

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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Historic Haulers



2020 Season Kicks Off

March 2020

Inside...



Pictures from the Past



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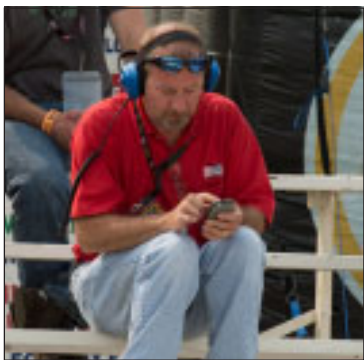
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Publisher's Note Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Another Speedweeks in Daytona has come and gone. Here are some random thoughts from this year's event.

During Speedweeks I definitely don't eat right, I stay up way too late, I don't sleep enough and drink too much. On the positive side, my Fitbit showed that the amount of walking done on the beach every day and at the track each night, I blew away my exercise goals every single day. Life is all about balance.

The Clash at Daytona was practically laughable with only 5 cars finishing and 4 on the lead lap. The Pro Late Model main event later in the night at New Smyrna was no better, with 5 cars out of 20 finishing. Young Gio Scelzi looked quite surprised when motioned into victory lane. The feel-good moment of the week was seeing David Weaver grab second place. A career best finish for Weaver.

Jamie Skinner backs up what he says.

2020 Speedweeks Random Thoughts

Ty Majeski is really fast in a pavement Super Late Model. So is Derek Griffith. These two swapped the lead back and forth numerous times at New Smyrna in the Tuesday night 50 lapper. Griffith won and Majeski was second. Side-by-side racing usually doesn't happen in pavement racing in the South. Usually somebody ends up in the fence. Griffith would end up with the World Series title, and Majeski rebounded from being on his lid in the Truck race to picking up the 100-lap Super Late final event at New



Smyrna.

Mike Whitener and "Big Sexy" Brandon Overton put on one of the best races I've seen in a long time, until they started running into each other, and then took themselves out with just a few laps to go. That type of stuff usually just happens in pavement racing and

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651-451-4036

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Publisher
Dan Plan

Contributing Writers

Dale P. Danielski
Dan Margetta
Jacy Norgaard
Jacklyn Nuttleman
Jason Searcy
Dean Reller
Charlie Spry

Photographers

Guy Adams (815-980-0354)
Vance Birno (612-308-3572)
Jeff Blaser (715-498-7544)
Martin DeFries (651-346-1199)
TJ Harron (608-301-5258)
Doug Hornickel (920-563-0993)
Mark Melchiori (414-463-0131)
Bruce Nuttleman (612-860-6622)
Vince Peterson (612-419-6372)
Jess Riedner (608-334-5329)

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Racing According to Plan from page 3

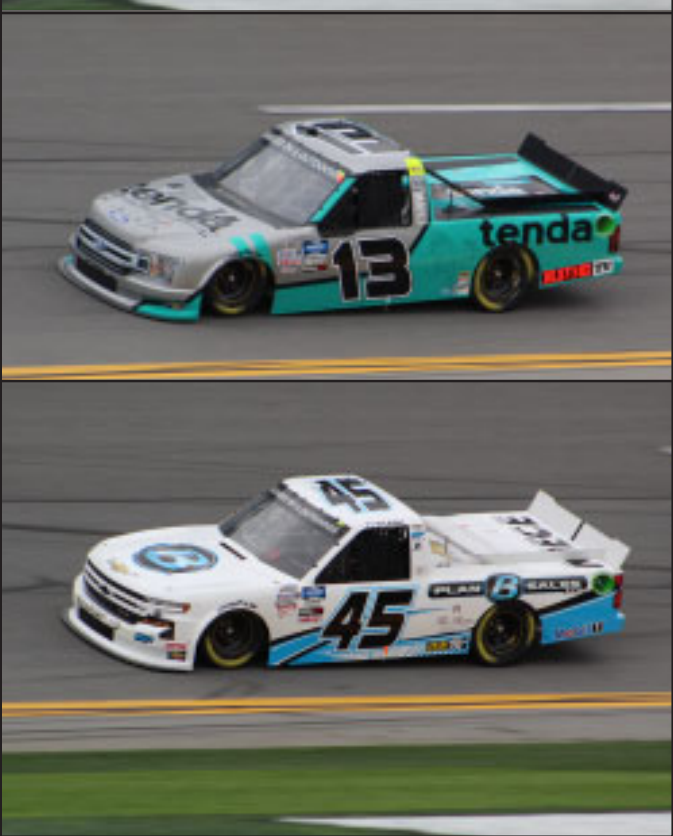
doesn't happen in top level of dirt Late Model racing. Dennis Erb had a tough break at Volusia, but he really should have asked where to go for tech. Never go back to your trailer without checking with somebody first.

