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June 2020

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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

Through my life of being a fan of short track racing, I've met some truly great people. Even more so when becoming involved with the paper about 20 years ago.

Within the span of a few days in the month of May, just before Memorial Day weekend two great people were lost; Eddie Nicholson and Richard Timm (known among friends as Timm Timm.) I wouldn't see them much outside of the racetracks but would cross paths with Eddie and Timm Timm several times throughout the racing season.

For the first ten years or so of owning this paper, Eddie would joking say "Hi Rob!" as I walked through the pit gate at Cedar Lake Speedway. Eddie was pretending to let me think he thought I was Rob Hahn,

Two great guys

who originally started the publication. Eddie was the kind of guy who would bust his tail all night long at the races. On the few occasions each year I would spend the night at Cedar Lake, he gave me many reasons to laugh around the campfire until the wee hours of the evening/morning. Even though we would stay up way too late after the races, he always stopped by my RV the first thing the next morning when emptying the garbage cans in the campground area. People that work this hard are a rare find these days, and he will be missed dearly.

I first met Timm Timm when I purchased the paper. He was one of the first advertisers I picked on my own. I probably didn't bring him any new business with the advertisement, but he enjoyed seeing his logo in each and every issue of the paper. Each year he would call me prior to the racing season to let me know he wanted to continue his ad in the paper even though his Taxi business didn't have the revenue of year's past due to unfair competition from things like Uber and Lyft. Conversations with Timm Timm were always enlightening and entertaining. The dinner he hosted at Mancini's Char House for the Discount Taxi Racing Team drivers was always a great time, and there are many racers he helped keep on the race-track by providing sponsorship and having the Discount Taxi Racing logo on their cars. It's definitely not going to be the same without Timm Timm around at the track.

To steal a line from Brad Both's opening speech at Cedar Lake Speedway on Memorial Day weekend, "We are better people to have known Eddie." The same goes for Timm Timm. I'm a better person having known these two fine gentlemen and having the opportunity to spend time with them while they were around.

God Speed to Eddie and Timm Timm.



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USA NATIONALS

The lives you touch: what tragedy reminded me about this community

By Jacy Norgaard

The recent tragic loss of long time Cedar Lake Speedway employee, official, and all-around saint Eddie Nicholson, was a heart wrenching reminder about the preciousness of life. For those that are unaware of how I got my start in dirt track racing, Eddie played a very crucial part. When my father quit racing Figure 8's and Hobby Stocks in 2002, the towing company he worked for began towing at Cedar Lake Speedway. My dad first brought me to the races in 2003 and it was my first dirt track race by my recollection. I got to sit in the tow truck in the middle of the track and watch the races. As a ten-year-old kid, I felt like a big deal! It's there from that seat in wrecker that I first met Eddie. He had come over to chat with my father and we were introduced, he was super friendly and had a big smile. I went to the races off and on with my father from 2003-2006, spending lots of time around Eddie in the infield and watched as him and my dad (and others) would tow wrecked car after wrecked car off the Speedway. I thought they had the coolest job in the world. And I thought Eddie was especially cool because he had one thing any young kid would go crazy for: SUGAR! Eddie always had Twizzlers in his truck or near victory lane and was never shy about sharing. The eleven-year-old me could not have been more content. There were race cars and there was candy. Cedar Lake was heaven and Eddie was a savior.

As I grew up and spent more time at Cedar Lake Speedway, I eventually started brining along a point and shoot camera in 2007. Inspired by guys like Stan Meissner, Jerry Zimmer, Chris Burback and Vince Peterson, I quickly discovered that racetrack towing was probably not my calling. I would play around and shoot photos of my dad, Eddie, Chris, all



Jerry Zimmer photo

the guys working and standing around waiting for wrecks. I had no idea what I was doing, but I was having fun. Eddie would always take the time to let the 14-year-old me show off the work I had created and I will always be appreciative of that. After the races our time would be spent around the campfire just outside the pit gate at Cedar Lake. I was obviously much too young to drink then, but Eddie would happily share his Coca Cola's with me as we all sat around and re-hashed the night. Many weekends were spent sleeping in Eddie's trailer after the races and countless memories come to mind when I think about that period of my life.

The most prolific memory for me has to be during a two-day show weekend at Cedar Lake. Dad and Eddie would let me drive the pack trucks and other vehicles around after the race so long as I was careful. To a teenage boy this was the coolest thing ever, I had never felt more sophisticated and grown up. The rules of course were that once Eddie or Dad said it was time to stop driving around, I had to be done. This night in question of course I decided to be rebellious. Dad and I were camping outside of turn 4 and it was just after midnight. I had walked down to the pits and scoped the area out, Eddie was sleeping and no one was around. I hopped in a Bronco with expired tabs and questionable running conditions and drove around the property. I then decided to be daring and took off out on CC down to C and turned around and came back to the track. I must have done this trip back and forth several times. On my last trip back I got scared of getting caught and decided to head back for the track. I arrived back and swung into the pits. As I was returning the Bronco to the place I found it I heard yelling and screaming and had just put the truck in park long enough to see the drivers door swung wide open and Eddie standing right there. Boy was he pissed and man was I scared. I handed Eddie the keys and listened intensely as he told me how stupid I had acted. The nervousness of my voice replying either "Yes" or "I know" scared of how my dad would react if he found out. Eddie told me I had been foolish and that something bad could have happened, but most of all he told me that he was glad I was okay and not harmed. He gave me a ride back to our turn 4 campground and I fully expected him to wake my dad up and tell him what I had done. But he didn't. He dropped me off and told me to basically stay out of trouble. The next day I was nervous for the races, I was scared that Eddie would tell dad what I had done and I would be in some major trouble. As the night wore on I kept waiting for my dad to chew me out, but he never did. Perhaps Eddie never told him what I had done or perhaps he had and my dad just trusted that Eddie's stern talking to me was all that I needed.



