

Originally appeared on News-Journal Online at

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/NewsJournalOnline/News/Local/newEAST04020909.htm>

| [Print This Page](#)
| [Close This Page](#)

February 09, 2009

Parade, other activities lead up to 500

By AUDREY PARENTE
Staff writer

The exhaust-fume excitement of qualifying began Sunday at Daytona International Speedway, and a pileup of race-lovers brings with it a weeklong stretch of other local activities -- including the chance to run into "Mad" Marion MacDonald, the original bad boy of racing.



The activities begin tonight with the Daytona Oceanside Rotary Club naming Dale Jarrett and Robert Yates to the Stock Car Hall of Fame at the 20th Anniversary Banquet.

Tuesday there's a beach parade and sprint races, followed later in the week by awards banquets, charity auctions of race memorabilia and a car show at Ponce Inlet Lighthouse.

MacDonald Signup for entry into Tuesday's parade is today -- between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. -- at the Living Legends of Auto Racing Museum at Sunshine Park Mall, 2400 S. Ridgewood Ave. The parade starts Tuesday at noon at the Daytona Beach Shores Drive-In Church.

MacDonald, 90, of Port Orange wants to be in the parade but hasn't found a driver for an all-original 1964 Ford Galaxy he rebuilt recently. He can't drive himself because he's on heart medication.

But he sure can tell what it was like to put the pedal to the metal and spin out in the sand during beach races in the 1930s.

"My daddy went to a race and came back home and told me about \$600 Sears Roebuck cars that came in first and second. I said I could beat those cars," said MacDonald. "I had never done any racing, but I was crazy -- like Tony Stewart."

MacDonald lived in the Central Florida community of Plymouth, near Apopka, and was 20 when he came over to meet Bill France.

"He bought me my first race car, made in England. Ford made it; they named it Mercury -- with a padded dash, and the wheels turned with the fenders," MacDonald said. "It had cable-controlled brakes from a British bomber."

So, in 1938, MacDonald went beach racing.

"I popped out the clutch and jumped out ahead. I couldn't believe it. I came into the turn wide-open, when everyone else slowed down. I would go sideways, and then I had a straight shot down the backstretch," MacDonald said.

He bucked a headwind on the beach but flew down the backstretch. Sliding wide-open, tipping slightly around the south turn, he made it onto the beach for another lap.

He led three laps but the car slid too far around a turn, tipping sideways into a palmetto.

"Spectators turned it back over, but it was still in gear and it stalled," he said. "By the time I got it started again, I was several laps behind."

MacDonald didn't win, but he came away with his nickname, and France showed him favor.

"I finished way back in the pack, but Bill France paid me the same prize he paid No. 3 -- \$350, because I put on a show, he said, but told me: 'You will never win a race like that. You have to learn to know when to go and when to slow.' After he told me that, I started winning races all over the south."

Buz McKim, NASCAR Hall of Fame historian at Charlotte, N.C., said MacDonald is a living time capsule.

"He was there at the birth of stock car racing with Bill France competing on the beach before World War II," McKim said in a phone interview Saturday. "The fact that he is here to tell us his first-hand accounts makes him a treasure."

Although MacDonald won't be driving in the beach parade, parade organizers have found him a ride.

audrey.parente@news-jrnl.com

RACING SPECIAL EVENTS

Here are details on racing-related events this week:

- **STOCK CAR HALL OF FAME** Anniversary Celebration, tonight , 6:30, The Shores Resort and Spa, 2637 S. Atlantic Ave. Prices are \$100; \$150 includes 5:30 p.m. VIP reception. Also includes cocktails, dinner and induction of Dale Jarrett and Robert Yates. 386-334-0996.
- **BEACH PARADE**, Tuesday, antique cars and old race cars on display at 11 a.m. at Daytona Beach Shores Drive-In Church, 3140 S. Atlantic Ave. Cars will leave church at noon and go south on A1A to El Portal beach approach and line up for viewing. Parade at 12:30 p.m. going north to the Shores Resort and Spa and back south where sprints will occur. Presented by Living Legends of Auto Racing. 386-290-4192 or 386-763-4483.
- **RACE WEEK CHARITY AUCTION**, Tuesday 6 p.m. at Indigo Lakes Golf Club, 312 Indigo Drive, Daytona Beach. Features autographed memorabilia and more, also book signings and autograph sessions. Prices: \$20; \$15 in advance includes food and beer. 386-299-7343.
- **ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET**, Wednesday, 5-10 p.m., Plaza Resort and Spa, 600 N. Atlantic Ave. Daytona Beach. Prices: \$45. Advanced tickets required. Presented by Living Legends of Auto Racing; dinner, award presentation and special guests. 386-255-7428.
- **PARTNERS FOR PAWS SPECTACULAR**, Wednesday 5:30-9:30 p.m. at the Daytona Club, Daytona International Speedway. Live and silent auction hosted by Ryan Newman and Greg Biffle; to benefit the Greg Biffle Foundation, Ryan Newman Foundation and Halifax Humane Society of Daytona Beach. Prices: \$25; \$20 in advance includes dinner. Children 14 and younger are free. 704-348-9680.
- **LIGHTHOUSE CAR SHOW**, Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, 4931 S. Peninsula Drive. Beach racing vehicles and appearances by former drivers, owners and mechanics. Prices: Included with regular admission: \$5 ages 12 and older and \$1.50 ages 11 and younger. 386-441-3246.

© 2009 News-Journal Corporation. ® www.news-journalonline.com. Do not republish or distribute

without permission.