of Syracuse as their Modified stock cars race Monday in the "CNC Syracuse Qualifier" race at the Flemington, NJ Fairgrounds Speedway. At right is Daryl Carmen of Flemington, NJ. Only minor injuries were reported in the crash (AP Laserphoto) (GPW/J0950str-Tom Kelly) 1985

OLD BRIDGE STADIUM

The Vintage Automobile Museum of NJ will hold a Salute to Old Bridge Stadium event on October 6 and 7, 2018. The museum is located at 1800 Bay Avenue, Bldg. 13 in Pt. Pleasant, NJ. For more information, visit the museum's website: www.vintageautomuseum.org.

SEEN ON THE SCENE...



It's another busy night at the Museum. Lots of folks enjoy looking at our videos and articles from days gone by. *Ray Shea Photo*



Club track time spectators (L-R) El Herbert, Frank Drogan and Bill Morsch. *Ray Shea Photo*



Terry Van's got the hang of "hanging out" at the Patterson Fun Day event. *Ray Shea Photo*



NEW MEMBER

William Rasiewicz from Freehold, NJ



GET WELL WISHES

Earl Megill



Folks are needed to catalog the club's archived items. Contact Ray Shea if you can help out.

CONDOLENCES

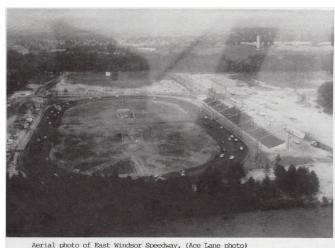
to family and friends of club member George Driver



IN REMEMBRANCE

Former local racer Sam Riggleman, Jr. passed away on February 9, 2018. Here is a photo of Sam and his car appearing some years ago at the club's display at the Seaview Square Mall in Ocean, NJ. Our condolences go out to Sam's family.

PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER
from the Spring 2018 issue



Aerial photo of East Windsor Speedway, (Don Lane photo)

Can you identify this popular NJ race track? Sadly, it closed in 2002.

Okay, the caption gives it away. It's East Windsor Speedway.

The site was originally the home of Hightstown Speedway, a 1/5 mile oval (dirt and then asphalt) which operated from 1950 until 1965.

The grand opening of the half-mile dirt East Windsor Speedway took place on June 11, 1965 on a beautiful day with packed grandstands. The legendary announcer Nat Kleinfeld worked the microphone and colorful Tex Enright waved the flags. The night began with first-class showmanship: Sonny Strupp, driving his red coupe #24 and Bob Pickell, in Joe Racz's yellow and black coupe #41 made a slow lap around the track with a ribbon suspended between the two cars. Upon returning to the start/finish line, township Mayor Frank Matheson cut the ribbon as a beaming Don Jones looked on. The first feature winners at EWS were Russ Hoek (Modified-Sportsman) and Bob Smith (Limited Sportsman).

East Windsor was leased a few times over the years to Ken Brenn, Sr., Joe Scamardella and Lindy Vicari, but the track was best known for the Jones family promoting most of the events. The "it's my way or the highway" attitude occasionally saw top competitors like Billy Pauch, Sr. and Doug Hoffman suspended from competition.

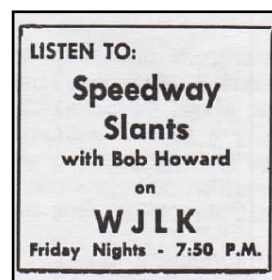
East Windsor was known for its Modified racing until the RSCA days of Lindy Vicari came to a close on November 2, 1980. Jimmy Horton won that event, which was the last Modified feature held at the track that featured a full field of only Modified cars. Don Jones resumed promoting his family-owned track in 1981. EWS became one of the first racetracks to feature Small Block Modifieds as the headline division. The track would never again be run by anyone other than a member of the Jones family. Soon after the switch was made to Small Blocks, the township began to complain about speedway noise. EWS was the first to have a strict noise ordinance placed upon it. The track made street legal mufflers mandatory and on all race cars. The track hosted one DIRT-sanctioned Modified event which was won by Phil Meisner. Jimmy Horton was the track's all-time Modified winner and Doug Hoffman was the all-time Small Block Modified winner.

Sadly, East Windsor Speedway fell to the real estate developer, like so many other tracks. Closing night was held on August 23, 2002. Doug Hoffman won the last SBM feature. The last Sportsman feature was won by Stan Janiszewski, and Rob Ormsbee won the last Street Stock feature. The 2002 division champions were Kenny Brightbill (Small Block Modified), Richie Pratt, Jr. (Sportsman) and Al Cheney, III (Street Stock).

Sources: Earl Krause, Editorial Assistant, Area Auto Racing News and GSVSCC Historian; Allan E. Brown, *The History of America's Speedways: Past & Present*; Wheels of Speed (www.nj3.com).

NOTE: sometimes the entire Photo Trivia Answer is too long to fit in this space. See our website for the full articles (www.gsvscc.org).

PHOTO TRIVIA



Nowadays there's no shortage of media outlets that talk about racing. Back in the day, very few opportunities like those existed. Here's an ad for one such show. Do you know what track was discussed on Friday nights at 7:50 p.m.? What was "WJLK"?

Look for the answer in our next issue, or go to our website www.gsvscc.org if you can't wait that long. Sometimes the website answer contains more information than we have space for in print.

If you have a photo you'd like to share, send it to Linda Cooper via e-mail at: vintageviews@gsvscc.org or by mail to: 7 Thompson Street, West Long Branch, NJ 07764. Prints will be returned promptly.

Be sure to provide the pertinent facts!



Some new items are on display at the club's Museum.

Ray Shea Photo

**VINTAGE VIEWS, THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
GARDEN STATE VINTAGE STOCK CAR CLUB**

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