Dan Plan photo

As I grew up and moved on from Cedar Lake Speedway and went elsewhere the Cedar Lake Towing days faded into the rearview. When I returned to Cedar Lake to shoot for the first time in a decade last August for the USA Nationals, Eddie said hello and asked how I had been. I'm sure there were Twizzlers and I'm sure he would have offered. When I first heard of the tragedy, I was shocked and in disbelief. I wondered if it might have been someone I

knew; someone I grew up knowing. When I found out it was Eddie I was in utter disbelief. He was a gentle giant with a big heart and a gracious smile. He made that ten-year-old kid feel happy in a new world all those years ago. He made that young teenager see the stupidity of their actions. Most of all he made me realize the magnitude and the love of our racing community. The outpouring of support and stories about him make you realize just how close knit our family of dirt really is. People I never would have expected to know him recalled countless stories of the times they interacted with him and the

mark he left on them. Eddie will be missed by everyone. His absence will be felt long after the memories of him slip from the forefront of our minds.

When my editor at Dirt Monthly Magazine, Travis Cushion passed away last year it lit a fire inside of me and inspired me and pushed me creatively in a whole new direction. Travis believed in me and my work, and Eddie believed in me at a time when I needed it and never could comprehend just what his generosity of heart meant. This season is for you Eddie and I have no doubt that your legacy and your memory will serve as fuel for me in whatever direction the creative winds sail for me. Thank you for being a friend, for providing guidance, and most of all for just being who you were and helping others as you did.

As tragic as Eddie's death is and as devastating a loss to our community and our world as this is, he went out of this world at the one place that was a very important piece to his world. Call it fate, call it god's plan, call it destiny, I just wish he wasn't gone.



Matt Bohl photo

Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Local racing is finally getting a slow start, but during all of the downtime I have been giving a lot of thought to all of the years that I have been involved in the sport of auto racing. It's been quite a ride!

I feel fortunate to have seen many drivers start a long career in the sport, including seeing the very start of some pretty famous ones. I can remember seeing Matt Kenseth start his career in a limited late model at Columbus and Wis. Dells, then soon after at Madison and Slinger amongst others.

I have had the chance to see many more drivers start their careers and get their first wins. That is really fun. Some never do a lot of winning, and some never win anything. Some try it once and give up. Some do it for a couple of years. You have all been important to me.

I had a chance to see the very first race that Ty Majeski ever drove in a late model, also at Columbus.

I got a chance to meet John Beale when he first started racing Bandit cars at Jefferson and Columbus, in a rent-a-ride from Gary Krueger.

I remember when Casey Johnson first started racing in the Bandit division at Jefferson and raced with him at least once. He wasn't in that division for long.

I had a chance to see some amazing competition at Capital Speedway in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Joe Shear, Dave Watson, Don Leach and others came up from the Rockford Speedway, taking on Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner, Jim Back and many others from "up north," and of course, the Madison hot dogs such as Bill Retallick, Johnny Ziegler and Eddie Hume. I don't think I realized what I was seeing at the time and the level of competition there.

I remember when Erik Johnson came over from the Chicago tracks to race weekly with Joe Shear at Rockford Speedway, and the battles that they had.

Of course, I have seen some strange and exciting finishes as well. Drivers spinning out by themselves on the last lap with a huge lead. Others winning a race by driving backwards over the line. Huge crashes right at the line. Too many two and three wide finishes at the line to count. Cars on fire crossing the line.

I remember when Jerry Eckhardt had a buzz cut. (and no cowboy hat).

Strangest track food that I have seen at the concession stand? Frozen pickle juice at the track at Mt. Vernon, Illinois in the southern part of that state. My Nephew loved it. I passed on it.

I remember the spectator drag drivers and cars from the mid-1970's and early 1980's. How many first-generation Camaros and early Chevelle's were destroyed, and what would their worth be today? Hey, they were just cheap used cars at the time.

I remember the days when everyone eagerly awaited the arrival of a racing paper in the mailbox on Thursday, so they could read results from their local tracks and others and learn what the tracks had to offer on the upcoming shows. No internet or social media!

Some have fun with their car numbers, even now. I once saw a painted-on egg with a face on it used as a number. And every finger digit you could imagine. Even letters or letter/number combos to spell out something... I8A4RE, I 1/2 2P, or weapon designations such as AK-47 or M1. And how many James Bond's have we seen, 007?

I have had a chance to drive a late model,

sportsman car, various four- and six-cylinder stock class cars and have raced both four and sixes at many different tracks against some real talented drivers. Thanks!

I have had a chance to race several cars of my own at some thirteen different tracks on both asphalt and dirt. Not a lot of success, but sure a lot of fun. Had a friend tell me when I started that I would only race at one track, ever. Wrong!

I have had the chance to talk to many veteran racers, most of whom have given me very good advice on many subjects, and the best advice ever, was "Don't overspend on this sport and go broke." The driver who gave me this advice knows who he is!

Now, I am considered one of the "old farts."

Unfortunately, I have had many good friends pass away over the years, some by aging, some by accident. I miss you all!

I have seen drivers at their absolute best, and their absolute worst. We all have those days.

I have attended 2,246 short track events from 1983-2019. I started attending in 1968, but didn't keep stats until 1983, so my lifetime total would be quite a bit more. I have had 326 events rained out from 1983-2019.

I have been fortunate to write my musings down now for over thirty years. First one to give me a chance was Jim Cleveland at the old Checkered Flag Racing News. Next, when they shut down it was racer Scott Null who gave me a place on his website to write, then after that it was Denny Bandt at the old FASTRAX magazine. Now, Dan has given me a great place to share my thoughts here at the Midwest Racing Connection. Thanks to all! I never thought I would do it for so long. Thank you to all of you!

