



Vintage Views

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

**Dedicated to the Preservation of Stock Car Racing History
October, November, December 2022**

AARN'S Walter Chernokal, and Announcers Kleinfield and Singer "Set the Standard"

*By Earl Krause, as published in Area Auto Racing News'
January 11, 2022 Issue*

Race drivers often recall fellow competitors that inspired or mentored them in their careers. As a writer and full-time staff member with Area Auto Racing News and a racing announcer, I too often look back at three people in our sport that did the same for me. They were announcers Nat Kleinfield and Bill Singer; and AARN's own Walter Chernokal, who wrote the "Wheels of Speed" column and was a photographer for this publication and an announcer as well. They have long since passed away, but remain a constant influence in my career and life. While I never had the opportunity to work with Kleinfield, I'm grateful that I did so with Singer and Chernokal.

Today, Walt Chernokal is remembered each year by the officers and members of the renowned Checkered Flag Fan Club (CFFC). The CFFC is a service organization that has been coordinating a monetary fund to assist injured race drivers and their families for over 60 years while also honoring the champions of local tracks and organizations from all divisions from Quarter-Midgets and Go-karts on up to the higher levels at their yearly banquet. At that event, the CFFC presents its annual "Walt Chernokal Memorial Press Award," in coordination with Area Auto Racing News, to honor a writer or photographer in the sport that has displayed the professionalism and dedication to local racing that Walt did in his career.

SETTING THE STANDARD: When I was a young fan at NJ tracks such as Old Bridge Speedway, Flemington Speedway and Trenton Fairgrounds with my dad Earl Sr., I aspired to become an announcer by listening to Kleinfield and then to Singer. As to writing, I was led in that direction by detailed stories of Kleinfield and Chernokal that I first saw in the old Illustrated Speedway News and then in Area Auto Racing News.

Nat Kleinfield died in 1970 at the relatively young age of 60 after an illness of several years. He retired from announcing following a stroke in 1966, but continued as a racing writer. Ironically, Chernokal and Singer died during the same week in 2004 at racing events. Chernokal, who became the "Dean" of the AARN staff, died of a heart attack on Tuesday, June 8, 2004, at 80 years young at Bridgeport Speedway after taking pit and race notes for his AARN column. The Saturday after Walter Chernokal died, Bill Singer, the "Voice of Flemington Speedway" for over 30 years and announcer at many other Northeast tracks, passed away suddenly at age 70. He was serving as Master of Ceremonies at a reunion and race car show saluting Flemington Speedway. Bill had been interviewing drivers and personalities from the track on the microphone. Sadly, within view of the track that had he had been so identified with, the joyous day ended as he too was ironically felled by what would prove to be a fatal heart attack.

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.

Nat Kleinfield was “The Voice” of New Jersey stock car and open-cockpit racing from the 1930s through the mid-1960s. Bill Singer often told me that it was Nat that had influenced his career behind the microphone and had “learned the business” in the 1950s as Kleinfield’s back-up announcer. Bill considered Nat to be “the master.”

Walt, Bill and Nat shared a passion for the sport and its people.

WALT CHERNOKAL: While well-known as a columnist and race-results writer, Walt Chernokal’s specialty was photography. He was a recipient of many awards and recognition for his motorsports pictures in Area Auto Racing News and with the Associated Press as well as a senior staff photographer for PA’s Delaware County Daily Times. “Walter truly set the standard for motorsports photography,” said AARN publisher and chief editor Lenny H. Sammons. “He had that ‘eye’ for getting the right picture. But more than just taking the picture, he had the special talent of sensing when a situation was developing. It led him to already ‘be at the right spot’ when a spectacular accident would happen; or when ‘the pass’ took place that determined the outcome of the race.”



Walt Chernokal receives an AARN award from Lenny Sammons, Jr. in 1987. *AARN Photo*

In fact, Walt earned Associated Press photo awards for 22 consecutive years. Proof of his craftsmanship with a camera came in the recognition of his photography by the internationally acclaimed Life Magazine in 2002. Life Magazine published a book entitled *LIFE, AMERICAN SPEED from Dirt Tracks to Indy to NASCAR*. The book included a picture he filmed at PA’s legendary dirt mile Langhorne Speedway on September 1, 1957, of driver Charlie Musselman being ejected from the seat of his flipping open-cockpit car and flung high into the air!

