

# THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

## Wisconsin Speedweeks



September 2020

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## Publisher's Note *Racing According to Plan*



### Dan Plan

This year's running of the USA Nationals was just as great, if not better than any of the previous 33 years of the event. To steal a line, I once heard from the late, great Dan Ryan "You can't make this stuff

## *You can't make this stuff up*

up!" Well Dan actually used another word that starts with an "S", but I know a couple of kids that actually read this paper.

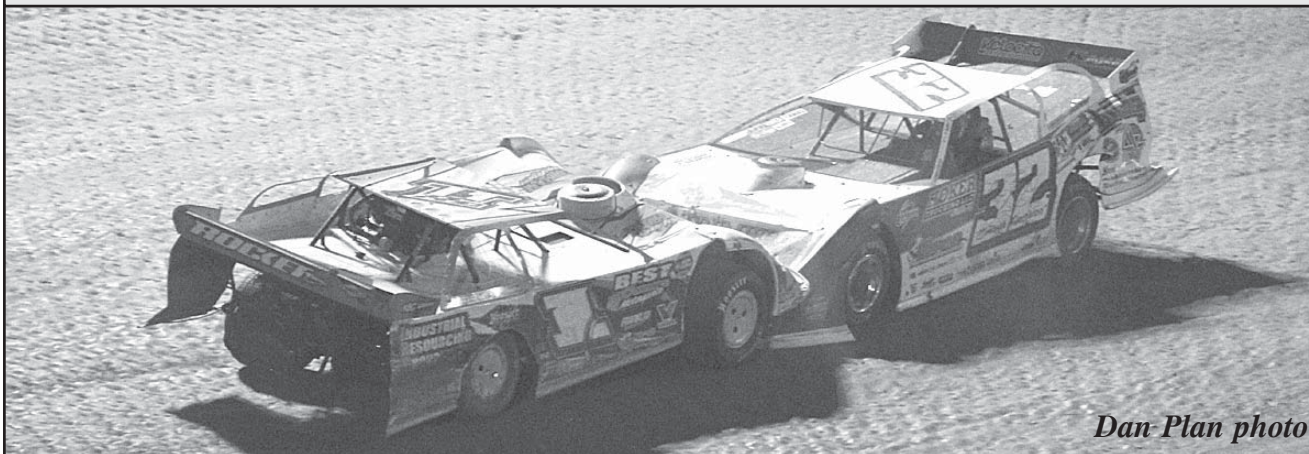
While one of the hottest drivers in the nation, "Big Sexy" Brandon Overton went home with the \$50,000.00 payday, all kinds of other excitement took place over the 3-day weekend. Overton also picked up the opening night stand-alone show on Thursday night.

The neat part of the dirt track Crown Jewel events is you get the best of both worlds, Lucas Oil Late Model Teams and World of Outlaws Late Model teams. As an added bonus, Overton hasn't been a regular on either series and runs whenever he wants, wherever he wants.

I'm pretty confident the majority of race fans will agree, the dual heat race qualifying format is much more entertaining than time trials. It's basically the same format we used for our kart racing; you have to race your way into the show and earn a good starting

*Publisher's Note continued on page 4*

*Tyler Erb and Bobby Pierce disagree on which way is the proper direction  
around the track during the 33rd running of The USA Nationals*



*Dan Plan photo*

*The Midwest*

**RACING**

*Connection*

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*Publishers note from page 3*

spot. Some of the national drivers don't like this format. Race car drivers that don't like to race their way into a show? You can't make that up.

While Overton had the headline for the big payday, local driver Jesse Glenz continued his hot streak by sweeping both local Late Model shows held Friday and Saturday. Friday was a barnburner with Glenz getting by his good friend James Giossi on the last corner of the last lap. Can't make that up.

Sixty-two-year-old Billy Moyer won the pole dash and started on the front row of the 100-lap main event. Moyer would finish fifth right behind Scott Bloomquist. Almost sounds like the finish from the first USA Nationals in 1988. Can't make that up.

Late in the race Tyler Erb and Bobby Pierce got together. Erb went through the spin cycle and chaos ensued. Bumper cars, Bob Pierce running onto the track to have words with Erb, and then Erb ultimately being ejected from the facility. You can't make that up.

The USA Nationals typically has a large contingent of Canadian fans in attendance. This year, there were none on hand, due to the Canadian border being closed. Yes, the Canadian border was closed. You can't make that up.

And finally, one of the things I most enjoy about multi-day events like the ones at Cedar Lake or Oktoberfest is seeing people I only get to see once or twice a year. Even with the world we are currently living in, I had plenty of entertainment before and after the races. You can't make that up.



*Jacy Norgaard photo*

*Brandon Overton left Wisconsin over \$50,000.00 richer following the USA Nationals*

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## New Dirt



**Jacy Norgaard**

The week leading up to the coveted USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway has always been dubbed as Wisconsin Speedweeks, at least in my mind. While Cedar Lake Speedway pays out a handsome \$50,000 to the USA Nationals champion on Saturday night, a few days prior there is always big money to win. The annual Street Stock Little Dream race is contested at Rice Lake Speedway on the legendary 1/3-mile dirt oval. An event in its 26<sup>th</sup> year has seen record payout after record payout. Last year the winner, Jim Randall took home an astonishing \$25,000.00. Did I mention that this race is exclusive to Street Stocks only? The race is almost always held the Tuesday before USA Nationals, in my opinion it is a great way to kick off a week of money in the badger state.

