

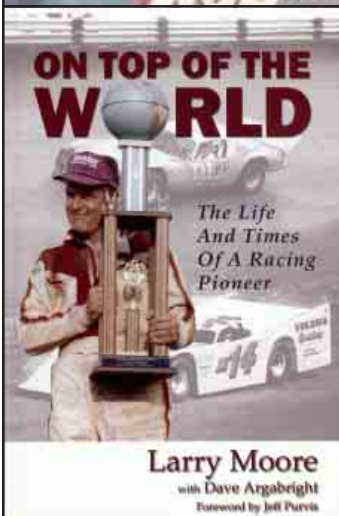
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December, 2014

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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

While reading Dave Argabright's latest book, *On Top of The World* (featured on page 16 of this issue of *The Midwest Racing Connection*), I started thinking back of some of the experiences I've had through the years of attending short track racing events. Much of the book talks about events that take place after the racing or away from the race track. I couldn't help but smile as I read some of Larry's stories. It reminded me just how lucky I've been, having many different people in the racing world allow me to be part of their fun. Some of the fun times I've had don't always involve the action on the track. There hasn't been much short track racing locally since my last column, I've decided to use this final column of the year to recap a few of the more memorable moments that don't necessarily involve racing, but I thought were good stories, and still make me laugh when I think about them. Hopefully you'll feel the same. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.

Shortly after graduating from school, I was on my way to a Friday night show at Red Cedar Speedway with this old guy I've known my entire life. Literally, I've known him since the day I was born, but he doesn't want me to mention his name. We arrived at the track about 30 minutes before the show started. A beautiful blue sky, without a cloud in site; but the place was empty. Turns out, Menomonie was hit with a monsoon of a storm earlier in the day, and the pits were flooded. This was way before the day and age of the Internet and social media. We had no idea the track had cancelled. Out came the Atlas road map (no Smartphone's or GPS either at this time) and took the back roads to St. Croix Falls. What was supposed to be about an hour long trip to watch races suddenly turned into a nearly 3 hour trip. The good news is I was able to spend some quality time with the old man, and we were able to watch some short track racing that night.

One time back in the early 1990's, just around the time the Mid American Stock Car Series was formed by

Late Nights And Rain Delays

the late Gary Vercauteren. I was part of a pit crew that was going to run the Mid Am groups first events in the state of Minnesota. It was a two-day swing over Memorial Day weekend at Elko Speedway and Raceway Park. By the way, I must add that was a neat little two-day swing, but unfortunately it only happened once. Anyway, the Elko cars ran a different brand of tire (McCreary), and we decided to pick up a set of Mid Am Hoosier tires prior to the event. The driver/owner of the car (we'll just say his name is Bob) decided to make a Sunday afternoon drive to Wisconsin International Raceway for the ARTGO/MidAm show. The original plan was to purchase tires for his car (and a few other teams) and then return home around 10:00pm. We arrived at WIR, picked out our spot on the hill and watched the afternoon show.

After the races were over, we went down to the infield to pick up the tires. Unfortunately, the tire truck was gone and we were informed the truck went to Slinger for their regular Sunday night show. We looked at each other for just a second, and no words were spoken. Off to Slinger we went. We watched their Sunday night program and bought a pickup truck load of tires at the end of the night. I had promised to be a good co-pilot and make sure the driver stayed awake. I didn't do a good job and probably fell asleep within 30 minutes. It's hard for me to stay awake in the passenger seat. The driver purposely would move onto the shoulder and run across the rumble strips all night long on I-94, just to make sure we both stayed awake. I think we rolled back into town around 4:00am. We both still had to work Monday morning, but it was worth the trip.

There was also this time where I was all alone on a trip to the World of Outlaws Monday night show at Cedar Lake Speedway, followed by a run down to Madison, WI for a Tuesday night show. A group of guys (let's just say they claimed to be brothers) were on the same schedule I was on to Madison the next day. My plan was to leave Tuesday morning, while they had intended to drive all of the way to Wisconsin Dells on Monday night. I think we only made it about one-fourth of the way to the Dells before calling it a night. I won't go into a lot of detail on this trip, although I think the statute of limitations has expired. I did learn how to bypass a governor on a golf cart, and that you can find some really nice sunglasses at the bottom of the wave pool in the Dells during this trip.

More recently, there was a rain delay at late season special event this year. During the rain delay, one of the teams let me wait out the storm in their hauler. Somehow we started telling stories of air travel, and some of the challenges we've all experience at the airport. About 20 years ago, I had a job that required a lot of plane travel. I thought I had heard or seen just about everything. This team sure topped my stories.

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The car owner of this particular team once was part of a rather well known ASA team back in the day. He mentioned one race where they spent a fair amount of time at the airport bar prior to boarding for the flight home. He had built up enough frequent flyer miles to get a seat with extra leg room by the emergency exit. Once seated, the flight attendant asked if he could give up his seat, as they were worried about his ability to open the door in the event of an emergency. I can honestly say I've never seen anybody that couldn't open a door after having too much to drink, but anything is possible. He was just glad they let him stay on the plane.

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Racing According to Plan from page 3

The driver for this particular team mentioned a trip he took a trip to Mexico with his girlfriend a few years back. When they were going through customs, their bags were mixed up. As the customs agent was checking the items of his bag, he realized he had ended up with his girlfriend's luggage. Once opened, the bag was full of items a guy typically wouldn't bring on vacation (bikini's, bras, etc.) The customs agent asked him if this was his bag, and without batting an eye, he said "Yes it is." This prompted a rather strange look from the customs agent, but he was sent on his way. A much easier transition through customs, versus trying to explain you somehow ended up with

your girlfriend's luggage. I have to say, I was honestly in tears from laughing so hard following this rain delay.

There have been many, many more moments like these during the years of going to short track events. There was the time I was duct taped to a lawn chair and nearly dropped in a bonfire, the Ultra Violet marker incident at a gentleman's club in Manitowoc, the upside down turtle in the Apple River, and countless others. I could probably right my own book. These things are a big part of what I enjoy about short track racing. Every once in a while, I wonder why I continue to do this. Times like the stories mentioned in this column remind me that long nights and rain delays ain't all that bad.