Among the seemingly countless laurels Walt Chernokal received, being honored with the prestigious “Ace Lane Sr. Memorial Award” for photography was among the most special. That annual award presented by the Eastern Motorsport Press Association (EMPA), honors the memory of the late Ace Lane Sr., an African-American who was a pioneer in motorsports photography. Ace Lane Sr. and Walt Chernokal not only filmed together professionally at many racetracks but were close friends. Upon Ace Sr.’s passing in 1973, Walt became a mentor to another aspiring photographer. That was Ace Lane Jr., who went on to become one of the best in that racing photography field and an award-winner himself. When Walt passed away, Ace Lane Jr. said then it felt like he had lost a man who he considered to be “a second father.” In fact, Walt was the first recipient of the Ace Lane Sr. Memorial Award from EMPA and received it a second time as well.



Walt Chernokal with his GSVSCC Hall of Fame award in 2002. *GSVSCC Photo*

Chernokal was also a racing announcer. He handled announcing, press reporting and general on-track/pit area official duties for the original winter Indoor Racing Series for TQ-Midgets in Atlantic City’s Boardwalk Hall (then known as Convention Hall) between 1965 and 1981.

He was also particularly devoted to young drivers in Quarter-Midget racing, attending not only their races at many tracks in NJ and Eastern PA on a regular basis, but also the club meetings and banquets. He became a trusted advisor to the youngsters, as their “unofficial” grandfather or uncle, and a source of priceless advice to their parents and families when it came to racing knowledge.



Nat Kleinfield at the mic
AARN Photo

NAT KLEINFELD: Before Bill Singer was “The Voice” of New Jersey auto racing, Nat Kleinfield held that honor, beginning in the 1930s. That’s when Nat was on the microphone at the legendary Nutley Velodrome, a steeply-banked board track in Northern NJ that presented weekly Midget races.

After serving as a radioman during World War II, Nat became the leading announcer for NJ stock car and open-cockpit events from the 1940s into the mid-1960s. He called the action at weekly dirt and paved tracks in the Garden State such as East Windsor, Flemington, Harmony, Hinchliffe Stadium, Morristown, New Egypt (then known as Fort Dix Speedway, as a paved quarter-mile track), Old Bridge and Pine Brook; and the special stock car, Indy Car, Midget and Sprint Car events at the NJ State Fairgrounds mile paved oval of Trenton. He was also track manager and public relations director at many of those ovals to go along with his weekly “Speaking of Speed” column in Illustrated Speedway News. In the

1960s, Nat also hosted the nightly “From the Pits” racing show on New Brunswick, NJ’s WCTC 1450 AM radio.

What I always recall about Nat is his announcing style. He would tell grandstand spectators, in a conversational manner, interesting items about the drivers and team members. Thus, the fans learned the personal side of the competitors, such as their hometowns and type of “day job”. Nat spent hours in the pit area, talking to the racers and gathering information that he delighted in sharing with an appreciative audience.

BILL SINGER: Bill Singer was a fan of racing since his youth. He competed as a driver in ARDC Midgets, URC Sprints and Modified stock cars in the 1950s before going into what he referred to as his “true calling in life” as a radio broadcaster and racing announcer. He became Flemington Speedway’s chief announcer by 1968 after Nat Kleinfield retired. Bill remained on the microphone as the track’s “welcoming host” in its dirt and pavement eras through the final race in 2000. In fact, Bill’s tenure at Flemington Speedway preceded that of its long-time promoter Paul Kuhl.