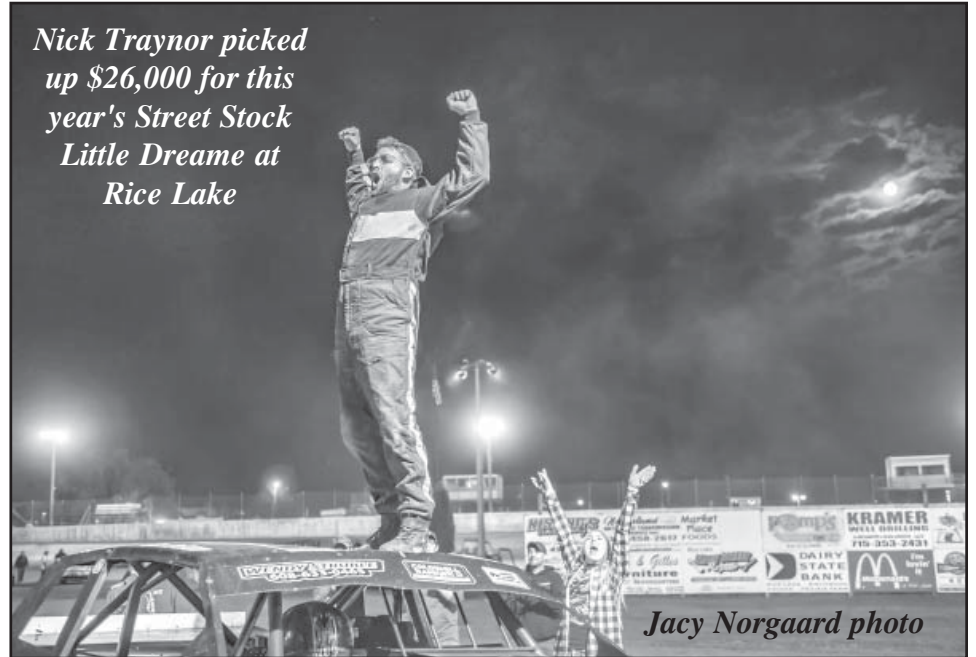
If you are unfamiliar with the way in which the Little Dream works, the purse is entirely decided by donations. Race fans and companies can donate before and during the event with donations closing just

prior to the start of the A-Main. Given the current climate with the pandemic and the record number of businesses affected very few thought this year's edition of the Little Dream would come close to a record payoff. I spoke with several drivers during the pit meeting and they all estimated the final total would be somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Which is still a tremendous payout for any class, especially Street Stocks. The purse slowly climbed through the night and soon we had surpassed \$15,000. Then we surpassed \$20,000 and I was shocked. When they made the final announcement prior to the A-Main it was revealed that the feature winner would take home \$26,000.00. The power of our racing community is incredible, and the Little Dream donations proved that point once again. Even during a global pandemic with many people out of work, businesses bankrupt, and tracks not even running, the racing community came through. The pure excitement of watching Nick Traynor lead every single lap on route to a large payday of cash was worth the yearly wait for the event. I tell myself two things after each Little Dream. The first being that this is it, there is no way next year we can top this payout. The second being that I should really take the day after the Little Dream off work. I've been saying these things for several years now, I hope I can say them again in 2021.

The day before the USA Nationals is usually a day where I get photos done and prepare for the upcoming Crown Jewel. It would be nice in 2021 if someone were to add a special on that Wednesday so that we could truly have a Wisconsin Speedweeks. Perhaps a Modified or Midwest Modified special somewhere would really add to the allure of my self-proclaimed Wisconsin Speedweeks. This upcoming season will no doubt be interesting to watch unfold as many things are unknown, but I am very hopeful we can return to normalcy by the time racing gets underway around here.

The USA Nationals weren't very memorable this year. The racing was great and there were some exciting fin-

*Nick Traynor picked up \$26,000 for this year's Street Stock Little Dream at Rice Lake*



*Jacy Norgaard photo*

ishes. This statement would be true if you were in attendance on Thursday night and did not go back again for Friday or Saturday's portion. Brandon Overton took a convincing win in the opening night World of Outlaws feature on Thursday and seemed poised to be in contention for the Eagle come Saturday. Friday saw double heat races for the Outlaws with passing points determining the Top 8 rows. When it was all said and done it would be a legendary face leading the field to green for the 100 lapper. One of the GOAT's, Billy Moyer was able to win the qualifying dash and had pole position locked up for Championship Saturday. Moyer along with the other GOAT, Scott Bloomquist are among the most victorious Late Model drivers in the country. Each also hold the record for most USA Nationals titles at 5. Although, Moyer hasn't won a USA Nationals title in 27 years. Current World of Outlaws Late Model series points leader, Brandon Sheppard was less than a year old the last time Moyer won the event. Friday night's portion of the USA Nationals was capped off by a thrilling NASCAR Late Model feature. James Giossi took the white flag and sailed through 4 corners of Cedar Lake Speedway on his way to victory or so he and everyone thought. Jesse Glenz made a late, late, last front stretch pass and nabbed Giossi at the line in a race for the ages. Something Glenz has been accustomed to doing as of late.

