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The Month of Month of the Later of the Later

Inside...



Small Car Corner



Racing Observations



Little Cars - Big Wreck

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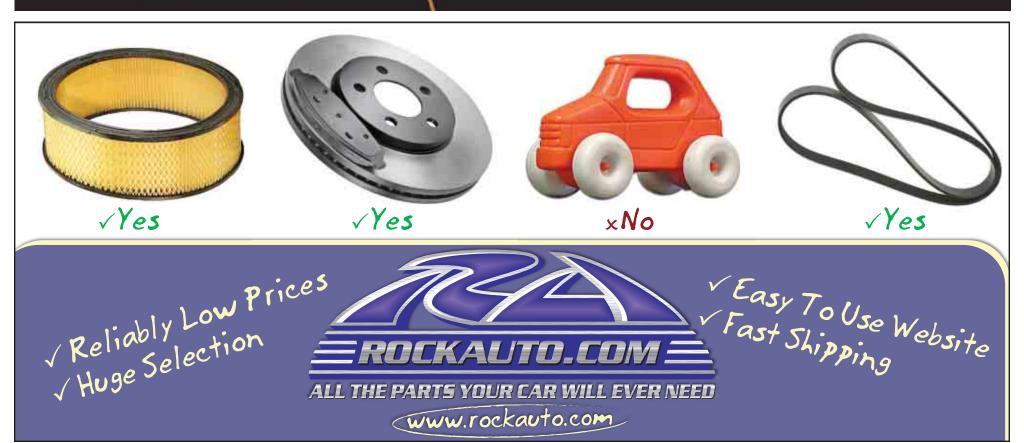
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Publisher's Note Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

The racing season is drawing to an end as we put our September 2014 issue of *The Midwest Racing Connection* together. Some tracks have already wrapped up their weekly point championships, or will do so in the first few weeks of September.

Labor Day weekend typically indicates summer is coming to an end, and school is about to start. These two items are



The Month of Money and Papa Georgio

typically dreadful for many people. On the flip side, the best part of Labor Day weekend for race fans is this indicates the start of "The Month of Money" for short track racers across the country. I've used the term "The month of money" before, but I can't take credit for it. The first person I heard use this term was Shawn Kelley. We're not sure if he was the first one to use the phrase, but we'll give him credit.

September is a great month for short track racing. As mentioned previously, the weekly championships have wrapped up at most tracks. Through the years, many tracks have now established season-ending special events, some approaching 50 years of history.

What's unique about these events is the atmosphere they present, with many race fans camping for the weekend and drivers getting the opportunity to travel away from their home track. The race fans get the opportunity to have a mini-vacation, spend time away from home and meet new friends. The drivers get to see how they stack up against the competition and race for additional prize money.

The month of money in this area typically kicks off the Thursday before Labor Day each year for the dirt track racers with the 42nd Annual Silver 1000 at Proctor Speedway. The special event season now continues well into the month of October.

The asphalt racer's month of money typically kicks off with the Wisconsin State Championships at Jefferson Speedway a few weeks after Labor Day and goes through the Bahama Brackets at Rockford Speedway in October. If you get the chance, I would highly recommend taking in one of these shows. We've had the opportunity to check out many of these specials through the years, and still have a few on the bucket list we hope to attend some day. Check out our listing of other season ending special events

continued on page 17

The Midwest

RACING

Connection

September 2014 Vol. 18, No. 5

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The Midwest Racing Connection is published six times during the summer racing season by The Plan Company, Inc.

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The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner

I attended nights one and three of the USA Nationals with a 45th White Bear Lake High School class of 1969 reunion sandwiched in between. When I arrived at the reunion I thought I was in the wrong place because the room was full of old people but on closer examination these were my classmates. During my senior year I bought my first car and a frequent destination was the Cedar Lake Speedway. Cedar Lake has been updated and looks much better than it did in 1969. The class of 1969 is showing its age more than CLS but it was good to see everyone again.

The Thursday night showing of the USA Nationals produced great racing in the World of Outlaws Late Models and the NASCAR Midwest Modified divisions. Jimmy Mars looked to be the driver to beat in Saturday night's big show.

Saturday night was delayed two hours by an unexpected shower extending the show with its traditional orchestrated driver introductions until 1am. I had hoped to get out of there earlier than I did but when all was said and done I'm glad that I hung in there until the checkers flew. I am not a student of Late Model racing but even a casual fan like myself could recognize the star power. When Scott Bloomquist made his traditional visit to the infield to check out the track photographer Vince Peterson looked at him



and said "what a rock star". That pretty much describes Bloomquist and his legion of fans but he was not the show on this night. Jimmy Owens, Bobby Pierce and Jimmy Mars (final finishing order) staged a duel at the front of the pack while spots were contested throughout the field. Rumors are that all of the camping and parking spots were full and by the looks of things that rumor wasn't hard to believe. The Cedar Lake Speedway along with all of our other local tracks have had a rough year fighting weather so it was good to see a large crowd both nights that I attended.

On August 9 I opted to stay home and watch the PPV of the Knoxville Nationals on thecushion.com. I am happy to report that the broadcast was flawless for the

Nationals. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for yours truly as I fell victim to a combination of working on the house topped off by a big dinner of pizza and beer. I fell

asleep during driver introductions while my son Les sat in the chair next to me and watched the A Main. When I asked Les if it was a good race his reply was that Schatz won over Brian Brown and we could have saved some money by watching a replay of last year's race. I watched the replay of this year's A Main a couple days later and thought it was a pretty good race with side by side battles all over the track. In a perfect world all of the mainstream news channels would have run a front page



headline about Donny Schatz winning his eighth Knoxville Nationals along with a mention that Tony Stewart is his car owner. Sprint Car photos and video along with Tony Stewart's likeness were featured on all the mainstream news channels the next day but the attention to our sport was for all the wrong reasons. Tony Stewart ran over and fatally injured 20 year old Kevin Ward Jr. at a New York Empire Super Sprints (ESS) race while circling the track under caution. By the time I got on the computer on Sunday morning the news sites and social media were lit up with links to the video, articles by writers both in and outside of racing and personal comments on message boards and social media. People were

chastising each other for discussing the incident and posting the video on social media. In the meantime all of the mainstream media sources had the video posted on their websites and were replaying it on televised broadcasts.