East Coast Big Block Dirt Modifieds and East Coast Tour Pavement Modifieds are cool. Every damn one of them. People talk about missing the good old days of only 2 racing divisions at the local short track. They

still do that at Volusia during Speedweeks. The efficiency of the program at Volusia is second to none. Only 2 divisions, a full race program of heats, LCQ's and main events. Race, race, race, no track prep, short intermission and racing again. All before 10:30pm. Man it is a good show. I typically don't stay in Daytona for more than 6-7 days but stayed for 8 days this time. I never got rained out while I was there. You really can't beat going on the beach during the day and the races at night for 8 straight days. The reason I stayed an extra day was to see a

bunch of drivers from close to home run in the Truck race. This year there were 4 drivers from the state of Wisconsin on the big track at the same time. This was also the first time in 53 years without a Wisconsin driver in the Cup field. Another reason for me to stay at the short tracks. And finally, being at the big track in Daytona is cool and all, but it's not my cup of tea. It's not racing, it's blocking. It sets a bad example for young racers, and we are lucky Ryan Newman didn't get hurt worse. A really big reason for me to stay at the short tracks.

East Coast Modifieds, dirt and pavement, are cool (left photos.) Derek Kraus, Natalie Decker, Johnny Sauter and Ty Majeski all participated Daytona Truck race. Kraus, Decker and Sauter all finished in the top-ten. Majeski's night ended early when caught up in an early race melee (right photos)



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Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

The race car hauler is one of the most overlooked but important piece of any racers inventory. Times have changed for this ubiquitous equipment, and it is up for debate as far as the pros and cons of the enclosed trailer.

I can certainly understand the viability of the enclosed hauler. We have many different kinds of weather here in the Midwest, and the typical racer may be racing a car in anything from below freezing temps to 100-degree scorching days. The trailer is a great place to stay warm or help stay cooler or stay out of the sun in the hot weather. It is also a great place to store all of the tools, spare parts, and even the car. It saves time with all of the loading and unloading. It can be an advertising billboard for your team and sponsors as well.

That is, if anyone actually knows what is inside. Any race fan immediately looks to any enclosed trailer at any time for clues of a race car inside. However, it is more likely a contractor or some other business, and even a private hauler with no ties to racing.

Therein lies the problem. With an open trailer, you see right away what is being transported. As a child when I went to the races, every car was hauled



via open trailer or maybe a ramp truck. I knew right away what I was seeing, and quite honestly, was in awe of it. It sparked a fire and an interest immediately. I wanted to go to the races!

I have been around the sport quite a while and have seen people use pretty much anything to get a car to the track. In the 1960's, the ramp truck was the choice for many teams, seemingly mainly with the 1953-

1956 Ford models. Some used open trailers, and some even flat towed behind a tow bar or even *gasp* chains. Retired school buses became somewhat common, as their heavy-duty chassis provided a great platform for a hauler, with room for the car and a few spare seats for crew and family. Don't see much of this anymore, and I wonder why?