Saturday of the USA Nationals rolled around, and they made their way through the B-mains, the last chance race and the NASCAR Late Model feature. The lights went down and the coolest driver introductions on the planet started. One by one they lead the cars out on the track from last to first and shine a spotlight on them. Every fan in attendance was given some sort of lighted souvenir upon entering the track



*Jacy Norgaard photo*

*New Dirt continued on page 6*



*New Dirt continued from page 5*

Saturday. This is one of the most exciting things to witness and to photograph. There is very little light to work with. I used the same settings I had in the past and expected I would get decent results. Unfortunately, none of my driver introduction shots turned out. I spoke with a couple other photographers and they didn't have much useable shots as well. We determined that the spotlights perhaps weren't as bright as they had been in years past. Now one could use a flash to shoot the driver introductions and there would be no problem at all, but that would drown out the illumination of the crowd. I hate missing shots but it proves that there is always something to learn.

Billy Moyer lead the USA Nationals to green and held the lead for quite some time. It looked as if he might just have the car to beat and finally become the all-time winningest USA Nationals driver. That was until Lap 44 when Brandon Overton was able to sneak by and assume control of the race. Brandon Sheppard was able to pass Moyer and set his sights on Overton. Around lap 80 or so Sheppard began to smoke from the rear of his car, and it looked like he might not be able to finish the race.

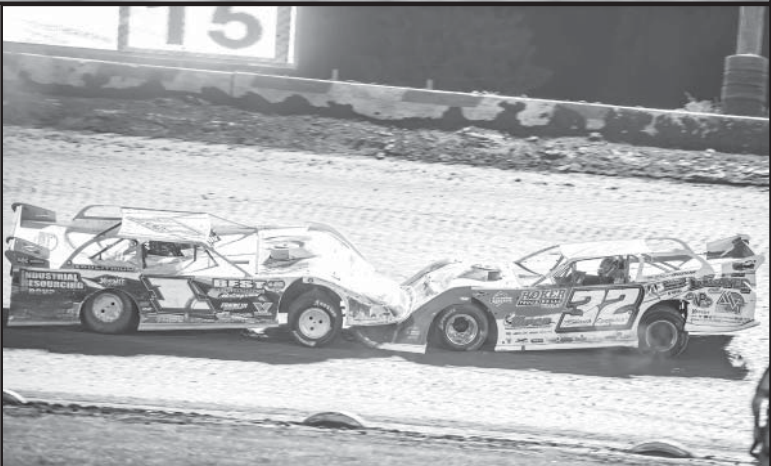
Lap 85 proved to be the most prolific and story lined caution in Dirt Late Model history. The caution was brought out by a Tyler Erb spin. Bobby Pierce made contact with Erb going down the back stretch and spun him out. Under yellow Erb attempted to cut down Pierce's tire but was unsuccessful. Then things got interesting. Erb proceeded to drive backwards on the Cedar Lake Speedway until he met up with Pierce in between 1 and 2. Erb then tried driving over the nose of Pierce's car several times. He could be seen yelling and throwing his hands up at Pierce. Bob Pierce, Bobby's dad ran down onto the track along with a World of Outlaws official and both reached into Erb's cockpit. Bob was trying to stop Erb and the official was trying to shut his car off. Erb then backed down the track and mashed the gas which threw the Outlaws official to the ground. Erb pulled into the infield and most of us made our way to his location to see what would happen next. Tyler Erb was out of his car and in a shouting match with the official who fell



*Jacy Norgaard photo*

to the ground. World of Outlaws Series Director, Casey Shuman took Erb's wheel from his car and walked off into the night with it. Erb was disqualified for his actions and later suspended for one year from all World of Outlaws and DirtCar events. Bobby Pierce was disqualified from the feature for having a crew on the track and his dad was suspended for 30 days. Adding to the drama of this caution was the fact that Brandon Sheppard could not restart his car and was pushed to the pits. Thing settled down and Overton lead the field home to pick up a clean sweep of the weekend and the \$50,000 payday. Jimmy Mars, Rick Eckert, Scott Bloomquist, and Billy Moyer rounded out the Top 5. Dustin Jarrett of Dirt on Dirt.com tweeted, "Party like it's 1999" in describing the Top 5. His tweet was the perfect summation for second through fifth.

It is incredibly unfortunate that Brandon Overton's victory was overshadowed by the WWE antics of Erb and Pierce. Overton mastered a field full of legends and won one of the biggest races of his career. The boy from Georgia who as he said, "Was just trying to get it done." Was able to do just that. All told he took home \$57,000.00 on the weekend and one cool wooden eagle trophy. I just hope that



*Jacy Norgaard photos*



*Jacy Norgaard photo*

looking back on the event, people remember that it was Brandon Overton who dominated the weekend and he should dominate the storylines. The distraction of Erb and Pierce while incredible and foolish, will never come close to being as masterful as what Overton was able to do. The Georgia Boy got it done and please remember that when you think back to what just might have been the most memorable USA Nationals to date.



