

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY



July 2014 Vol. 18, No. 3

Inside...



Thrills & Spills



Racing Nuggets



The Inside Dirt

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1988	Billy Moyer	1997	Rick Aukland	2006	Scott Bloomquist
1989	Billy Moyer	1998	Donnie Moran	2007	Brian Birkhofer
1990	Billy Moyer	1999	Scott Bloomquist	2008	Scott Bloomquist
1991	Rick Aukland	2000	Davey Johnson	2009	Jimmy Mars
1992	Billy Moyer	2001	Dale McDowell	2010	Scott Bloomquist
1993	Billy Moyer	2002	Rick Eckert	2011	Josh Richards
1994	Jack Boggs	2003	Scott Bloomquist	2012	Darrell Lanigan
1995	Jack Boggs	2004	Brian Birkhofer	2013	Tim McCreadie
1996	Jimmy Mars	2005	Dale McDowell	2014	?????

Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Every few years or so, you'll hear about a driver going on a consecutive win streak. When I was in my teens, the Legendary Tom Nesbitt won just about every week (or so it seemed) at Cedar Lake. He won so often, the Cook family (founders, and former owners of Cedar Lake Speedway) put a bounty on him. I can still remember drivers from Iowa and Illinois showing up trying to collect the bounty. I haven't seen many bounties offered in some time, but the consecutive win streaks still seem to pop up here and there.

Winning Streaks



*Tom Nesbitt picked up 38 wins in one season with this car in the 1980's
(Bruce McClain photo)*

Moving ahead about ten years from Nesbitt's streak, there were drivers like Steve Murgic knocking off a almost a dozen in a row at Raceway Park and John Knaus on a win streak at Rockford Speedway in the 1990's. Both phenomenal win streaks that were eventually stopped. More recently, Chad Walen racked up nine in a row a Raceway Park in 2012, just one year prior to the tracks closing in 2013.

This year, two drivers in the upper Midwest have been on a hot streak; Buddy Hanestad in the Hornet class at Cedar Lake and Alex Papini in the Late Models at Rockford. Hanestad is the son of Late Model driver Rick Hanestad, and won every Hornet main event at Cedar Lake during the months of April, May and most of June. The Papini kid also is carrying on the family tradition. Alex started the year off with a seventh place finish on opening night, and then racked up six in a row. Papin's streak came to an end on the last race night in June at the hands of "Driver X", Jon Reynolds.

While the naysayers will bring up things like the level of competition or the number of cars competing these days, but we'll toss these comments

continued on page 10

*Buddy Hanestad is undefeated in feature race action thru mid-season at Cedar Lake Speedway
(Stan Meissner photo)*



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Throughout the early part of the 2014 local racing seen, many tracks have seen plenty of first time feature winners, which is pretty cool! Everyone wants to eventually win a feature event, and it is a memorable moment for all who do this.

At Marshfield Motor Speedway, Reagan May became the first female feature winner in the super late model division

by winning a feature on May 31st. While there have been a few that have tried, Reagan is the only one to do it, and she did it in impressive fashion, as she had to hold off Kyle Genett, who was also looking to win his first in the division at the track. Genett repeatedly tried to get by, as the pair ran side by side for many laps. As for the female persuasion, Natalie Decker has won three super stock features at the track, but there had never been a female super late feature winner until now.

Marshfield Motor Speedway super late model driver Jack Greenwood has a new ride, a former Paul Knoblock Lefthander, which is still an older car, but much newer than his old car, which was Lefthander chassis #13. Jack had the old car since 1992 and won quite a few races with it. He's hoping to do better with his new equipment. The perennial hard luck racer deserves to get some victories. I'm sure he'd be happy to land more sponsorship, too, if anyone would like to participate. Jack is real good with the fans and would represent anyone well.

At the Columbus 151 Speedway, Wayne Hook won his first backup car feature of his career, which spans a few years. For those who don't know, Wayne also mans the pit gate at the track, and races strictly for the fun of it, and during all

the time he went without a win, he still always smiled at the end of the night and declared that he had fun. That is a true racer! Also at Columbus, recently Collin Tomlinson won his first street stock feature ever, while Dalton Jones did likewise in the Bandits. Jones had come oh-so-close the prior week, but noted that he burned up his brakes, then overdrove the car to try to maintain the lead, only to lose it. The next week he proved that he learned the lesson well, and

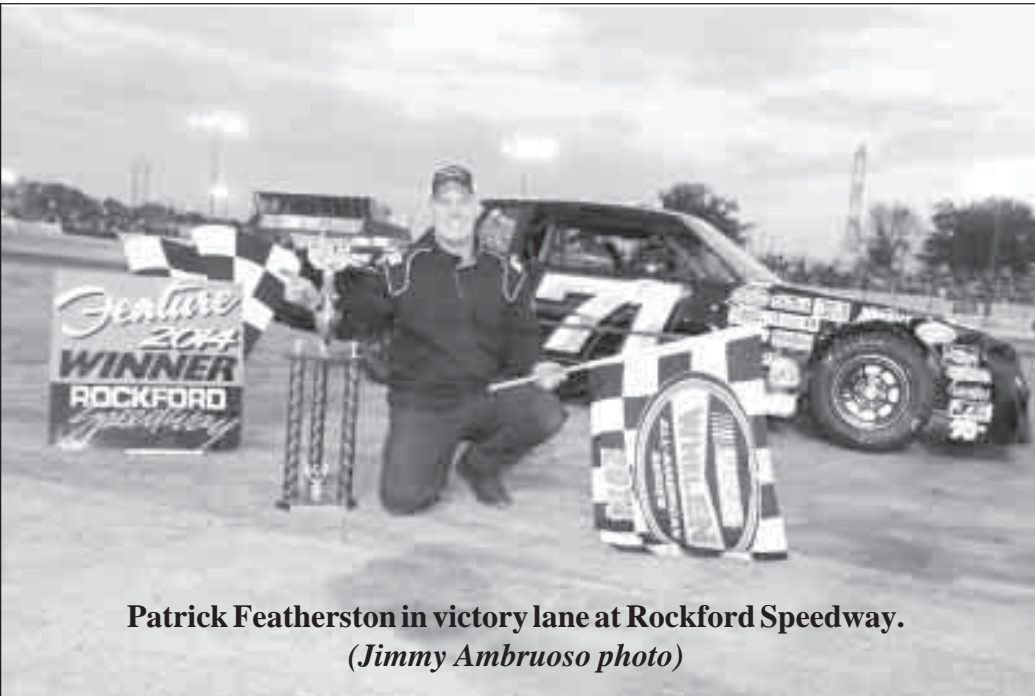
pulled off the win! It was also nice to see veteran street stock racer Dan Schmidt win a feature in that division a couple of weeks ago, as it had been four years almost to the date that this last happened. Dan is one of the quiet drivers who never ruffles feathers, never complains, doesn't spout off on the internet, races everyone clean, and is just a joy to watch race. He has had opportunities to win races if he would have wanted to move someone to do it, but he said it best, "I don't want to have to take someone out or get into them to win races."

Veteran late model racer Andy Wendt hasn't raced much at Columbus the past couple of years, but he showed up last week and proved that he hasn't forgotten how to get around the track, as he won the feature. He got there just in time for time trials, timed in mid-pack with a car that had a miss in it, then got that fixed and worked his way through the pack to get the win.

At the Rockford Speedway, it has continued to be the Alex Papini show in the late models, as Alex has won six of seven regular season features run thus far. The only blemish to the record came about on opening night when Casey Johnson got the win. This is on top of a great 2013 season for Alex, where he won ten feature events throughout the season on his way to the track title. He appears to be able to top that mark this season.

The American Short Tracker four cylinder division has been very competitive again this year, with seemingly anyone able to win on a given night. Of course, the sportsman division has also been anyone's game, but Brett McCoy and Patrick Featherston seem to be just a notch up on the others. It's nice to see former dirt racer and Rockford sportsman driver Justin Sellers make it out with his new late model, as a few other new drivers have made appearances as well, including Dana Czach, Chris McKay, and Tony Brutti. Czach and McKay are neck-to-neck in the battle for Rookie-Of-The-year status.