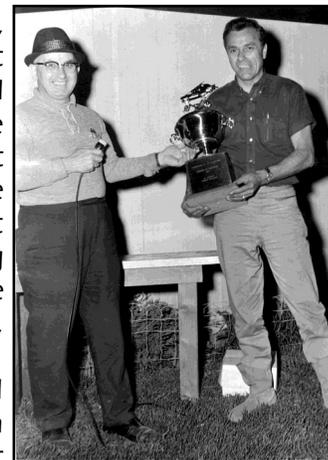
Along with Flemington, Bill became well-known for announcing at NJ’s Bridgeport, East Windsor, New Egypt/Fort Dix in its asphalt years, Old Bridge and the State Fairgrounds at Trenton. In April 2004, just months before his passing, he had a well-received “guest announcing” role at Wall Stadium at its Spring “Open House” test session. He also announced at Dover International Speedway in Delaware and in PA at Langhorne, Pocono and the Bloomsburg Fairgrounds for Midget races.

Away from the track, Bill owned and operated the Allen-Singer Broadcasting Studio and announcer training school in Trenton which operated from the mid-1970s into 2004. Beginning in 1972, he was also advertising director for Area Auto Racing News for several years; and was press/advertising director for numerous speedways and racing organizations. He also hosted radio shows and appeared on Trenton area radio stations.

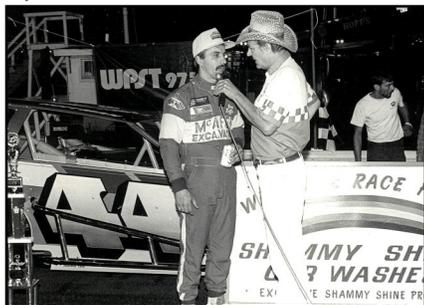
Bill said that one of the important things he did as an announcer of a race, at any level, was to “make each driver special.” He never made fun of a driver who was struggling but rather would speak only of the positive side. To Bill Singer, the driver in last place was just as important as the biggest winner. His goal as an announcer, just like his mentor Nat Kleinfield, was to be “the host” to the grandstand fans.

HALL OF FAME HONORS: Their professional style, knowledge of the sport past and present, and stature led to Walt Chernokal, Nat Kleinfield and Bill Singer being inducted into the Halls of Fame of the Eastern Motorsport Press Association (EMPA) and Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club.

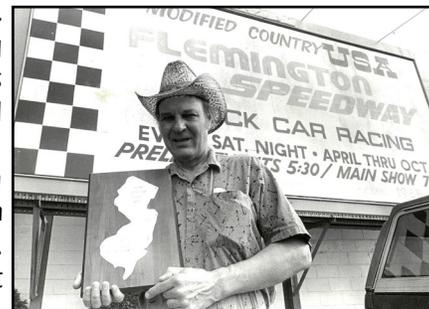
Those gentlemen set the standard as auto racing media members.



Kleinfield with Al Tasnady
AARN Photo



Bill Singer interviews Doug Hoffman at
Flemington Speedway AARN Photo



Singer with one of many awards
AARN Photo

NEW MEMBERS



Scott Cook
Anthony Fichera, Jr.
Joe Macfarlan
Larry Parker
Chas Sergewick
Ken Sparke
Patrick Voss
Doug Wolcott

**30th ANNUAL
HALL OF FAME HONOREES**

Drivers – Kevin Eyres, Doug Wolcott
Owners – Bob Furslew, Howard Harvey
Historian/Journalist - Herb Anastor
Bob Thomas Award Dominick Ragno
Pioneer Award– Johnny Luhrs

The 2023 awards banquet will be held on Sunday, March 19, 2023, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Spring Lake Manor, 415 Route 71, in Spring Lake, NJ. Signup forms will be mailed and are available on the club's website: www.gsvscc.org. See you there!

GET WELL WISHES

Sue Brice
Ray Liss



CONDOLENCES

on the passing of John Blewett, Sr.

HEY, DON'T I KNOW YOU?

You never know where you're going to run into a club member! George Klein, Linda Cooper and Steve Golembeski enjoyed chatting at the Whelen Modified Tour race at Martinsville (VA) Speedway in October.



OFFICER ELECTION

At the club's Annual Meeting on November 16, the club's incumbent Officers were re-elected:

President - Ray Shea
Vice-President - Marty Van Drueten
Treasurer - Jim Kelleher
Trustee - Al Voorhees, Jr.