## Racing Nuggets



### PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

Admittedly, I haven't been to as many races this year as I would have normally attended. It isn't just because COVID threw a wrench into everything either. Our oldest dog, Bo—a loveable Black Lab, had been battling some health issues. I wanted to stay close to home and take care of him.

By the time we finally figured out why he was losing his hair and getting two-hour bloody noses, it was too late. He had an aggressive tumor in his head that was putting pressure on his pituitary gland—and messing with everything.

If you've never had the pleasure of dealing with a dog having a bloody nose, you're missing out on pure chaos. Add into the mix two other dogs trying to "help," all on white carpeting and you've got yourself a bona fide adventure in exhaustion. (I will never understand why the previous owners of our house decided upon white carpeting. Who does that?!)

At any rate, I've been a major homebody because of Bo, and now even though he's passed away, I'm still mourning that loss. I have been struggling to leave our other two dogs, Daisy and Pudge. I know it's irrational, and they'd be OK, but it's still been a real struggle to let go.

Doug Hornickel photo



## Storm in My Heart

My husband, Toby did talk me into going to the Slinger Nationals in July. Thankfully, I rode there with his oldest daughter and grandson. The thought of driving with the rawness of just having helped Bo cross over the Rainbow Bridge would have been a dangerous mix with the heaviness on my heart. If I'm being honest, I wasn't fully into the event. When it rained so hard and postponed the race—I almost felt like the sky was crying with me over the loss of Bo.

They say winning cures many ills. I suppose there's some truth to that. When Toby and their team were celebrating winning the Nationals, it sure was hard not to get caught up in the celebration. I would say that probably helped me to take a big step after losing Bo.

But I still wasn't going to many races. I just felt these waves of sadness washing over me.

Toby talked me into going to the Dixieland 250. My heart wasn't feeling into it, but as it turns out, it provided what I needed: A long drive alone to work through my emotions.

Isn't it weird how road trips can do that to you? And they're more effective when you're alone with your thoughts and the radio. Singing with Jon Bon Jovi and countless other artists from the 80s can pull darn near anyone out of a funk.

Toby laughed at the goat trail I took to get to Kaukauna, but I really don't like playing "Follow the Leader" on Hwy 21 for miles and miles. You get behind someone who is terrified to pass and before you know it, you're part of the slowest train ever chugging across the state. Besides, I enjoyed my goat trail. It was scenic and just what I needed to continue working through my depressive funk. It really was quite therapeutic.

By the time I arrived at Wisconsin International Raceway, I was feeling a lot lighter in my heart. Seeing friends who I didn't realize how much I had missed was the icing on the cake—and the race hadn't even started yet!

I do enjoy bumping into friends at the track; it's just a challenge when you're on your way TO the bathroom. I find myself cutting the conversation short, out of fear of laughing too hard and having "tears" roll down my leg. I am guilt of being like a three-year-old and waiting until the last minute to get to the bathroom.

I was feeling pretty good as the clock was winding down to the green flag. I did my normal quick scan of the pit area for Toby, who can invariably be found pacing a trench into the infield grass.

My mind wandered to the idea of getting him another pedometer, as he broke the last one I had for him. That guy puts on some miles at a race! We're already on his third pair of shoes this year—and it's been a

slower race season, due to COVID!

I don't need to recap the race—if you were there—you saw it. If you weren't there, you already know that Ty Majeski dominated it with fast time and the win. You likely witnessed a large smile on Toby's normally scowling face. These are the moments I cherish in racing. I like to see Toby happy. The whole day helped me continue to work through the depression of losing Bo.

There was a nugget of note during the race—at one point as the team was preparing to pit, there was discussion about adjustments and somebody asked over the radio if Toby had a shock packer in his pocket.

Imagine my surprise to hear him key his mic and say, "No."

What?! Has hell frozen over? This man ALWAYS has shock packers in his pocket! There have been countless times he's been questioned at length while going through airport security about shock packers in his pockets. I've sent more through our washing machine than I care to admit. They LIVE in his pants pockets, yet here he was on the scanner, saying he had none?!

WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE IS MY HUSBAND?!

It turns out, he HAD shock packers in his pocket... just not the RIGHT size; or so he says.

I'm not sure I completely believe that. I do believe I will always get wet-eyed when I see a Black Lab, and that friends and the racing family are definitely good medicine for a sad heart. 🐾





## Going in Circles



### Charlie Spry

Rockford Speedway has been having some very interesting racing shows in August. One simply cannot deny the large car counts and thrills that have been the norm in the Sixer division. Nightly car counts into the forties are becoming the norm. Much more scrutiny is also being paid to the rule enforcement as well. Many are spending much more time and effort into making these cars look sharp, as well.