I've had trouble getting a race in lately at Rockford, as it seems every time I am able to get there, it rains. I'm hoping to break this trend real soon and to take in a few of the Wednesday night shows as well, which are always fun. Still really enjoy the "Spectacular Drags." (Spectator racing).



Patrick Featherston in victory lane at Rockford Speedway.
(Jimmy Ambruoso photo)

LIL' CALE *shortly after APRIL 2013*

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NASCAR Insight**Shane Carlson**

August 5th, 2013 was a day Tony Stewart didn't expect he would be injured driving a sprint car, but it's a day he wouldn't trade either. He was racing at Southern Iowa Raceway in Oskaloosa, Iowa, when he flipped trying to avoid a slow car on the track. His leg was broken in two places, and sidelined him from his day job in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series for the remainder of the year.

A floodgate of controversy then opened regarding whether Stewart should be 'playing around' with sprint cars in his free time. One thing about Stewart is that he will race anything, anytime, any day of the week. He is this generation's AJ Foyt. It just so happens Foyt is Stewart's idol, and the reason he has the No. 14 emblazoned on the door panels of his Cup car.

Smoke still fiery about Sprint Cars

Only Tony Stewart knows what goes on in his mind, but I'm going to trust the three-time Cup champion knows what he is doing, and if racing sprint cars is what his true passion is, then I'm all for it. People who are telling him to stay away from the dirt, and quit on his passion are probably the same folks who quit on their own passion. If he's happy, then chances are as lot of race fans are as well because the dude brings a brash intensity to a sport that desperately needs its characters to be exactly that. He'll speak his mind, and whether fans love him or hate him, at least he's honest, which makes for some fantastic interviews. He brings so much excitement to whatever series or racecar he is driving on any given night, and fans ought to appreciate a guy like this while they still can because there's not many Tony Stewarts left out there. He's a throwback to racing's golden age, where a racer raced whatever he or she could get their hands on.

Racing on dirt is what Tony Stewart grew up on; it's in his blood. To take that away from Stewart, you would be taking away who Tony Stewart is as a person. He would not be the same fiery driver race fans have grown accustomed to seeing on the track.

Stewart still isn't 100 percent as of late June, but he's grown considerably more comfortable than he was in February, where he climbed into his No. 14 Bass Pro Shops Chevrolet for the first time since the August prior. It was evident Stewart was still in pain, hobbling along with a limp and gingerly climbing in and out of a racecar, but being away from the sport in general was a blessing in disguise for the decorated racer.

It's no secret that when something is taken away, people have a tendency to realize how good they had it, and they learn to truly appreciate whatever it was that was taken away. For Stewart, he realized that the sport would go on without him, whether he's in the car or not.

As the Sprint Cup season is reaching its midpoint, don't be surprised to see Stewart pop off a win or two as the tracks get slick. Stewart does his best work in the hot summer sun, and winning would certainly help the healing process.

Tony Stewart plans to continue wheeling sprint cars across the nation's dirt tracks, and though he may be a little more selective in when and where he races, Stewart isn't going to stop living his life and doing what he loves on weeknights. It's impossible to please everyone, so one might as well do what feels right and not worry about what the critics think.



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THE MIDWEST
RACING CONNECTION

Lecka/NASCAR via Getty Images



The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner

We'll begin this month's column by picking up where we left off in the last issue. Unfortunately I left off writing about rains of epic proportions and that is where we'll begin in this issue. In my June column I mentioned my 70 mile cheeseburger run to the rained out Triple Crown. We said we'd try again and that is what we did on the weekend of June 6 and 7 with no success. I skipped the Herbison Memorial on June 12 (in retrospect a race I should have attended) and opted for the opening night of the Masters on June 13. Let's break it down.

The first thing that filled my ears when I arrived at CLS on June 13 was what an awesome night of racing the Herbison Memorial had been. I had lulled myself into complacency thinking maybe 25 Midwest Mods and opted to not make the post work dash across the border. Bad mistake on my part as 26 NASCAR Modifieds and 49 (that is not a typo friends), 49 NASCAR Midwest Modifieds, 17 Pro Stocks and 10 Hornets provided a great night of racing according to my sources. Darrell Nelson, it was reported, dominated the Modified feature. Smooth was the word I heard in the infield in reference to Nelson's run. Michael Truscott picked up the win in Midwest Mods, his first at Cedar Lake and the first annual Eric Herbison Memorial. It sounds like it was a great night of racing and I'll make it a point to be there for this one next season.

Friday June 13 would end up being the first and final day of the Masters rolled into one. We saw good fields of cars



Stan Meissner photo

with some star power among the competitors. The track was in great shape and the racing was outstanding. Rick Eckert won the Late Model Feature and Brad Dierks won his first ever USMTS Feature. The features on this evening were two of the most entertaining races I have seen so far this season. The stage was set for Saturday June 14 but the second night was washed out by an obviously angry Mother Nature.

The following weekend I kicked off a week of vacation with a last minute diversion to the Superior Speedway for USAC non-wing Sprints. My son Les and I joined Track Rat Vince Peterson for the road trip. Checking the Superior weather everything looked like it was going to be a go. The Superior Speedway posted photos of an immaculately prepared track with a side note that the fog in the photo was expected to dissipate by race time. Skies were partly cloudy for the drive north but we started to get into some fog as we approached the Twin Ports. The closer we got the heavier the fog became and it got so heavy by the time we hit Duluth we could barely see the road. To add insult to injury the fog was producing a steady race killing mist. We arrived



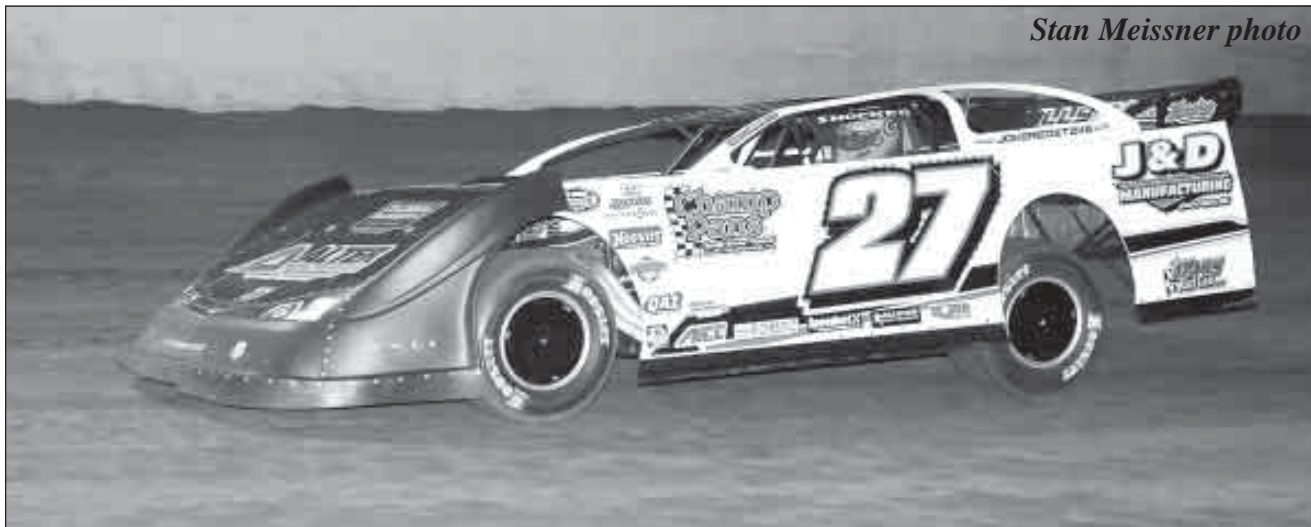
Stan Meissner photo

Next up after striking out on Friday was a trip to Cedar Lake for their weekly show on June 21. Cedar Lake had a good field of cars, by my count 14 Hornets, 19 Pro Stocks, 14 Modifieds, 26 Midwest Modifieds and 23 Late Models. Winners included Buddy Hanestad in the Hornets, Mike Loomis in Pro Stocks, Darrell Nelson in the Mods, Jason Vandecamp in Midwest Modifieds and Jake Redetzke taking the Late Model

Feature. It was a good night of racing and well worth the effort to attend what I consider the best weekly show in the area.