Four nominations were offered for the position of Secretary, but the nominees declined. Linda Cooper was re-appointed as Secretary at the Officers Meeting on December 14.



We're sorry to report that the **Vintage Automobile Museum of NJ**, located in Point Pleasant, will **not** have a winter racing display. The museum's property is undergoing some renovations.

PATTERSON GREENHOUSES' FALL FAMILY FUN DAY

Patterson Greenhouses had another stellar car show fundraiser on October 9, 2022. GSVSCC was on the scene. **Thanks** to club members and car owners who attended. The club made a donation to the Disabled American Veterans. *Photos by Linda Cooper*



Please Give a Warm Welcome to...

We continue to have guest speakers at our monthly meetings. Accomplished driver **Ken Woolley, Jr.** was interviewed at our October meeting. **Thanks** to Ken for participating; to **Earl Krause** for serving as Interviewer and **Ray Shea**, Chief Videographer.

Who will be our next guest speaker?



Photos by Linda Cooper

OCTOBER 19, 2022

The October meeting of the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by President Ray Shea. Seventeen members were in attendance.

Earl Krause announced the passing of several members of the racing family: Mike Stahl, Legend car driver from NJ; Lou Ferraina, Jr., dirt racer from the 1960s and 1970s; Pete Fiandanca, asphalt driver from New England; and Ken Kuhlman, columnist for Area Auto Racing News. A moment of silence was observed. Tom Simmons of Racing with Jesus Ministries said a few words in memory of them and offered the invocation.

Ray announced that longtime member Peter Stieglitz recently had knee surgery. We offered our get well wishes to Peter. Ray announced that we have a new member - Thomas Harrington from Toms River. We were pleased to see Ray Liss in attendance after his recent illness.

Ray introduced the topic of the letter that was sent to the membership recently, expressing concerns about the future of the club. Ray instructed anyone with comments to contact the Officers through the website, email, or by phoning Ray, Al Voorhees or Linda Cooper. Ray said many organizations like GSVSCC are in reduced circumstances. Ray invited those in attendance to comment.

The group thanked Pete Wortman for opening up the firehouse each month, making coffee, and making us feel at home for our meetings.

Treasurer Jim Kelleher gave the Treasurer's Report. He emphasized that our bank account is in a good situation. He encouraged the membership to bring in younger new members. Jim had copies of bank balances for 2021 and 2022 available for members to take if interested.

Ray read an email he received from Krystal Ramsen, Richie Massing's granddaughter. Instead of gifts for her upcoming wedding, she and her fiancé are asking friends and family to donate to nonprofit organizations. She asked if we would be able to accept donations in her grandfather's memory. Ray replied to her with our thanks.

Ray reported on Patterson Greenhouses' Family Fun Day Car Show. It was another huge success. Over 200 cars were on display. Ray offered thanks to Alan Patterson and family, and to Terry Van and John Malsbury for bringing their cars. He also thanked our members who attended and staffed the "hospitality tent". The club and Jim Hall made donations to the Disabled American Veterans who were the focus of the benefit event.

Ray reviewed the club picnic held on September 25. He thanked Cheryl and Ray Liss and Larry Housman for making the necessary preparations. He said Tom Wardell did a great job as our Grillmaster, and the side dishes and desserts were delicious! The weather was nice, and about 35 people attended.

Continuing the subject of club picnics, Ray Liss suggested that we hire a person to serve as Grillmaster for next year's picnic. There are people who are hired to bring the food, cook it and clean up. This would make picnic preparations easier for us to manage. Folks would

still bring side dishes and desserts. There was general agreement about this idea.

Ray Liss then offered some discussion about the condition of the club – commiserated that other clubs have the same problems.

Fleming's Pumpkin Run is coming up on November 5. The club will have a display. Club car owners should contact Al Voorhees or Doug Megill if they are interested in displaying their cars.

Doug Megill gave details about a Swap Meet to be held at Wall Stadium on December 3. Proceeds will be donated to The Matheny School for children with disabilities. Donations will also be accepted also for Matheny.

Ray received an email from someone who offered to donate a commemorative shirt from Harmony Speedway. Ray is working with him to have it sent to the club.