The Bandit division has also seen some new and varied competitors. Dave Parker has let it be known that he has moved into the area and will be now calling Rockford his home track. He formerly raced at Grundy County while living in that area. Some other new drivers who have shown include the return of Charles Schwark, Rich Warren and the return of former Winged Women on Wheels champion Wanda Dobbs. Brock Baumbach has been coming over from the Williams Bay, Wisconsin area as well.

The Roadrunner division has also seen some new and returning racers, as Robert Roush made a return, and new driver Don Ciano returned. Don raced in this division many years ago, and as for Robert, it wasn't quite that long.

Making a recent night out here in a late model was Randy Sargent, son of Tim Sargent, and Grandson of Randy Sargent who raced here in the 1980's. Got that?

Late model rookie Willie Nelson has been making good use of seat time and has gotten much quicker and racier as the season goes along. Hunter Drefahl has been making the trek here weekly and has gotten faster. Likewise, Jerry Stafford has been running very well. 2019 Rookie runnerup Dave Thomason recently made his first appearance of the year here and is a welcome addition.

The vintage cars made their annual return here for a figure eight race. This is a very unusual event and brings out some very different looking race vehicles. One of the most unusual seen is the school bus bodied racer of "Rockstar" Russ Lorbiecki. Russ' vehicle is actually based on a 1973 Chevelle, and features a custom made chopped down school bus style body on the car. It has the flashing lights and whole nine years. He has vinyl images of two children

looking out of the windows, which are actually images of his own two kids.

Russ has built several unusual race cars, and last year raced a yellow with purple flames '55 Chevy. "I built that car, and they came out with a Hot Wheels car that looked just like it," Said Russ. "Now, I built this, and they came out with a yellow with purple flames school bus." Coincidence....or?

Russ enjoys meeting with fans and said that he hands out the Hot Wheels cars to kids after the races, making him very popular.

I asked how he got started in racing, to which he replied, "I actually started in demo derbies. Then I saw a race ready four-cylinder racer for sale on the way home one night, and got that. I did that for awhile, then did some destruction tournaments, then decided to get into building and racing figure-eight cars."

He really enjoys building something different, saying, "I have a steel company as a sponsor, so that helps a bunch." His other figure-eight racer is a Lightning McQueen lookalike. He will also race wherever he can find this type of racing, which is mostly at Slinger and Kaukauna, but really enjoys coming to Rockford when he can. "I really like it here and I do well, so this is a lot of fun," Said Russ.

He also brought up an unusual ritual before racing, saying, "You know how many drivers have a ritual or something they have to do before they race? Well, for me, it seems I have to yawn about twenty times while lined up and ready to race," Well, Russ might yawn, but this driver is ANYTHING but boring!

One of the rookie drivers here in the AST division is Ronnie Robinson. Ronnie told of how he got started in the sport, saying, "I raced a Bandit division car a few years ago, then got out of it. This car came up for sale very cheaply, and I have always wanted to race in this division, so here I am!" Ronnie is making laps and finishing races and learning the ropes. The Robinson name is familiar here, as there are three brothers racing here in the sportsman division, John II, Trevor and Travis. Ronnie said that he gets asked all the time if he is related, but said he is not. Ronnie had a relative, John, race here in the early 1980's in the late model division (#76 silver car, if I remember right), at the same time that the current racing brothers' dad also raced in the roadrunner and sportsman division, and his name was also John. Confusion then, and confusion now! But, no they are not related.

Speaking of the other Robinson's, John II took the win in the prestigious Hugh Deery 99 race this year for the sportsman cars. He said his car was not the best, but still enough to hold off his brother Trevor, who has been very fast all year.

Sportsman racer Austin Fowler is getting his car closer to where he wants it, saying, "I turned in my fastest qualifying lap in this car, so we are getting it better." He also led a feature event for quite a few laps with the field breathing fire down his neck. "I was wore out after that," He said, "But it sure was fun!" If that isn't enough, he usually races his roadrunner car on the same nights, keeping him very busy.

New drivers keep coming out into the Sixer division. "Superfan" Jason Morgan recently made his

first showing here at Rockford with a new car for him. He raced once last year with a different car at Madison, but came out on a practice night here and decided to give racing here a try. He didn't finish last in his races and learned much. He likes to attend races at various tracks all over the midwest, and now is getting his time behind the wheel to find out exactly what it is like. His Uncle is Red Morgan, who raced a Ford Galaxie late model at Rockford, Madison, and Freeport back in the early 1970's. His car had the Union 76 logo as a number, and Jason has done the same with his car.

Braden Noble is another new driver who recently made his debut, also having ties to the racing world. His Uncle is Tim Noble, who was a very prolific late model racer at various tracks not all that long ago. "I made some mistakes out there my first night, but I know what I did wrong and will learn from it," Said Braden, "I started about mid-pack and was in traffic all the time, so that is a big learning experience right there."

Veteran Sixer driver Mike Shipman races an unusual car in the division, a Chrysler Imperial. "I actually bought this car for my Daughter, but she said it was too big and too ugly, and didn't want it. So, I made it into a race car!"