We are now on our winter break. The next issue of

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Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions

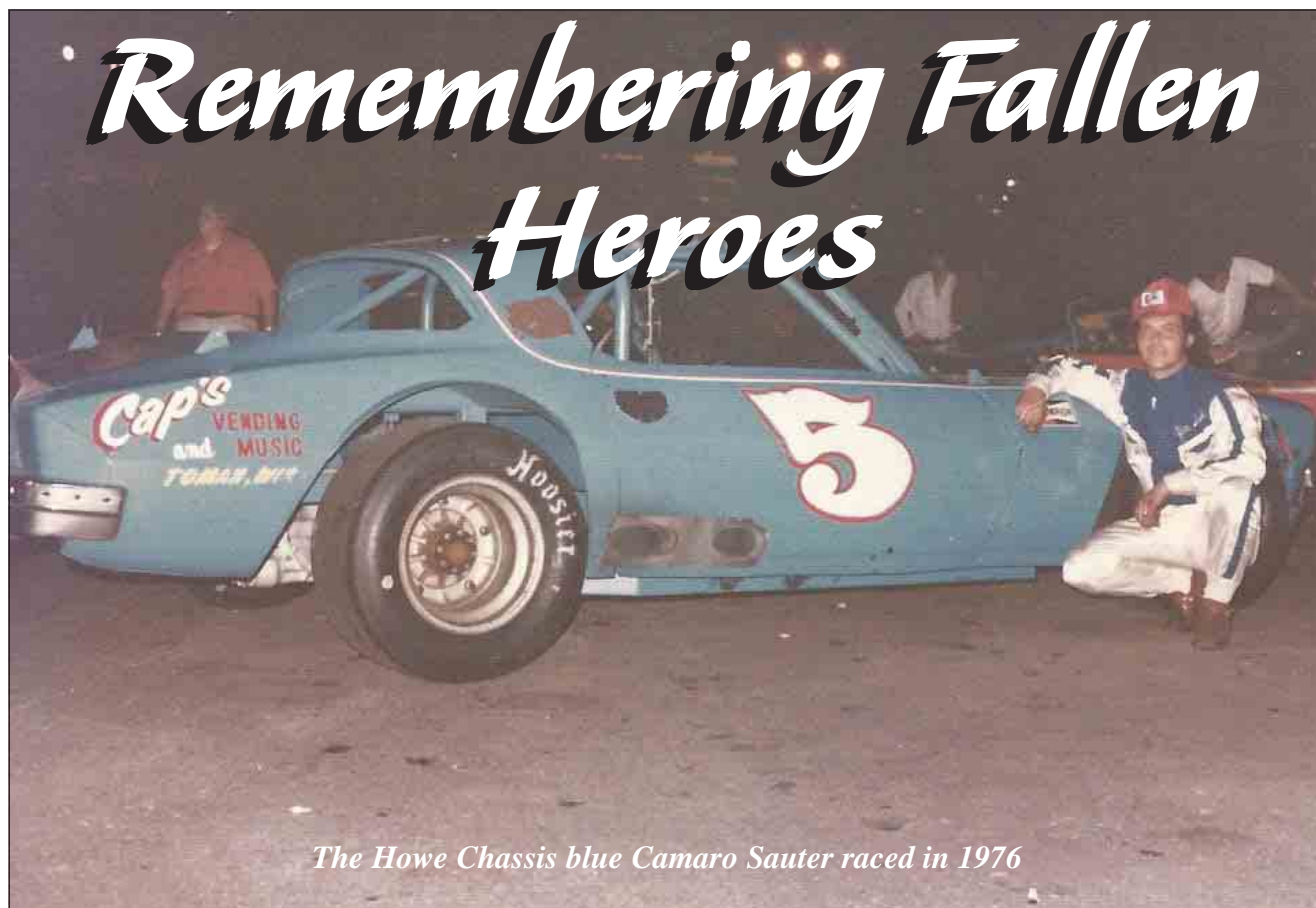


Dale P. Danielski

I really enjoy bringing back the memories of past racing heroes and champions through these writings especially when I have a chance to sit down with them and catch an episode or two of racing back in the Glory Days. I don't like having to rehash these great memories posthumously and sadly that is the way this column will be written as we lost two more stars of Wisconsin racing as both Jim Sauter and Tom Steuding passed away here in the last month.

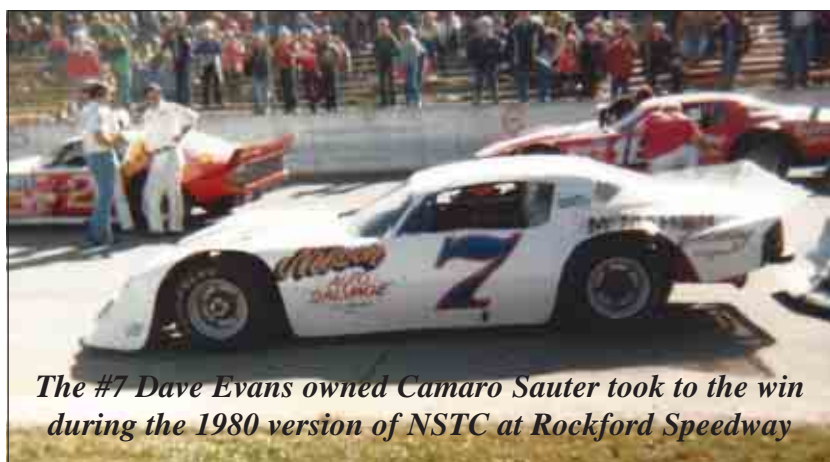
Jim Sauter is of course the original Sauter, the patriarch of the racing family of which there are many. After moving from the Twin Cities Jim Sauter, Sr., carved out one heck of a racing career beginning with the short tracks of Wisconsin and eventually ending up at the top level of the Sport, NASCAR Cup racing. There were many stops, wins and championships acquired along the way and with that Sauter can certainly be defined as a superstar of the 1960s-1980s era of racing.

I fortunately at that time was very in tune with the short track scene and was able to see Sauter race and win too many times to recall. I first recall his visiting the Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, WI., my home track and racing in 1969 in a 1957 Chevrolet for Dave Marcis. Marcis who of course carved out an excellent racing career himself was in the process of relocating down south to take on NASCAR's best. With little or no time to race in his home state of Wisconsin, Marcis had a hot car he needed to do something with other than sit in a barn. Bring in Jim Sauter who admirably raced the car in Wisconsin, beginning here what would be a long career. I remember Sauter in 1970 bringing a copper colored 1967 Chevelle to the "Sands oval and winning a couple features with it during the year. A gold colored 1969



The Howe Chassis blue Camaro Sauter raced in 1976

Chevelle followed which as I recall was a car that looked cool to this scribe and stood out among the crowd. He won with that car as well and continued to race at area and neighboring State tracks. I remember a Chevelle with help coming from Larry Wehrs later being painted blue in similar fashion to the Dave Marcis race car paint schemes. The biggest win for that car came at the Minnesota State Fair as Sauter won a 500 lap race there in 1971. The pony car era beginning in 1972 saw Chevrolet Camaros and Novas for Sauter to race, with more wins following.



The #7 Dave Evans owned Camaro Sauter took to the win during the 1980 version of NSTC at Rockford Speedway

With more traveling to big dollar events now taking place, Sauter ranked among the best, winning his share against the likes of Trickle, Marzofka, Back, Reffner, Shear, Watson, Miller, and all the others racing at that time. Sauter won perhaps the most prestigious event at the time, The National Short Track Championships at Rockford Speedway of Rockford, IL., in 1980. But it was with the John McKarns ARTGO Series that Sauter really shined, winning the 1981 and 1982 Championships in that series. He also won the track

Championship at Wisconsin International Raceway, Kaukauna, WI., in 1981. The ASA Tour was also now going strong and Sauter won numerous of those events as well.