I remember seeing someone drive a car into the grounds of the Rockford Speedway, literally knock the windows out, take the lights out and race that night in the Roadrunner division. I think this was even in the 1980's. Not sure if they put the lights back in after and drove it home, but I know this was a somewhat common thing in the times prior to this.

I have also seen people drive full-fledged race cars to the track. Especially if they lived nearby or if the hauler broke down on the way. Pretty much can't get away with that now.

In logging country, some teams would use a logging truck as a hauler. A very unique and utilitarian concept. Haven't seen that anywhere for awhile, either, although I am sure it is still being used.

Most open trailers are of the dual axle variety, but there are some who use a single axle hauler for a small car. My first trailer was a single axle unit that I paid an additional \$200 for in addition to the \$500 paid for my first four-cylinder racer. A cheap way to get into racing, and it served its purpose well for a couple of years going mostly to local tracks. Once I started going further from home, I thought I'd better make the upgrade to a dual axle unit that would do the job much better and safer. I have never regretted that.

Rockford late model regular Jon Reynolds Jr. took a unique approach to this matter, by installing clear sides on his enclosed trailer, so that the car was visible to all. It looked great, especially when he installed colored lighting inside to light the whole thing up at night. I applaud his efforts!

One of the most unusual haulers belongs to

Historic Haulers



Bruce Nuttleman photo

southern Wisconsin racing legend Jerry Eckhardt. He has a 1962 Chevy flatbed hauler with another Ford cab grafted behind the main cab to make a sort of crew cab. He has had this hauler for many, many years, and I can imagine that if it could talk it would have many stories to tell. An old school racer, Jerry makes his racing stuff when he can instead of buying new. Will we ever see much of this kind of ingenuity again?

It doesn't matter the division as far as limiting haulers, either. I have seen stock six-cylinder racers hauled to the track in multi-car, enclosed trailers, and I have seen championship winning late models towed on an open trailer. A good example of the latter is multi-time champion late model racer Ron Bishofberger, who is now retired, but when racing he always hauled the racer on an open trailer and an aging Chevy Suburban. He got it done!

Bottom line, it doesn't matter how you get your race car to the track, just do it safely and get it there!



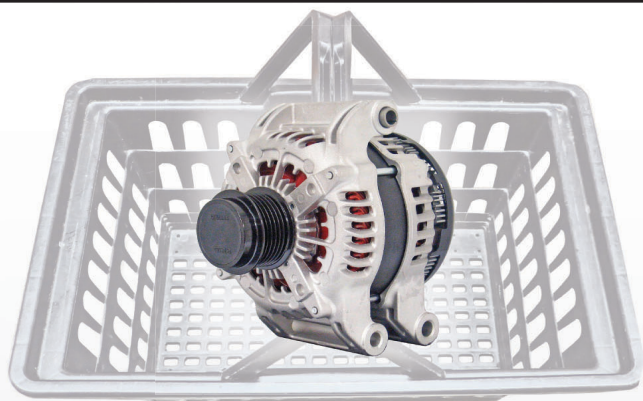


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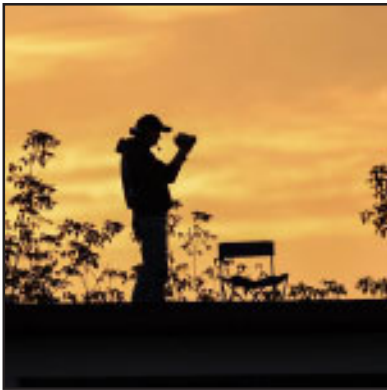


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Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