Cody Armato recently won his very first feature event in the Bandit division. Not only was it his first feature win, but he told me that it was his first win in any kind of race. Pretty impressive! Cody utilizes a throwback Dick Trickle Purple Knight paint scheme on his car, complete with the Knight. It is an eye-catcher.

State Park speedway near Wausau has been a frequent stop for us this year when we can get there. We took in the opening night of the Detjens Fest in late July, with the weekend in honor of the late great racer Larry Detjens. Veteran racer Tom Gille took the Big 8 late model headliner. Tom always races very cleanly and is a true, old-school racer. It had been quite some time since he had won a late model feature, so it was nice to see.

Ashley Schoone had quite a weekend of racing in the mini-stock class. She won her feature on Friday, then her boyfriend Conrad Lemmer proposed at victory lane, with the ceremony taking place the following night. Conrad is the Grandson of Larry Detjens, so what better time to do this?

Mini-stock racer Steve Clark impacted the front straight wall hard in his heat race, then got out of the car and walked into the stands to join family and friends. Later on, he collapsed in the grandstands and had to be rushed to the hospital. He had torn the cartoid artery, and suffered from a blood clot, which resulted in a stroke. Steve had emergency surgery that night in Madison and is recovering well I am told. We wish the best and are praying for a speedy and complete recovery for Steve.



## Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



**Dale P. Danielski**

Been spending a fair amount of time catching the action at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., and that is not a bad thing.

July 18th found us at the big 5/8-mile paved oval and in tonight's NASCAR main event it was Matt Henderson and Mike Carlson taking the 20 lap feature wins. It didn't take Henderson long to move into the top spot and from there on in nobody could catch him. Nick Clements, Steve Bachman, Michael Haller and

Nick Murgic followed the popular driver to the checkers. Carlson found himself in a similar situation in race two, getting out front early and leading the pack home. Jerimy Wagner, racing after a long absence, Brent Kirchner, Nick Murgic and Bryan Wrolstad were next at the finish. Of course, the track was running a number of double features to the end of the season to make up for the delayed 2020 start. To qualify for National NASCAR points and all the goodies that go with it, a certain number of features must be run and this way the track gets in the thick of the battle.

Same place, different time as it was another visit to Lax. Fairgrounds on August 1st. With barely a cloud in the sky, it was certainly not a night you expected any rain. Unfortunately, a couple local radio stations got their programming messed up and announced the races were cancelled! In mentioning what I heard to the track, the parties were contacted, and another announcement was made of course stating, the races were very much on. Still, how many potential new fans to racing intended to go, heard that and decided not to? Very harmful to say the least. As it turns out, it was the Trailer Race of Destruction night and a big crowd did show up, nonetheless. 22 NASCAR Late Models took to the track for the 25-lap feature run on this night and it was Minnesota racer Jacob Goede taking the win with a last lap pass of Nick Murgic. Following the lead duo were Nick Clements, Billy Mohn and Steve Bachman.

It was another two NASCAR main event program at Lax Fairgrounds on 8/8 and this time it was veteran racer, Brent Kirchner picking up the win in 20 lapper number one. Jeff Partington in one of his best runs at the track, finished a close 2nd and was fol-

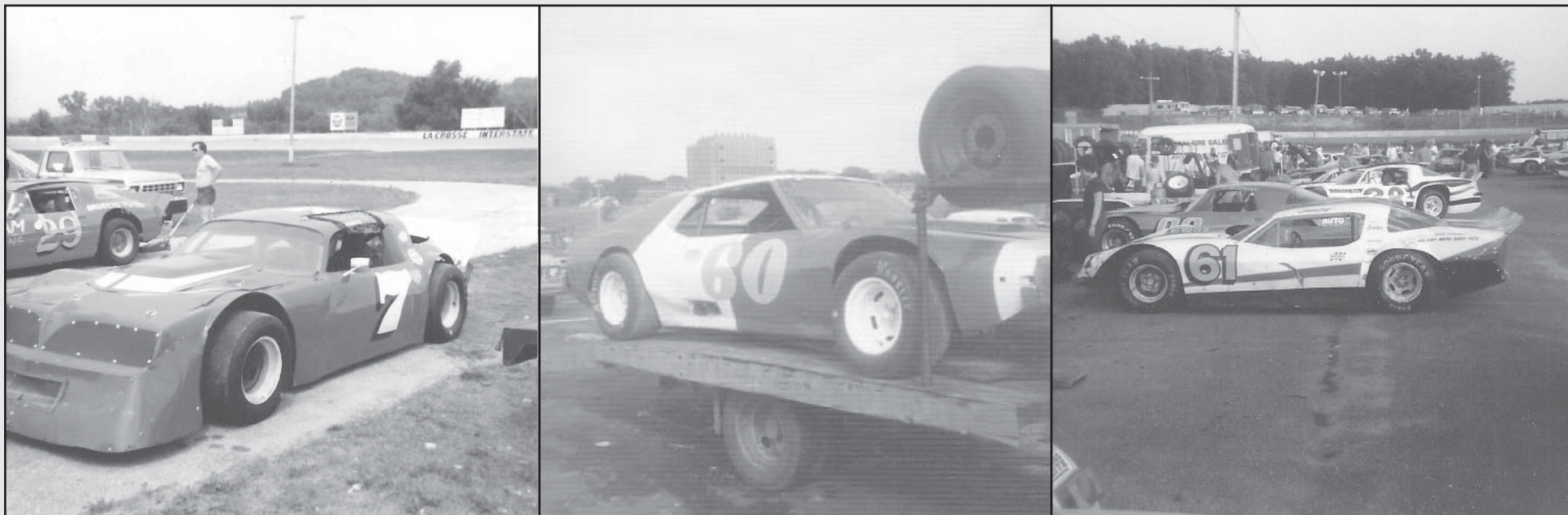
lowed by Billy Mohn, Brad Powell, back after a long lay-off, and Steve Carlson. Nick Murgic, who finds himself in great position to win the season Championship, picked off the win in the 2nd 20 lap feature. Carlson, Powell, Mike Carlson and Nick Clements followed.