Of course the good drivers always get to a point where they feel they've conquered all they can at the local and regional level so it's time to take the next step. Sauter took a shot at ARCA racing competition and again proved to be a winner. NASCAR came next with some competitive runs in the then Grand National Division. Stardom at the Cup level was within reach for Sauter as he proved competitive right from the start. Most folks probably don't recall, but Jim nearly won the 1982 Daytona 500 racing a car for JD Stacy. Stacy arrived on the NASCAR scene with a fat wallet and fielded numerous cars for a number of different drivers. Sauter was one and really making the most of it as he raced in the top 5 of the 500 with a legitimate shot at winning before brake problems set in and he wound up a disappointing 12th. Of course with that run Sauter felt he was on his way with the team, but Mr. Stacy left the sport almost as quick as he got into it leaving Sauter and a number of other drivers and bills behind. Sauter actually

had opportunity even before that being offered the Hoss Ellington car that was very competitive at the time. According to Sauter, "I was just proud that they considered me for that ride. I just couldn't commit to it at that time though I had other things come up, but I was really proud that I was considered that caliber of driver." Sauter and Marcis eventually got latched up again, this time in NASCAR but without the real

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funding necessary to do it right never really were a major threat. Sauter did manage however to stay around the sport at that level being one of the test drivers for Goodyear when it was holding its International Race Of Champions (IROC) series. It gave Sauter and fellow short tracker Dick Trickle a chance to stay within reach of the top level of sport and turn some fast laps at some of the most reputable tracks in America. The cars proved extremely equal which is what the series was looking for and that certainly is a testament to their race car set-up ability and also knowledge and expertise in tire management. At a time when Cup racing wasn't nearly as financially rewarding as it is today it was really special to see our own in Rebel Country proving to everyone they belonged.

Of course with time marching on and numerous sons getting involved in the sport Jim eventually backed way off his racing schedule spending more time helping with their efforts. He never totally disappeared though still calling Necedah, WI., home and it was always great fun having him at the Champions Reunions we held as part of Oktoberfest racing weekend the last 6 years. It was also a reunion of



Tom Steuding, Dick Trickle and others enjoying the 2011 Champions Reunion.

Sauter's Blue Nova raced in 1975



sorts for Sauter with that track as he won the first ever feature event held there in 1970 as a paved ½ mile oval having previously been dirt. In another first for both Sauter and the track he won the season points championship the following year as the speedway held its first full season of racing.

So with the last Reunion this past October, and Sauter having a good time mingling with former competitors and fans its just memories now that will live on for all of us who saw him race. I consider myself fortunate that I was able to see Sauter race and also get to know the driver who certainly will go down as one of the best to come from this area ever.

Tom Steuding's racing prowess was mostly on the dirt tracks of Wisconsin as he was a threat wherever he

raced. Although not following the dirt guys as much in the '70s and '80s I do remember Steuding spanking the field at the Fairgrounds track in Neilsville, WI. one year. Steuding's success was certainly not limited to a track or two either as he won track championships at Wisconsin Speedways in Eau Claire, Marshfield, Menomonie and Neilsville. Having raced on dirt for nearly his entire career Steuding; apparently upon Mr. Dick Trickle's suggestion, decided to go pavement racing. Steuding ran the majority of the Central Wisconsin circuit competing at West Salem, Plover, and Wausau tracks. If memory serves me right he did win a feature at Wausau in his #7 white Camaro. What he may have lacked in a long list of wins on

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Racing Observations from page 8

pavement was more than made up for when he and Trickle would get together, which was usually a party in the making. Fun doesn't describe the two when they got together and fortunately for us followers we'd get to be a part of it now and then after a race somewhere. Steuding also lays claim to coming up with the White Knight moniker for Trickle during the

Tom Steuding heading for a win in the prestigious Gopher 50 in 1986



Super America sponsorship days. According to Steuding and I quote him as told to this scribe, "Dick you need to uphold your clean image and become the White Knight instead of the Purple Knight." Take that however you want but that's kind of how it went when those two got together so who's to say it isn't true.

We were also pleased that Steuding was able to make it to our 2011 Champions Reunions as part of 'Fest. He was a lot of fun to talk with and brought to light a lot of what went on back in the day that I had forgotten. Too much partying with those guys and too many lost brain cells I guess.

But, as with Jim Sauter, we will have to rely strictly on memories now of two great race drivers. Again, I am so glad I got to see them race back in the day and also get to know them off the track. Nothing can replace those days and these two racers that will certainly go down as a couple of the best. To that end, I'm thankful.

Our fallen heroes racing back in the day...On Tuesday night, July 14th 1970 the La Crosse Interstate

Speedway, West Salem, WI., opened as a ½ mile paved oval with Jim Sauter winning the feature race. Following Sauter were Jim Back and Dick Trickle...On July 24th 1970 it was Jim Sauter in his 1969 Chevelle winning the 30 lap feature at La Crosse Interstate outpacing Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner, Marv Marzofka and Rich Somers...On May 7th 1971 it was Jim Sauter winning the season opening 20 lap feature in his 1979 Chevelle at La Crosse Interstate over Marv Marzofka and Rich Somers...On July 12th, 1970, Jim Sauter won the feature race at Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., in his 1967 Chevelle. Following Sauter were Jim Back, Marv Marzofka, Dave Field and Bill Wirtz...On July 9th, 1986 Tom Steuding drove to the Gopher 50 feature win at the Steele County Fairgrounds, Owatonna, MN.

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, 608-518-2478, or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com, www.starmakermultimedia.com

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Racing Nuggets



Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

“God is great. Beer is good, and people are crazy,” Billy Currington sings in his chart-topping song that is still a favorite of mine from several years ago. The lyrics are very applicable to racing. Most drivers who taste success are quick to thank God for the talents and opportunities that they have been given, and the support that surrounds them. Beer is obviously a component of most race teams, particularly after a big win. The “people are crazy” part could be interpreted in a variety of ways, but I tend to tie it back into the support that surrounds a racer.

It’s the funding that a racer struggles to gather together for a race season to even come to fruition. Many pull the money out of their own personal pockets. That can get pretty crazy when it comes to trying to balance a budget for a home filled with kids. I know plenty of racing wives who often struggle with the desire to let their husbands follow their dreams, and reign in the spending frenzy that can happen when an engine needs refreshing or parts are needed for their cars. It’s a delicate balance, I’m sure.

From the outside looking in, it may seem even crazier to some when businesses write sizable checks to drivers for sponsoring their season. Those who are not at all into racing freak out when they hear how

much money it takes to run a race car for a full season. I sold \$50,000 worth of sponsorships one season for two different drivers. There were a handful of friends that knew what I had done and it dang near took a backhoe to lift their jaws off of the ground upon hearing that figure. To them—it’s insane for businesses to put that kind of scratch in a race car; something that could be demolished in a matter of seconds on the track at breakneck speeds.

I suppose if you’re going to look at it in that kind of black-and-white manner, then yeah... racing folks (and specifically, financial supporters) can be considered crazy. However, if that’s how someone views it, then they’re missing a key component of what really drives the sport: PASSION. Passion provides the color that shatters the monochromatic perspective.

I like to equate this to the scene in the Wizard of Oz when the movie dramatically changes from black-and-white to full Technicolor vibrancy. Let’s be honest—that’s when we all actually get drawn into that movie anyway. And to get newbies drawn into racing, you’ll need to help them find and flip that passion switch.

The key to cueing up their enthusiasm involves taking them into the pits before the races, or even to the race shop to meet the driver and crew prior to the races. When they have a face and personality to go with the car that they will be seeing on the track, it helps to kindle what could quite possibly be a blazing fire of passion for racing.