However, with all this, 2020 is the first year that I have seen a virus shut us down. So, you see, you just never know what will happen in this life. Whenever we get back to "normal" I might have something more interesting to write about!

I wouldn't trade it for any other pastime.

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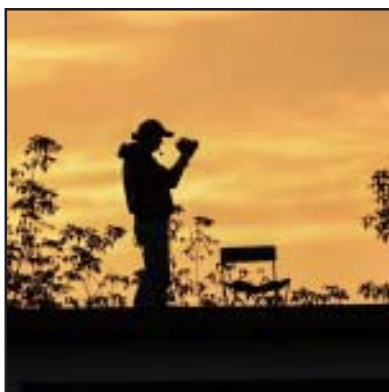
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Dangerous Dan**Dan Margetta**

“Failure is not an option.” It’s a catch phrase made popular twenty-five years ago in the movie Apollo 13 as flight engineers were tasked to overcome insurmountable odds in figuring out how to bring astronauts in a stranded command module home safely.

It’s also a way to accurately describe the attitudes of just about everyone involved in the sport of auto racing during the current pandemic. Right from the beginning track owners, promoters, series officials, racers, and fans have attacked the lockdown situation focused on the desired target of getting back on track. While other sports spent the past two months squabbling over money or coming up with every doomsday what-if scenario they could think of, the racers just figured out what needed to be done and set out to accomplish their goal.

Take Slinger Speedway owner Todd Thelen for instance. When the lockdown threatened his season, instead of just waiting for the situation to clear, Thelen contacted just about anyone he could think of from state and county representatives to health officials, city leaders, and law enforcement. The hard

work paid off and the diplomatic efforts to get the diverse group on the same page resulted in the Slinger Speedway becoming the first Wisconsin track to be allowed to open for limited practice with safety precautions in place. That gradually led to an official opening date being set albeit with limited grandstand attendance and social distancing rules enforced in the pits. The Slinger Speedway staff immediately went to work streamlining all aspects most of us take for granted from pit sign-in to ticket sales to media relations and concessions. Everything was reworked according to safety guidelines including online line-up notifications and even a virtual driver’s meeting. The drivers were kept up to date with the progress and all remained on board assisting with common positive messaging through their social media channels. Even the fans got involved and despite the political hot button issue the virus deal has become, everyone remained focused on the goal of racing and online

responses and comments were kept professional and positive.

Despite all the efforts that went into to getting the opening date on the calendar, Mother Nature welcomed the day with flooding rains and the 73rd season opener would have to wait another week. Once again, realizing that if the speedway staff had not fought so hard to get the opportunity to race on that day, there might not have been a Slinger season this year, the postponement received little criticism from fans and drivers. Online tickets sold were honored the following week and the Slinger Speedway kicked off its 2020 season on Memorial Day Weekend highlighted by a 100-lap super late model feature. The limited grandstand tickets were sold out and an internet pay per view was quickly set up for those that

Dangerous Dan continued on page 8

*TJ Harron photo*

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Dangerous Dan from page 7

could not or wished not to attend.

The atmosphere at Slinger on opening night was upbeat as it seemed everyone was just happy to get out and be at the track once again. Everyone may have realized just how important some of the little things normally taken for granted in racing are as the racing family gathered to start another season. Alex Prunty scored the victory in the super late model main event that featured plenty of action from a strong field of cars that included Steve Apel, Rich Bickle, Casey Johnson, Dennis Prunty, and Brad Mueller among others. Ryan Gutknecht won the late model feature while Brady Held topped the Slinger Bee main event. Tristan Swanson and Alex Hartwig won in the Legends and Bandolero divisions respectively and Ryan Lovald topped the wild Figure 8 race to end the evening. Perhaps the highlight of the night occurred in the late model semi-feature when 77-year-old South-eastern Wisconsin Racing Hall of Famer Jerry Eckhardt worked the tough outside groove alongside Dan Church to win in a close finish. The veteran racer's incredible feat combined collectively with the current times resonated deeply with those in attendance and the roar from the limited capacity grandstand sounded like a packed house when Eckhardt emerged from his car in victory lane.

Other tracks in Wisconsin have begun to open as well and I had the opportunity to attend the dirt track at Gravity Park USA Speedway in Chilton for

the first time. It's a pretty neat place to watch a race and the night I was there Dan Roedel won the A-Modified feature with a last lap pass and Jeff Steenbergen topped the Sport Mod A-Main while Kyle Fredrick won the stock car feature.

I spent Memorial Day at the Golden Sands Speedway for the Dick Trickle 99 super late model race as the Plover track opened the season. Chad Butz led for a majority of the 99-lap event while Gabe Sommers and John Beale challenged for the lead as well. Sommers appeared to have the fastest car but his choice to take the outside line at the choose cone on the final restart proved costly as Beale took advantage of the inside lane to pass both Sommers and Butz

and take the lead late in the event. By the time Sommers was able to get around Butz for second, Beale had pulled out to a sizeable lead and he drove to the victory. The Midwest Truck Series was also in competition and Joe Valento captured the 50-lap feature victory over Rich Schumann, Levon Van Der Geest, and James Swan.

The Memorial Day Weekend marks the unofficial start of summer in the Midwest and tracks are gradually beginning to open for the season. While schedules are still fluid depending on the health situations in certain areas, it is encouraging things in the racing world are starting to return to normal.

John Beale picked up the win in the Dick Trickle 99 event at Golden Sands Speedway
(TJ Harron photo)



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New Dirt



Jacy Norgaard

Just like a race feature with never ending cautions the pandemic of a lifetime rages on. As states seek to rekindle our way of life, we're reminded of just how different things are by the vernacular being thrown around. "Social distancing", "New normal", "Six feet", these are all burned into our collective dialect and lives for the time being. It's not breaking news to anyone that the race season is more upside down than a sprint car after a vicious wreck. Shows are being cancelled, races are being held without fans, I'm shooting photos with a mask on, and yet somehow there are aspects of this that I hope stick around forever.