Unbelievably, the summer portion of the regular season for NASCAR Late Model racing, came to an end on August 15th at Lax., although two points shows at Oktoberfest will be run to determine the 2020 track Champion. Brent Kirchner grabbed another main event win on this night, taking the first 20 lap race. He was followed by Devin Schmidt, Nick Clements, Nick Murgic and Billy, remember that name, Mohn. Speaking of Mohn, he won the 2nd 20 lap Feature after coming oh so close during the year. Mohn is another of a large contingent of Minnesota drivers making the trip on a regular basis to La Crosse. With Elko, MN., Speedway finally opening, a few stayed closer to their Minnesota home to race on this night. But not Billy Mohn, who outpaced Steve Carlson, Nick Murgic, Nick Clements and Justin Mullikin for the win.

So with that, the next racing to take place for these cars will be at the Annual Oktoberfest racing weekend, October 8-11th, 2020. At Least 17 Divisions of racing are set for the weekend, including for the 1st time in as long as anyone can remember, the Central Wisconsin Racing Association Super Late Models. CWRA will be racing in one 25 lap Feature on Sunday

*continued on page 10*

## Dale's pictures from the past



#7 Don "Thunder Turner" who has never missed an Oktoberfest race. #60 Ralph Bakewell Javelin. #61 A Jim Back creation. All photos by Rodney Dykeman. Additional pictures from the past on page 14.



*Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions  
from page 9*

of ‘Fest, which will also serve as the Stars to Legends Tour/season Championship for the group. A large field is expected to race in the event, and it will be great to see them in action as part of ‘Fest 2020!

Here and there...Devin Schmidt made his late season debut in NASCAR Late Models at La Crosse in a new Kyle “Rowdy” Busch car. He ran well and expect big things from this Minnesota racer...Champions Reunion XII, will again take place at Oktoberfest. The event is set for Sunday, October 11th, from 11am-2pm in the Hospitality Chalet in turn one of the main grandstand. Many racers, and promoters for that matter, from the grand ‘ole days of racing will be in attendance and you the race fan, if you have a Sunday ‘Fest ticket, can get up there and rub shoulders with them for FREE! Always a great time, with numerous old race cars, photo displays and memorabilia on hand to enjoy...

Looking back in time, on Friday night, August 28th, 1970, it was Jim Back winning the 25-lap feature race at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI. Following Back at the finish was Tom Reffner and Jim Sauter. Semi-feature action found John Brevik taking the win over Buck Linhart and Ralph Bakewell. Heat race winners were Curt Iverson, Dale Walworth and Reffner. Reffner also won the dash with Back setting fast time at 20:83 seconds which was a track record. Looking at the first ever Oktoberfest 200 run at the track in 1970, a 33-car field started the 200 with 17 cars finishing. The race was held on Sunday, October 4th, 1970 and a crowd of 4,000 attended. The complete feature finish: 1. Tom Reffner, 2. Rich Somers, 3. John McNamara, 4. Bill Mueller, 5. Dennis Sobkowiak, 6. Kato Theisen, 7. Buck Linhart, 8. John Scott, 9. Everet Fox, 10. Harold Mueller, 11. Bill Schorer, 12. Ed Nichols, 13. Larry Anderson, 14. Roy Schmidtke, 15. Larry Sparks, 16. Marv Marzofka, 17.



Bruce Nuttleman photo

*Nick Murgic sits atop the Late Model point standings at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway heading into Oktoberfest Race Weekend*

C. John Brinkman, 18. Pete Mahlum, 19. Bob Agena, 20. George Thornton, 21. Benny Olson, 22. Mike Murgic, 23. Ron Beyer, 24. Roy Gau, 25. Louie Vetrone, 26. Jim Back, 27. Jim Sauter, 28. Larry Detjens, 29. Bill Wirtz, 30. Darrell Busch, 31. Homer Spink, 32. Del Triesch, 33. Jack Brambilia.

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 701 Indiana Avenue, Stevens Point, WI. 54481 715-344-9072 608-518-2478 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

THE MIDWEST  
RACING CONNECTION





\$\$\$ Yung Money \$\$\$



Kyle Larson has used his time away from NASCAR to return to his roots of short track racing. As we go to press, Larson has picked up 34 wins this season and over \$400,000 in race winnings.



