

We didn't have a fancy name for mechanics back in the day, they were just called "mechanics" or "guys that worked on the car".

Whatever they were called, they were a breed all by themselves, they were loyal and would always go above and beyond for their driver.

Nowadays they are called "crew chiefs" and it's time to give those guys the credit they deserve. Now I'd like to tell you about my crew chief.

His name is Ray Bartling, he grew up in the New Gretna area, hung around with Russell Groff, who had a junkyard and still does today.

Ray went in the Army in 1963 to 1966, he went into tele-communications as a lineman and when he was stationed in Germany, one of their trucks broke down, so he fixed it and they put him to work in the motor pool.

After Ray got out of the service he worked for Sears in the automotive center as a mechanic and that's where we met up.

Now Ray's wife Pat, enters into the mix along with all the other women that were directly or indirectly involved with racing.

I said earlier that crew chiefs were loyal, well Ray was that and then some.

P'ville had their 1st race on mother's day one year and she wasn't a happy camper that she sat home alone on mother's day, I think how he put it was "she had tight jaws about that episode".

Another occasion was Ray's dad had come into town and he told his dad "he was sorry that he couldn't spend Sunday with him because of the races", now if that isn't loyalty I don't know what is.

Ray would bring his nephew Kenny to the track every week but then there was a fatal accident involving a firearm and we lost our little buddy.

Kenny's dad wrote me a letter shortly thereafter which all of you can read in the pictures below.

Roy Miles

November 1974

Dear Friend

It would please me a great deal if you would accept this small gift for your scrapbook. It is from one of your fans and one who loved racing. You "Roy" were his idol at the speedway on Sundays. Kenneth Lee Ross drew this picture about a day or so prior to his checker flag. I know since I gave him the tablet only about three days before.

The next season you race, race it clean and fast. My son "Ken" will be rooting for you all the way in "27" "Ken" knew something that has taken me almost a life time to learn I'd like to pass it on. "The best and nicest winners are not always the first across the finish line!"

You were his winner

Chuck Ross

One night I had blown a tire and came into the pits to get it changed and I got out to help and Ray was getting ready to tighten the lugs when I took the wrench from him and tightened them myself. After the race Ray let me have it with both barrels and said if I didn't trust him to tighten the lugnuts on the wheels, that maybe I should find someone else to work on the car.

He taught me a "life" lesson that night and I'm damn glad he did and so after that night we had 9 damn good years together and if you asked me would I do it again with him, ABSOLUTELY !!

We didn't have a lot of money to put into the car and by many peoples standards we shouldn't have done as well as we did, but Ray and I made this checklist up and that list was adhered to every week without fail, so we didn't have to many nuisance breakdowns like plug wires coming off or nuts coming loose and I would say that was a large factor that kept



us in the top ten in points for all those years.



It took about a year before we really clicked as a team and had the routines down pat until we were able to work on and around the car without getting in each others way and that was no easy task as it was only a one car garage and not much room on either side of the car.

Ray and I would be working on different projects on the car and he would have the correct wrench or socket in my hand without me asking for it and if any of you turn wrenches in racing you know that is a big asset and a timesaver.

I even got Ray to drive my car in a few times when I drove the #14 for Ed Brown for a couple of races so we could keep up the owner points on the #27.

Another member of the crew was Jack Carty from Somers Point, who also worked at Sears. At night Jack had a part time job at Pontierres Auto Service in Ocean City, where he would do our cylinder heads and valve work.

Jack was and still is a good mechanic, he's 70 years old and still busting wrenches.

Tommy Harte, also known as "Tiny" helped us on occasion and the one time I remember I threw a party for the crew after a complete rebuild of the #27 and my man Tiny was the life of the party. Tommy usually hung out with Harry McConnell and when racing season was over Tommy and I would go to Brigantine Beach and fish as we were avid surf fishermen.

Joe Permuy was the scrounger for our team, he would go all over the place looking for parts we needed. One day he brought this big window fan over that he'd found somewhere, he said we needed an "air conditioner" and he set it on the bench in front of the window and turned it on, it worked but it had a slight vibration, so much that it vibrated my tool box off the bench

scattering tools everywhere.I took my 10 lb sledge and beat the crap out of that fan.

I'll wind this up by saying to my guys,"Thanks again for sticking with me all those years,I really appreciate it,you guys always gave a 100 %".

If any of you want to see an article done on anyone that was affiliated with your car or the track send me an email at raycer27@lsracers.com or call 561-642-1999 and let us know who you would like to see featured on our website.