It’s that way for major sponsors, or team owners, too. They are a fanatical breed, much like the racers. A connection obviously exists between them and the driver or team that they are actively supporting. It absolutely must be a strong bond, given the amount of financial support that they put forth to help a driver pursue their dreams.

Passion - Pass it on

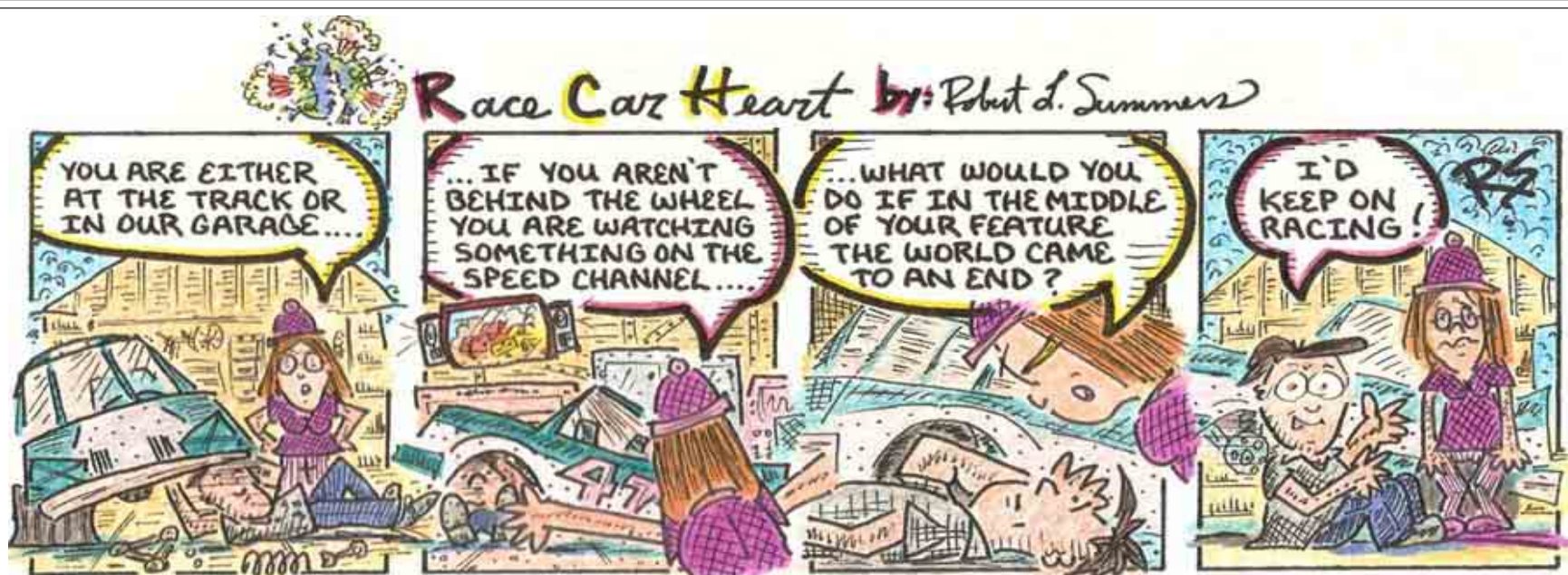
Of course, sometimes the team owners have a few dreams of their own that they are fulfilling through the relationship. For some, they’ve been around racing for many years and had a longing to get back into it; sponsoring a driver may provide an outlet to do just that. For others, it may just be a delight for them to have a hand in perhaps helping a young up-and-comer reach the next level in professional racing. And for some, it’s a combination of both.

I’ve heard after the races plenty of times, a fan talking in the pits about wishing they had the money to help so-and-so out in their career. You know you have it bad for racing when you fantasize about winning the lottery and a great portion of those imaginary winnings would be allocated to racing in some way, shape or form.

I’ll admit it; when I buy a Powerball ticket, those thoughts cross my mind (after paying off our mortgage, and other miscellaneous debt, of course). There are definitely a handful of racers that I would love to help finance, some equipment that I’d like to buy for my husband to help him continue to build race cars for others, and one heck of a sweet motorhome to travel to races in what would be my early retirement, thanks to the windfall.

Until my winning numbers come up (and yes—I play specific numbers that represent my favorite drivers!), I’m going to continue to appreciate the passion of the racers, teams, and particularly the owners and sponsors who manage to pull together the funding to finance their seasons. Regardless of how incredible or lackluster anyone’s season may be each year, there is a lot of effort and funding required to put it all together, as THAT is what really drives this sport that we all love so much.

Passion. Pass it on.



The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner

This issue of MRC wraps up my 16th season of writing "The Inside Dirt" column if I'm allowed to count limited contributions during the 2013 season. If we don't count 2013 my streak was broken and this column comes in at 15 ½ seasons. Either way it's been a pretty impressive run that has seen a lot of changes in racing as well as my personal life. Over the years my column could best be categorized as an opinion piece. It's definitely not a place to look for results and does not have the cheerleader feel of a press release leaving opinion piece as the most accurate description.

Over the years I have included a fair amount of quotes and personal observations culled from the mouths of drivers, track officials and pit crew members. 2014 saw me at fewer than half of the races I have been accustomed to attending each season. The drop in attendance can be attributed to a tighter racing budget, seven grandkids and the ongoing effects of aging. If you see me in these pages in 2015 you can be certain that we'll rock another season of racing. If this column comes up MIA I can assure you that it was a good run and we had a blast doing it for sixteen years.

Let's take a look at a few highlights of the seventeen nights of racing I was able to attend during the 2014 season.

Cedar Lake Speedway UMSS Sprint special May 3, 2014

UMSS Sprints aside Cedar Lake is the place to watch competitive weekly Late Model racing with good car counts. Like most tracks CLS got off to a bit of a slow start with car counts and unpredictable spring weather but things had come around nicely by this weekend in May. It's not uncommon for some of the competitors to not have their cars ready for the first few weeks of racing. Some hold back to see how track conditions

are going to come around and start their season when they're certain they'll get a smooth surface. My concern about early season Sprint Car shows is that the tracks might still be on the rough side and we'd see a bunch of torn up equipment. All of those early season issues had worked themselves out by the time May 3rd rolled around. By this time of the spring the weather is usually warm enough that spending the evening outdoors is more comfortable. By my way of thinking, Sprints, Modifieds and Late Models on the same card is the ultimate night of racing. Cedar Lake excels at providing that mix.

Cedar Lake Speedway School Bus night, May 14, 2014

Mark Kinser school bus driving jokes aside, my son brought his two girls and another one of my grandkids to CLS on this night. Despite the grumbings of hard core racers (Late Models and Modifieds are given the night off) it was fun to watch the kids enjoying themselves. Wild Man Clay Gallagher produced a scary moment when he destroyed one of the buses on the backstretch. If Clay started out with nine lives I have personally witnessed him snuff out two or three of them. We routinely cheer when drivers emerge from a wreck unscathed knowing that the safety features in today's race cars are the best there have ever been. I don't share that same assurance when it comes to something like a school bus. When Clay jumped up on the mangled bus and pumped his fist in the air my cheers were heartfelt.