Before I go any further I want to make it clear that this was a terrible tragedy and my deepest sympathies go out to Kevin's family, friends and fellow competitors along with the Speedway, rescue personnel, and the ESS and fans. With that having been said I am going to touch on some sensitive subjects. These were my opinions at the time this column was submitted so it's possible that more information will come out and I will adjust some of these opinions after this issue goes to press.

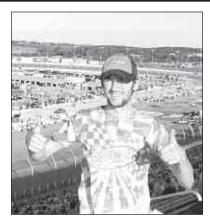
Kevin Ward Jr. did something we have seen far too often in all levels of racing. He walked onto the track to express his displeasure with Stewart. Even during a yellow Sprint Cars are cruising along at a pretty good clip. Approaching a Sprint Car circling under yellow would be akin to running out into the middle of University Avenue at night and attempting to slap cars as they passed by.



The Inside Dirt continued on page 16

RAGING CONNECTION

NASCAR Insight



Shane Carlson

There's no feeling like that first-time feeling. Most everyone remembers their first time riding a bike, first kiss, or first job. They might even have a picture to go along with it. For racers, there's nothing like that elusive first win. There's just something I love about seeing a driver or a team take the checkers for the first time.

It doesn't matter what level of racing it is. It could be a driver racing at his or her local rinky-dink dirt bullring, but a first win there might just feel like a win at Daytona. The taste of victory is insatiable.

Once a driver gets it in them, they can never get enough. And that's why drivers like Jimmie Johnson, John Force, and Donny Schatz still show up every weekend. Those are drivers who have accomplished everything they can accomplish in their respective realm of motorsports, but they still come back every weekend for the thrill of victory.

Drivers are humans too, which means they have emotions. And that is a good thing, because without emotions, life is no fun. I don't care how tough you think you are. You have feelings, whether you want to admit it or not. To see a driver win for the first time in their career, or in a series, fans get to see someone exude the most joy they have ever experienced in their life.

Fans love to see the human side of drivers. Personalities gives media members storylines, and provide fans with plenty to debate about at the water cooler. Whether a driver or a team has been around for a while, or if they are just starting out, it is an absolute spectacle to witness someone accomplishing something so joyous, and for so many drivers, a childhood dream.

Listen to the radio chatter that flows through the in-car radios at the end of a NASCAR race in the closing laps. It's all there for us to hear. Elation.

This year has been great at the NASCAR level of competition with regard to seeing new faces in Victory Lane. Chris Buescher, Chase Elliott, and Ty Dillon have all raised a NASCAR trophy for the first time in their respective careers, while Aric Almirola and AJ Allmendinger joined the exclusive list of NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race winners this summer. Brendan Gaughan hadn't won a NASCAR race of any sort for over 10 years until he finally broke through in Road America for a Nationwide Series race win. To him, he



probably felt like he had never won a race. A terrific ambassador of the sport, a shadow of doubt had begun to set in, and his win this summer brought him to tears. Grown men crying. This sport has a quick way of humbling those who participate in it, so that's why winning one time, nevertheless on multiple occasions, is so monumental.

Often, I find myself just sitting back and smiling, enjoying the moment just as much as the team is. So much work goes into putting a contending race product on the track that fans in the stands don't get to see. Many crew members on local race teams volunteer long hours on top of working a nine-to-five, and the reason they put those extra hours in is to experience the thrill of winning a race, at whatever level they compete. It's the ultimate accomplishment in racing, other than winning a championship. But to win a championship, it will most likely take winning a race or two in the process.



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WILL MIDWEST CONNECTION

Racing Nuggets



Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

As a woman, I am encouraged to see a bumper-crop of young ladies entering the motorsports world, vying to compete among the "best of the best." It seriously warms the cockles of my heart that there are fearless women who like to go against the odds and make a name for themselves, as well as help pave the way for future females in this sport that we love so much.

It can be tough to be taken seriously in this sport as a woman. Even from the media side of things, it can be difficult to garner a strong foothold because of your gender. Granted, it is getting much better, but regardless of how one feels about it, gender bias is bound to infiltrate most career paths to some degree. Mind you, I'm not complaining. I think I have a pretty thick skin (the scale reinforces that it's more than just skin), but generally speaking, I don't let other people's opinions or snarkiness impact my attitude. Age and experience have helped me to deal with negativity, as have Dale Carnegie training classes.

Danica Patrick is without a doubt, the poster-woman for other aspiring ladies in the sport. She has a huge fan base, as well as a large contingent of "haters." She has reached the pinnacle, despite not having any "Ws" in her stats column for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. It's for that reason that many naysayers don't care for her, explaining that she's "overrated."

That's true. She has to prove herself week after week, but then so do most of the other 42 drivers who start every race in the Cup Series. The old saying, "You're only as good as your last race," is painfully true for ALL racers, regardless of the division or series. It's tough to make the race, let alone win one when the competition is stacked high. But isn't that the point of racing—to beat the "best of the best?"

Which has me asking this: As a female racer, would it mean more to make the race on your own merits, or be given preferential treatment for a spot in the race, because of your gender?

Playing The Gender Game

For me—hands down—I'd rather make a race on my own abilities, as opposed to receiving advantages simply because I'm a female. How can you demand to be taken seriously, if you have to rely on special privileges because of your gender to get what everyone else in the field has had to work to earn?

I can assure you—you are NOT earning the respect of your competitors if you must rely on playing the "gender card" to get into a race. I won't name names, but there was a big special event in Wisconsin recently, where there were WAY more talented drivers on hand, than starting spots available. It was dog-eat-dog in the qualifying races for drivers striving to earn a position in the starting line-up of the feature, and it was exciting to watch it unfold. There were A LOT of successful drivers, with plenty of wins under their belt who were relegated to watching the main event from the pits, because they failed to earn a spot in the race.

A female racer also failed to earn her way into the race. She was also passed over for having one of the much coveted provisional starting positions bestowed upon her, which were granted by the promoter and title sponsor. How did she handle it? She and her father lobbied them to allow her a starting position based upon her gender and her participation in a much lauded, but farcical dog and pony show that allegedly strives to help women and minorities get a foothold in the world of motorsports. And the powers that be granted her request—creating an extra, previously unannounced provisional to allow her to run the race.