The 2020 NASCAR season has officially kicked off and just three weeks in, it has already featured some dramatic moments. The season began with the return of the Busch Clash namesake to the opening exhibition race and the event turned into a demolition derby with the winning car of Erik Jones entering victory lane about smashed to pieces. Many attributed the crashes to insane moves being made on the racetrack in this bump draft versus blocking style of racing we have now come to see on the superspeedways. After being involved in one of the wrecks during The Clash, Brad Keselowski implied some drivers may feel they are invincible in these newer safer cars and he criticized the unnecessary crashes while trying to remind everyone this sport is still dangerous. The craziness seemed to tamper down a bit during the qualifying races but as expected it reappeared as the Daytona 500 neared its conclusion. Numerous multi-car accidents dotted the closing laps of the “500” but one final incident coming to the checkered flag may have finally driven Keselowski’s message home. Everyone, and I mean everyone, in the racing world collectively held our breath as we awaited word on Ryan Newman’s condition after his car hit the wall and turned over while racing for the victory only to be struck at speed just above the driver’s window by another car. For two agonizing hours the optics on the track as well as the television broadcast didn’t look good and those of us who have followed the sport for a while recognized the empty feelings and procedural similarities to past times when tragedy struck at a racetrack. The NASCAR world had not had to directly deal with those circumstances for 19 years as safety improvements developed had produced extremely safe racing machines and drivers almost routinely walked away from spectacular crashes. Thankfully that 19 year streak will continue as eventually word came down that Newman had survived the accident and then two days later miraculously walked out of the hospital with his family.

Immediately talk began to surface on media shows and social media sites questioning if the incident

could have been avoided. Well all incidents can be avoided but the question in this case isn’t an easy one to answer. With the current racing rules package on the superspeedways the best way to get past someone is to have a strong push or bump draft which produces a fast closing run of which the only way for the lead car to defend against it is to move around and block the closing car’s momentum. The blocking part of the equation is what causes almost all of the wrecks as the closing car is unable to slow down in time and the lead car gets turned or if that driver is able to slow down enough to avoid spinning out the lead car, the sudden slowdown accords through the field and the incident occurs behind the leaders. Many have suggested NASCAR issue a rule outlawing blocking but that would be almost impossible to enforce objectively. There isn’t a clear cut definition of what would be considered a “good” block or a “bad” block. Others have suggested placing sensors on the cars that would alert officials when contact is made. While this could work, it would also open up a whole new can of worms technology wise and could lead into too much scrutiny resulting in way too many tedious discussions which would dilute the product, similar to the way debates on what constitutes a catch disrupt NFL games.

Ultimately the responsibility to avoid unnecessary crashes lies with the drivers themselves. One of the “unwritten” rules of racing etiquette is “If you can avoid a crash, do it” and respect of that mantra has

2020 season kicks off



Dan Plan photo

The 2020 NASCAR seson kicked off at Daytona International Speedway with a Eric Jones winning a wreck-filled Clash

been glossed over in recent years. In the final stages of the 1999 Daytona 500, Jeff Gordon pulled off a daring pass of Rusty Wallace by dipping below the yellow inside line as the wounded car of Ricky Rudd limped around on the apron. Gordon completed the pass in what probably was the most frightening game of “chicken” ever seen in the “500” and after that the “Yellow Line Out of Bounds” rule was born. But the main reason Gordon completed that pass was because Rusty Wallace followed the unwritten racing rule and left room for Gordon to race between himself and Rudd’s battered car. It cost him his Daytona 500 win, but he did the right thing by avoiding a horrendous accident and having never won the 500, I’m sure he has spent many nights rewinding that moment and wondering why he didn’t just run Gordon into Rudd’s rear bumper. Nowadays I’m not sure anyone would leave room in that situation as it seems like winning at the cost of wrecking or worse, hurting someone, is acceptable. People get hurt when everyone drives like goofs and while the Newman wreck turned out for the best in the end, I really hope it woke up the rest of the drivers to the responsibility they ultimately have to not only race hard but to also race safely.

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PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

I've always had some part of everything that I do involve auto racing in my career. When I made the jump from co-hosting morning radio to the non-profit world, I pondered how I would still tie the two together. It didn't take me long to bring together the generous population of fans and drivers from the racing community to a worthy cause, like New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers.