We still have a few 30th anniversary shirts available for purchase. Price drop - \$20 each. Christmas is coming! Get your stocking stuffers before they're gone.

Ray said we received an email from Larry Gendras. He has many negatives from Jack Fitzpatrick, who was a photographer at Wall Stadium from the mid-1960s. He wants to know if the club is interested in buying them. Ray informed him that the club doesn't pay for artifacts, and negatives are difficult to store and use. However, Steve Barrick of Program Dynamics is interested in the negatives, so they will go to a good home.

Ray thanked all club members, drivers and owners who raced this season for their efforts in perpetuating our sport. He noted that several club members race at local tracks and wished them good luck at Turkey Derby.

Ray reminded the group that the next meeting will be on November 16 and there will be no meeting in December.

Doug Megill said Bill Force is working on a Vineland Speedway display for Fleming's Pumpkin Run. We look forward to seeing that.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The room was set up for an interview with this month's Guest Speaker Ken Woolley, Jr., who is an accomplished asphalt racer.

NOVEMBER 16, 2022

The November meeting of the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by President Ray Shea. Twenty members were in attendance.

Earl Krause announced two men who recently passed away: Rich Clickner, who was a skilled sheet metal/body fabricator in the 1970s. Also, Ralph Broschard recently passed away. A moment of silence was held for Rich and Ralph.

Earl gave the invocation.

Ray sent get well wishes to Carol Hearne, who recently had surgery. She is doing well. Also, Al Voorhees is experiencing back problems future. Get well to Carol and Al.

Ray reminded the folks that there will be no meeting next month.

(continued)

Ray said that nomination ballots for club officers were mailed to the membership. All the incumbents were re-elected: President – Ray Shea; Vice President – Marty Van Druten; Treasurer – Jim Kelleher; Al Voorhees – Trustee. Four nominations for Secretary were declined by the nominees. The Officers will appoint a Secretary.

Ray reminded folks that we still need a Newsletter Editor. Let Linda Cooper know if you are interested.

Ray gave a report about Fleming’s Pumpkin Run, held on November 5. It was a beautiful, non-autumnal day with 70-degree temperatures. Reportedly over 2,000 cars of many types were displayed. Thanks to Terry Van and Doug Megill for bringing their cars. Bill Force’s Vineland Speedway display was very well-done. Ray offered thanks to Jim Hall and Tom Wardell, who helped Ray set up our display on Friday. He also thanked Jim Hall, Tom Wardell, Don Bruno and George Klein, who helped man the booth on Saturday.

Ray announced the following new members: Anthony Fichera, Jr.; Ken Sparks; Patrick Voss (son of GSVSCC Hall of Fame driver Larry Voss).

Ray said we will not be participating in the Motorsports Race Car and Trade Show in January. No interest was expressed in putting a display together this year.

A swap meet will be held at Wall Stadium on December 3. Sellers will be charged \$20; shoppers will be asked to donate at least \$1. Proceeds will benefit the Matheny School in Peapack, NJ.

Polo shirts are still available – get your stocking stuffers now! They’re a bargain at \$25 each.

Ray gave an update on the negatives from Wall Stadium photographer Jack Fitzpatrick Steve Barrick bought them. Thousands of negatives have found a new home.

Ray thanked club car owners who brought their cars for display during this past season. We appreciate your participation.

Ray thanked those who responded to the recent letter regarding the club’s future. Ray expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Officers. It’s been his pleasure to be President for 31 years. It has meant a lot to him, and he has been fortunate to be surrounded by good people all these years. It is the Officers intent to continue the club next year. A round of applause was held. Ray mentioned that we had several responses to the letter concerning suggestions. Ray opened the floor for suggestions:

- A new meeting location was suggested. This topic was discussed.
- Recruiting new, potentially younger members who will participate and be active;
- Coordinating with Flemington Historical Society to have some joint events;
- Putting club cars on display for younger generations;

Ray thanked those who participated in tonight’s discussion.

Ray mentioned that we will not have a display at Wall Stadium’s Turkey Derby this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.