Was this fair? I suppose it depends upon who you ask. The bottom line is that it was the promoter and sponsor's choice on how to handle it. On the other hand, the actions taken by this female driver did NOTHING to earn the respect of her fellow competitors. She did NOT earn her starting position. The manner in which she received it was the equivalent of batting one's eyelashes at a police officer to finagle ones way out of a speeding ticket. Did it work? Hell, yes. Was it ethically the right thing to do? Hell, no I say.

You may disagree with me on this, and you're entitled to do so, but I will argue that regardless of the tactics used—if someone has not earned a place in a race, to just hand them their "Golden Ticket" is a step back for the REAL drive for diversity. Success thrives where hard work and opportunity meet. If you didn't earn your way into a race based upon your hard work—you didn't fulfill half of the equation for success.

Recently there was a situation unfolding out in Connecticut with a female racer by the name of Nichole Morgillo, who got into a bit of a tiff with speedway officials at Waterford Speedbowl. Morgillo has participated in the SK Modified division for the past six years. During her time racing there, she was afforded a "handicapped" starting position, rather than where her performance determined her spot in the lineup for every feature.

Morgillo was the first female driver to win an SK Modified feature at the Speedbowl. In my opinion, that win should have an asterisk behind it, because she did not start in the position that she earned through her qualifying efforts. She started in the "handicapped position" which was afforded to her.

How Morgillo could continue to accept a "handicap" starting position for six years is mind-boggling to me. Even a baby eventually learns to walk on their own without the assistance of holding onto furniture or someone's hands.

Oddly enough, it was the removal of Morgillo's "handicapped" starting position that caused a ruckus, which ultimately led to her decision to leave the track and the series. She didn't want to lose that "competitive advantage" which had been handed to her for six years.

I'm sorry if you're scowling at me while reading this. Actually, I don't care if you're scowling. I honestly don't care if I am upsetting you. The fact that this woman could comfortably accept a "handicapped" starting position for SIX YEARS in the SK Modified series at a highly competitive race track is HEINOUS to me. The fact that she isn't deterred by accepting something that essentially says being a woman is a "handicap" in racing is appalling to me. It should be to you too.

Racing is not like long jumping. Unless you're a female with a large Adam's apple, deep voice and a budding moustache, you probably will have a difficult time besting a man at the long jump. However, racing is different. There's a several thousand pound machine that you pilot. It needs to be built and set up as close to perfection as possible for the best chance at success. That has nothing to do with gender. You need to have the ability to see past the hood pins of your race car and have an excellent sense of your surroundings. That has nothing to do with gender. You must have smooth, catlike reflexes to be a race car driver. That has nothing to do with gender. The bottom line is success in racing has NOTHING to do with gender. Unfortunately, there's a contingent out there that keep playing the gender card to gain a competitive advantage or sales opportunities, and generally speaking, it's not casting female racers in a positive light.

Ladies—please STOP playing the gender card to curry favor for advancing your career in racing. Put on your big girl panties. (They can be lacy—it doesn't matter.) If you are talented and have what it takes—you need to showcase your abilities by EARNING your way through your performance, not preferential treatment. Anything earned is WAY more valuable than what is handed to you. Success feels and tastes better when you worked for it—not batted your eyelashes to gain a competitive advantage.

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Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

We start out this months MRC column with highlights from a conversation with short track racing star Mike Miller.

"When the Central Wisconsin Racing Association came up with the 9-1 Engine Compression rule it went Nationwide. I'll bet we saved racers across the U.S. 100 million dollars on that.

We'd race 100 times a year back in the 1970s and '80s. Up to 5 days a week and twice on Sunday. Race somewhere Sunday afternoon and get back in time to race that night at our home track Golden Sands Speedway in Plover. (WI.)

When we were racing then, we could run 30 features in a month and still have some month left! I remember racing 12 days in a row. Around the Holidays especially you could do that.

There were probably 6 or so of us that were racing for a living back in those days. You could do that then because we had so many opportunities to race, and a lot of those shows were specials that paid good money.

Mike Miller Observes a Great Era of CWRA Racing

We had a gentleman's agreement not to buy new tires every race. And, we'd run off our old tires every Wednesday at La Crosse and then buy new ones at Wausau Thursday to start off our racing week.

We had some good races at Wausau. One year there were four features that the combined differential between 1^{st} and 2^{nd} was a bumper! I won three of those features and Dick Trickle won one. Although if Dick was here today he may tell you he remembered it differently.

It really helped to be one of the fastest qualifiers at Wausau. You could pick the lane right away that moved first and get right up and race for the lead. And you still had enough laps left to race for the win.

With the uniform rules CWRA came up with that got established across the U.S. we could take our cars and race almost anywhere. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Michigan, Colorado, Nevada, California, Washington, Tennessee, Florida – Everywhere. We didn't just race either; we won those races which paid really good money!

One of my biggest wins, actually it was my biggest win, came at the Minnesota State Fair. It was a month or so after Larry Detjens was killed racing. I just know Larry was riding with me that day.

Larry was a dear friend of mine. He would have made it in NASCAR because he was so good in long distance races. Within a year or so he would have been down there, but then he got killed. To this day it brings tears to my eyes to think about it.

The biggest problem I see with today's racing is the aero of the cars, and at the NASCAR Cup level it's the worst. Get the cars 5-6 inches off the ground and you'd have better racing.

If we could get back to uniform rules and have all the tracks and promoters included, racing could get back to, or at least close to what it was when I raced. I hope that happens, and with CWRA re-established and looking to get back into the rules making end of things maybe it can."

Speaking of CWRA they will be having their racing Reunion on September 27th at the Lions Club in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. Many racing celebrities will be on hand for this the second reunion the group is having.

And don't forget about the 6th Annual Champions Reunion to be held as part of Oktoberfest Racing weekend, Sunday October 5th, from 11-2pm. Many past racing champions will be on hand for this event and the public is welcome to attend free with a Sunday ticket.