The Superior attempt and CLS weekly show kicked off a week of vacation to be concluded with a much anticipated three race weekend. Races on my list included the Traditional 40 at the Saint Croix Valley Raceway, the Cedar Lake Firecracker and the World of Outlaws at Cedar Lake. I spent most of my vacation week working on the house while day dreaming about my planned triple header. As the week progressed that dreaded "R" word started to creep into the forecast with the percentages in the advance outlook increasing each day as we approached the weekend of June 27-29.

While watching the UMSS Traditional Feature at SCVR on May 23 I came up with the idea of a Traditional 40 for 40 Bonus for June 27. Contributors helped me to cover 21



Stan Meissner photo

Racing Nuggets



Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

Racers are truly a tough breed. They'll pour every spare minute they have into their cars and some even ante up their last dollars to get a set of tires to go racing. I've known several racers—male and female—who have raced with a cast on one of their arms. I couldn't imagine trying to wheel a race car with one arm—let alone with pain. My pain threshold is pretty low; in the negative numbers, really. It is partially for that reason that I have never given birth to a child, and have long hoped to adopt a 30-year-old doctor.

Speaking of doctors, and I hate to stereotype, but men can be the most difficult when it comes to going to one! Slice your finger on a piece of sheet metal—just wrap it with duct tape. We don't need no stinkin' stitches! Break a bone? Hobble it off, until your wife MAKES you go to the doctor. Men are notorious refusing to go to the doctor and they wear that stubbornness like a badge of honor.

It took much convincing, but I finally had my husband, Toby booked for a physical. He's in his mid-50s and has never had a full-blown physical exam. Honestly, as best as I can tell, the last time he's had a check up of any professional degree was likely well over 30 years ago. That was a visit to remove a chunk of tire rubber from INSIDE of his ear. Don't ask me how it got in there. Thanks to his aversion to doctors, I have a new role in our relationship: Health Officer and it is my job to haul his butt in when it warrants; only after he puts up a huge fight, of course.

Toby's been going in a lot of different directions this race season. He's primarily working with Ty Majeski on his Super Late endeavors, which include the ARCA Midwest Tour, the TUNDRA Series, a few special Super Late Model events, and some action at the La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway. He also puts some time in on Steve Carlson's car at La Crosse and a few other racers on occasion. Busy is an understatement this season for him.

At any rate, he recently was at Wisconsin International Raceway for the Red event with Majeski. That afternoon, as he was stooped over the front end working on the car, he suddenly became light headed and had tingling in his left arm, as well as in his jaw. If you are remotely familiar with the basic warnings of a heart attack or stroke, you are probably freaking out reading this, much like I was when he finally told me about it—the FOLLOWING MORNING.

Yes, my husband who gets his medical insight from an imaginary volume entitled "The Book of Toby," sat across my desk at work and informed me of this incident approximately 18 hours AFTER it occurred—in a rather flip

manner, I might add. Obviously, I freaked out and insisted that we head to Urgent Care IMMEDIATELY.

In his infinite wisdom (or at least according to that swell, imaginary book) he informed me that he could just wait until the upcoming physical to get it checked. I actually had to call the Nurse's Hotline and describe what happened to get her professional proof that we needed to bring him in to be examined. Of course, I was right, so off we went to Urgent Care.

It was at this point that I realized that he was likely more than just a little bit scared and perhaps living in denial. It has only been a matter of a month or so since his good friend, Bruce Mueller succumbed to a heart attack. That hit Toby hard, as Bruce was a very close friend and the pair, along with the team had dinner the night before he passed away. I'm certain Bruce was on his mind as he sat silently in the passenger seat of his truck, while I drove to Urgent Care. He did, however, grumble under his breath when the clinic staff put him in a wheelchair upon our arrival.

As I finished filling out the paperwork, they wheeled him back into a room, specifically for patients with potential heart issues. When I got back there, they already had his shirt off with the EKG monitors stuck on his hairy chest. He appeared to be in pain, so I was glad we were there. The nurse proceeded to ask him various questions, while she typed his responses into the computer.

Suddenly, he leaned to the right and emitted the most enormous blast of flatulence. This is commonplace in our home or at the race shop, but it took me by surprise in the Urgent Care room. It apparently took the nurse by surprise too, as she made a quick exodus. For the first time in a long while, his eyes were twinkling, delighting over clearing the room with his brand of weaponry. I will never fully understand the joy men get out of passing gas and the whole pull-my-finger ritual that they introduce to their offspring at an early age.

The stomach pain was severely overwhelming for him. After several hours of monitoring and a thorough questioning by the doctor on duty, they surmised that he likely has an ulcer. An ulcer?! They prepared a cocktail that was the loveliest shade of pink-purple which he dumped down this gullet, like a 20-year-old doing a shot of Fireball. We were told it was a concoction to coat his stomach and hopefully provide some temporary relief, which it did.

After it became apparent there were no serious heart issues showing, they released him. And like a trout diving back into a creek, he couldn't get out of the clinic quick enough. My concerns were not quelled, as I knew that having his ticker checked so many hours after the incident was mostly fruitless. And after the effects of that GI cocktail wore off, he was still having abdominal pain. I wasn't convinced it was just an ulcer.

Tune-Up of a Different Variety



Doug Hornickel photo

But the racing never stops. So armed with his Prilosec, he embarked on a three-races-in-three-days jaunt. I was not feeling confident with this schedule, given so many unanswered questions about his health. That Thursday, he and Ty raced at Wausau. It wasn't with a car that he had prepared and the run wasn't exactly stellar, so I hoped that it would not be the tone-setter for the rest of the weekend.

I took the next day off work and traveled to Grundy County Speedway for the ARCA Midwest Tour event. Somehow, it felt more reassuring to be at the racetrack with him and at least keep an eye on him in person. This race went much better than Thursday, with Ty setting the fast time and finishing runner-up to Chris Weinkauff—a first time ARCA Midwest Tour winner, so that was pretty cool, even if the hubby's driver didn't nab the checkers. It's funny how a good run in racing can make body aches and pains become less predominant. Toby didn't complain too much about pain that day, but I could see he wasn't feeling 100%.

As I headed back to La Crosse, Toby and the team stayed in the Rockford, IL area to sleep before going to Jefferson Speedway the following day for the TUNDRA Super Late event. I tried really hard to not worry about him. I did my thing at La Crosse Speedway, while he was at Jefferson, but the uncertainty about his health still had a stranglehold on my mind. Not in an ocean-waves-lapping-on-the-beach kind of way, but more like the torrential-splash-at-the-bottom-of-the-Log-Ride-at-Six-Flags way. I was having full-blown panic attacks that I tried to hide.

We both made it through the night at our respective tracks. I had the pleasure of watching some fantastic racing, along with some Thunderstox drivers wheeling their machines as if they lost their brains for part of the night. Toby brought home another second-place finish with Ty. I can honestly say I've never been happier than when he finally got home after Jefferson, because I knew that IF something should happen, I would be there. The added bonus for peace of mind was that we were now only a few days from the next doctor appointment.

Let me tell you, THAT was a doozy of a doctor appointment too. It was a no-holds-barred information-fest. We were

continued on page 8

continued from page 7

overwhelmed with the results of all of the blood tests that had been done. Toby was deemed pre-diabetic and that was likely a contributor to the tingling arm and jaw. At least that’s the theory, because no one can be completely sure if it was heart-related, low blood-sugar related, or gallstone-passing related. I neglected to tell you that he informed me (in accordance with the “Book of Toby”), that he’s 98% sure he spotted a gallstone in the toilet after one of his “sessions.” I didn’t inquire how he discovered it. I really felt I had far too much information on that particular topic already.