Stan Meissner photo



Saint Croix Valley Raceway UMSS(w) Sprints, May 23, 2014

The UMSS made their first appearance at the Saint Croix Valley Raceway for the 2014 season on May 23. SCVR has become a home track of sorts for the UMSS with six shows booked at the facility last season. May 2, and August 16, both fell to rain with the August show rescheduled giving them a total of five completed events there last season. Ironically both Cedar Lake and Saint Croix Valley rack up exactly 32 miles on my odometer from my location in Forest Lake. I remember a time not very many years

ago when we couldn't attend six Sprint Car shows in an entire season. Now as I like to point out there are more Sprint Car races in our area than some of us have the time or resources to attend. That's a nice problem to have. Sixty Four drivers recorded points with the UMSS in 2014 bolstered by several touring weekends. Overall the series is doing well and their races have been entertaining. Jerry Richert Jr. won the championship over rookie Ryan Bowers by a slim margin of 26 points. My first racing activity of 2015 will be attending the UMSS banquet on January 14 at the Hampton Inn located at 694 and Lexington. If you would like to attend you can find more information on the UMSS website at umsprints.com.

Cedar Lake Speedway Masters final night June 13, 2014

I'll admit to staying away from the Masters for a couple of seasons after the IRA Sprints were removed from the lineup and added to the Triple. Needless to say I realized that the only loser in my change of agenda was me and I

eventually returned with my tail between my legs. Open Late Models stand out

from the local limited Late Models (NASCAR/WISSOTA) in much the same way as 410 Sprints take it up a notch from 360's. They're badder, faster and the drivers that show up for this event are some of the best in the business. Add the USMTS Modifieds to the mix and the Masters becomes a can't miss show second only to the USA Nationals.



Saint Croix Valley Raceway Traditional 40 June 27, 2014

I don't have deep pockets so you won't see my name on the side of any race cars. If I had the resources (think winning the Power Ball) I could see myself being a generous supporter of racing. Absent the financial resources I came up with a scheme to add a little something to the purse for the UMSS Traditional 40 on June 27. The Traditional 40 is exactly as it sounds, 40 laps of non-wing Sprint Car racing on a quarter mile bullring. With their limited motors the

continued on page 12



The UMSS Traditional 40 is exactly as it sounds, 40 laps of non-wing Sprint Car racing on a quarter mile bullring. Rob Caho won this annual event on Friday June 27.

Stan Meissner photo

The Inside Dirt continued from page 11

UMSS Traditional Sprints aren't the fastest Sprints on the planet but what they lack in speed is made up for in excitement. If you have never seen these cars at the Saint Croix Valley Raceway you owe it to yourself to go check them out. I came up with a plan to coordinate a bonus distribution for this race. Essentially what I did was to put up \$40 of my own money and invite others to match my contribution. It went so well that I threw in an additional \$40 and we collectively distributed \$840 in additional winnings through the field in "rounds" of \$40. When we got to the end of the pack we made a second round so that several of the top finishers went home with a double bonus. Rob Caho (7 wins on the season) was the winner on this night and Cam Shafer (5 wins in 2014) was the series Champion. Shafer does double duty in both the winged and non-wing divisions.

Cedar Lake Speedway World of Outlaws June 29, 2014

The 2014 World of Outlaws season was all about Steve Kinser and his "Salute to the King" tour. I made it a point to give Steve a photo I had taken of him several years ago at CLS in exchange for his autograph on my copy. I quipped to Steve that my "retirement gift" wasn't on the same level as a gold watch but it was a nice shot nonetheless. Kinser will be running a limited schedule during the 2015 season but it's likely that this could have been his final appearance at Cedar Lake. Oh, by the way, a former WISSOTA 360 driver by the name of Donny Schatz won the WoO Feature on this night. The hot rumor on the street is that CLS will be going to a two-day WoO show in 2015. More on that later in this column.

Cedar Lake Speedway USA Nationals August 2, 2014

Late Models put the Cedar Lake Speedway on the map and the USA Nationals is the event that has lifted the status of the track to the national stage. Known as one of the "crown jewels" of dirt Late Model racing the USA Nationals packs the place to the rafters and is hands down the biggest show in the area. Sometimes I get so focused on what I'm doing that I lose sight of what a privilege it has been to attend this event as a representative of MRC for so

many seasons. This year's winner was Jimmy Owens over Bobby Pierce and Jimmy Mars in one of the most exciting USA Nationals Features that I have seen.

Cedar Lake Speedway Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial September 6, 2014

The Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial is my favorite race of the season. There are bigger events on the CLS calendar but this race is a celebration of Sprint Car racing that honors a driver I watched when I was growing up. Richert Sr. did some racing for my mother's cousin Tom Wilke and in fact Tom was in attendance as a spectator for the first time in several years. In addition to being a celebration of local Sprint Car racing this event offers Sprint Car fans a rare opportunity to see an all Sprints show. This year's winner was Ian Madsen, the brother of World of Outlaws driver Kerry.

News, notes and observations.

In the last issue of MRC I mentioned the new National Sprint League that was founded by Todd Quiring, owner of Big Game Treestands out of Windom,



Stan Meissner photo

Known as one of the "crown jewels" of dirt Late Model racing the USA Nationals packs the Cedar Lake Speedway to the rafters. This shot was taken at the Saturday Night "big show" as drivers went four wide past the main grandstand.



Stan Meissner photo

Minnesota. As I mentioned Quiring had been Craig Dollansky's and Sammy Swindell's World of Outlaws car owner. More news has come to the fore since the last issue of MRC. The NSL has named Bill Wright as PR Director, Chuck Zitterich as Competition Director and Natalie Sather as Media Director. Bill hails out of Iowa and has done PR work for the Knoxville Raceway and many of the high profile drivers in the Midwest. Chuck comes to the NSL from the ASCS where he held similar duties and calls the Sioux Falls area home. Natalie is a former 360 Sprint Car driver out of the Fargo area that made the transition to racing media work. Natalie spent the past few seasons working with the World of Outlaws.

Another strong rumor has Todd Quiring purchasing the Jackson (Minnesota) Speedway. If the purchase

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The Inside Dirt from page 12

becomes a reality I am certain that it will tie in with the NSL and become a frequent stop for the series. I'll admit that when this new series was announced I had a level of skepticism or perhaps a better term might be cautious uncertainty. We have seen a lot of series and events come and go over the years and not being familiar with Todd's organizational and business skills I was hesitant to jump on any bandwagons until things started to unfold. So far I like what I see as all of his hires are people I have met personally over the years so I'm familiar with their work in the racing industry. All the pieces are coming in place nicely and the Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial has been announced as an NSL event along with five series drivers, Danny Lasoski (will be driving the BGTS machine with Guy Forbrook turning wrenches), Ian Madsen, Brian Brown, Dusty Zomer, and Terry McCarl. I will, however, continue to hold onto my original opinion that we won't see a lot of their events this far north. My observation does not imply anything negative about the NSL but is based on our location in the far northern reaches of their area of operation. You can follow the progress of the NSL at their newly unveiled website nationalsprintleague.com.

