



May 23, 2025

Three named to SBD Hall of Fame



Bates



Geer



Staples

Paul Bates, Steve Geer and Alvin Staples were named to the Soap Box Derby Hall of Fame for 2025.

The honor recognizes contributions and efforts of individuals who have made it possible for the Soap Box Derby program to have a positive impact on the lives of young people throughout the United States and other parts of the world.

(Continued on next page)

Don Strub: 1948 All-American Soap Box Derby Champion; the hanging race car

Don Strub, 13, won the local Akron Soap Box Derby in 1948. He was a resident of Warren, Ohio, which did not have a race. Representing Akron, he went on to beat 147 other racers at Derby Downs to become the 11th All-American Soap Box Derby champion.

After graduating from high school, he used his Soap Box Derby scholarship to attend the University of Akron and then Youngstown State University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in engineering. He was an industrial engineer for the Packard Electric Division of General Motors for 32 years. After retiring in 1992, he spent 10 years as an engineering consultant.

Don Strub died at age 85 in 2020.



Jim Strub of Tallmadge at the Akron History Center with the car his uncle used to win the 1948 Soap Box Derby.



Blast FROM THE PAST

Three elected to SBD HoF

Continued from previous page

Paul Bates, Culpeper, Virginia

Paul Bates has been instrumental in the Piedmont Area Soap Box Derby in Culpeper for more than 20 years. He has served on the local organization's board of trustees since 2003 and promotes participation of youngsters and their families through school seminars and construction clinics.

On land donated by the county, Bates organized and managed the project to build a dedicated racetrack and support facilities for Soap Box Derby competition. The racing complex is named in his honor. He also is a member of the All-American Soap Box Derby's racing commission, which manages the program's racing rules and construction requirements. During the All-American world championships in Akron, he is the lead inspector for the Stock Division.

Bates is a retired operator of automotive parts and used car dealerships.

Steve Geer, Uniontown, Ohio

Steve Geer is an Akron native whose first involvement in the Soap Box Derby was as a competitor in the 1977 and 1978 local Akron races. He later became an active volunteer for the Akron local Soap Box Derby organization by staging construction clinics, mentoring and encouraging participants and sponsoring local racers.

He continues as an inspector for the local racing events. Geer has contributed countless hours working on projects to enhance facilities at Derby Downs, including the starting line and ramps, track drainage and has fabricated and refurbished many signs around the facility. He operates CLS Finishing in Tallmadge, which provides industrial painting and protective coatings.



A Tradition is Born - The start of the first Soap Box Derby in Dayton, Ohio in 1934.

Photo: Akron Beacon Journal

Alvin Staples, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Alvin Staples was a spectator at the Soap Box Derby in Fredericksburg in 1997 and became interested in volunteering. Two years later, he became race director—a position he continues to hold. He has dedicated his time to promoting participation and support for Soap Box Derby racing, by staging construction clinics and displaying racecars at community events. His marketing efforts resulted in Fredericksburg fielding the largest number of racers in the United States of a least 160 boys and girls for 10-consecutive years starting in the early 2000s.

He joined the All-American's A-Team more than 20 years ago, became a member of the racing commission in 2012 and is lead inspector for the Masters division in the All-American world championships. Staples currently teaches automotive collision repair at North Stafford High School after retiring from operating his automotive body shop businesses.



Champs Week Checklist

The Week Before Race Week:

Car Delivery via crate – Monday, June 30 to Thursday July 3

We are closed for the 4th of July

In-Person Car Drop-Off (@Topside)

- Saturday, July 5 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Sunday, July 6 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Monday, July 7 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 8 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 9 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10 – 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Friday, July 11 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (*all cars must be in our barns by Noon*)

Car Inspections

- Wednesday, July 9 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Friday, July 11 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Saturday, July 12 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Champ Bag Pick-Up (Optional, if you are town)

Saturday, July 12 – 3 to 5 p.m. (@SBD HQ)

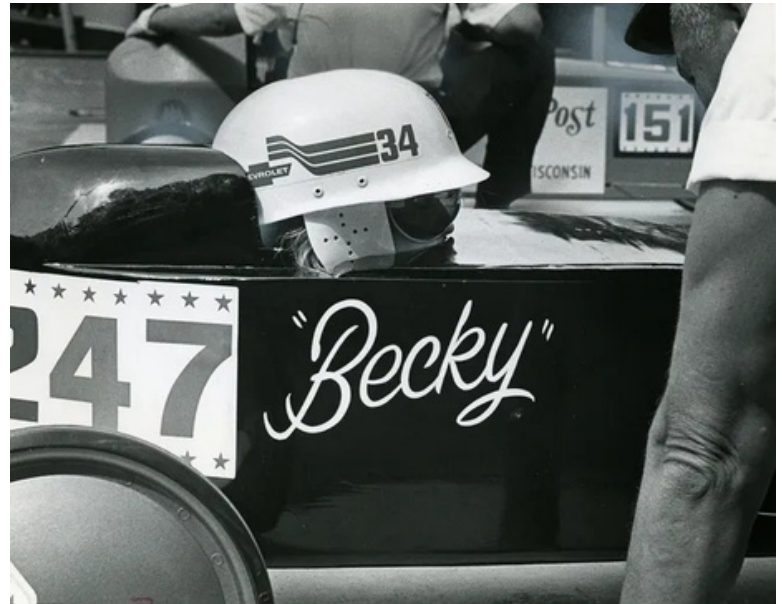
Volunteer Picnic @ Topside – 5 p.m.

CHAMP CHECK IN & REPAIR DAY (@Topside)

(STATIONS) - Sunday, July 13

For more information and updates: Go to www.soapboxderby.org.

Blast FROM THE PAST



Pioneer - Rebecca Phillips of Texas in 1971, the first year that girls were permitted to compete at the Soap Box Derby. Karren Stead of Pennsylvania would make history five years later when she became the first girl to win the championship.

Photo: Akron Beacon Journal

Quick Hits . . .

These items and registration are now available in the Race Week store.

<https://commerce.soapboxderby.org/product-category/raceweek/>

Legacy Registration – Must complete this form and make payment in the store.

- [Race Week Legacy Registration Form](#)
- [Race Week Legacy Registration Payment](#)

Reserve Box Seats – Complete this form and make payment in online store.

[Box Seating Registration Form](#)
[Box Seat Payment](#)

Champ Program Messages – This message will be included in the 2025 Race Week program.

[Champ Program Message](#)

Go to **Race Week 2025** page for more information.