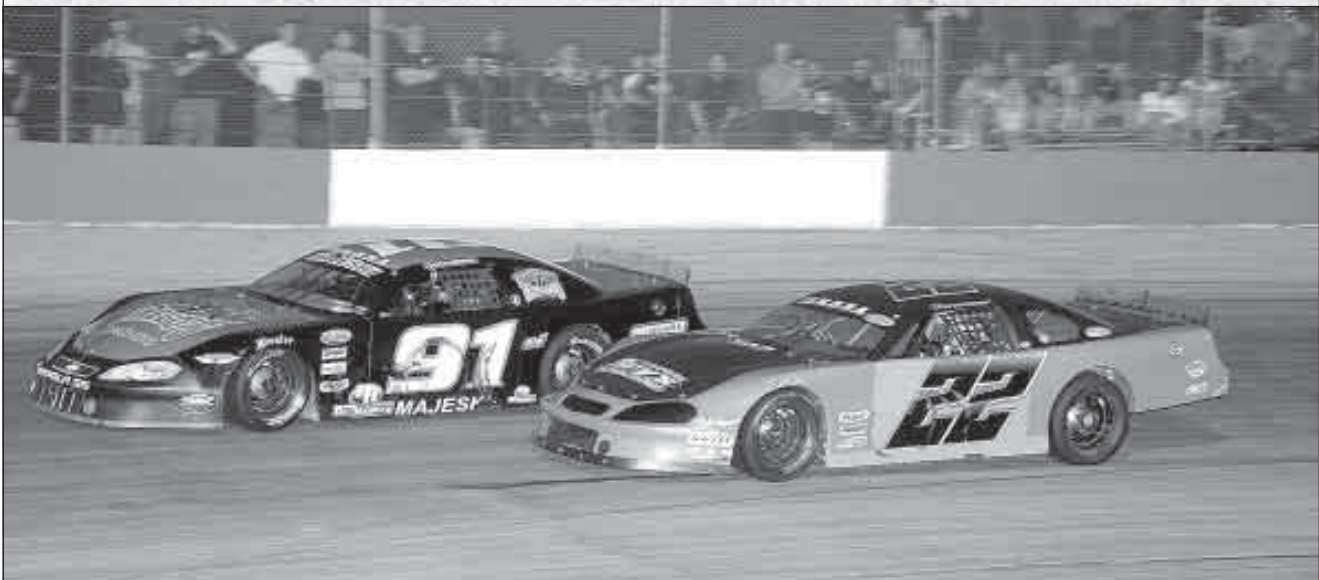
Regardless, he was put on a medicine that we were told acts like a turbo-boost to the insulin that his body already produces. Of course, with a description like that, he was more accepting. This doctor was good. Apparently, he knew to create racing analogies. The doctor also finally made sure that Toby finally got a real physical.

That was fun. I offered to leave the room, but Toby insisted that I stay. It delighted me beyond words, only because it was refreshing for me to know—firsthand—that men have awkward annual check-ups too—despite the absence of stirrups or even a machine that will squash their private parts obscenely flat for imaging. My grandmother always used to say, “Someone always has it worse than you,” so keep that in mind gentlemen, as you lament your annual...or should I say anal...exams? And ladies, you haven’t lived until you’ve exchanged looks with your husband, as he’s bent over the exam table while the doctor is lubricating a gloved finger.

Toby survived it, and I assured him that his “ordeal” was nothing compared to the exams that women must undergo every year. But still, no matter how uncomfortable or embarrassed you think you might be at the very thought of any medical exams or tests; there is NO replacing the ability to detect health problems early. I would much rather endure a few minutes of awkwardness while a doctor rummages around in my nether regions or squashes my C-cups into a pancake, than have to battle for my life because I never took the simple precautionary measure to discover a potential problem, BEFORE it becomes a serious threat.

Honestly, if my “tough guy” can do it—anyone can do it. We all should. You do a tune-up and bolt check on your race car on a regular basis, so it doesn’t fail you on the track. You need to do the same thing with your body, so it doesn’t fail you in life. People are depending upon you—your spouse, your kids, and yes—even your racing community.

On that note, I’m pleased to announce that Toby is now scheduled for his first colonoscopy. I’m planning to celebrate the occasion by baking a cake. Sugar-free, of course, and in a checkerboard design. I’m fancy like that.



*Top photo - Chris Weinkauff turned around his season with a win at Grundy (Doug Hornickel photo)
Middle photo - Ty Majeski battles with Nick Panitzke (Doug Hornickel photo)
Bottom photo - Casey Johnson topped the TUNDRA Travelers at Jefferson (Mark Melchiroi photo)*

Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

With the weather either threatening or in a deluge rain mode, it's been difficult to get in many shows this year but we did manage to get in a show and a ½ at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway of West Salem, WI.

The completed show occurred here June 21st and taking top honors on the night in the NASCAR Late Model division feature race was Mike Koenke. Koenke is proving to be a legitimate title contender this year as he has already won 3 feature events. Of course it hasn't hurt that the car Koenke drives is a two time champion in the division driven by none other than Steve Carlson. A third title for the car is a distinct possibility as Koenke is leading the point standings as we speak. In order to accomplish that feat, Koenke will have to contend with multi-championship winning driver Steve Carlson who is again competing full time at the track. Carlson is currently 2nd in points with a feature win and has been consistent as usual which will keep him in the hunt for the duration of the season. If anything should happen to those two drivers former track champion Brad Powell is

within striking distance currently 3rd in the standings. Powell had mechanical trouble a couple weeks back and is now racing in his backup car. The car is not set up to run the La Crosse Fairgrounds 5/8 mile however and he continues to keep pace with the leaders.

Also on this night it was first career Late Model win for rookie competitor Randy Humfeld as he captured the 1st heat race victory. Humfeld outpaced Shawn Pfaff and Jerimy Wagner for the win.

Bill Niles meanwhile took his 3rd heat race victory in a row which is a personal best for the long time competitor at the track. On this night Niles out-paced Texas traveler Scott Rand for the win.

The new Street Stock Division is building a following at the track and John Eron has the most momentum thus far having won every race he's competed in! Can a bounty on his head be far off?

In the Sportsman Division it is looking like Steve Bachman and Greg Scheck are going to be battling it out all season long for that division's championship with Jamie Dummer and Nick Clements withing striking distance. On this night it was Bachman taking the 15 lap Feature win with Scheck following and Dummer in 3rd.

In Thunderstox Division racing it was perennial front runner Jason Bolster appearing to grab the feature win only to be shown the black flag for moving a competitor out of the way. I would have moved the other car out of the way too as it was about to be a lap down and right in the racing groove on the last corner of the last lap of the race. Unfortunately for Bolster it wasn't the last encounter with the black laundry as it was also shown to him in the Street Stock Division. Finally, in the figure 8 race he finished a



Mary Schill photo



Mary Schill photo

clean 2nd and could at least head home feeling a little better about the night.

The ½ a race program we alluded to was on June 28th where just a portion of the program was completed before the monsoon hit ending the night's racing. Before the storm hit, a hit of a different kind took place as Lisa Hohlfeld, wife of Jerry Hohlfeld competing in one of the Faster Pastor races smacked into the big tractor tire coming out of turn two on the small track which ended up putting her car on its top! She wasn't hurt, but her night of racing was done before it even started and after that episode her career in the sport may be over too. Late Model winners on the night before

***Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions
continued on page 21***

Dale's Pictures from the past



Left photo - Long time racer Karl Fenske racing at the Steele County Fairgrounds of Owatonna, MN., in 1986. Middle photo - Sonny Immerfall and Mike Niles battle at the La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI., we believe sometime in the 1970s or early '80s. Right photo - Henry "Butch" Miller of Michigan was one of the winningest drivers racing this car in 1985.

Publishers note from page 3
to the wind. Both of these drivers have had a career season for most drivers, and we are only half way through the year. Congrats to both on something they should be proud of.