The organization operates out of La Crosse and Trempealeau Counties—serving victims of domestic and sexual abuse in the community. We provide free and confidential services and supports to victims of abuse; like trauma therapy, legal advocacy, and even shelter, just to name a few. Those services and supports are also extended to children who have either witnessed or experienced abuse too.

We are holding a major fundraiser on Friday, March 20th at Drugan's in Holmen, WI—it's called "Victory Over Violence." As the Development Director with the organization, it's my job to pull this event together; including securing items for the live

and silent auction. Needless to say, this is how my two passions of helping others and auto racing intersect.

This year will have a whole lot of auto racing flavor to it. And I'm hoping that some of my friends in the racing community will make plans to join us at the event for some fun and maybe even secure the winning bid on some of these racing themed items for themselves while supporting New Horizons.

I have to thank Ty Majeski for coming through for us in a big way and agreeing to donate a pit experience with his NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series team—Niece Motorsports. This package will include two Hot Passes for one of the Midwest races on the schedule, as well as some team swag, and a tour of their race operation at the track. Also included in this package is an autographed 16x20 photo of Majeski doing donuts at Oktoberfest 2019 after winning the main event that Sunday. (Thanks to my brother-in-law, Bruce for providing it!)

We also had some incredible donations that would be sweet items for someone's collection.

- Kyle Busch signed NASCAR M&Ms full-sized replica helmet
- Ryan Blaney signed NASCAR Menards full-sized replica helmet
- Brad Keselowski signed NASCAR Miller Lite mini-helmet
- Brad Keselowski 8x10 photo autographed by Keselowski and Roger Penske

We also have a bunch of Green Bay Packer items too, for those who bleed green and gold.

- Davante Adams signed Green Bay Packers logo football
- Sterling Sharpe signed Packers 8x10 photograph
- Paul Hornung signed Packers 8x10 photograph
- Dave Robinson, Carroll Dale, and Don Horn signed mini Packers helmet inscribed "ICE Bowl 12-31-67"

If you're a Brewers fan, we have some nifty things for you too:

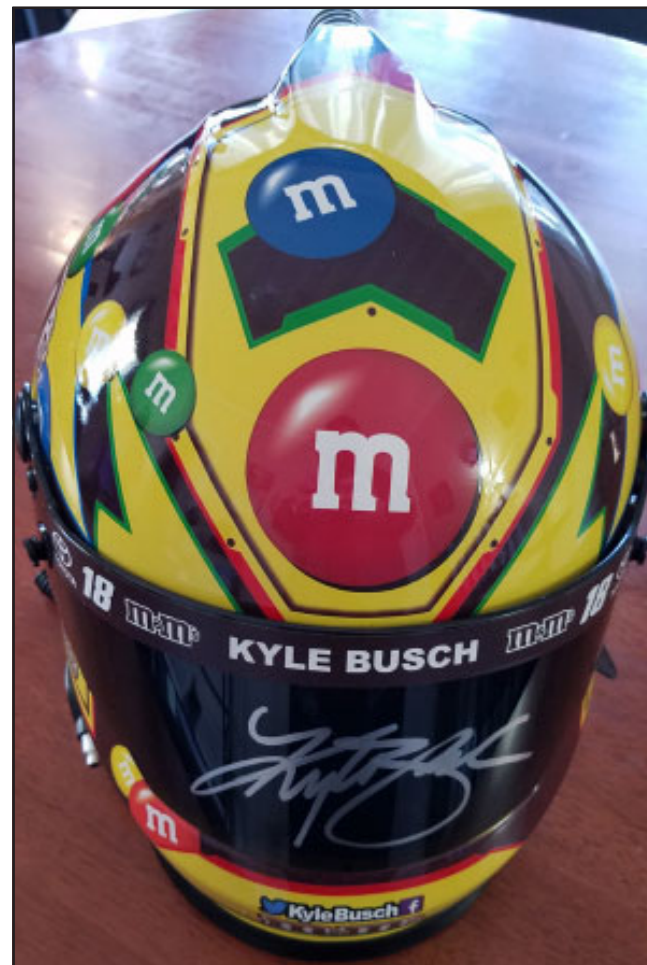
- Paul Molitor Brewers custom matted and framed display with signed Upper Deck card