Here and there...Steve Carlson rebounded nicely from a poor night the week before to win the 25 lap NASCAR Late Model Feature at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway Saturday night. Carlson outlasted Matt Henderson, Cole Howland, Brad Powell and Mike Koenecke in the caution plagued event...Howland kept his chances for a top five finish in points intact with a 3rd place run in Matt Henderson's backup car. All in all a good night for that team as matt placed 2^{nd} in the main...Covering some previous racing action in recent weeks at Lax Fairgrounds Adam Degenhardt, Steve Carlson, Mike Carlson and Brad Powell have all picked up feature wins at the Speedway...At the Fairgrounds on 8/2/14 a couple females stole some of the spotlight as both Kayla Rae Lockington and Kayla Steinhoff took heat wins in the Thunderstox Division. And speaking of racing gals, Mandi Eckleberg got her first ever win taking a heat race victory in the Sportsman Division on 8/9/14. Todd Lockington crossed the finish line first in the race but was disqualified moving Eckleberg up to first. She was even allowed later in the show to grace victory lane with the checkered flag which is only right for your first ever win...Tabi Swenson made her first ever racing appearance at the Speedway 8/9 competing in the Hornet Division. That in itself may not be that unusual but the 17 year old did it behind the wheel of a 1980 Chevy Citation! She put the car through its paces, maybe too much so, as it didn't complete the entire feature distance before smoke could be seen rising from under the hood of the "Classis" race car...Fat Phylis almost had her way. We're talking about the Steve Scholze owned Cole Scholze driven Outlaw car that looks rather wide and carries that nickname that almost won the Outlawz Feature 8/9/14 at Lax. Scholze had taken the lead in the 0No numbered car only to have the rear end go out of the car before the checkered flag waved. A painful occurrence to say the least but Phylis vowed to be back to finish out the racing season...And she did, and nothing went wrong this time as she won the Outlawz Feature event at the track 8/23/14 taking the point lead in the process with one race left...The Mid-America Stock car group was at Lax Frgnds 8/16/14 with Rick Corso and Rick Tachman taking Feature wins. The Mid-Am group always puts on a competitive racing show and tonight was no different with close racing throughout... Brad Waits raced to his 4th main event win of 2014 at Mississippi Thunder Speedway, of Fountain City, WI. here recently. Waits held off Lance Hofer and Lucas Schott for the win...

Looking back at racing on September 30th, 1974 it was Mike Miller winning the National Short Track Championship 200 at Rockford Speedway, Rockford, IL. Miller bested Joe Shear, Wayne Stallsworth, Ramo Stott, Don Leach, Tom Jones, Larry Detjens, Danny Bellard, Al Schill and Ed Hoffman at the finish. The win was worth over \$3,000 to

Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions continued on page 8





1974 Mike Miller racing in Wisconsin in his Ford Mustang. Miller moved from New Prague, MN to Wisconsin Rapids, WI., to race full time. Miller raced Chevy Camaros in 1980 and '81 winning the Minnesota Fair race 300 two years in a row.

Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



Jason Searcy

The Power Stock division has been very entertaining this summer at Elko Speedway. The racing has always been good in the Power Stocks but now the weekly car count has

increased to over 20 and that has turned up the intensity a notch.

Fans have also been treated to a pretty good points race as well with two new rookies in the mix for a Championship. Before this season Nick Oxborough had only raced a couple times in a Mini Stock at Elko Speedway. This year Nick won on opening night in the Power Stocks and has held onto a slim point lead each week along with a picking up a couple more wins.

"I'm very surprised how well we've done," said Oxborough "I've got to thank my dad and all the pit guys behind me, I couldn't ask for any better help."

Fighting for a point title can put a lot of pressure on a race team but the number 88 seems to remain consistent.

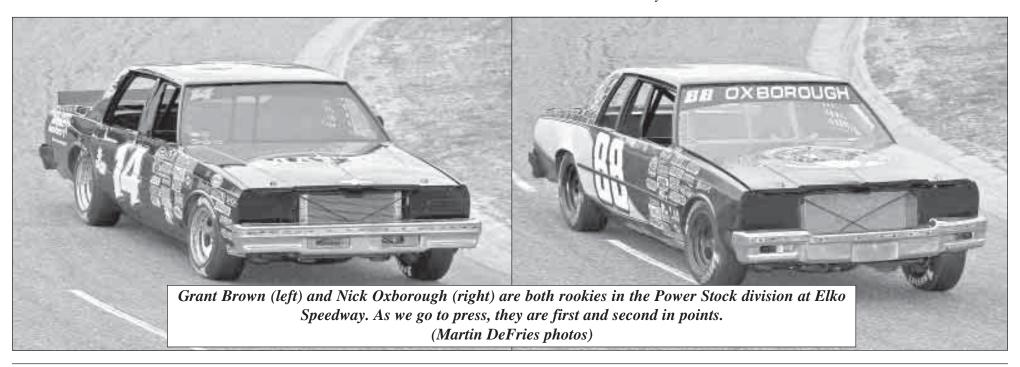
"I'm trying not to think about points as much, because it starts getting in your head," said Oxborough "when I get to the track I try to throw all that out but then on Monday morning I'm back looking at the points!"

Grant Brown is another Power Stock rookie in the hunt at the age of just 14. He was the 2012 Bandoleros Champion at Elko and he raced in the Short Tracker division at Raceway Park last year. Grant seems to be very calm behind the wheel but also has the intensity needed to fight for the lead in a tough division. Apparently something has rubbed off from his father Doug who is a four time Champion in the Sportsman/Big 8 division.

Tom Doten was the "Hard Luck Loser" in a very tight Power Stock point battle last year. Doten lost to John Lebens by only 2 points in 2013 and is still in the hunt this year after recently scoring his first win of the season.

Early this season Doten had to race a back-up car for several weeks after crashing their primary car but, now he is back in his familiar #62 and ready to make a run. "If we keep running the way we're running, we've got a shot at it" said Doten. "I have the same feeling as last year, I'm real hungry."

Brandon Peterson, Paul Hamilton, Paul Neisius, Shaun Prins, Taylor Goldman, Ryan Varner and Cole Neisius have all won feature events this year too. So far, thirty-eight different drivers have earned points this year and that makes for both quantity and quality racing in the Power Stock division at Elko Speedway.



Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 7

Miller. 80 cars representing 5 States were on hand for the event. On October 22nd, 1978 it was Mike Miller taking his Olds Cutlass to victory in the 150 lap feature at Mesa Marin Speedway of Bakersfield, CA. Miller outdistanced Jim Thirkettle, Roy Smith, Joe Ruttman and Larry Phillips for the \$4,000 win. On October 29th, 1978 Mike Miller steered his 1978 Olds Cutlass to the 150 lap feature win at the Craig Road Speedway, of Las Vegas, NV. The win for Miller was worth \$7,000 as he won out over Jim Thirkettle, Joe Ruttman, Larry Phillips and Dan Press. On August 30th, 1981 Mike Miller captured the AMSOIL 300 race at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds of Falcon Heights, MN. Miller crossed the finish line 1st ahead of Mike Eddy, Darrell Waltrip, Dick Trickle, Jim Sauter, Joe Shear, Bob Senneker, Rusty Wallace, Alan Kulwicki and Don Gregory. Miller dedicated the huge win to friend Larry Detjens who was tragically killed in a racing accident earlier in the month...

Bonus Pictures from the past

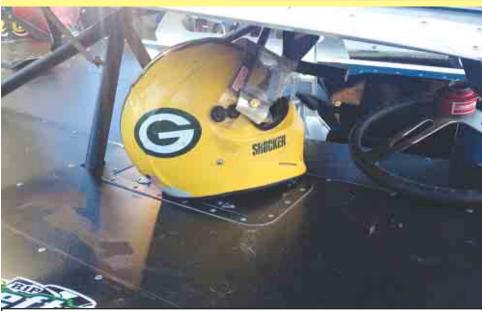


Mike Miller 1978 Olds Cutlass. Miller had his winningest seasons in 1978 and 1979 racing a pair of Cutlasses. 1978 27 Feature wins, 1979 33 main event wins.





Photo Gallery



Jake Redetzke's unique helmet as seen at Red Cedar Speedway

Cal Naughton Jr. photo



Sportsmen action at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway

Bruce Nuttleman photo



The world famous Caterpillar Miller with yet another trailer race trophy *Jimmy Ambruoso photo*



The Zoo looks quite calm during the daytime hours at Brainerd *Bruce Nuttleman photo*



The start of the USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway

Bruce Nuttleman photo



Elko Speedway honored past Raceway Park champions *Cal Naugton Jr. photo*



Photo Gallery



The tire specialists were the key to Nathan Haseuleu's win at Norway

Doug Hornickel photo



"The O-Show" Jimmy Owens *Stan Meissner photo*



Matt Goede and Jacob Goede battle for the lead at Elko *Martin DeFries photo*



The kids are always winners at Rockford Speedway *Jimmy Ambruoso photo*



Ken Christensen Jr. and Jimmy Summerfield at LaCrosse Speedway *Bruce Nuttleman photo*



Race fans turning the August issue of MRC into seat cushions after a rain delay *Matt Plan photo*

Small Car Corner

Driver: Sierra Knase
Age: 14
Hometown: Duluth, MN
Racing Division: Briggs 206 Junior
Years racing: One

What do you like about go kart racing? It's fun and gives me something to do on weekends.

How did you find out about the Midwest Karting Association?

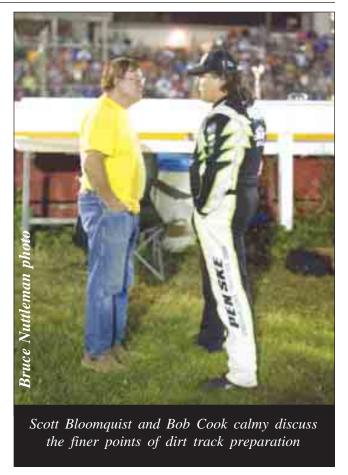
My grandpa found out about it.

What is your favorite candy bar? Snickers

What do you hope to accomplish racing this year?

Just to keep up with the pack.







*Time Calls - Appointments

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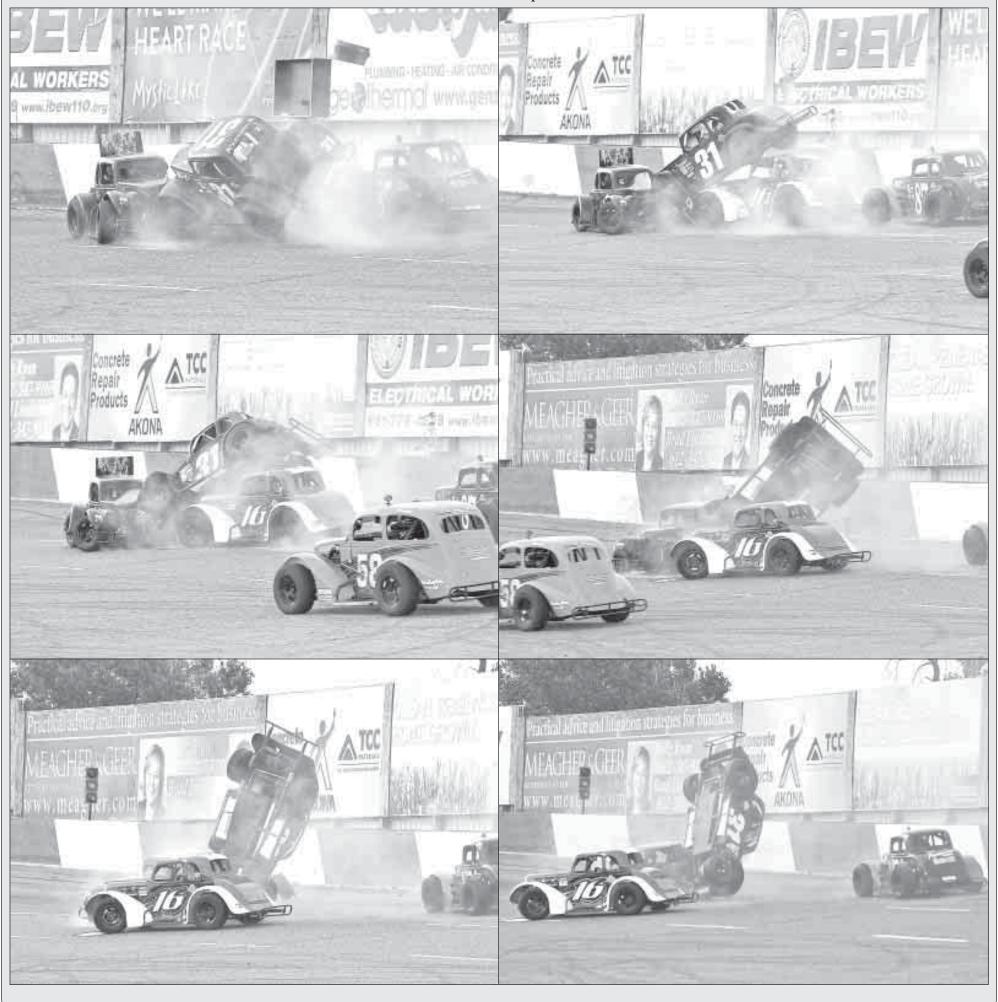
THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

LITTLE CARS - BIG WRECK

The Great North INEX Legend drivers have had a tough time on a few occasions this year.

