



Message from EMPA President, Dino Oberto

EMPA is an organization of professional writers, broadcasters, announcers, videographers, and photographers working in the motorsports industry, along with Associate and Corporate members.



Greetings all,

Hope all is well with everyone and your racing season has been good thus far. As we send this latest newsletter out we're now into the planning stages of the of the upcoming convention and you should all well know we are looking forward to the move at the Holiday Inn in Wilkes-Barre the weekend of January 12-14. 2024.

The hotel – Holiday Inn Wilkes-Barre - East Mountain, 600 Wildflower Drive, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702 – is viewable if you copy/paste this link:

https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/wilkes-barre/avphi/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps- -HI- -US- -AVPHI

Reservations:

The Room Block has been live and you can book two ways:

Via Phone – Use code **EMS**

Via Online – Use <https://tinyurl.com/EasternMotorSports>

If you would like to call the hotel direct here is the number: 570-822-1011. Make sure to let them know you are with EMPA.

Dues are due:

A reminder to everyone that you must have your 2024 dues paid in order to vote in the upcoming ballot and attend the convention. Dues remain at just \$50.

There are a few ways to pay which includes by check or through Speedway Illustrated on their website at the link you can copy/paste: <https://speedwayillustrated.com/product/2021-membership-to-the-empa/>. That also gets you a one year free subscription to the magazine and a huge thanks to Karl Fredrickson for this really great offer to the organization.

If paying by check please make out to: **Eastern Motorsport Press Association**

Mail to:

Dino Oberto

211 Columbus Avenue

Hazle Township, Pa. 18202

As our paths sometimes cross some of you can pay me in person.

If you already sent in your dues thank you. We'll be getting out your 2024 membership cards very soon.

I would like to add that your \$50 membership is your weekend ticket to the convention and it really is well worth it. I know I give emphasis to this each year but we really do look forward to having all who can attend the convention be there with us. And, to also submit to the photo and writer contests for those who apply.



Board of Directors:



Dino Oberto

Karl Fredrickson

Carol Houssock

Jeff Gromis

Pete MacDonald



www.empamedia.org



*The Mission of the EMPA is to acknowledge excellence in motorsports reporting and those whose who have excelled on the track and within the motorsports community.
To foster an atmosphere to improve the quality of motorsports reporting through the fellowship and interaction of veteran media with less experienced members in a welcoming atmosphere where tips, techniques and ideas are exchanged and encouraged.
To increase positive interactions between racetracks, sanctioning bodies and the working racing media.*



Convention Weekend Line-up:

We are in the process of lining up the weekend itinerary and don't want you to miss out on what's in the works. Friday night will see the **Belmont's Garage Champions Salute** taking place. This continues to be a great way to kick off the weekend. We'll once again reach out to a limited number of local and regional champions to join us for a casual gathering meet and greet. Thanks again to **Andy Belmont** for his support this year with Friday night's happenings.



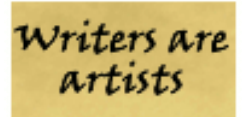
Contest Tidbits:

Saturday morning, of course, starts with the **Brice's NAPA Auto Parts EMPA Photo Contest** getting underway. Thank you goes to **Billy Brice** for your continued support to the contest and organization.



On the photo contest I would like to speak freely here on behalf of chair Bob Yurko. We want as many as possible to get in on this contest and please, don't ever think your photos stack up. They do! You guys and gals are all outstanding, we're all proud of your work, and you should be part of the contest. The rules are posted on the website. Any questions Bob is more than willing to help you with putting your boards together to anything else you may need help with.

The same goes for the **Pocono Raceway EMPA Writers Contest**. Send in those submissions. Just like our photographers, this organization is made up some amazing writers and I highly encourage you to submit your articles. The writer contest rules are also posted and have no changes. **Pocono Raceway** remains a strong supporter of the contest and EMPA, and we pass along our thanks to them and all that they do for the media.



As for the Saturday press conferences we are changing that up to be more of a discussion/roundtable sessions that will include the media and area promoters followed by a keynote.

We're in the process of putting the agenda together and will have more info out to all of you very soon.

Our friends at **Dover Motor Speedway** will be hosting our luncheon again. I can't begin to say how lucky we are to have people like **Gary Camp** and **Dover Motor Speedway** in our corner. Like Pocono, they too do so much for the media and all that we stand for.

The Board has had several meetings to date on getting the Hall of Fame names together and, as always, the selections that have been presented to us are fabulous. It's painstaking to narrow down the list because of how many worthy choices we have to go over. The other voting categories are not much different in who makes the ballot. All of that will be sent out accordingly.

More convention news and info will be going out as it becomes ready so



IN THE NEWS

From Bruce Bennett

Where does an auto racing writer and photographer go on vacation to really get away from it all? Aruba, of course, where, except for a small local dragstrip, there are no race tracks. That doesn't mean I couldn't get my racing fix, however. Sitting poolside, reading my favorite racing magazine, Speedway Illustrated - now that's relaxation. Regards, Bruce

Dino: Bruce, I think I hear the Beach Boys playing Kokomo in the background!