By the time this column makes it to print I will have in less than two weeks photographed 8 shows at 5 tracks in 4 states. The capability to work my actual job remotely has been a blessing and I have a feeling things will only get crazier as we get back on track. I started the season off in Watertown, South Dakota at Casino Speedway. This was the first time I opened up the year in a state other than Minnesota since 2012

The "New Normal" we need when we go back to normal



Jacy Norgaard photo

when my first race was at Algona Raceway. What was stranger than starting in South Dakota was the fact that my first race wasn't until May 17. It was with a mask and it was without fans. You almost feel guilty being one of the lucky ones who get's to be there in person to experience the dirt flying in the air and the sounds and smells of racing. Cast aside the absurdities required to race and things felt somewhat normal. Getting home at 3 am and waking up at 8:30 to log onto my laptop dead tired with



Jacy Norgaard photo



Jacy Norgaard photo

a pit band still on my wrist reminded me of a life that seems long forgotten. My week went by quick as I traveled to Superior, Wisconsin the next night in preparation for the Minnesota Modified Nationals in Wisconsin. A marquee event usually held at my home track of Ogilvie Raceway was forced to make the bold choice to move the entire event to a completely different facility on

less than a weeks' notice. We practiced Wednesday night and raced Thursday and Friday night. The management and staff at Gondik Law Speedway did an amazing job of practicing social distancing and taking preventative measures with increased hygiene stations, thermal scanning at entry and more to ensure the event was a success. Chris Stepan and his staff did an excellent job as well organizing a well-run, professional event in such a short time frame.

The next day my photography colleague Tim Hunt and I made the trek down from Superior to Jackson, Minnesota to shoot the World of Outlaws Late Models return to racing event. We had to fill out a COVID-19 health checklist upon entry and have our temperature scanned before we could enter. Much

New Dirt continued on page 11

New Dirt continued from page 10

like my first race in South Dakota, no fans were allowed at this event either. The first time in Casino came as a surprise to experience racing like that, this time it felt like the “new normal”. That was until the four wide salute came along and I missed the opportunity to get the perfect shot. Normally I could sense when things were getting ready to go by the reaction of the crowd. When you take that away it changes the elements entirely. When I say I hope some aspects of what is going on now stay, fans not being in attendance is not one of them. We need fans and I hope that someday soon we return to full grandstands. Even if that means we slowly work our way back to that point. At the conclusion of the event that saw Ricky Thornton Jr. score his first ever World of Outlaws victory, Tim and I made the 5.5-hour trek back to Superior. Tim drove as I edited photos to send into Dirt on Dirt and World of Outlaws. The magic of technology allowed me to Bluetooth the full resolution RAW files to my phone where I could quickly edit in Lightroom and then email off.

Tired and weary from 4 straight nights of racing we made a two-hour drive south to Eagle Valley Speedway on Sunday for their Season Opener. A track I had not been to in nearly a decade. The sun shined bright, the weather was near perfect and a decent number of fans were in attendance. Social distancing occurred in the grandstands and for once everything seemed to be normal.

As I wrap this column up prior to heading out to Davenport Speedway in Davenport, Iowa for World of Outlaws Late Models this weekend, I reflect on all that I have seen the past 12 days and all that should remain long after this pandemic ends.

That excitement and good cheer that so many have possessed just being back at the track should extend. It needs to extend to the conversations you


Jacy Norgaard photo

have with non-racing fans, with potential sponsors and with others in the racing community. Let us summon that happiness we felt and illuminate it onto others and shine a light on our sport. The creativity and hard work by so many promoters, series, tracks, drivers and companies through this pandemic has been inspiring. You have found ways to make quarantine tolerable, to make racing possible where jurisdictions allow, you have found ways to create content and activities for people to do. You have kept us connected through live streams and updates and you’ve been as transparent as ever. Closely related to your creativity has been your professionalism in handling this pandemic and your ability to take things seriously when given the

chance to race. The social distancing, the temperature checks, the signage, the enhanced rules. You have met the moment and the demands that are needed, and when this all fades away I just hope that you don’t lose sight of what you did. I’ve always said the one thing that racing is missing on a broad spectrum that will only help drive new people in the gate is more professionalism, more modernization, and more living in the current world, not the one we remember from our earlier days. Those little things that you did to slow the spread are the exact kinds of things that are necessary to advance our sport forward. Online ticket sales, credit cards, Facebook live draws, occasional free streams, clean facilities. Each of them on their

own isn’t the magic ticket to a growth of our sport, but collectively they are the key to attracting a new fan base. The more modernized we can make racing, the more adaptive to the world we live in now that we become, the more our sport will grow.

I’m not saying that I have the answers or that my observations are what is needed, I am saying that the way you have conducted yourselves and the way that our sport has adapted to the times we live in now is the way it should stay. We need to continue to be creative, be professional, be adaptive and be proud of our sport.

Long after the masks and the six-foot distancing has left our return to normalcy will have begun. I just hope that who we were during this “new normal” becomes the new normal.


Jacy Norgaard photo

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Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'



Jason Searcy

As iconic rivers go, there are very few bigger than the Mighty Mississippi. It starts in Minnesota and splits the Nation in half, running all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico, that is an impressive 2,320 miles. The St

Croix river is not nearly as famous or long, but I believe, at least recently, it is more powerful. The Mystical St Croix river has a 123-mile span that separates Wisconsin from Minnesota and somehow that wondrous waterway has been able to repel the Covid-19 virus and prevent it from spreading from Minnesota to our neighboring state to the East.