One more Sprint Car note before I wrap up this column for 2014. World of Outlaws CEO Brian Carter announced on the Winged Nation podcast that Cedar Lake would be hosting a two-day show on July 11-12, 2015. This has not been officially announced by the track yet but considering the reliable source it came from I think we can expect a full weekend of WoO racing at CLS. More details to follow as they become known.

I want to thank Dan Plan for allowing me the opportunity to bring this column to you for another season and Barry Braun for allowing me to "test drive" XSAN for the season. The streaming races helped me fill in the gaps when I wasn't able to get to the track which seems to be a more frequent theme with each passing year.

See you at the races!

Top photo - Rookie Sprint Car driver Ryan Bowers attracted some attention during the 2014 season. In this shot, Bowers motors his way around the Saint Croix Valley Raceway on Friday, May 23.

Middle photo - Cedar Lake is the place to watch competitive weekly Late Model racing with good car counts. John Kaanta leads a pack of cars down the front chute during the May 3, 2014, Late Model Main Event.

Bottom photo - IRA Sprint Car action during the annual Jerry Richert Memorial.



Stan Meissner photo



Stan Meissner photo



Stan Meissner photo

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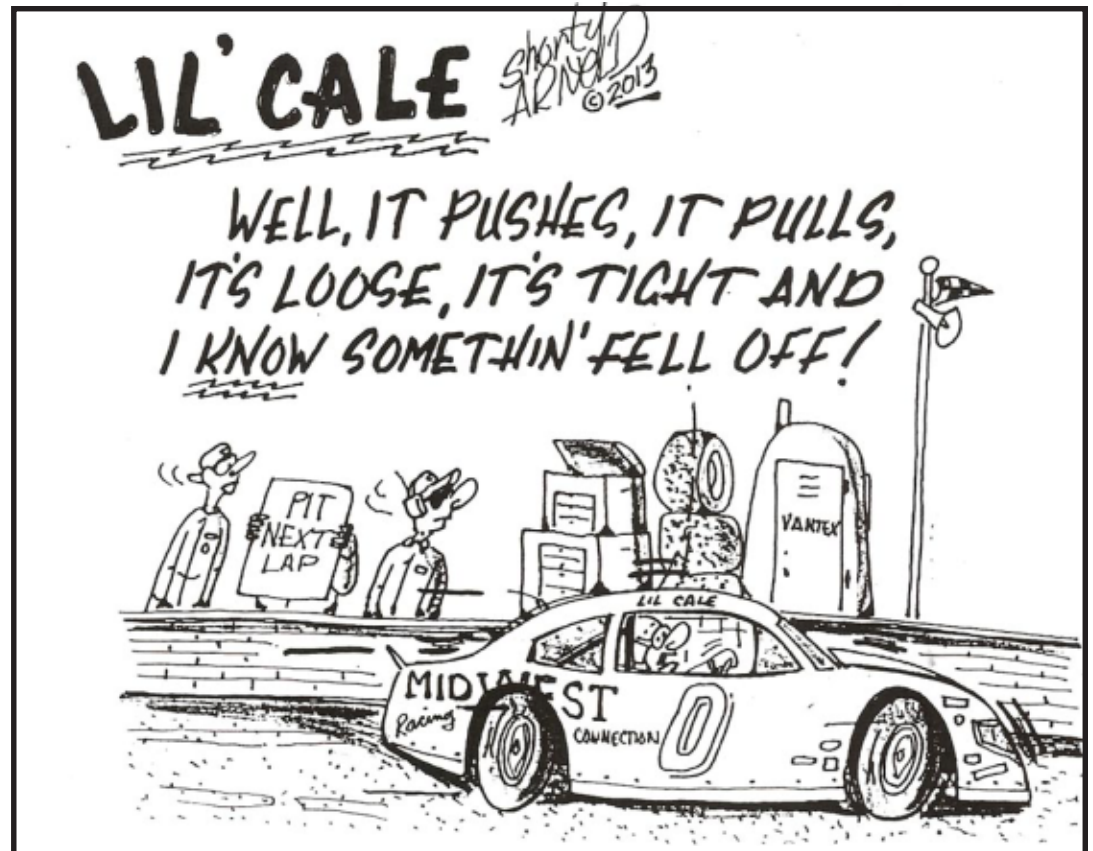
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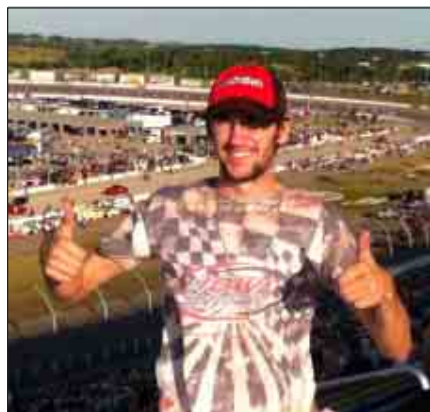
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NASCAR Insight**Shane Carlson**

Every NASCAR fan has their opinion on the newly revamped Chase format, for better or worse. When Brian France announced these changes before the season, I admit I was skeptical. There was so much change occurring at one time, with a new knockout qualifying format employed, that I thought too many changes will make the sport look desperate and gimmicky. It was. It needed a new flavor; the old Chase format was stale. Well, NASCAR got what they wanted, and the fans did too.

For years, NASCAR battled the stigma of 'points racing.' Fans didn't want to show up to a race and hear their driver say "Well, it was a good points day for us." This year, that phrase was virtually nonexistent. They want to see drivers going all-out for the win. Not settling for second. We saw that this year. And that's why 2014 has been the best NASCAR season I have ever witnessed. It seemed the pressure to make the Chase weighed on teams' minds every week, but teams that were good enough to win a race had the freedom to test and prepare for the Chase, taking more risks in an effort to stockpile wins. Every week was a chance to make the playoffs. You can't say that about any other sport.

The action on-track only heightened once the Chase was underway. I like the idea of elimination races every three races, eliminating four drivers. It puts an

My Thoughts on 2014 Chase for the Championship

immense amount of pressure on teams to go and win a race to advance to the next round, so as a fan, we get to see teams rise to the occasion or crumble under the pressure. The 10-week Chase is like an entirely different season in itself and teams are pulling out all the stops in an effort to raise the hardware in Homestead. I really can't complain about drivers going all-in to win races. Personally, I have every right to be frustrated with how the Chase played out; I'm a Jeff Gordon fan, and to see Ryan Newman (0 wins) edge out Gordon (4 wins) by a single position, that was tough to swallow, but it's just part of the game. Sometimes a team just gets hot; if you follow baseball, see the Kansas City Royals in this year's World Series. Granted, I would change my tune about this whole Chase thing if a winless driver were to win the championship. That shouldn't happen.

Pressure has a way of bringing out the best performances. Take a look at Brad Keselowski's clutch win at Talladega to advance, and of course Kevin Harvick's wins at Phoenix and Homestead en

route to the 2014 title, which is well-deserved. He was arguably the best on-track every week, and could have been in the double-digit win column. At Homestead, all four of the remaining title contenders were running at the front of the field, and any of them could have won the race and the championship to go with it. Ultimately, Kevin Harvick prevailed and won his first Cup championship.

