November 14, 2018 Meeting

The November 14, 2018 Waterloo Technical Society (WTS) meeting was called to order by President Dorhout at 7:15 pm. President Dorhout welcomed visitors and noted that this was the third meeting of the 105th year of the Society.

A total of 34 members and guests attended.

Treasurer's Report. Ken Friend reported a beginning balance of $735.17. Income of $160.00 from memberships with expenses of $20.00 for the October speaker's meal, no other expenses leaving a new balance of $875.17. Treasurer Friend's report stated a total of 8 honorary and 33 paid members yielding a membership roster of 41 members.

Current Officers. Officers for the 105th WTS year were introduced by President Dorhout:

Officers for the 2018-2019 year (year 105) are:

President:	Gary Dorhout
Co-Vice Presidents:	Jerry Mohling and James Stevenson
Treasurer:	Kenneth Friend & Paul Anderson
Dinner Reservations:	Derek Eagles & Steve Lang
Secretary:	James Stevenson
Publicity/Recognition:	Todd Whiting
Auditing:	Bill Mitchell & Jim Garrett
Nominating Committee:	Open
Web Site:	Tim Schoenfelder / Jim Volgarino

Old Business. President Dorhout reviewed the topics for this year. The dates, speaker and topics for the 105th WTS were:

Speakers for the 2018-2019 Meeting Year (Year 105)

12 Sep 2018—Austin Maginnis—Tiny House Project at UNI
Oct 10 – Steve Lang – Early Electronic Digital Computers
Nov 14 – Jim Volgarino – History of Tunis Speedway
Jan 9, 2019 – Chuck Nielson – Airgas Gas Supply
Feb 13 – Open – **looking for speaker**
Mar 13 – Vasko Popovski – Advanced Heat Treat (Mike Woods)
Apr 10 – Mark Albright—MidAmerica Energy, LNG Waterloo, Tom P.
May 8 – AECOM Engineering Services, Waterloo, IA
(Architecture, Engineering, Construction and Operations Management)

Discussion on the May 2018 motion to donate $250 to Tiny House Program at UNI concluded with a decision to identify where donations have been made and prioritize alternatives for donations for action at the November 14, 2018 meeting. President Dorhout and Treasurer Friend to make a list and members to identify possible recipients. Item tabled until the January 2019 meeting.

New Business. Bill Mitchell presented the Auditors' Report. The conclusion was that the records are in excellent condition. Auditors Mitchell and Garrett moved that the Treasurer's dues be paid by the Waterloo Technical Society. Motion was tabled until the January 2019 meeting. The report is appended to these minutes.

Guest Speaker. **Jim Vogarino**, freelance writer and WTS Webmaster.

Mr. Jim Volgarino is a Waterloo native. He was born here and lived here for nearly all of his life except for a few years when Uncle Sam decided he needed him. Jim graduated from West High and has degrees from UNI in English and Journalism. He was a journalist for several years at the Waterloo Courier before entering the world of commercial graphic design, eventually buying a local printing operation he ran for 15 years, selling it in 1995. For several years he was a consultant for a number of local companies and started up another small hybrid print company in 2001, selling it in 2006 before heading to UNI to teach and manage a graphics lab. He is now retired and a freelance writer for a number of automotive publications and is a WTS member.

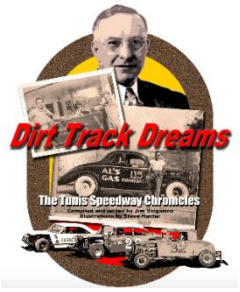


Figure 1 Tunis and race cars

Overview. Jim talked about the history of the Tunis Speedway in Waterloo, Iowa. In 1947 Judd L. Tunis decided to build a 1/2 mile horse racing track in his backyard. He owned 52 acres of land located between Waterloo and Cedar Falls and he wanted a place where he could exercise his horses and stage some races. He staged a few races but found that the audiences weren't as large as he wanted. So a year later, he changed direction and created an automobile dirt track that became one of the most popular racing venues in the Midwest. And he did it without having even one race car driver living in the Cedar Valley area



Figure 2 Sign at the Speedway

Minutes: The Tunis Speedway, named for Judd Tunis its founder, was in Waterloo, Iowa from 1948 to 1983. There were two race tracks in Waterloo and Cedar Falls in 1900. Waterloo's had the Homepark Race Track near Byrnes Park on Homepark Boulevard. Cedar Falls had two race tracks. The first near UNI moved to a track near Peet Junior High. These tracks had horse races and also sulky races in their day. The Tunis Race Track was constructed for sulky races and was a half-mile oval on the Judd Tunis property south of University Avenue near Hackett Street in Waterloo. The track is visible on Google Maps today.


Figure 3 Tunis site

In November 1895 the first sanctioned auto race was sponsored by the Chicago Tribune from Chicago to Evanston, Illinois. The 52 mile race had 80 entries, 6 showed up and 4 finished due to a blinding snow storm. The winning car was owned by the Duryea brothers, Frank (driver) and Charles. The prize was $2,000. The Duryeas built cars in Waterloo for the next two years because their engines came from the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company which was later purchased by Deere & Co.