Due in part to the safety measures mandated by the U.S Legend Cars sanctioning body, all drivers walked away uninjured.

Martin DeFries photos



Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Joann Rottiger on August 14th. Joann had worked at many area southern Wisconsin tracks in many capacities, most recently for many years at the Columbus 151 Speedway. She basically did whatever needed to be done in regards to scoring, control tower, lineups, media, etc. Joann was always a HUGE help to me in my duties at the track, providing all-time track records and other stats that I needed. She could find out any information that I would need, and I always enjoyed our chats after the races in the tower. A great person to be around, I am glad I had the opportunity to get to know her. Her Husband, Dave, worked at the track as well, and I will always remember Joann trying to get Dave to answer on the

radio when she wanted to know who was being teched, any disqualifications, etc. They had that way of arguing with each other in a lighthearted way that was more teasing than anything, just the way any couple who loves each other does after many years of marriage. My condolences to the family, and I know I will always be thinking of her as well.

Some tracks have already crowned season champions. Rockford Speedway runs a weekly Wednesday night show during the summer months, which includes a variety of lower dollar divisions. I really enjoy these shows, and try to make it to most of them. The "Ironmen" of the speedway, the Roadrunner division, runs a "Summer Series" with a separate points title from their Saturday night appearances. Dennis Smith Jr. was crowned Roadrunner champion with an absolutely dominating season, winning seven of the eight feature events contested. Bobby Frisch was the only other driver to win a feature in the division on Wednesdays. Smith also was crowned figure-eight champion, racing with the same car, winning four of these events as well.

Justin Pearson won the Bandit point title, winning only one feature along the way, but consistency did it for him as others had more "off" nights. There is a group of racers they like to call the "misfits." There are divisions for open wheeled cars and fendered machines which run together, but are scored separately. The misfits name comes from the group of cars which are not run regularly at any local track, but there are still some racers around who want to race these cars and Rockford gives them a place to do this. Vern Brown dominated the open wheeled segment of this division with his Mini-Indy car, winning six of the eight

Tim Roach won the other two, also in a Mini-Indv car. Dwight Dunlap won the championship in the fendered division with his Allison Legacy car, winning three features. Kyle Voss won four features and Cody Cootware won the other ones. Amanda Bohn won the Super Mini-Cup crown, winning only one feature, while Jaden Fryer won four, Noah Eisenhower two, and Derek Doerr one. Once again, it was Amanda who

features run, while

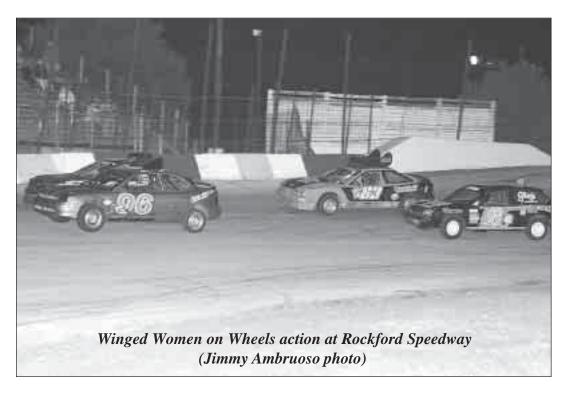
finished second many times and was very consistent, which is often what is needed to win championships. Cassidy Frisch won the Winged Women On Wheels (WWOW) championship, dominating on most nights, winning seven of eight features run. No champion was named in the spectator drags, but Charlie Roland won more than anyone with his sleek, black Camaro.

On the dirt side of things, the Lafayette County Speedway in Darlington, Wisconsin concluded their season in early August, with Jason Buss winning the Modified points title, taking five feature wins along the way. Jason Robbins won the title in the Sport Mods, with four feature wins, while Cameron Wahl won the title in the four cylinders, winning four features, including three in a row at the end of the season. Roger Winkers won the title in the new Sportsman truck division, winning two features. the Late Models made two appearances at the track, with Dan Shelliam winning the annual fair race, and Chad Simpson winning the Corn Belt Clash race.

Asphalt Late Model racer Steve "Dobie" Dobbratz recently raced his four cylinder Bandit racer at Jefferson one night. What is a late model guy doing racing a Bandit, you may ask? Well, as Steve tells it, "It was for sale, and it was a bargain, so I bought it." He let a crew member race the car once, and decided to hop in it himself one night, finishing fourth in the feature while also winning his heat race. The differences? "Of course, a lot less power, and with the four cylinder, you go into the turn, and it just keeps pushing," said Steve.

One of the drivers that I really respect at the Columbus 151 Speedway is street stock racer Dan Schmidt. Dan is a kind of quiet guy, comes to the track by himself, races, has fun, races very clean, never fights or argues, and is just a pleasure to see race. I've seen him attending races at many other tracks, and the smile on his face when racing indicates that he just plain likes to race and enjoys the sport. If every track had 100 Dan Schmidts, the show would run flawlessly every week.

Congrats go out to Casey Johnson, who won the Late Model feature during the running of the annual "Dick Moore Memorial" race at Columbus 151. Casey has shown the ability to win races on any kind of track and in any series he competes in, as well as any weekly show. I think you will be hearing plenty about this young driver in the years to come





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RACING CONNECTION

Dirty Talkin'



Kris Peterson

Spending most of my summers the last several years at two area dirt tracks watching races, I have had the pleasure of watching many young drivers develop their talent at these tracks. This year I have paid more attention to the Midwest Modified division races and discovered a young new driver that I have enjoyed watching and supporting throughout the season.