- Brewers Rookie Keston Hiura signed baseball, signed Team USA mini battling helmet and player used jersey baseball card

And we have an INCREDIBLE week-long Canadian fishing vacation at Pipestone Point Resort in Lake of the Woods, Ontario, courtesy of Sue and Mike Weidemann. You'll get seven days and six nights of some of the best trophy fishing! Also included are three meals each day, daily housekeeping, docking fees and more!

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fire ring from Global Finishing Solutions, a Mile-Buster Seat Cushion from Impact Gel... and a whole lot more! There are oodles of great items that will be up for grabs on Friday, March 20th at Victory Over Violence, presented by Gundersen Health System. If you're willing to make a difference with New Horizons, helping victims of abuse become survivors of it—we'd love to have you on-board to help!

You can learn more about the event and get your tickets online at www.nhagainstabuse.org. Hope to see you at Drugan's in Holmen, WI on Friday, March 20, 2020. With any luck, you'll see my husband Toby there all shined up, wearing something much nicer than his grease-smear sweatshirt.



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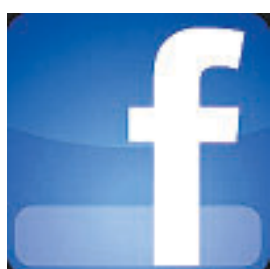
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Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

It had been over 20 years since a Florida, during Speedweeks trip occurred, so 2020 was going to be it!

The trip wasn't the usual banzai down there, only stopping for fuel and a bite to eat now and then, as was generally the case in the past, as our crew of three, all being a part of the Central Wisconsin Racing

Association had to get to Fla., via a North Carolina tire run. We arrived in Kannapolis with a pile of tire casings courtesy of Rick Shone's trailer. The tires were earmarked for new re-treading and would eventually be headed to Wisconsin for CWRA competition in 2020. Arriving with the tires at an early am time didn't allow for any visiting, so it was immediately off to Sunny Daytona Beach, FL!

Not having been on the beach in so long, many of the old haunts from what we remembered, had changed names, or were gone entirely. A mainstay however here in Daytona, is the Racing Promoters Workshops. With it being in CWRA's best interests to attend, we did so and sat in on two full days coverage on numerous topics. To say in this day and age that racing at the short track level, the main RPM focus, is a difficult proposition, would certainly be an understatement. The group in attendance however remain positive and there definitely is a "Not giving up" attitude in each and

everyone of them. Featured guests in conversation with the group included discussion on the latest insurance issues, social media, event streaming, rules and tech, leasing racetracks, and who the race fan is of today among a dozen or so other topics. Folks that

*Racing Observances continued
on page 13*



Dale P. Danielski photo

Any idea what this piece of equipment is? Just one that Towel City Manufactured years ago and is still in use today.

Dale's pictures from the past

Dick Trickle #99 in his Pontiac Firebird in 1979 (left photo) and Henry Miller #52 racing in 1979 (right photo)