From Carol Houssock

I have a new grandchild! Dean was born on October 12th, just a day before his sister's birthday. That makes 2 boys and 3 girls for me. Being a parent was a blessing. Being a grandparent, as many of you know, is over the top! Update — I'll be back at Chemung Speedrome for my 30th year of track announcing. The owner and promoter came to a contract agreement!

Dino: Carol, congrats to you and the family on the latest edition! (Or is it addition? LOL) Go for that 30th!



Dover Motor Speedway...



The magic and spirit of the holiday season will be on full display to close 2023 when the “Gift of Lights at Dover Motor Speedway” drive-thru event returns to the Monster Mile. The second annual Gift of Lights event runs every evening from Thanksgiving through New Year’s Eve, with more than 60 scenes and 3.5 million lights set up along an almost two-mile pathway winding through Dover Motor Speedway campgrounds.

Gift of Lights is produced by Winterland, Inc., a holiday services firm headquartered in Marion, Ind., with more than three decades of experience, along with support from partners including Delaware Behavioral Health, Delaware’s Quaint Villages, Dover Pools, Del-One and Visit Delaware.

The schedule for the in-car experience includes:

- **Thanksgiving through Saturday, Dec. 16**

- Sunday-Thursday: 5-9 p.m.

- Friday-Saturday: 5-10 p.m.

- **Sunday, Dec. 17 through New Year’s Eve**

- All days: 5-10 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased online at GiftOfLightsDover.com or upon arrival, with rates of \$35 per car and \$60 for buses and limousines. No advance reservations are required. Vehicles will enter the display via a new entrance at 1229 Persimmon Tree Road and exit on Leipsic Road. Follow traffic signs for directions and up-to-date messaging. Several theme and discount nights are planned for Gift of Lights, including:

- **Free Military Mondays, Nov. 27 and Dec. 4:** All active-duty airmen, reservists, guardsmen, guardians and veterans with valid IDs receive free admission (for them and their car load).
- **Monday, Nov. 27: Pajama Night** (\$5 off per car if wearing pajamas).
- **Tuesday, Nov. 28: Giving Tuesday** (\$5 off per car).
- **Wednesday, Nov. 29: Pet Night** (\$5 off per car if you bring a furry friend).
- **Neighbor Nights, Dec. 5-6:** Flyers to be distributed to track neighbors for free entry.
 - Flyer must be given to ticketing agent for free entry.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 6:** Christmas Sweater Night (Wear your most festive holiday sweater for \$5 off per car).
- **All Mondays through Thursdays:** Cars bringing three nonperishable food donations to Food Bank of Delaware any night receive \$3 off per car.

“After just one season, Gift of Lights is already a Dover community holiday tradition,” said Mike Tatoian, Dover Motor Speedway’s president and general manager. “We received an overwhelming positive response after our inaugural year and look forward to welcoming everyone back to enjoy the joy and the wonder of the holiday season with Gift of Lights this year.” **For information on the Gift Of Lights Dover Outreach Program benefiting groups, schools or organizations, email dms@giftoflights.com.**

From Joe Kaminski

Mike Zarrett (mike@townecamera.com) of **Towne Camera, Bloomsburg** (570) 441-1165 looks forward to returning to Saturday’s EMPA Photo assembly in January. Mike will offer camera cleaning services, camera evaluations and special offers on camera equipment during the Saturday session. Photographers are encouraged to contact Mike in advance of the Convention if they require any special assistance or equipment interest.

Dino: Joe, great getting Mike to come back to the convention and hey photographers this is a great opportunity to take advantage of this.

From Greg Gage

Greg was interviewed by his local TV station on his photo work and we invite you to check it out on the link here:

<https://www.wtrf.com/weather/local-photographer-highlights-ohio-valley-scenes-for-wtrf-and-boasts-world-class-credentials/>

Thanks Greg and really awesome!

Attention Photographers

SELL OR TRADE

We will have a table available to bring your photography equipment you would like to sell or trade.

There could be someone out there that might need something you have!

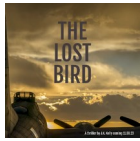
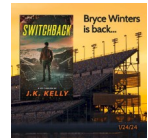
Please place your information/price and your name with your equipment.

Table will be set up during the judging competition on Saturday.



From JK Kelly

It's been an unbelievably productive year for me. The sequel to the DEADLY DRIVER F1/CIA spy thriller is named **SWITCHBACK** and launches in January at the Rolex 24 in Daytona, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.



Last spring, we developed two feature film scripts, one titled **THE LOST BIRD**, involving a B17 warbird and a family's effort to recover her, and the other titled **SANGUE**, an international crime thriller.

The big news is that the scripts were pitched to several producers in Hollywood, and we had complete script requests from two well-known producers. While the WGA and SAG strikes brought everything to a halt, we expect to hear something about them by year's end.