Pressure also brings out real emotions, something fans have wanted for years. They want rivalries. It's human nature. It seems every week, there was some sort of off-track antics going on. There was the skirmish between mild-mannered Matt Kenseth, Brad Keselowski, Denny Hamlin, and Tony Stewart, and who could forget the Jeff Gordon-Brad Keselowski brawl.

The 2014 Chase had everything. And the best driver still came out on top, so I would say it was a success.



Dirty Talkin'**Kris Peterson*****Twas the Month of December***

Twas the month of December, when all through the shops

Not a wrench was turning, not even a mop;
The race cars all winterized and covered with care,
In hopes that the snow would melt and spring would be here.

The drivers were nestled up in their deer stands;
With visions of victories and cheering fans;
They fold all their T-shirts and store racing caps,
Dragging out winter coats and warm stocking hats.

While out on the trails all covered with snow,
Riding their snowmobiles is the only way to go.
Away to a frozen lake they flew like a flash,
Drilled open the fishing holes to fill up their stash.

The owners and promoters come up with new plans,
Finding new ways to put fans in the stands,
Their changing the rules to make things more fair;
Without raising the cost for the drivers who care.

With their favorite driver forever they stick,
The fans are so loyal their blood it runs thick,
They knew from the moment they first saw a race,
The more rapid their heart pumps with smiles on their face.

They whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:

“Now, Weiss! now, Loomis!
now Jensen! and Mahder!
On, Richert! on, Berger! On Viebrock and Schafer!
To the top of the scoreboard! from the bottom to the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!”

As dirt from the spin of the Hoosiers does fly,
The fans they are cheering as the fast cars go by;
So up to the victory lane the winner he flew,
With the roar of his engine and checkered flag too.

And before we awoke from our long winters night;
The dream had just ended to see such a sight;
The driver gave a high-five for the team's good fight,
I heard him exclaim, as he drove out of sight—
“Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”
Is it April Yet???

On Top Of The World

We recently added another book to our ever growing collection of racing books. The newest book is titled; On Top of The World – The Life And Times Of A Racing Pioneer. The book covers the history of one of the best short track racers in the sport, Larry Moore. Once again, Dave Argabright hit another home run with his choice of drivers to work with on his books.

The main thing that interested me in getting a copy of this book was the fact that Larry Moore was one of the top drivers in the country when I was entering my teens. While I never had the opportunity to see Larry race in person, he was always in the racing papers for winning somewhere across the country. This guy won races at historic places like the Milwaukee Mile and Salem on pavement, or Eldora and Pennsboro on the dirt.

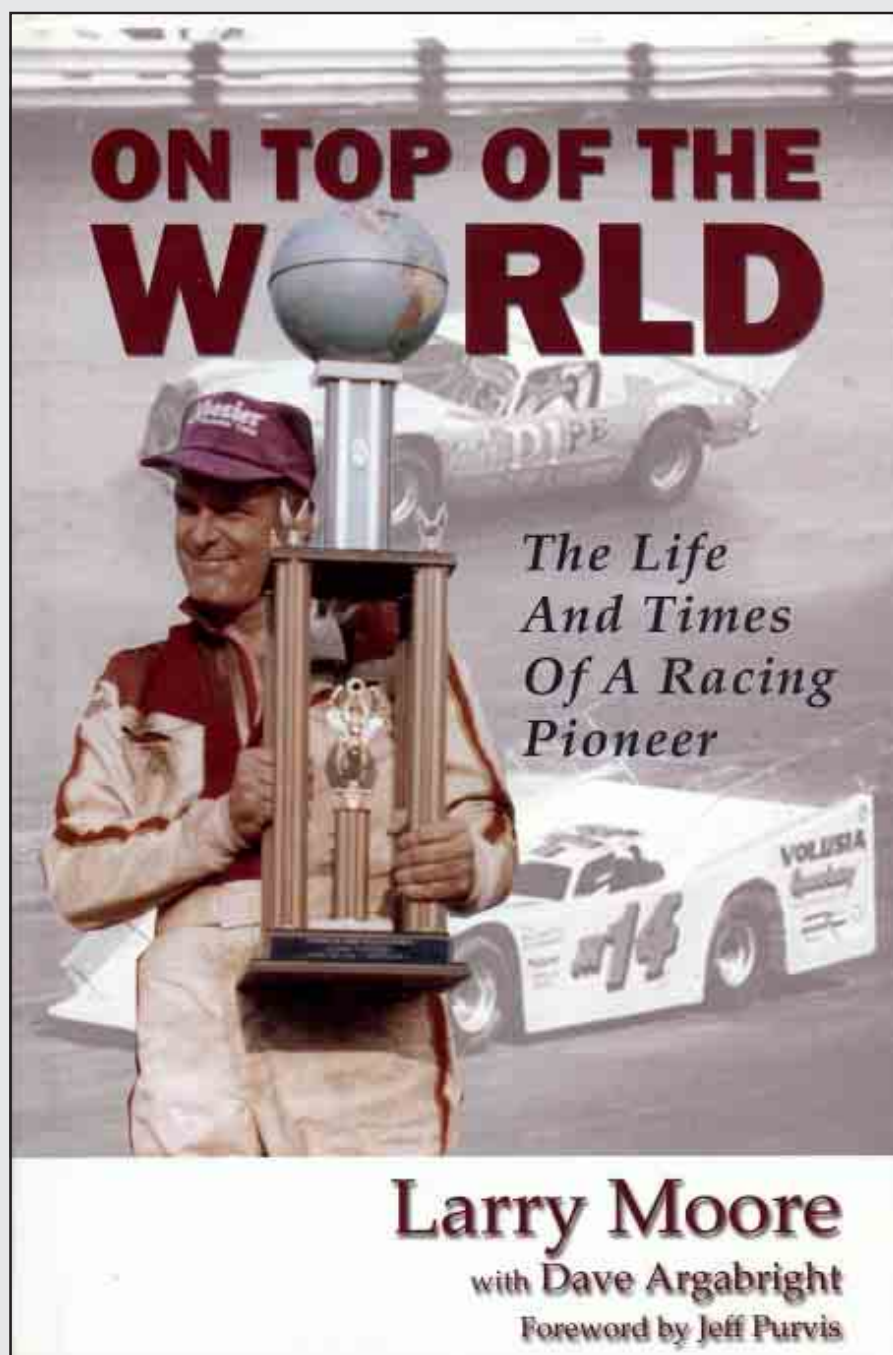
Most race fans these days have heard of versatile drivers from the past like A.J. Foyt or Mario

Andretti. More recently, drivers such as Tony Stewart or Jeff Gordon had success in open wheel and fendered cars. Larry probably didn't get the credit he deserves when it comes to versatility, and winning races. When I was a teenager, Larry Moore won in just about everything that had wheels; Sprint cars, Late Models, USAC Stock Cars, etc. It didn't matter if it was dirt or pavement, big track or small track, ASA or NDRA, Larry was in the racing papers and magazines in just about every issue during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

The book chronicles the gypsy life of living on the road, the wild post race antics of years gone by, the evolution of Late Models from “stock cars” to the purpose built machines of today, and some of the financial hardships that many experience when trying to drive race cars for a living. I especially enjoyed the parts in the book where Larry goes through the changes seen in the Late Models of the

late 1970's to the early 1980's. At one point Larry mentions having a car that was nearly 500lbs lighter than the competition. Can you imagine that scenario in this day and age? There are literally hundreds of tidbits like this throughout the book, often told with Larry's sense of humor. Near the end of the book, the guy known in his inner circles as “L-Mo”, once the wild party goer, a driver/chassis guy with a big ego (every driver has an ego), also gives some very important life lessons for everyone, race fan or not.