Miscellaneous News & Notes:
In looking back at our events attended this year (22 total as of the end of June), with the exception of our Speedweeks visit, only a handful of shows have been run in our area without the threat of rain. I think we've had enough rain to last us through November. Let's cross our fingers for no more rainouts during the remainder of the 2014 racing season.
Speaking rain, once again, the final night of the Masters at Cedar Lake was washed out by Mother Nature. The Thursday and Friday night shows were completed, and the first ever Eric Herbison Memorial events for the Midwest

Mods appears to have been a success. Nearly 50 Midwest Mods were on hand for a Thursday night show. Michael Truscott held off a hard charging Jason Vandekamp for the win. The Friday night show during The Masters was just about perfect. The UMP Summer Nationals "Hell Tour" Late Models had some unexpected big time drivers like Rick Eckert and T-Mac (Tim McCreddie) on hand. Young Bobby Pierce and Brandon Sheppard put on a heck of a battle for the lead, only to have Eckert sneak by Pierce with two laps to go for the win. The USMTS Mods made their annual Masters appearance with Brad Dierks taking the win over his car builder, Kelly Shryock. Local Modified driver, and



Jimmy Ambruoso photo

past CLS champion Brent Larson, charged from 15th place starting position to a podium finish in third. The best part of Friday night you may ask? The show was done before 10:00pm.

The "Extra Crispy" Steve Anderson picked up the Super Late Model main event at Elko Speedway early in the month of June. Steve took a year off to recover from shoulder surgery and is back in action with his boys wrenching on the car. The veteran drivers have been able to show the kids a thing or two this year.
And finally, we had the chance to sit down with Big Bill Venturini and Kenny Schrader while they were in town for the ARCA race. While it's neat to talk to the up and coming drivers, I personally find it more entertaining to listen to the guys that have been around a while. The smile that popped up on Bill's face when he realized I wanted to talk about his racing at Rockford Speedway was priceless. Interviews with Bill and Kenny are featured in this issue of MRC.



Martin DeFries photo



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Photo Gallery



Steve Rubeck (aka - "FIB") waves to all of his Illinois fans
Jimmy Ambruoso photo



Mandi Eckelberg gives a young fan a ride at LaCrosse Speedway
Mary Schill photo



Mini Stocks go three-wide at Elko
Martin DeFries photo



Krysta Swearingen picked up a Pure Stock win at St. Croix Valley Raceway
Stan Meissner photo



Race fans enjoying the tailgate section at Cedar Lake Speedway
Bruce Nuttleman photo



Steve Anderson was another veteran driver to pick up a win at Elko
Martin DeFries photo



Photo Gallery



USMTS Parade lap during The Masters at Cedar Lake Speedway
Bruce Nuttleman photo



The world famous trailer race at Rockford Speedway
Jimmy Ambruoso photo



Justin Schelitzche has wins at Elko, Granite City and KRA in Wilmar this year
Martin DeFries photo



Tony Kaus was the highest finishing local driver in USAC action at Deer Creek
Scott Swensen photo



Three-wide Thunderstox action at LaCrosse Speedway
Mary Schill photo



All of the big haulers on hand for The Masters
Bruce Nuttleman photo



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Five Minutes with Kenny Schrader

The Midwest Racing Connection recently had a chance to catch up with one of the great ambassadors of short track racing - Kenny Schrader. Kenny was at Elko Speedway for the 3rd Annual ARCA race. As always, Kenny was in a great mood, and gave straight forward answers to our questions.

How are things going at your track that you own at I-55 Raceway in Pevely, Missouri?

It's going good, going real good. We got off to a good start, the weather has been cooperating with us, and we've had some excellent shows this year. We're very happy with the way this year is going.

There are some challenges these days with short tracks. Is there anything you've done different to maintain your crowds?

I don't know if we've done anything different. We've got a good core group, yah know. We keep updating on the facilities, and put in new rest rooms. People enjoy that, and it makes it a lot nicer experience. We try to get a good announcer, get them out there on time and make it not too dusty. We're just trying to do the basics, and do 'em good.

Bruce Nuttleman photo



Speaking of restrooms, we've noticed most women prefer an actual restroom versus a port-a-potty.

Yeah, well I do too; it's just the way it is. You're going out to an entertainment venue, and it's supposed to be nice.

I think this is your third visit to Elko Speedway. You ran the USMTS show when we ran the dirt, and then the ARCA race last year as well?

Yes, we came here for a USMTS deal and ran second and then we ran fifth up here last year in the ARCA deal. We came the year before and watched Tom Hessert drive for us.

He did good, I don't remember where he finished, but it was solid, somewhere right in there. This is our third trip back, so hopefully we'll do a little better.

In your history of attending different tracks, do you count Elko on dirt and pavement as two different tracks?

Oh yeah. You wouldn't run the same tire or same gear or anything like that. It's two different tracks. One's dirt, and one's pavement.

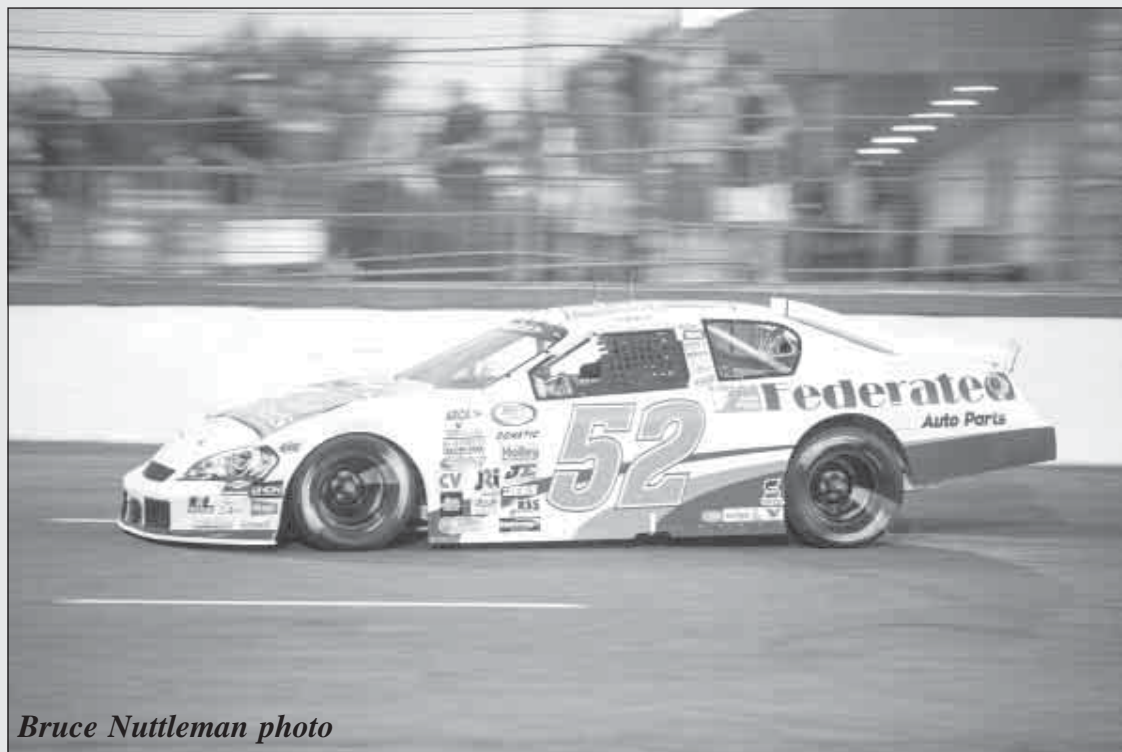
How proud are you of your little brother Kenny (Kenny Wallace) on his dirt track racing these days?

Kenny 's really doing good. He's been racing a lot, but his TV deal is kind of messing him up a little bit when it comes to racing as much as he wants to. He's been running real good, he's got a couple of new cars and he's been at it for a while now. He's got it figured out.

Has Gene Haas called you yet to drive his F1 car?
Man, that would really mess up my dirt racing.

You've raced a lot of different cars on a lot of different tracks. What is your favorite type of car and favorite type of track?

This weekend, it's an ARCA car on a smaller pavement track. And then Sunday, it will be dirt Modified, obviously on a dirt track, and then again Monday too.