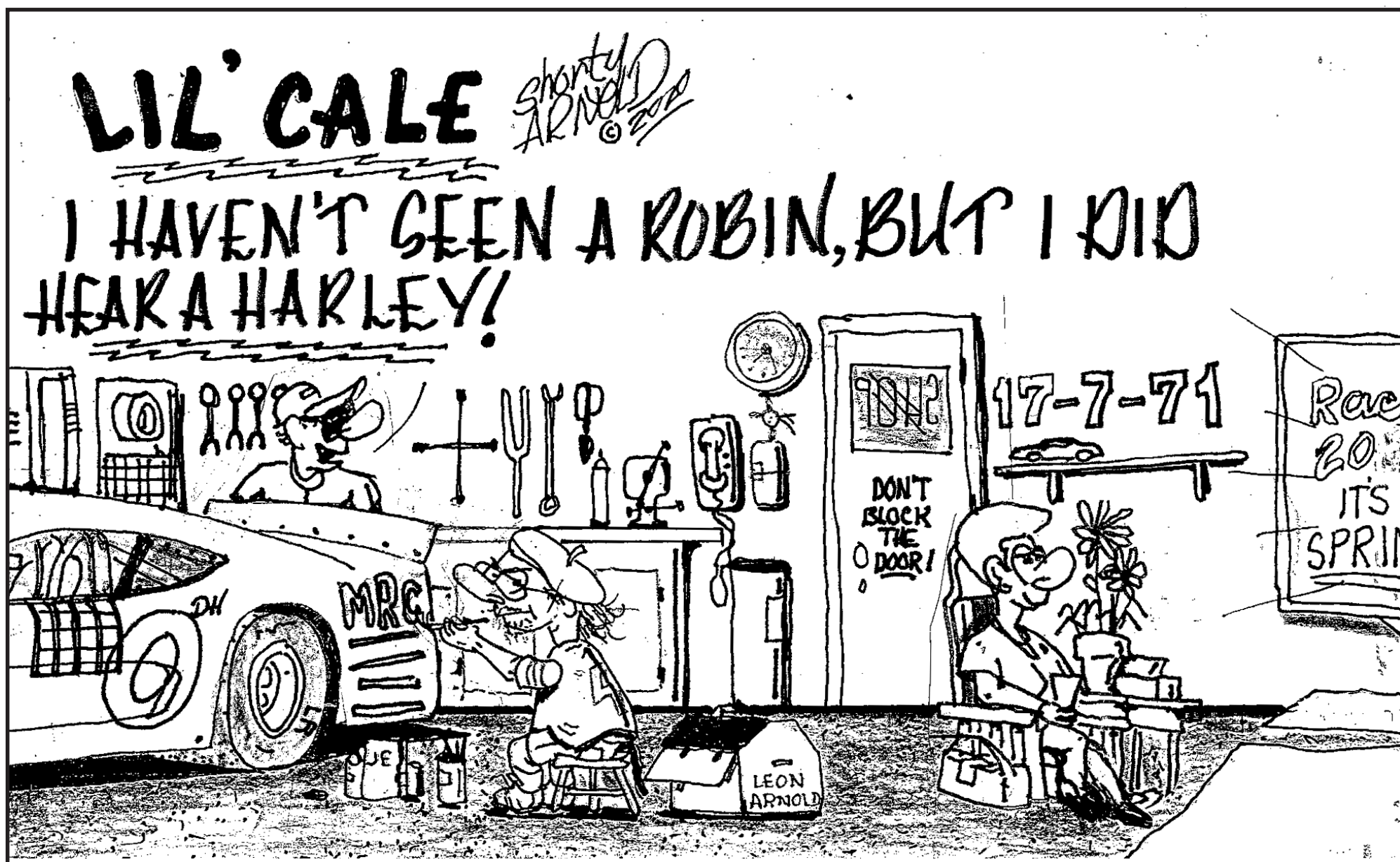
How else would you explain why the Minnesota race tracks have been shut down and not allowed to open yet numerous Wisconsin tracks just across the river have been open and it is business as usual. You race fans in Wisconsin are lucky to have a Superhero tributary protecting you from the virus. Over here in Bizarro world Minnesota we have tight restrictions in place with no end in sight.

Elko Speedway is willing and ready to open its gates on the 55th season of racing in Elko, Minnesota. The opening day (May 22nd) has already been cancelled and the new opener (June 13th) is certainly in doubt unless the winds change in a hurry. Racers have their cars ready, Eve of Destruction acts have been booked,

fans are eager to have any sort of entertainment to help our mental health and small businesses are in dire need of cash. A track like ELKO has ample room for social distancing, numerous entry/exit gates and online ticketing to mitigate crowding and the ability to provide sanitation stations to keep hands clean. It is a shame that the St Croix river did not bend about 30 more miles to the West after the Glaciers melted, if so apparently everything would be different.

At this point I do not have the permits necessary to build a canal from the St Croix circling Elko Speedway, but if this lasts much longer... I know a guy with a payload.

* Note- Elko Speedway is currently not allowed to have spectators but cars will be allowed to be on track. Divisional group practice will begin at ELKO each Saturday beginning June 6th from Noon - 4pm. Only drivers and crew allowed at the track with a total maximum of 250 people.



Auto Racing Facts,
Observances and
Opinions



Dale P. Danielski

Well, being that we have not seen a race anywhere, NASCAR doesn't count, and who has really, we'll talk a little bit about a race that we will be a part of, that is supposed to take place, May, 30th, 2020, at Dells Raceway Park, Wis. Dells, WI.. It's the Lyle Nabbefeldt Memorial event honoring one of the original pioneers of the sport in Wisconsin.

Lyle was one of the elite drivers back in the '60s in Wisconsin short track racing, before that word was even used in our sport. He and Augie Winkleman. Marlin Walbeck and many others that unfortunately who's names elude me, were the "Guys" at that point in time. Of course when they were fast, I was too young to know what that meant, but fortunately, parents that were interested in the sport took me to where I could figure it out!