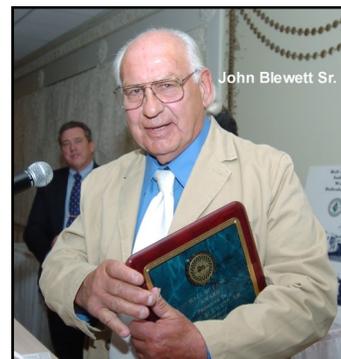
Racing Family Patriarch John “Grandpa” Blewett Passes At 90

John Blewett, Sr., patriarch of the famed No. 76 racing family based in Howell, NJ, died at age 90 on November 18, 2022. He passed away peacefully at his “log cabin” in Howell, surrounded by the family group that he referred to as “His Gang.”

Beloved as “Grandpa” to all, John, Sr. initially fielded his signature red, white & blue Modifieds in the 1970s and ‘80s for son John, Jr. at NJ’s asphalt Wall Stadium, then-paved New Egypt Speedway, in weekly NASCAR Modified events at Islip and Riverhead on Long Island, and on the NASCAR Modified Tour of that era.

John, Sr. was then car owner for grandsons Jimmy and the late John Blewett, III at Wall, on the NASCAR Modified Tour and Northeast and southern tracks with winning success through the present. Jimmy also competed and won in John, Sr.’s No. 76 on dirt at New Egypt and NJ’s Bridgeport. John, Sr. was also a proud “Great-Grandpa” when great-grandsons John Blewett, IV, the son of John III; and James Blewett, the son of Jimmy, took their first laps as the fourth-generation.

GSVSCC President Ray Shea said, “John, Sr. was a big supporter of GSVSCC from Day One. Words cannot express how much we appreciate all that he has done. RIP John ‘Grandpa’ Blewett.”



Thanks to Earl Krause of Area Auto Racing News for contributing to this piece.

PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER

(from the Summer, 2022 Issue)



There's no doubt that these guys had a great story to tell at the end of this night. Do you know where this photo was taken? Maybe what year?

These guys look like they had a fun time at Old Bridge Speedway in 1961. The photo credit goes to Pepper Cunningham, who is in the front passenger seat of the speedway's pace car. It's common for car dealerships to have their names painted on the pace cars they sponsor, but Laffin Chevrolet/Oldsobile Sales of South River, NJ also got their motto on there, too: "Stop Cryin' Try Laffin". Catchy!



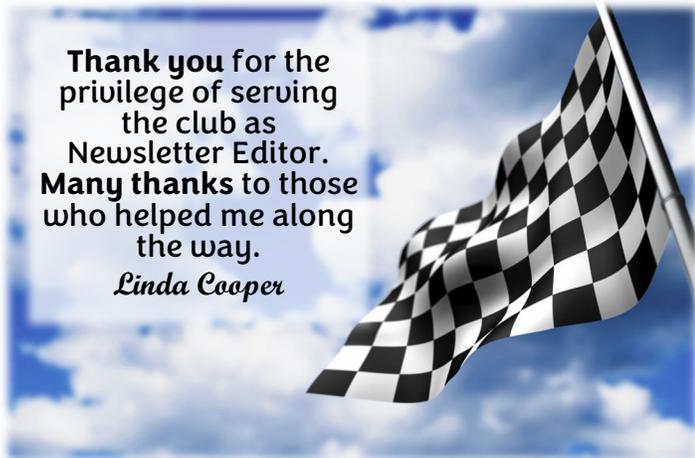
IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE



In 2011, Nancy Shea announced that she needed to step down as Newsletter Editor. I agreed to take over for a few years and then hand the reins over to another. That was 11 years ago! In recent years I have also announced that I needed to step down from the job and asked someone to step in. It's still me.

Almost a year ago, I announced that I would be retiring from the job at the end of 2022 and a replacement would be needed. It's still me.

Please let me know if you or someone you know would like to become the new Editor. Some computer and writing skills are necessary, but a degree in Journalism is not. A desire to help the club is the main requirement. - *Linda Cooper*



Thank you for the privilege of serving the club as Newsletter Editor. Many thanks to those who helped me along the way.
Linda Cooper

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