Bruce Nuttleman photo



Matt Plan photo

Five Minutes with Bill Venturini

The Midwest Racing Connection recently had a few minutes to sit down Bill Venturini Sr., the founder of championship contending ARCA team, Venturini Motorsports. While the Venturini name is mostly associated with ARCA racing these days, Bill sure did show his enthusiasm when we talked about his start in racing, and more specifically talking about Rockford Speedway in Rockford, IL.

You spent some time racing at Rockford Speedway back in the day, correct?

Oh, yeah. I grew up at Rockford Speedway. We raced there from 1973 to 1979.

What are some of your favorite memories from Rockford?

Sitting on the pole at the National Short Track Championships. Just good memories. Hugh Deery meant a lot to me. He was the promoter, but he was a friend to me. He put a lot of value into what I did with my racing life. I really appreciated that about him. I loved the place. I have a lot of fond memories of Rockford.

Along with Bill Venturini, who were some of the top drivers when you were racing on the Illinois short tracks?

That's funny. When I went to Rockford, they had just went to the two-barrel," Rockford Rules" type Late Models. It was a whole new crop of drivers back then. Denny Ballard and Wayne Lensing were probably the two that stand out the most. Wayne Lensing was the king of Rockford. I finally got to the point where I couldn't beat him, so figured I would join him. He built my next car so I could race against him.

That whole building cars thing has worked out pretty good for Wayne.

Yeah, not bad. Actually, me and Wayne have been friends and stayed in touch for about 40 years now. It's pretty cool.

What was it like making the jump from the short tracks to ARCA racing?



Bruce Nuttleman photo

It wasn't planned. I got to the point where I had run Rockford; I ran some ASA and ARTGO stuff back then too. As a person, I had done what I wanted to do and I just felt kind of empty. I started to run USAC with the big cars, and it just progressed from there. USAC went under, and then we progressed to ARCA and went from there. We've been with ARCA for 32 years now.

That's a great segue, as our next question was going to be why you chose ARCA over USAC.

I was actually with USAC in the '79 - '80 era, when USAC was still pretty strong. I had the opportunity to go to Daytona in 1982 and run the ARCA race, and I fell in love with it. ARCA and USAC were Midwest based, but USAC was faltering and I could see the writing on the wall. ARCA was really coming into their own and was a good transition for me.

Have you changed the reigns over to Bill Jr. and how hard was that to do?

Oh yeah, 99% of it has been turned over, and it wasn't hard at all. He's general manager and runs the competition part of the company. I have nothing to do with cars, nothing to do with setups, and nothing to do with the drivers. I handle the business part of the company; insurance, trucking, invoices, ordering parts and my wife does the payroll. He's really made the company successful. I would have never imagined we

would have the facility we have now. It's all his doing.

How proud are you that both of your kids have been successful in the racing industry?

I feel very blessed. Not many people get to make a living by living out their passion. Both of my kids were born and raised this sport. It's nice to see that they both make a very good living at it, I'm very proud of them being successful, and I'm very happy for them. Yeah, my chest sticks out.



Rockford Speedway photo

Bill watching ARCA action atop the pit box at Elko Speedway (top photo)
Venturini wone the Pit Stop Championship at Rockford Speedway in 1982 with his all-girl pit crew (bottom photo)

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The Inside Dirt from page 6

positions at \$40 per position to be spread out through the field. My idea was to cover the entire starting grid with one round of \$40 each and make a second round doubling up from first on back as far as funds would take us. Ma Nature gave the Saint Croix Valley Raceway a break and allowed the event to take place as scheduled. Red Cedar was forced to cancel which added to the car count in the Midwest Modifieds and Modifieds making it a great night of racing in all classes.

Seventeen Traditional Sprints showed up for the Traditional 40 with one scratching for the evening after hotlaps. With sixteen starters I was able to provide a bonus to the entire field and a second round doubling the bonus from positions 1-5. Rob Caho Jr. cruised to victory but not without pressure from Jake Kouba. Kouba got caught up in an incident in the early stages of the race forcing him to restart from the back of the pack. Jake sliced and diced his way through the field to challenge Caho for the lead. Another up-and-coming driver, Chase Viebrock, finished third.

The next night Ma Nature decided to spit on Cedar Lake's annual Firecracker. I had spent most of the day twenty minutes up the road at the family lake home helping to install a new water heater. I arrived at CLS a couple hours before race time and was able to check out the Cedar Lake Arena and grab what would become another 70 mile cheeseburger and fries. The skies opened up around 6pm and put an end to any notion of getting the races in. Fireworks have been rescheduled for Saturday July 12.

Sunday June 29 arrived with clear skies for Steve Kinser's final visit to the Cedar Lake Speedway. The World of Outlaws have relied heavily on Kinser's success since their inception under the late Ted Johnson back in 1978. CLS partner Steve Kaufman presented Steve Kinser a commemorative trophy during a break in the action. Kinser's final CLS appearance didn't provide a story book ending but the King finished a respectable eleventh.

The Cedar Lake WoO race was the third night in a row that a non-Outlaw from our area had a strong showing with the series. Bill Balog finished third with the WoO at 34

Stan Meissner photo

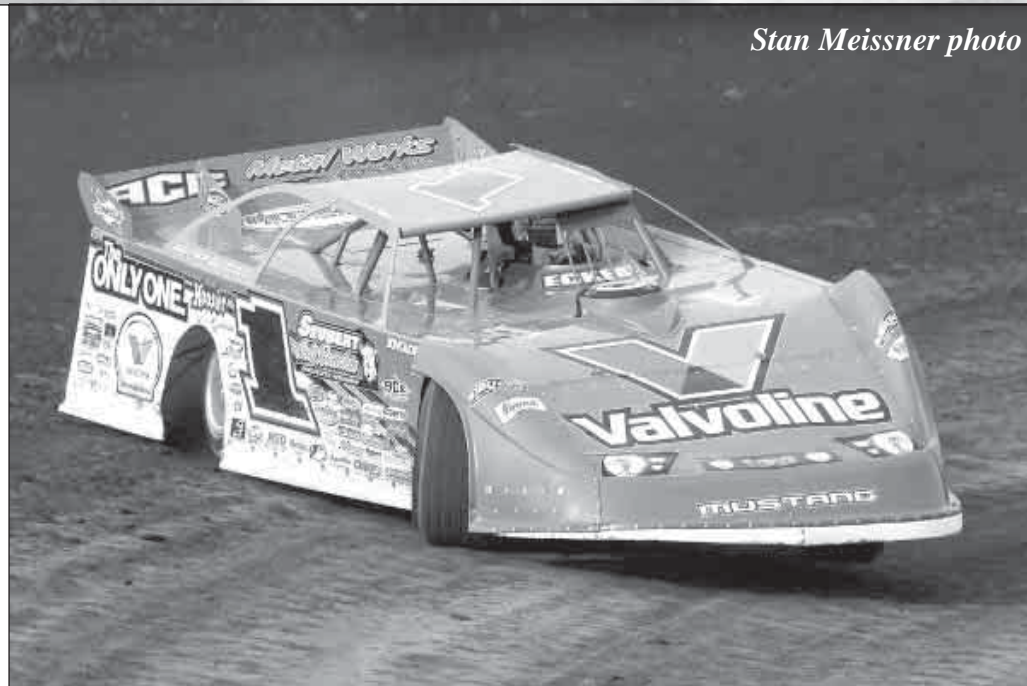


Minnesota based Sprint Car driver Davey Heskin had a strong fourth place run with the World of Outlaws at Cedar Lake.

Stan Meissner photo



Stan Meissner photo



Raceway and led the Beaver Dam race at one point. Davey Heskin had a strong fourth place run at Cedar Lake and was the highest Minnesota based finisher in the CLS Feature.

I spoke with Craig Dollansky after the races about his 2014 schedule. Craig is competing weekly at the Knoxville Raceway and helping his son Garrett get a start in the sport. Craig's approximately sixty race schedule will include select special events in addition to the Knoxville weekly shows. Garrett's first appearance at the Cedar Lake Speedway, the third generation of Dollanskys to turn laps at the western Wisconsin speed plant, did not go as planned. The young Dollansky made contact with the backstretch wall in time trials and scratched for the evening.