A good thing about this race is that it is still happening. Obviously, with that many years past, how many even know who Lyle Nabbefeldt is! Interesting also, is that the original Memorial races that were held,

featured a traveling trophy, that if you could win the event three consecutive years, it was yours to keep. Dick Trickle tried, Tom Reffner tried others won two, all coming close, but it was a 1990s era racer that eventually pulled that feat off. None other than La Crosse, WI., racer, who enjoyed plenty of success of his own, Rick Wateski, pulled off the feat, the first, and only driver to win the event three years running.

Now that you have your history lesson, we'll show you in text, and photo who Lyle Nabbefeldt was.

Here and there...Should see some racing action coming up here June 4th, in Wausau, WI., June 13th, in Marshfield, WI., June 19th in Plover, WI. and June 25th, back in Wausau, WI., as dates originally scheduled for that time are going to happen. Me being there, you will get a report on what took place...Back in time, on May 14th, 1966, Lyle Nabbefeldt won the 30 lap Feature race at Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI. Finishing behind Nabbefeldt was, Dave Marcis, Dick Trickle, Jere O'Day, and John Mc Namara. On July 28th, 1966, Lyle Nabbefeldt won the feature in his famous X car at Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI. Following Nabbefeldt was Dick Trickle, Marv Marzofka, Dave Field and Rich Somers. On June 8th, 1962, Lyle Nabbefeldt won the Feature race at Friendship Speedway, Friendship, WI.



93 Rick Wateski and Lyle Nabbefeldt, #55s below



Dale's pictures from the past



We know Lyle Nabbefeldt drove this Dodge, 55s, but Mike Brown did as well. Lyle here in this Bob Bergeron photo at Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI. Ed "Gunner" Walkush in the #20, along with #67, Larry Rezin race with the 55s here (left photo), Lyle Nabbefeldt racing his X Coupe at Griffith Park Speedway, Wis. Rapids, WI., Bob Bergeron photo (middle photo) and #Another X car, Chevy (right photo)

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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Have you ever gone to a zoo and watched a tiger pace back and forth, as if he's trying to figure out how to break out of his cage?

That's been the scene at our house ever since this coronavirus situation started impacting the race season. My husband, Toby has been wound tight. He NEEDED to get to a race track; any race track!

Fortunately for him, South Alabama Speedway was finally able to hold their postponed Rattler 250 superlate model event. I thought as soon as the new race date was announced that it would relieve some of that tension for him.

But alas, it just fueled it more.

There was the whole challenge of schedules hopefully meshing for Ty Majeski to be able to run the race with the revised NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoor Truck Series that he is committed to with Niece Motorsports.

They didn't end up officially entering the Rattler until just a hair over one week out from the event. But even that didn't end up reducing the level of anxiousness from Toby.

Now we had a whole new level of worries and concerns to fret about as the days clicked off toward the event. Would it rain? Would it be postponed again, due to coronavirus vigilantes?

I suggested that Toby focus on what he could control. He tried, which meant he transferred the concern to the engine that they were going to be running at the Rattler. I couldn't fathom why he was so concerned, but it turns out it was because it was a sentimental piece with lots of character and it would mean A LOT if it ran well against the competition there.

The engine was first built back in 1995, when Toby was working for Rick Scalzo at Motorsports of Rice Lake. Scalzo was putting together a race car for Dick Trickle to run and they decided to have Wegner Automotive build a Ford concept engine for it.

Trickle was one of the supporters of the concept engine in an effort to help curb rising costs of auto racing for short-trackers. *Funny how the more things change, the more they stay the same, isn't it?*

Back then, nobody really ran Fords much. They had different deck heights, and several other oddities about them, but they were lighter, which was an attractive point and Wegner was able to make it happen.

As was often the case, Wegner and company would burn the midnight oil to get something right. They had the engine ready, but did some extra testing on the dyno with it, which ended up burning a hole between the cylinder and the block. *Bananas, right?*

The guys at Wegner pulled extra hours to fix the engine and get it ready in a tight window, as Toby was headed their way. He was picking it up to be raced THAT NIGHT in the car that he had built for

Trickle—only there was a twist. It was going to be driven that night by Steve Holzhausen at Dells to shake it down and give it a test run under race conditions.

See what I mean how this whole story gets tastier?!

Toby and they boys at Wegner dropped the engine right into the car on the spot and then it was loaded it up to head to the Dells. Holzhausen met him at the track and when he slid behind the wheel to turn the initial practice laps, he had two words:

Bad Ass.

It performed like a dream that night at Dells. He was swiftly slicing his way through the field, until it dropped a cylinder.

Holzhausen still gets a gleam in his eyes when talking about that engine. He says it was the "best motor we ever ran, period."

Holzhausen and Toby immediately wanted to race it again in 1995 at Hawkeye Downs for an ARTGO event, but Scelzo declined the request. He said he was saving the car and engine for Trickle to run the Slinger Nationals.

**sad trombone*

Obviously, that bummed Holzhausen and Toby out because those guys always want to race more than anything. The fact that they knew what this rocket was capable of and had to let it sit was depressing.

Sidenote: Trickle ran great at the Nationals with that car and engine, but due to a tire issue, he ended up finishing 5th.

Toby and Holzhausen would run that car together over the course of several years, until Motorsports of Rice Lake closed down and everything was sold. Andy Burgess ended up buying the complete car. He later sold it to Adam Degenhardt, who took the power plant back to Wegner and had it turned into an ACE engine.

If you're thinking that this story is starting to sound like the movie, "A Dog's Journey," you're right. This engine has had an incredible history, being "reborn" again and again.

Degenhardt continued to own and run the engine until recently.

The lure of the legend that is Dick Trickle can be magnetic for many. It's even stronger when someone has had a personal connection to Wisconsin's most famous race car driver.