Racing Observances from page 13

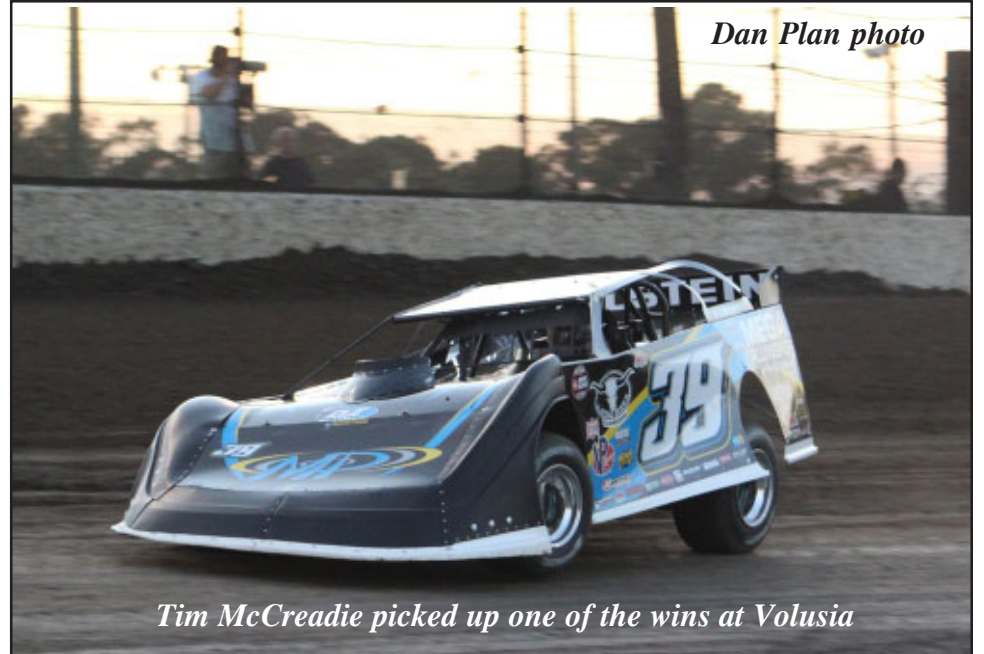
have been there and often times made mistakes on the way offer plenty of insightful info, so that you can hopefully avoid the pitfalls! With all the extremely beneficial discussion that goes on, not to mention the networking that takes place outside of the break-out seminars, its a surprise to this attendee that a larger group wasn't on hand. If you can take away just an idea or two from the Workshops, it pays for the cost and probably your expenses to get there. If you don't gain any knowledge, you can bust a gut listening to Kenny Schrader speak! Our group was able to do both.

Of course, if you are in Daytona during Speedweeks, you might as well catch a race or two. Our choice was a couple events at Volusia Speedway Park, of Barberville, FL. Sprint cars raced on the first night we were there, and they are wickedly fast around the 1/2-mile clay oval. They are almost too fast, as it is hard to pass when everyone is flat footing it around the entire oval! Nonetheless, we did see some pretty clever moves and down to the last lap drama in seeing Logan Schuchart pick up the 30-lap main event win. Our second night of action at the track featured the Dirt Car Late Models and although speeds are obviously down from what the Sprint folks do, the LM guys know how to get around the place! Catching racing action down here this time of year always produces great fields of cars. People you have only heard, or read about race during this time, as it's literally a who's who of short track racing. One such driver to this scribe, won the 50 lap Feature on the night, as Tim McCreadie showed the way to the checkers. With a little bit of beach time, eating Rock

Shrimp and other seafood delicacies, trying to wrestle alligators and visit with other natives, it was time to head back North.

Of course heading back to Wisconsin, we knew we would be welcomed by the 12 inches of snow that fell earlier in our neck of the woods. But before that, it was heading North by North Carolina again, this time to pick up tires to be used for the 2020 CWRA campaign. Talking to the Towel City crew on hand, it's amazing the work they do with very minimal resources. They've been doing it this way with a lot of famous racing names since 1935, so their approach has to be working! Continuing North after our visit, and being for the most part a backseat driver, it was a bit surprising to see a sign saying "Welcome to Ohio"! Being up in age and counting on GPS, (I had a nice atlas we could have used, but didn't bring it, trusting the driving crew.) we got pretty far off the beaten path. My immediate response to seeing the sign was, "What the hell are we doing in Ohio, we are supposed to be heading East!" With a little extra GPS direction prodding, we found our way however and did get back in reasonable time, to as mentioned earlier, remove a bunch of snow!