Donny Schatz scored his 154th World of Outlaws win two races prior to CLS to pull into third place on the WoO all time win list. Schatz ran the low side and second place finisher David Gravel used the top lane in an attempt to gain an advantage. Donny commented in victory lane that he learned from



Stan Meissner photo

The Inside Dirt continued on page 19

Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



Dean Reller

Growing up in the Brainerd area of Minnesota, Nate Thiesse took his love for racing and became a dirt track racer, turned asphalt driver. Along the way he earned an engineering degree. Thiesse worked for few race teams and then worked in the racing industry for a while. "I knew I wanted to get back to the race track and I had a really good working relationship with Kevin Cywinski from back when he was racing and I was working on his stuff as a team engineer for LaFavre Racing and Country Joe Racing", said Thiesse during a recent interview at an ARCA Racing Series event at Elko Speedway. "So when Joe Miller decided to sell the team, that's when Kevin and I said this is a really neat opportunity to come in and buy it and help these kids and we figured if we did it right and were smart about it, we could make it work. And so, seven years later, here we are."

Win-Tron Racing (Win, coming from CyWINski's name and Tron, from Nate's nickname, NaTRON) became a Minnesota based team with its shop and headquarters located in Lakeville. The team became what is known as a driver development team, taking young drivers such as James Buescher, Blake Bjorklund, Justin Marks, Matt Merrell and Mason Mingus and giving them the professional opportunities to compete in the ARCA Racing Series. That was at least until 2014, when the team hired 10-time ARCA Racing Series Champion Frank Kimmel to drive for them. With a seasoned veteran behind the wheel, the team's goals changed a bit, but not the focus. "So its 180-degrees opposite of what we had been doing, but it's not any different than what you do on a day-to-day basis", said Thiesse. "You are still taking the driver's feedback, making the car better, doing the adjustments and just finding that speed." Kimmel has served as a resource for many of the

Win-Tron Owner Thiesse Keeps Minnesota Roots Strong In Growing Team

drivers in the series as it is very common to have them come to him for information. Cywinski's driver development role as changed a bit, but not a lot. "Kevin works with the drivers and it's not uncommon for him to tell Frank to be easy on the restarts and not to spin the tires."

A little over a year ago, the Win-Tron team moved from Minnesota to North Carolina mostly because of the available resources needed to be successful. "From a cost standpoint, you almost had to do it for logistics", remarked Thiesse. "With Diesel costs up, it's expensive to keep running cars to North Carolina to get the chassis repaired and get the bodies put on, nobody around here does that." Along with the move, the number of cars in the team's inventory has greatly increased to as many as 22 ARCA cars in various stages of construction or repair, not to mention some NASCAR K & N Series cars and seven NASCAR Camping World Trucks.

The trucks have been something Win-Tron has been gradually getting into. "The last few years we've ran the truck races at the end of the year", pointed out Thiesse. "This year it's a full-time effort with Mason Mingus who finished second to Kimmel last year in ARCA points." Going up against well established truck teams is no easy task, but the Win-Tron team was somewhat prepared for the challenge. "We knew the first third of the season we were going to take some bumps and bruises as he (Mingus) is still learning and we're learning what he needs in the truck which is way different than the ARCA cars." To help with the development of the truck team, they have hired a few people with truck experience to help with the learning curve.

With an ARCA team and now a Truck team, you may wonder what's next? Well, expanding to yet another series isn't totally out of the question sometime in future, but it isn't a priority for the team. "Stick with what you are good at", added Thiesse. "We know where we fit in the racing world. The ARCA Series is awesome to run in, the Truck Series is a great stepping stone for kids coming through our ARCA program to go to. We are slow to build and very conservative and want to make sure we are doing Quality instead of Quantity."

Even though the shop has moved out of state, Thiesse still has his roots firmly planted in the Brainerd area where he and his family reside. "For me it's keeping close to family and having that support system is the key", said Thiesse.

Bruce Nuttleman photo



"Kevin keeps everything together at the shop. I handle more of the business side of it. So, together it's a good working relationship. There are a few things that I can do that I don't have to be there and we see everybody often. There are only three days a week that I don't see everybody and then we are back at the race track, so it works out."

When the ARCA Racing Series came recently to Elko Speedway, just miles from the team's former shop, it became more of a homecoming besides just being a race. "It's fun to see everybody", beamed Thiesse. "After the race, when everyone comes down (to the pit area), you'll see people that you haven't seen for years that you used to see at the race track, whether that's Sauk Centre or somebody that you used to know back in the ASA days, they'll find their way down here." So that Minnesota foundation remains there for Nate Thiesse and Win-Tron Racing which still can be considered a Minnesota based team.

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Dirty Talkin'



Kris Peterson

Mother Nature has not been very cooperative over the last month, but I am really hoping that is all about to change. There are some big things coming up in July for many area tracks, however the one show that I am really looking forward to is the Open Wheel Nationals at St. Croix Valley Raceway. The Third Annual Open Wheel Nationals event is a two day event that runs July 11 and 12. This year's event includes the "Advantage RV Modified Tour" and will feature Wisconsin Modifieds, Midwest Modifieds, UMSS Traditional Sprint Cars and UMSS Winged Sprint Cars.

Past Winners include in Modified's the #2C of Dave Cain (2012), #06 of Jeremy Nelson (2013), Midwest Modified's the #16 of Jason Vandekamp (2012 and night one of 2013)

Open Wheel Nationals on tap at St. Croix Valley



Stan Meissner photo

and the #55 of Josh Bazey (2013 night two). The UMSS Traditional and Winged cars have also brought a great field of cars and past winners include winged warriors #21K Lou Kennedy Jr. (2012) and #64 Scotty Thiel (2013) and for the traditional non-wing sprints the #12 of Johnny Parsons III (2012) and splitting the weekend in 2013 the #95 of Kevin Bradwell and the #54 of Cam Shafer.

The Advantage RV Modified Tour, which is presented by Watertown Ford and Chrysler will attract several top performing and championship race teams from all over the region. Some drivers projected to attend this year include the #2M Dave Moss, #2C Dave Cain, #06 Jeremy Nelson,

#99G Jason Grimes, #24S Mike Stearns, #7X Jesse Glenz, #31 Jason Voight, #22B Josh Beaulieu and the #40 Buzzy Adams just to name a few.

I would expect that with the increased purse for all classes that this event will draw a stellar field of cars in each of the four classes that will be running. If you are an open wheel fan this is not an event that you will want to miss. Previous years have shown to be successful and provided the fans with some hearty edge of your seat racing action.

The Inside Dirt from page 17

running the high side of CLS with a 360 twenty years ago that "you ain't going to move that wall". This was Donny's 155th career win and he said that racing at Cedar Lake was like coming home after crashing, wrecking, going fast and going slow here back in his 360 days.

That's going to wrap up my racing news and views from the past month. Looking ahead to July my schedule is still a bit uncertain. It appears that family obligations will take precedence over racing during the July 4th weekend. The following weekend I will be taking in a VIA performance at the Fine Line on Friday July 11. Saturday July 12 will be spent enjoying night two of Saint Croix Valley's Open Wheel Nationals. Other events penciled into my July schedule include the Dan Grams Memorial at Saint Croix Valley on the 25th and Cedar Lake's Summer Sprint Special on July 26. The Car Craft Summer Nationals taking place at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds July 18-20 is a possibility as well. More races will likely be added as we get into the month of July.

We'll see you at the races!

Craig Dollanksy left the Outlaw tour after the end of the 2013 season and is concentrating his efforts on the Knoxville Raceway and a regional schedule of special events. Craig is helping his son Garrett break into the sport. Craig's father Bill drove Sprint Cars making Garrett the third generation of Dollanskys to drive Sprints.



Stan Meissner photo

Something Different



Stan Meissner photo

Keith Paulsrud (96K in the middle of action above) has been racing for several years around the Twin Cities area, with most of his experience coming in the Short Tracker division at Raceway Park. With the closing of Raceway Park, Keith has moved up to the Thunder Car division in the “Big Johnson” #65 at Elko Speedway this year. Paulsrud is currently the top points earning rookie in the division. Keith used the Sunday night race at Cedar Lake Speedway during the World of Outlaws annual visit to get more seat time in a V-8 powered car of a different variety. In just his third race on a dirt track, Paulsrud took the Ross Johnson owned ride and qualified for the main event in a field of 38 cars, and crossed the stripe in 12th position.

