



Can-Am Racing Celebration Sept. 12 at IMRRC

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y. (Sept. 4, 2015) – A group of insiders from the glory days of Can-Am racing will share their stories at an all-day celebration of the race series on Saturday, Sept. 12, at the International Motor Racing Research Center in Watkins Glen.

“It was a collaboration of lunatics,” says Oscar Koveleski, who was an independent team owner and SCCA Can-Am champion driver.

The always colorful and outspoken Koveleski is one of the headliners for the daylong event that will include cars, slide shows, films and stories galore, morning and afternoon.

Pete Lyons, motorsports journalist and author of the acclaimed “Can-Am Cars in Detail: Machines and Minds Racing Unrestrained,” will be the moderator and a speaker at the afternoon session.

The event is sponsored in part by the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce and is free and open to all. The Center is located at 610 S. Decatur St., Watkins Glen.

The Canadian-American Challenge Cup series for “unlimited” sports racing cars began in 1966. Its last race was in 1974. Racing continued under the SCCA banner until 1987.

“Power. Speed. Unabated engine thunder that shivered the earth beneath your very shoes. Free-wheeling technical innovation unleashed on every front,” Lyons writes in “Can-Am Cars in Detail.”

“At its peak, the Can-Am was a golden crucible for experiments at the cutting edge of automotive technology. The series granted a giddy freedom that today’s rules-bound race-car designers can only dream about,” Lyons writes.

Koveleski, who will be joined on stage by his Auto World Racing Team crew chief Jack Deren, said drivers entered Can-Am competition because they wanted a greater challenge.

“What we did was something out of the ordinary. There were no rules. Our rules were only to take care of each other,” said Koveleski, who is a past president of the Historic Can-Am Association.

The Racing Research Center’s celebration actually begins on Friday, Sept. 11, at the Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen, the downtown festival honoring the village’s racing history.

At 3 p.m. at The Legends Speak, sponsored by the Center, Lyons, Koveleski, Deren and others will give a glimpse of what people can expect from the daylong event on Saturday.

Saturday's schedule starts with slide shows and films at 9 a.m. and continuing throughout the day. A couple of cars will be on display.

At 10:30 a.m., Judy Stropus, a professional timer/scorer who worked with the Penske and Brumos racing teams in Can-Am, will moderate an informal storytelling session with Can-Am drivers and team owners. Invitees include Victor Franzese, Bobby Brown, Steve Durst and Randy Zimmer.

At 1 p.m., Lyons takes over the moderator and speaker duties for a panel discussion about the draw of Can-Am racing, its challenges and glories. Other panelists will be Koveleski, Deren, Stropus and John Bornholdt, chief steward for SCCA Can-Am racing.

The day will also include a model car show of Can-Am cars and previews of a book and a documentary film, both to be released in 2016 as Can-Am marks its 50th anniversary.

The Racing Research Center is an archival and research library dedicated to the preservation and sharing of the history of motorsports, all series and all venues, worldwide. For more information about the Center visit the website www.racingarchives.org.

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