Enter Brad Mannstedt.

Mannstedt had grown up around the race track and Trickle. His father had been a long time supporter of Trickle's racing. The roots of connection grew deeper as Mannstedt continued on his own path in racing, sponsoring drivers and ultimately owning a team with his wife, Nancy.

It was kismet when Mannstedt found out that Degenhardt had a car with ties to Trickle. He had to have it.

And so, the race car that Toby built for and was raced by Trickle, tested and raced by Holzhausen, sold to Burgess, and then to Degenhardt found its way back to a Trickle aficionado and his lead wrench—the same guy who built it twenty-five years ago.

Mannstedt and Toby took it over to Donnie Schultz at B&B Racing Engines to have him turn it into a Southern Parts Motor for running at events down south with Majeski. Basically the bottom end—crank, rods, pistons, block, and the front dress were all

Racing Nuggets continued on page 18



Bruce Nuttleman photo

Racing Nuggets from page 17

part of the original Trickle engine.

And that, my friends is how the legendary Dick Trickle is connected to Majeski's most recent Rattler 250 victory.

Oddly enough, it was during the first practice session at South Alabama Speedway when a similar exchange occurred between Toby and Majeski, just like it had between Toby and Holzhausen twenty-five years earlier.

Both drivers were thrilled by the power unleashed when they cracked the throttle. But of course, it's the whole package. A solid engine alone won't win the race.

Toby had figured by the attitude of the car on the track at South Alabama Speedway that they had a good piece, but it was confirmed just four laps into that first practice session. Majeski keyed his microphone and said, "They're in trouble!"

Twice during the practice sessions, Ty came on the radio and said, "This thing is bad ass!" The smile on Toby's face spread even wider knowing that they had 75-lap tires on their car and they were still within a tenth of everyone else on fresh rubber.

Despite being short on crew members for the race, the guys ended up recruiting some help at the track. Midwest nice goes a long way, apparently.

And you know the rest of the story—they won the race. Majeski tied Ronnie Sanders for the most wins of the prestigious event: Three.

There was something good that came out of the whole coronavirus situation with the delayed Rattler 250, at least from Toby's point of view. The health department in Alabama wouldn't allow the live rattlesnake be a part of the event this year. That meant that Ty didn't have that fanged reptile draped around his neck for photographs this time. Instead, the track opted for a little rubber rattlesnake.

But the best part about this tale without a doubt is the fact that 25-year old engine parts, once tied to the greatest short track driver in Wisconsin, continues to live a successful life with the same crew chief who was there when the original engine was built.

Full circle.

Bruce Nuttleman photo



2020 EVENT SCHEDULE



SAT, MAY 16 (2 PM) ■ **SPRING FLING SEASON OPENER:** LATE MODELS (TWIN 20 FEATURE), SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS AND HORNETS.

SAT, MAY 23 (2 PM) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS AND STREET STOCKS.

SAT, MAY 30 (2 PM) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBIES, HORNETS AND MINI VANS.
BUCK NIGHT- ALL CONCESSION ITEMS \$1, BEER \$2.

SAT, JUNE 6 (7:30) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS AND STREET STOCKS.

SAT, JUNE 13 (7:30) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, HORNETS AND JUNIORS

SAT, JUNE 20 (7:30) ■ **TWIN 20 LATE MODEL FEATURES**, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, HORNETS, VANS AND **FAN PHOTO NIGHT**

SAT, JUNE 27 (7:30) ■ **SMASH O RAMA** FEATURING A ATV AERIAL DISPLAY, BOAT RACE, MONSTER TRUCKS FIREWORKS AND MORE.

THUR, JULY 2 (7:30) ■ **STAR SPANGLE SPECTACULAR** - TWIN 20 LATE MODELS FEATURES, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS JUNIORS AND FIREWORKS

SAT, JULY 11 (7:30) ■ **QUARTER MILE MANIA** - HORNETS, STREET STOCKS, VANS, CONTACT DRAGS AND DEMO DERBY

WED, JULY 15 ???????

THU, JULY 16 **FAIR TIME DRIVE IN THEATER** (INSIDE THE RACE TRACK).

SAT, JULY 18 (7:30) ■ **TWIN 20 LATE MODEL FEATURE**, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, MINI VANS AND VINTAGE CARS

SAT, JULY 25 (7:30) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, HORNETS, AND JUNIORS.

SAT, AUG 1 (7:30) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, HORNETS AND **TRAILER RACE OF DESTRUCTION**

SAT, AUG. 8 (7:30) ■ LATE MODELS, SPORTSMEN, HOBBY STOCKS, STREET STOCKS AND JUNIORS. PLUS: BUCK NIGHT CONCESSION ITEMS \$1, BEER \$2

SAT, AUG. 15 (7:30) ■ **TWIN 20 LATE MODEL FEATURES**, SPORTSMEN, HORNETS AND VANS.

FRI & SAT AUG. 21/ 22—(TBA) CONCERT

SAT, SEPT. 5 **200 LAP ENDURO**, MINI VANS, HIGH SCHOOL RACING ASSOCIATION REGION EVENT.

SAT, SEPT. 12 (7PM) ■ **NIGHT OF DESTRUCTION** - ATV AERIAL DISPLAY, JET CAR, MONSTER TRUCKS, TRAILER RACE, JET CAR, FIREWORKS AND MORE.

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Dirt Track Debut



Dan Plan photos

At the end of the 2019 racing season, Nick Panitzke brought his son Cam out to the Cedar Lake Arena to make is dirt track racing debut in a winged Kart. It was dad's turn at the start of the 2020 season. The defending NASCAR Wisconsin State Champion made his dirt track debut in the USRA Late Model class at Cedar Lake Speedway on Memorial Day weekend. Nick's debut went well with top-5 finishes in both his heat race and the main event.