Salute to the King



Stan Meissner photo

The 2014 season of the STP World of Outlaws Tour is being billed as the Salute to the King as Steve Kinser makes his final full-season charge for the point title. Stan Meissner captured this shot of The King at his finest - wide open and sideways in a winged Sprint Car

"Hammer Down"



Eric Huenefeld

Eric's column will resume in the next issue of The Midwest Racing Connection

2014 edition of the FANSFund

By Tom Emerson

2014 will continue with much of what has made this such a popular event for fans, drivers and sponsors. Fans making a monetary donation are allowed to vote and have their say in what drivers get invited. The ever popular FANSFund Luncheon, for those that make an eligible donation, will be on Saturday of the USA Nationals at 11:30 AM. At the luncheon fans get a personal meet and greet with the drivers they voted in, a nice lunch, a FANSFund t-shirt, and eligibility for other numerous door prizes.

This year also brings about some exciting changes that we believe will make this one of the best renditions of the FANSFund so far:

1. FANSFund Dash: Drivers voted in this year will now race for their share of the money raised in the form of a 12 lap FANSFund Dash. The dash is planned for Friday night right before the NASCAR Late Model feature. The plan is for a structured purse based on the total funds raised and the number of drivers invited. Our goal is to invite 8-10 total drivers to compete in this dash (6-7 Regular FANSFund drivers and 2-3 All Star drivers). Minimum start money is targeted to be at least \$1,000. Drivers will line up based on votes with the highest vote earner from the Regular FANSFund Driver category starting on the pole, All Star drivers will start in the back of the field based on their votes.

2. Mileage Distance: For 2014 new drivers being voted in will need to live at least 400 miles away. This mileage limit will be waived for the All Star drivers. Actual mileage will be calculated on Google Maps using the driver's documented home town to Cedar Lake Speedway.

3. Fan Donations: Donation amounts will still be \$5 per vote but the minimum donation amount to be eligible for the FANSFund Luncheon, t-shirt and door prizes will be \$30 this year. Those donating at least \$30 will also receive free admission to the indoor race that is scheduled in the Cedar Lake Arena Saturday afternoon right after the FANSFund Luncheon.

These changes are being made to enhance the Fan experience with a new race format, recruit new drivers that are outside our regional area and expose them to this great event with hopes that they'll return for years to come, and



Jerry Zimmer photo

to continue to provide a quality FANSFund Luncheon experience for those that donate the minimum amount. Checkout the FANSFund website at www.FANSFund.com for more information. There is also a FANSFund FAQs link on the right sidebar of the website for more information about the format of the event.

Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 9

the deluge included Matt Henderson and Randy Humfeld with Sportsman race honors going to Jimmy Gilster and Brian Hesselberg.

Here and there... Rookie of Year contender Ty Majeski won his first ARCA Midwest Tour race taking the win at Illiana Speedway of Schererville, IN... Other Tour winners of late include Erik Jones, Chris Weinkauff and Travis Sauter. For Weinkauff it was ARCA Tour career race win number 1 matching his brother Jason who has also won in ARCA MT competition... Brad Powell plans to race in the TUNDRA Series Super Late Model race to be held at Lax. On July 26th.

He'll also race his NASCAR late Model the same night... A couple drivers claim 2014 will be their farewell tour racing. They include point leader Mike Koenke and Todd Korish. Steve Carlson never says whether he's racing each year it's usually contingent on his racing backers and owners giving him a little nudge back into the drivers seat each season...

In a flash from the past on Tuesday night, June 29th at the Dells Motor Speedway it was Dick Trickle taking a special event 100 lap feature. Following Trickle were Bill Retallick, Tom Reffner, John Ziegler, Marv Marzofka, Joe Shear, Jim Back, George Thornton, Don James and Steve Manke. The 40 lap semi-feature went to Fred Bender over Jerry Eckardt and Dick Ambrose. The 20 lap consolation race went to Darrell Busch, with the non-qualifiers race win going to Ralph Bakewell. Trickle posted the fastest qualifying lap at 14:74 seconds around the 1/3 mile paved oval. It was reported the largest crowd to ever attend an event at the

track was on hand, 6,000 plus fans. In the quote of the column, "I know how good that car is I won two Championships with it." That's Steve Carlson commenting on the car Mike Koenke is driving at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway and currently leading the NASCAR Late Model points with...

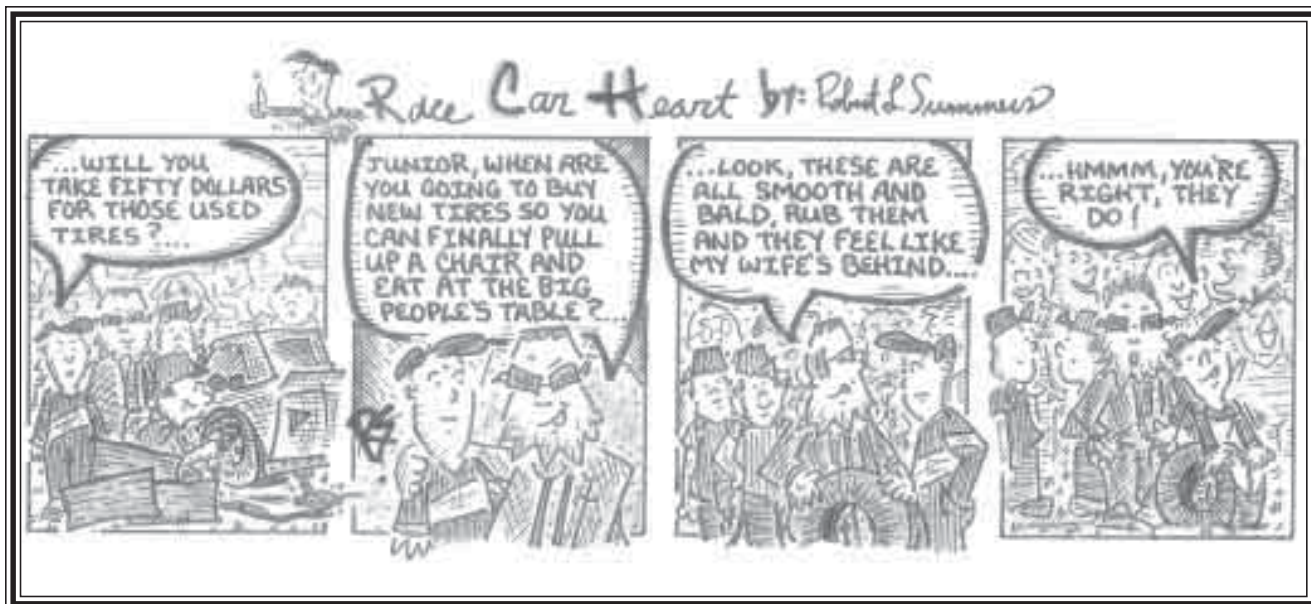
News, notes and comments welcome to Dale P. Danielski at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650, at 608-783-5827 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com, www.starmakermultimedia.com

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*Bobby Kendall gets airborne at The Dells (Jeff Blaser photo)
Tyler Sjoman takes a hard hit in Legends action at Elko (Martin DeFries photo)
Nick Herrick loses a wheel at Cedar Lake (Jerry Zimmer photo)
Jon Wes Townley goes through the spin cycle (Bruce Nuttleman photo)
A wild finish to the Big 8 main event at Elko in June (Martin DeFries photo)*

Stan Meissner photo



Jimmy Ambruoso photo



*Top photo - The 2014 World of Outlaws season is being billed as the Salute to the King. Steve Kaufman presents Kinser with a commemorative trophy from the Speedway as World of Outlaws Johnny Gibson looks on.
Bottom photo - Jody Deery fans out \$1,000 for Driver X for accepting the Gerber Collision Challenge.*



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