Surprisingly, after mentioning THE LOST BIRD story on a B17 fan site, there was enough interest that we've developed a novella that will be released in time for Christmas.

Last but not least, the Spanish translation of **DEADLY DRIVER** was completed, and **CONDUCTOR MORTAL** was launched on Amazon before the U.S. and Mexico GPs.



Finally, the book **VP Racing Fuels** commissioned me to write about the company's first 50 years in business is nearing completion. I look forward to seeing everyone at the EMPA convention this year.

Thank you, as always, for your support. Sincerely, Jim "JK" Kelly <http://jkkelly.com>

Dino: JK, looks like some great reads and perhaps you can bring along some copies to the convention.

From Ron Hedger

Ron sends along news from the Saratoga Automobile Museum

SLATE OF PRESENTERS AT "RACING MEMORIES" PROGRAM EXPANDED

An already full slate of presenters for the Saratoga Automobile Museum's annual "**Racing Memories**" program (formerly Lost Speedways) has been expanded by two with the addition of **Ron Moshier**, author of a terrific book on modified hero **Lou Lazzaro**, and longtime Vermont-based dirt tracker **Eugene Munger**.



The duo will join Lime Rock Park announcer **Greg Rickes**, modified stars **Jack Lehner** and **Dave Camara** and returning Pennsylvanian **Richie Tobias**, who will talk about both his Slingshot racers and his standout racing career. Along with a local racer and his car, Tobias will bring one of his new electric Slingshots for attendees to check out.

"I'm looking forward to interviewing Ron and Eugene as well as the previously committed Lehner, Camara and Tobias" offered event organizer Ron Hedger. "With Greg covering Showroom Stock racing at LRP and the others offering unique views of their segments of the sport, it should be a great day. And the recent return of the **Nolan Swift 'Ten Pins'** supermodified to the Racing in New York gallery by restorer Steve Miller will give visitors a chance to examine one of the Oswego Speedway's most famous cars as well."

As always, the **Racing Memories** program will be held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (November 25th) with doors opening at 10 am. Attendees are encouraged to bring their memorabilia to display, with a rerun of the video of Hedger's interview with **Ronnie Johnson** recalling his late father "**Jumpin' Jack**" **Johnson** set to run prior to the formal presentations.

The Saratoga Automobile Museum is located on the Avenue of the Pines in the Saratoga Spa State Park, just off the Adirondack Northway at exit 13 N. More information on the museum and advance sale tickets to Racing Memories are available online at www.saratogaautomuseum.org

Dino: Ron, always good stuff happening up there at the museum!

From Brooke Johnpier

Hey guys! I just wanted to share that I'm settling into college (St. Bonaventure University) very nicely, and am already involved with 95% of campus media. I am learning so much here, and can already see an improvement in my writing skills. I'm also still with **Speedway Illustrated** (one of the best racing magazines out there) and am working on pieces for them. Basically, life is going great for me, and I wouldn't want it any other way! Thank you, Brooke

Dino: Brooke, that's great news and we're all happy for you. The motorsports media is proud to have you!



From Dino Oberto

*You know we're all ambassadors to EMPA, so at a recent visit to Washington D.C. I took the time to stop by the **National Press Building** to pitch the organization. Needless to say I'm awaiting word on being invited to speak about us on NPR!*

Carol: Dino, don't enter this selfie in the photo contest. Just sayin'.



Kudos to Pocono Raceway

The track received the "Event of the Year" award from the Pennsylvania Restaurant and Lodging Association (PRLA). The designation is part of the Spirit of Hospitality Awards. Each year, the PRLA honors individuals and businesses statewide from the hospitality and tourism industry for their dedication, service, community involvement, and successes. The Pocono Raceway event was the NASCAR Cup Race Weekend (July 22 & 23, 2023). Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series race was a sellout and the largest crowd in Long Pond, PA since 2010. Saturday's race, the "Explore the Pocono Mountains 225" sponsored by the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, drew huge crowds as well for an all-new fan experience with a new Victory Lane, paddock and more.

"This award is an important acknowledgement of our avid fans and the relentless effort our team at Pocono Raceway puts in every day. Executing a premier national-level event each year also takes the support of a remarkable cohort of local, regional, and state-wide partners and advocates," said Ben May, President of Pocono Raceway. "For generations, our fans and industry partners have looked forward to their annual visit to the Pocono Mountains, and value the hospitality that welcomes them. Pocono Raceway's name may be on the award, but we share the honor with every small business, bartender, front-line worker, and community partner that rolls out the welcome mat with us."

Dino: Congrats from all of us at EMPA!

And finally—

If anyone you know is not receiving the newsletter please let Carol and me know so we can take care of that. Sometimes emails change and we don't always get that info.

Also, please empty your email box from time to time. Carol receives quite a few return messages that her mail cannot be received due to full mailboxes.



Until next time

Peace, out

Dino

EMPA Board of Directors

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