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Feel Good Win

Vance Birno photo



Vance Birno photo

Larry Fitzsimmons picked up the USRA Late Model win at Cedar Lake Speedway on Pack the Track night Memorial Day weekend. It was one of those “feel good” moments as Larry had a special wrap on his car from Andy Jones at JDI Signs and Graphics for the first race after losing his wife Sylvia late last year to cancer.

Carlson Keeps on Winning

Dan Plan photo



photo

Steve Carlson started off the 2020 season at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway the same way he started the 2019 season, in victory lane. Due to the current Covid 19 Pandemic, the LaCrosse season opener was postponed a few weeks until the last weekend in May. Steve Carlson held off his son Mike Carlson and Minnesota's Nick Murgic on his way to the win.

The Old Normal

By Dan Plan



Dan Plan photo

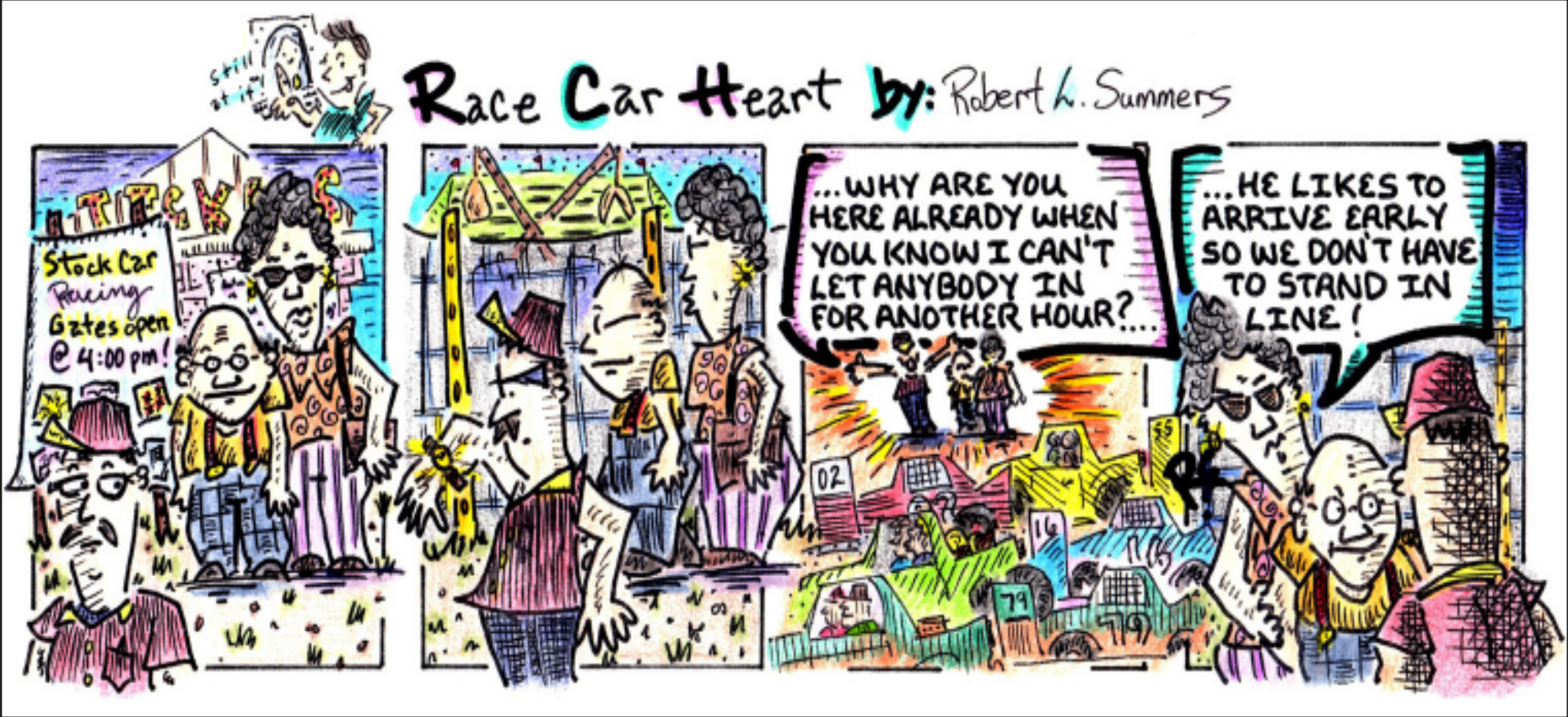


TJ Harron photo

The virus is real, and people have died. Those things I believe. Some of the numbers being presented I don't believe, and many of the restrictions some governors are putting in place are over the top. Over the past few months these things have led the mainstream media to badger us with the term "The New Normal." I don't want a new normal, I want the old normal.

As this issue is being put together, many tracks still have restrictions in place that prevent them from opening or allowed to open, but without spectators.

Luckily, a few tracks in Wisconsin were able to open back up during at the end of May and had great crowds and great car counts. That's the old normal, and that's what I'm looking forward to the remainder of this year.



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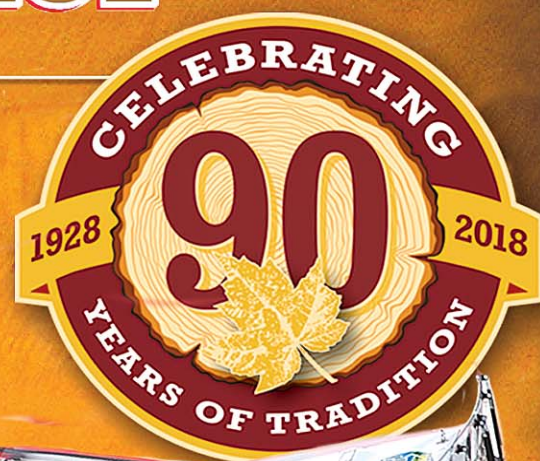
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