Mitch Weiss has been a constant this year at both Cedar Lake Speedway and St. Croix Valley Raceway. I have really enjoyed watching him, from his relationship with his mom

A New Generation of Mod Driver's

and dad in the pits, (both look to be his very dedicated pit crew), to his composure on the track I have become a huge fan of this young man.

Mitch began his racing career in 2004 at the age of 10, after he and his dad stopped into a kart track and he caught the racing bug. That bug was enough that he went and watched every race of that season to prove he would be dedicated enough to become a driver. In his six years of racing karts in the IKF region he won multiple championships including the IKF Grand Nationals in 2011, which was a highlight of his karting career. He bought his first Midwest Mod in 2010 only racing a few races. He spent a couple of seasons racing a Mod on the dirt and a Late Model on the asphalt and decided he needed to pick one or the other so he stayed with the Mod and dirt track racing.

This year Mitch has developed his talent in his new Midwest Mod and watching him has been so much fun. He received his first ever feature win at Cedar Lake Speedway in his 5th race out beating last year's champion as well as a very exciting feature win at St. Croix Valley Raceway winning on a fantastic last lap pass.

At the age of 20, Mitch will be the 2014 Track Champion at St. Croix Valley Raceway and will come away 3rd in Cedar Lake Speedway Points. He is a very humble kid who is grateful to all of his sponsors CRC Motorsports, Tim's Automotive Machine, Midway Sewer Service, Calvin's Handyman Service, Speedwerx Racing Headers, and Shocks by Hammer for all of the support given to him this season.

I am looking forward to watching Mitch race in the future and believe that he is a great role model to the future of our sport.











RAGING CONNECTION

The Inside Dirt from page 4

My question, and I have always felt this way, is why racing

at all levels allowed this dangerous behavior? If I set my camera down and ran onto the track shaking my fist at cars circling under yellow I would expect to be escorted out of the infield and sent on my way. Why would a driver be allowed to engage in this dangerous behavior that would get anyone else ejected from the facility with no repercussions? Thankfully at the time of this writing I see that this issue is being addressed nationwide. Whenever there is a racing fatality at the grass roots level NASCAR has generally taken the high ground but I think in this case that NASCAR shared some culpability. NASCAR allowed this type of behavior to take place often making light of it during televised races. Kevin Ward Jr. started racing karts at four years old and watched his racing heroes walk onto the track shaking their fists and throwing their helmets at other drivers. He grew up with the idea that angry outbursts are not only tolerated but encouraged in racing. I was happy to see that NASCAR recognized their responsibility to set an example and has taken steps to avoid a similar tragedy and to set a proper example. The on track incident between Stewart and Ward Jr. that preceded Ward's death was minor by Sprint Car standards. Perhaps Stewart ran Kevin Ward Jr. high causing him to run out of room but it wasn't a flagrant punt as some members of the media who are unfamiliar with Sprint Cars are portraying it. It's impossible to tell from the video if the cars made contact or if Ward jumped the cushion causing him to hit the wall. Regardless of whether they bumped wheels or Ward jumped the cushion it was a relatively minor incident as far as Sprint Car crashes go.

Some contend that Tony gunned his engine and took a run at Kevin so as to intimidate him. Some state that the car in front of Stewart had to take evasive action to miss Ward and could have obscured Tony's vision until the last second. Another driver who was lined up behind Stewart said that Tony gunned his engine deliberately and the other drivers said that they had no problem seeing Ward so there are conflicting reports about what happened among the other drivers. Drivers pull off tear offs and check gauges during yellows so they're busy while circling under yellow but they all know enough to pay close attention when approaching the scene of the accident. Some argue that Stewart was the most experienced driver on the track yet he was the only one who could not avoid Kevin Ward Jr. Only Tony Stewart knows what he was doing and thinking and whether he saw Kevin Ward Jr.

No driver would intentionally harm another driver so we can dismiss any thoughts of Stewart purposely running over Kevin Ward Jr. On the opposite end of the spectrum I have been caught in the crossfire too many times over the years to say that anger and intimidation never come into play in short track racing. Tony's legendary "bad boy" behavior raises a level of doubt that would not exist if this had happened to a driver who does not have that reputation. As recently as January of 2011 Stewart struck an Australian promoter with his helmet and was briefly detained before being allowed to return to the United States. That is not the kind of reputation a driver wants working against them when something like this happens.

Stewart is reported to have hired a high profile attorney and gone on hiatus to an unknown destination in the days following the accident. He has not spoken to the media nor has he given any interviews and had missed two races at



Mark Toews made the trip from Iowa to the Saint Croix Valley Raceway for the Earl Kouba Memorial on Saturday August 16. Toews is a long time friend of the Kouba family who relocated to northern Iowa and races at the Jackson Speedway. This is one of ten hot lap photos taken before the skies opened up to dampen the occasion.

the time of this writing. Reports are that charges of involuntary manslaughter have not been ruled out and that videos not available to the public are being reviewed. There are so many conflicting reports and opinions that it's going to take time for everything to be sorted out before we know the outcome. Until more is known I prefer to stay neutral and refrain from siding with the lynch mobs and apologists. Personally it is my opinion that if Tony survives this with his career intact he should give serious consideration to supporting Sprint Car racing as a car and track owner and stay out of the driver's seat. For the past two seasons he has brought the worst publicity imaginable to Sprint Car racing. I am not saying that getting caught up in last year's crash or this most recent accident were his fault but the resulting media coverage has portrayed Sprint Car racing in a negative light with the public. The mainstream media will be following Tony Stewart's every move as long as he continues to race and his days of making short track guest appearances could likely be over. It remains to be seen how this will be received by his sponsors and what effect it will have on his other racing interests including his Sprint Car teams and the Eldora Speedway.

The next race on my schedule was supposed to have been the Earl Kouba Memorial at the Saint Croix Valley Raceway on August 16 but rain ended the evening before hot laps had concluded. The Knoxville Raceway takes the week after the Nationals off so Brooke Tatnell and Davey Heskin were on hand. Mark Toews, a long time friend of the Kouba family, had towed up from Iowa and there was a good field of both winged and traditional Sprints on hand. The Earl Kouba Memorial has been rescheduled to Friday September 5, the night before the Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial takes place at Cedar Lake. This will give Sprint Car fans in our area two consecutive nights of racing with a choice between the IRA at Superior and UMSS at Saint Croix Valley.