Here and there...Towel City as mentioned, has worked with a number of famous names in racing and



Dan Plan photo

Tim McCreadie picked up one of the wins at Volusia

Dale Earnhardt, Sr., living in the vicinity was one of them. Listening to the Towel City folks tell it, Earnhardt was quite the hellion back in the day. Being the mouthy, arrogant guy, he was and getting knocked off bar stools more than a time or two was not necessarily the Earnhardt folks learned to Love or Hate in NASCAR! But that's coming from those that knew and worked with him in his back yard, so we know it to be true. On a somber note, Earnhardt Jr., had come into the Towel City location requesting to get tires for his Mother's car. Word never got passed on, and that transaction didn't take place, as it was just before he was killed at Daytona...The Central Wisconsin Racing Association is looking at a 12-race schedule for 2020. The addition of an event during the Fair at prestigious La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., on Wednesday, July 15th, is shaping up to be a big one. The event will be to honor long time promoter at the Dells and La Crosse tracks, Larry Wehrs. In addition to the event itself, the Larry Wehrs Challenge Bonus will be offered to the driver that can win both the La Crosse race and the one held at Dells Raceway Park, Wis. Dells, WI., on August 1st. A \$10,000 bonus over and above the purse pay-out, minimum, will go to the driver, if they can pull off that feat...Other venues, besides the aforementioned for CWRA in 2020 include May, 9th, June 20th, July 11th, August, 22nd, September 11th, 12, at Marshfield Motor Speedway, Marshfield, WI., May 30th, Dells Raceway Park, June 12th, or 19th, at Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., and June 4th and June 25th, at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI...

Looking back in time, Dick Trickle won both 75 lap features at the Larry Wehrs operated Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI., here Saturday, August 25th, 1979. It was Henry (Butch) Miller taking the overall win in the September 30th, 1979 Oktoberfest 200 at the Larry Wehrs promoted La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI.

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650 715-344-9072 608-518-2478 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

One of the natives. He may be coming to a racetrack near you!



Dale P. Danielski photo



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Volusia Travelers

Modified racer Jason Gross (left photo) and Late Model competitor Steve Hucovski (right photo) were just two of the drivers from the upper-Midwest on hand at Volusia for the DirtCar Nationals



Dan Plan photos

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Blackie on the Beach

By Dan Plan

The last 3 years of Speedweeks, I've made the trip South down State Road A1A to watch the annual parade on the original Daytona beach and road course. The original Daytona race consisted of one mile down Highway A1A, a left turn onto the beach, one mile along the shoreline and another left back onto A1A. The crowd at this event has been bigger each time I've gone, and there are plenty of drivers and other dignitaries from the past on hand.

This year's event had a bit of a surprise for me. As I was walking through the pre-parade car show, I noticed an old Buick that belonged to Blackie Wangerin. I later found out this was the very first car Blackie ever drove at Raceway Park in Shakopee, MN. The car was listed as winning 25 races in a row and the championship at Raceway in 1962. A few hours later, Blackie strapped in the old coupe (half-helmet and all) and made the drive around the original beach/road course.

The very next day, I ran into Blackie along with crew members Skip Pollak and Dano McInnis at the big track. Here they had Blackie's final Ford Thunderbird race car on display. Low and behold, the Thunderbird made a lap around the big track with its current owner. There probably aren't a lot of people that have access to their first, and last race car. There are most likely much fewer that have had both drive around the original track and current track on the same weekend at Daytona.



Blackie driving his first car down the beach (top photo), the car, the crowd and Blackie giving the Wood Brothers some points at the car show (middle row) and the band back together with the last car at the big track along with all of their autographs on the air cleaner.



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