In 1902, two Oldsmobiles, one Locomobile and one Waterloo Gas Engine Company (winner) cars raced in Waterloo. These races were held to promote the sport and demonstrate the durability of automobiles. It was during this time that Judd L. Tunis was born, 1896, in Independence, Iowa and moved to Waterloo in 1900. He worked for a butcher shop and at age 17 set up his own meat cutting business. He had horse barns off University

Avenue near Hackett Road. He raced sulkies in Waverly, Iowa and raised chickens, gardened and ran the butcher shop in Waterloo.



Figure 5 Early race car

In 1947 he tired of going to Waverly to race. There was little racing from 1910 to 1947 so Judd decided to build a one-half mile track at his home to race sulkies. The track had a grandstand for people to view the races. In 1948 his son-in-law suggested he race cars, midget cars. These small cars needed a one-quarter mile track so he made a banked, quarter-mile track inside the one-half mile outer track. Judd added more grand stand seats and concessions. The Black Hawk Motorcycle Club helped build the track. So the Tunis Speed Bowl raced motorcycle and midget cars. Approximately 3,000 fans came to the first races.



Figure 4 Tunis Speed Bowl with inner track for motorcycle races.



Figure 6 Ira "Speed" Chumley

Ira "Speed" Chumley suggested full size stock car racing. Chumley sold old cars for racing and promoted racing from 1949 to 1950. By 1952 fans were coming to see the races regularly and the Tunis Speed Bowl became the Tunis Speedway.

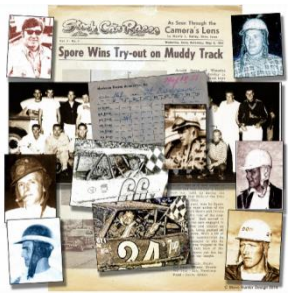


Figure 7 Early drivers.

Some of the early and successful drivers were known to the fans. Red Droste was the earliest. Bill Zwanzinger won a lot of races. He was sponsored by Cordes Ford. Bob Hilmer, a cantankerous personality, from Dysart was a big winner. He was known to brawl with other drivers after the races. Curt Hansen, sponsored by John Deery, raced four nights a week while working a full day at Clay Equipment in Cedar Falls. This lasted about a year, but Curt made $50,000 in prizes that year. Ed Sanger, a mechanic turned driver, was also a fan favorite. He lives in Postville since retiring from racing.



Figure 8 Collage from J. Volgarino

Performance Bodies in Cedar Falls sells race car parts and bodies. Ed Sanger started this business from his experiences restoring his own race cars. Merlin Benning raced for four years from 1959 to 1963. He raced a 1933 Ford which he modified and rebuilt at his farm.

In the early 1960 Tunis introduced Powderpuff Racing where all the drivers were wormen.

Due to the popularity of the races, the Waterloo Courier covered the races with articles about the race and its drivers. The races changed over the years. In the 1950s car speeds increased, promoters entered to sponsor drivers and generate interest, purses grew and special entertainment was provided at the races. Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circus performed at one of the races.

Professional promoters entered the scene in the late 1950s. Judd Tunis was a promoter as well as owner of the track. Jim Cordes and Bill Zwanzinger were local promoters as was former driver Keith Knaack. Bill Moyer and Claus Stricker were active promoters during this decade.



Figure 10 1960s racing

The complexion of racing changed through the years. In the 1950s the cars were primarily jalopies and raced at relatively slow speeds. The 1960s saw modified cars and engines to increase the speed. By the 1970s the cities of Waterloo and Cedar Falls were growing due to the agricultural boom and noise from the speedway became a concern. With land development around the track and promoters focus on prize money, Judd Tunis decided in 1959 to quit weekly races. September 23, 1983 saw the last race at the Tunis Speedway.

Judd Tunis died in 1985 at the age of 89. In 2014 the land of the track sold to a developer who built apartments on the south edge of the Speedway.

In 2013 a reunion of 100 of the former drivers was sponsored by the Grout Museum



Figure 9 Flyer for reunion

Further reading website: https://issuu.com/jimvolgarino/docs/book12-18-14, Dirt Track Dreams by Jim Volgarino.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be January 9, 2019, Chuck Nielsen will speak about Air Gas Company.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James R. Stevenson, Vice President and Secretary

Waterloo Technical Society Audit Nov 2018

After review We believe the financial records of the Waterloo Technical Society are in excellent condition.

- It is our recommendation that Treasurer should be compensated for his expenses of printer paper and printer ink in doing this job. We would recommend his annual membership be paid at a minimum.

We believe the books are in excellent shape and Ken has done a great job as our Treasurer.

James H. Garrett 01 Nov 2018

William Mitchell 02 Nov 2018