I have stated many times in this column and in preview articles that the Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial is my favorite

local event of the season. There are bigger and higher paying races that draw more cars but this event connects some of the dots from my past to present and brings back a lot of great memories. With both of these Memorials scheduled for the same weekend and most tracks in the region being done for the season the two consecutive nights might convince more 360 teams to make the trip up to western Wisconsin.

Notes:

As was mentioned previously Donny Schatz won his eighth Knoxville Nationals with Brian in Brown chase for the second year in a row. Craig Dollansky finished fourth and Brooke Tatnell won the B Main and finished twentieth in the A. Davey Heskin finished thirteenth in the B. Former UMSS Champion Leigh Thomas raced for the first time this season during the UMSS three race series of KRA, Princeton and Saint Croix Valley. Thomas finished 6th at KRA and eighth at Princeton before weather cut the three nights to two.

Long time open wheel photographer Bill Taylor has been going through some health issues that doctors now have under control and was at SCVR on August 16. Few people know this but Taylor is a member of the Bonneville 200 mile per hour club and served as a starter there until a few years ago. Taylor was a part of the California open wheel scene and has a lot of interesting stories about racing on the west coast.

Absent from competition was Cedar Lake UMSS winner Rick Kobs. Car owner Ron Olson told me that they had some engine problems and he wasn't sure if they would be ready by September 5th.

See you at the races!

Midwest Fall Invitationals

The Legendary 100

Cedar Lake Speedway September 11 – 13 www.cedarlakespeedway.com

Wisconsin State Championships

Jefferson Speedway September 12 & 13 www.jeffersonspeedway.com

Fall Shootout

Marshfield Speedway September 12 & 13 www.marshfieldspeedway.com

Thunder Struck '93

Elko Speedway September 20 www.elkospeedway.com

Fall Jamboree

Deer Creek Speedway September 18 – 20 www.deercreekspeedway.com

September Showdown

Dells Raceway Park September 19 & 20 www.dellsracewaypark.com

Punky Manor Challenge of Champions

Red Cedar Speedway September 19 & 20 www.redcedarracing.com

Red Clay Classic

ABC Raceway September 26 & 27 www.abcraceway.com

National Short Track Championships

Rockford Speedway
September 26 – 28
www.rockfordspeedway.com

Publishers note from page 3

that take place during the month of September in this issue of *The Midwest Racing Connection*.

Miscellaneous news and notes:

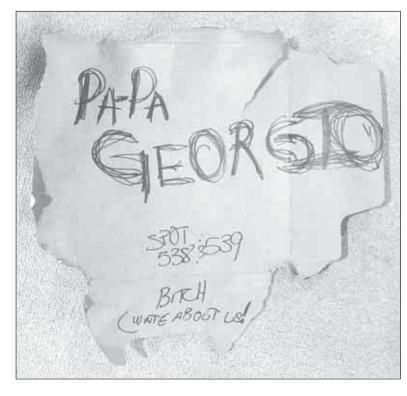
The 21st Annual Dwain Behrens Memorial race was held in the middle of August at Elko Speedway. Jacob Goede picked up his first win in this historic event named after the former Elko track champion. Despite another full moon, the drivers all behaved well. During special events such as this, I try to pick out one item that stood out for the night. On this particular night, I happened to be sitting in the stands next to the mother of Jacob and Matt Goede. While these two kids may have battled each other for the lead previously, I had never witnessed in person. I felt sorry for Lisa Goede watching the battle between her two sons for the lead. She definitely looked stressed out. In the end, they raced each other clean, and Mom Geode survived the night.

Other winners on the night were; LB Berthiaume (Big 8), Brent Kane (Thunder Car), Cole Neisius (Power Stock), Jon Lemke (Legends), Michael Wachs Jr. in the Mini Stocks and Luke Allen in the Bandolero's.

Red Cedar Speedway in Menomonie, WI is one of the first tracks in the area to typically wrap up their weekly points racing. It had been several years since we've attended a weekly show at Red Cedar, and were reminded once again how much we enjoy their quick-paced Friday night program. While the Late Model car count has had some struggles this year at Menomonie, the racers that were on hand put on a heck of a battle for the win on championship night. Jake Redetzke, Mike Prochnow and Rick Hanestad all taking turns up front. Redetzke would ultimately go on for the win. Next up for Red Cedar will be the 35th Annual Punky Manor Challenge of Champions on September 19th & 20th.

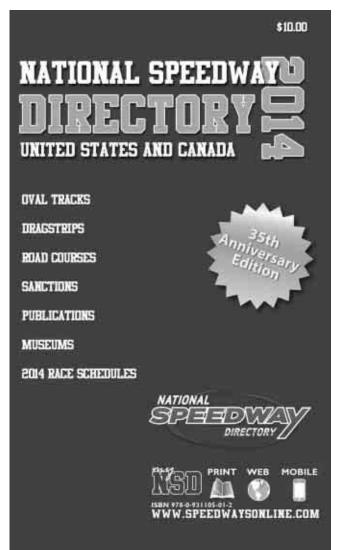
And finally.....several years ago, during the USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway, we had

the pleasure of camping at the track next to a group of race fans from Superior, WI. For whatever reason, they gave me the nickname of Papa Georgio. While we haven't had the opportunity to camp next to them for a few years now, we would often see them in our travels throughout the campground over the course of the weekend at the USA Nationals each year. Every time we would see them, they would yell out "Papa Georgio!" This year, we did not camp at the track and stayed at one of the local campgrounds on the Apple River. While tubing down the river on Friday afternoon, all of a sudden, our group could hear another group of tubers talking about Papa Georgio. Low and behold, it was our friends from Superior. Yes, it is a small world. I'm embarrassed to say I don't know their names, but I do know they camp by the Cedar Lake Arena and their camping spots numbered 538 & 539. As a bonus for this year's USA Nationals, when parking was at a premium, they were kind enough to let us park in the campsite and even offered shelter from the rain. They even left this note in the accompanying photo so I wouldn't forget about them. Race fans are the best.



THE MIDWEST CONNECTION





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