If you're are race fan, and want to know how racing went from where it was, to where it is today, this is the book that explains how things transpired on the short tracks. Thanks to Dave for putting together the book, and thanks to Larry for all the memories. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this book, they are available via www.daveargabright.com or www.coastal181.com



THE TOP 14 OF 2014

Recapping some of the highlights of the previous season has become somewhat of a tradition here at MRC. Here are the top 14 moments of the 2014.

Fourteen – This year we added two new columnists to the pages of MRC; Shane Carlson and Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttelman. While the majority of our coverage focuses on short track racing, it's been a welcomed addition to have Shane's view of the top-three levels of NASCAR racing added to our pages. We've known Jacklyn for several years now through her weekly radio show at Lacrosse speedway. Her funny and sometimes "snarky" view of short track racing has been much appreciated. We're hoping there are many more years with these two.

Thirteen – This summer, the ARCA tour came to Elko for their annual event. We were lucky enough to participate in the Friday night media event with Kenny



Donny Reuvers photo

Schrader. I have to tell you, Schrader is just as neat of a guy in person as he is on TV. The look on my kids face was priceless when Schrader was ready to fire the two-seater for a ride along. Kenny looked right at him and said "I think I know what to do here. I watched a Kasey Kahne video on YouTube last night. I'm just supposed to turn left." The same weekend, we also had the chance to sit down with Big Bill Venturini. Bill looked hesitant at first that some hunyuck with a voice recorder wanted to talk with him. Once I asked him about his kids (Billy Jr. and Wendy) and racing at Rockford Speedway, he sure did light up.

Twelve – We've read quite a bit about the TUNDRA Late Models in the last few years. This summer was our second time to see this group of drivers at Lacrosse Speedway. Despite having a couple of other

Super Late Model events scheduled up against the LFS TUNDRA show, they brought nearly 30 cars to the show. As a Minnesota resident, it was great to see Donny Reuvers and Adam Royle run their first races of the year and finish in the top 3. I also never would have imagined young Reagan May could have held these two off, especially using the outside groove.

Eleven – Every once in a while, it's nice to get out and see something different. This year, I was able to talk Bryan Turtle into a dirt show at Angell Park Speedway followed by the Big 8 event at Columbus 151 on Memorial Day. Angell Park was everything it was cracked up to be. Open wheel cars always make things exciting, and seeing Rico Abreu's talent in person was quite impressive. The night didn't end well for Rico when he cleared the catch fence by about 20 feet. Columbus 151 was another track off the old bucket list. While we were there to watch the Big 8 drivers compete, it was pretty darn cool to see their back up racers. They reminded me of a tight-knit bunch similar to the Raceway Park Figure-8 drivers.

Ten – There's no doubt Conrad Jorgenson and Brent Kane were two of the top contenders in the Thunder Car division at Elko Speedway. Things came to a boiling point about halfway through the season when there was contact while battling for the lead. I never received so many emails, texts and Facebook messages regarding a single incident in my life. This



Dan Plan photo



The Legendary Knute Fastenuff picked up a win at Oktoberfest in 2014
Bruce Nuttlema photo

was stuff legends are made of. Unfortunately, the two mended their ways and began speaking again. So much for the media building up a rivalry.

Nine – Many readers of MRC have probably seen the name Johnny's Hobbies on a race car, or sponsoring a race event along the way. Johnny is one of those people that really make a big impact on racing, without being in the limelight. Watching the CEO of Johnny's Hobbies, Knute Fastenuff, win the Vintage race at Oktoberfest was awesome.

Eight – Ty Majeski had a banner year. It's not often you see a driver win the Rookie of The Year title and Champion title in the same season. If it weren't for a couple of mechanical issues, Majeski stood a good

chance of picking up the TUNDRA title as well. In addition to his Super Late Model wins, Majeski picked up a win during weekly competition at Lacrosse. Not a bad year at all.

Seven – While we didn't make it out to Elko Speedway as often this year as past years, I was thoroughly impressed by the Power Stock car counts on the nights we were on hand. For a division that was down to less than ten cars on some race nights a few years ago, they have rebounded phenomenally well. One of our visits in July had



Ty Majeski in NASCAR Late Model action at Lacrosse Speedway
(Dan Plan photo)

Martin DeFries photo

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well over 20 cars in the feature and three heats races. Maybe the days of B-features for the Power Stocks will return in 2015.

Six – For the past several years, Dale Danielski has hosted a Racers Reunion on Sunday morning of Oktoberfest. I always enjoy getting the opportunity to meet the drivers I grew up reading about, and this year's event was another great group of legends from days gone by. Can't thank Dale and the folks at LFS enough for putting this event together each year.

Five – I've been lucky enough to attend Speedweeks several different times in my nearly 50 years on this earth. Not near as many times as I would have liked to have gone, but the trips have been about once every decade. The trips have been fairly spread out in the past; Once with my parents as a kid in the 1980's, with a group of friends in the 1990's, another trip with the family and the kid in the 2000's, and now two years in a row in the 2010's. In 2013 and 2014, we were able to hit racing every night without rain. I might just have to make it 3 in a row for the 2015 version of Speedweeks.

Four – Typically, we've camped on-site for all three days of Cedar Lake Speedway's USA Nationals. This year, I messed up and didn't get my reservation in soon enough, and the place was booked full. We opted to stay at a campground down the road on the Apple

River. Once again, the pre-race driver intros were a must see, and the racing as good as it gets. The pre-race and post race activities at the campground were quite entertaining as well thanks to two of our camping neighbors, and great advertisers at MRC; Pirtek & Turtles Bar & Grill.

Three – No matter what type of car you have, going undefeated in regular season feature race action is impressive. Buddy Hanestad had one of those years; winning all of the regular season Hornet races at Cedar Lake Speedway. I believe the only two races he didn't win at CLS were a heat race early in the season and the feature on opening night at of the Legendary 100. Both of these races, Buddy finished second.

Two – The best part about short track racing is how often you'll see a great battle for the lead. This year's finish of the Big-8 main event at Rockford Speedway during the National Short Track Championships was epic. I don't know if I'll ever see anything top that.



Stan Meissner photo

Buddy Hanestad in Hornet action at Cedar Lake Speedway during the 2014



Pre-race good times with Stan



Some of the Speedweeks action still takes place on the beach (top photo), the Pirtek gang enjoy a casual summer afternoon during the 2014 USA Nationals (bottom photo)



One – I've jokingly referred to Stan Meissner as the "Brett Favre" of MRC. Let's face it; this sport can wear on you in any capacity. Stan has been with the publication longer than I have, and has "retired" from writing and photography several times. After taking a complete year off in 2013, Stan returned in full force for the 2014 season. We couldn't be happier.

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