



Message from EMPA President, Ron Hedger

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

On behalf of the board of directors, officers and committee members, I would like to thank all who attended the recent EMPA convention in Valley Forge for another great event.



The contest entries were outstanding, Brian Carter gave a great keynote address punctuated by watching the afternoon demolition of the Syracuse grandstand live and the seminar on "What Speedways and Sanctions Expect from the Media" got rave reviews. I was especially pleased with the banquet and Hall of Fame presentations, as the inductees all gave terrific acceptance talks. (Brian Carter photo by Paul Stout)

Board of Directors:

Ron Hedger, President
 Dino Oberto, Vice President
 Len Sammons
 Earl Krause
 Jeff Gromis

Officers:

Carol Houssock, Secretary
 Jeff Gromis, Treasurer

Ricky Craven was especially compelling and indicated to me that he would return as keynoter sometime in the future. It will be extremely difficult to top this year's class of inductees. *Davey Brown is shown accepting his HOF trophy from EMPA's Earl Krause.* (Paul Stout photo)



The venue changes brought on by the hotel having a double booking for the auditorium worked out much better than expected. Breakfast and lunch went well using the auditorium area for seating and no time was lost moving upstairs for lunch and back down to complete the press conferences and start the seminar. And with the hotel bringing in extra help to turn the banquet room around from the other event, we had access earlier than expected and banquet setup was done ahead of time. Many thanks to all who helped with the EMPA portion of the setup.

Sunday's business meeting saw a close election, with myself and Len Sammons receiving three-year terms on the board, Earl Krause and Dino Oberto earning two-year terms, and Jeff Gromis joining the board for the first time with the one-year seat. The subsequent board meeting saw Dino Oberto and myself reelected as Vice-President and President, respectively, with Jeff Gromis and Carol Houssock reappointed to their current positions as Treasurer and Secretary.

Thanks to the other members who ran for Board seats as well. We look forward to them and others contesting the one seat that will be open next year. As I said at the meeting, a number of us, especially me, are aging and "new blood" will be needed in the future.



www.empaonline.org



For next year, we are currently looking at other hotels as well as discussing arrangements with the Crowne Plaza. We would likely have the same room arrangements as this year, with the calendar allowing us to move back a week the following year to avoid the conflict with the other large group. Another factor we have to consider is Len Sammons' schedule for his indoor race dates, which could draw off a large number of members who either work for him or cover the event for various media outlets if there is a conflict. The schedule is being negotiated at this point but will be factored into the decision when complete.

As always, we welcome your convention comments and suggestions, so please email them to rijhmedia@juno.com and we'll pass them on. A number of people have told us already that they would be happy with a smaller lunch on Saturday, so that will be considered by the convention committee when they discuss the menus with hotel staff. Input like that is always valued.

Membership New member Rich Corbett, who currently lives in Kentucky but has Watertown, NY roots, has graciously offered to recruit new members from the area south and west of our traditional area. Rich, who travels a great deal, meets a great many other photographers and writer and we appreciate his offer. As I said over the weekend, we need a steady stream of new members to replace the old-timers who retire from the sport, so please invite those you interact with this season to consider membership.

It raises everyone's game to compete against the best in the contests, but we also welcome those who are just entering the racing media. One of our missions is to make the media more professional, and helping these people learn ethical behavior and practices is a big part of that mission.

CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to those who prevailed in the three contests for professional members. We expect the writing and photography contest rules and categories to remain relatively the same for 2016 but will explore adding a broadcasting segment to the video contest to allow our members who are on radio or tv to participate as well. So far the change is just a concept, so anyone with suggestions is urged to send them along for consideration.

On a related note, longtime videographer and EMPA video contest chairman Bill Channel has decided to retire from the post. Like so many of us, his health is not what it could be and while we will greatly miss his expertise and keen judging eye, we totally understand the decision. Our best to Bill and his family for the future!

Special Awards:

EMPA Hall of Fame: **Davey Brown, Dr. Dick Berggren, Ricky Craven, Mike Stefanik, and Gary Balough**

Junie Donlavey Spirit of the Sport Award: **The Bailey Bunch**

Al Holbert Memorial National Driver of the Year: **Donnie Schatz**

Richie Evans Memorial Northeast Driver of the Year: **Stewart Friesen**

Chris Economaki Newsmaker of the Year: **Super DIRT Week Finale**

Jerry Reigle Outstanding Contribution to Sprint Car Racing Award: **Don Kreitz, Jr.**, presented by World Racing Group

John Blewett III Young Guns Award: **Freddie and Brandon Rahmer**, presented by New England Racing Fuel

EMPA Member Awards:

President's Award: **Terri Anastor and Pam Krause**

Ace Lane, Sr. Memorial Photography Award: **Bob Yurko**, Area Auto Racing News

Jim Hunter Memorial Writer Award: **Dino Oberto**, Hazleton (PA) Standard-Speaker

Ernie & Marilyn Saxton Dedication to EMPA Award: **Jeff Gromis**



Pocono Raceway Writers Contest

Personality profile: **Mike Aaskaveg** (Speedway Illustrated), Karl Fredrickson (Speedway Illustrated), Ron Hedger (Speed Sport Magazine)

Race Report: **Len Sammons** (Area Auto Racing News), Kevin Kovac (DirtonDirt.com), Mark McKeon (Area Auto Racing News)

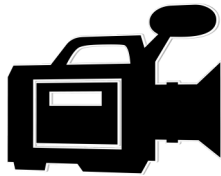
Column: **Dick Berggren** (Speedway Illustrated Magazine), Dick Berggren (Speedway Illustrated Magazine), Karl Fredrickson (Speedway Illustrated)

Feature: **Mike Adaskaveg** (Speedway Illustrated), J.A. Ackley (Speedway Illustrated), Linda Mansfield (Speed Sport Magazine)

News: **Mike Adaskaveg** (Speedway Illustrated), Aaron Creed (Speed51.com), Kevin Kovac (DirtonDirt.com)



American Honda Motor Co. Video Contest



Single Camera Race/Event Coverage: **Mel Thomas** (Thomas Video), Matt Thomas (Thomas Video)

Multi-Camera Race/Event Coverage: **Brian Unangst & Dino Oberto** (BRC13 Sports), Mel Thomas (Thomas Video), Matt Thomas (Thomas Video)

Racing Highlights/Compilations/Documentary/Crash Collections: **Matt Thomas** (Thomas Video), Robert Chalmers (Race Pro Weekly), Mel Thomas (Thomas

Video)

News: **Robert Chalmers** (Race Pro Weekly), Brian Unangst (BRC13 Sports)

Brice's NAPA Photography Contest

Feature: **Dick Ayers**, Amber Chalmers, Bill McGaffin

Action Sequence: **Lenny Slemmer, Jr.**, Bill McGaffin, Tommy Hein

Pure Art: **Brent Smith**, Lenny Slemmer, Jr., Mel Stettler

Portrait & Personality: **Bill McGaffin**, Dave Dalesandro, Jack Kromer

Action: **Dave Pratt**, Lenny Slemmer, Jr., Rick Neff

Picture Story: **Bob Yurko**, Paul Arch, Paul Arch

Crash Action: **Dick Ayers**, Robert Chalmers, Rick Neff

Portfolio of the Year: **Rick Sweeten**

Unpublished Color: **Lenny Slemmer, Jr.**, Jack Kromer, Dick Ayers

Action Cam: **JJ Lane**, JJ Lane, Robert Chalmers

Best of Show: **Brent Smith**

Janice Brice Memorial Honorable Mention Award: **Jim Smith**



CONTEST AND CONVENTION THANK YOU'S

We urge everyone who collected checks from contest sponsors as well as all who enjoyed the convention's amenities to drop a quick thank you note to the various sponsors. The website is undergoing some maintenance, but once it is back up you can find the sponsor contact information there:
www.empaonline.org.





Meet the Champions—Friday night at the convention!

Seated, left to right: Robert French, Tim Buckwalter, Jacob Balliet, Steven Drevicki, Matt Hirschman, Bill Gallagher, Earl Paules

Standing, left to right: Steven Reed, Paul Koehler Jr., Dan Bainey, Chuck Schutz, Ryan Godown, Brett Kressley, Ryan Watt, Matt Mahaney Paul Stout photo

And last, but not least.....this note from Ricky Craven

Ron, I couldn't have had a better evening and couldn't have been more content with any celebration than what I experienced with all of you at this great event. I am very proud to enter such an elite group and thankful I had the time to relax and enjoy all the people I met. And having my son with me made it extra special. I thank you again for acknowledging me and my career and feel I'm part of the teamgoing forward. Keep in touch. All the best, Ricky



Ricky Craven and his son (L) with NASCAR'S Scott Hunter
Jim Smith photo



Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Dick Berggren
Jim Smith photo

Until next time..... *Ron Hedger*

LEADERSHIP CONTACT DIRECTORY

President	Ron Hedger	rjhmedia@juno.com
Vice President	Dino Oberto	dlmo@ptd.net
Board	Earl Krause	earl@aarn.com
Board	Len Sammons	lhs@aarn.com
Board	Jeff Gromis	jjg495299@comcast.net
Secretary	Carol Houssock	carol2race@aol.com