OCT 8-9-10-11, 2020





Like Father - Like Son

Dan Plan photo

Jimmy Mars shows his son Sammy Mars the way around at Cedar Lake Speedway

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## Defending a National Championship

*Dan Plan photo*

*Similar to last year, 2019 NASCAR Weekly Racing Series National Champion Jacob Goede has picked up wins at Elko, LaCrosse and Madison. Goede is in the top - 10 in national points as we go to press, with the NASCAR National Championship in reach again this year.*

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# First Time Winners



Vince Peterson photo



Martin DeFries photo

The first win is always a pretty big deal. Two drivers accomplished this feat on the same night in the month of August. “Kid Cody” Emmans (left) picked up his first career Pro Stock win and Andrew Schulz (right) picked up his first career Late Model win.

## Dale's pictures from the past

photos by Rodney Dykeman



MAY • 72



JUN • 72

#1 Tom Nesbitt doing a little pavement racing. #96, Superb dirt driver, Mert Williams won a pavement Feature with this car on May 12th, 1972, at La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI.



## Dangerous Dan



**Dan Margetta**

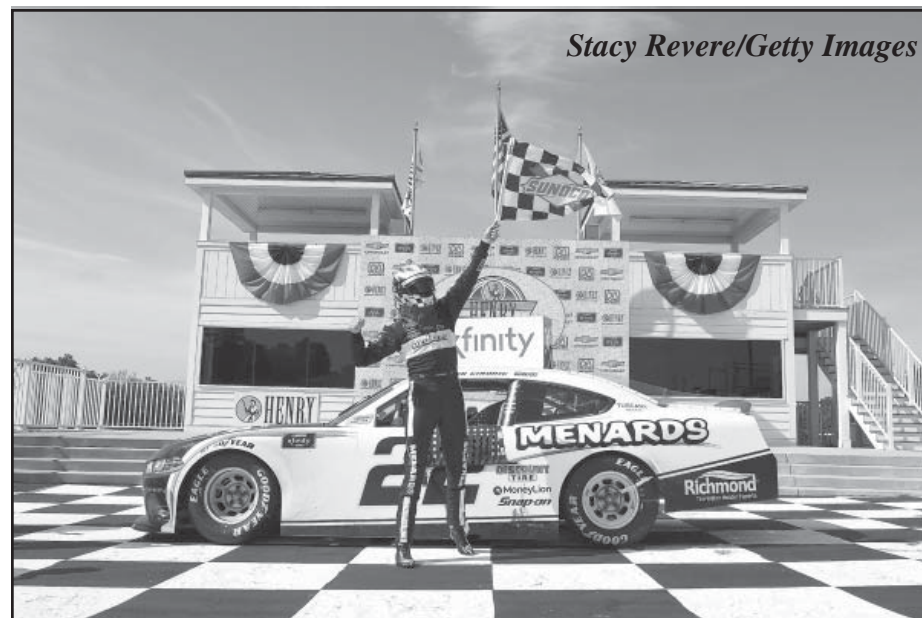
Just like racers always remember the wins that got away, writers never forget mistakes made in stories or race reports. It's the reason why "practice crash" shouldn't be used to describe a "crash in practice" because as I remember Ken Schrader saying long ago, "we don't practice crashing." Or why you won't see me write someone got "outraced" for a position as I vividly remember Al Schill's crew guys being hard on my case in the bar after a Slinger Sunday night years ago passionately lecturing me there was no way they got "outraced" for third place the week before, especially by THAT guy (I forget who actually finished ahead of them but in their minds whoever it was would never "outraced" them). It's also why the first edition of an event is the "inaugural" one because "first annual" makes no sense and drivers have "winless" streaks instead of "losing" streaks. Which brings me to my latest faux pas this year. Yes, even

after nearly 30 years of covering racing and writing race reports I still screw things up once in a while and I've been making this mistake for a few years before someone finally called my attention to it. Luke Fenhaus is a rising star on the Wisconsin asphalt super late model scene and while his last name is pronounced "Fenhouse" it most certainly isn't spelled that way. Fenhaus has made a few trips to Slinger Speedway this year where he has run exceptionally well and after his strong third place finish in the Slinger Nationals, it was brought to my attention his last name is actually spelled "Fenhaus" (well duh Dan it's actually written on the side of his car). Anyways, Luke Fenhaus came back to Slinger on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to race in the Carl Wegner Memorial and provided the perfect opportunity for me to finally get it right. Fenhaus won the Carl Wegner Memorial in pretty convincing fashion and you better believe his name was spelled right in the race report. Slinger is a tough track to get a handle on and drivers that run well there right out of the box are rare and talented. Fenhaus has been fast every time he has shown up at Slinger and he certainly didn't look like a rookie as he passed Dennis Prunty for the lead and then held off Slinger standouts Ryan DeStefano, Steve Apel, Alex Prunty, and Brad Keith for the victory. In my opinion, Fenhaus has the talent to go far in racing and when he is a national star one day, I hope I get the opportunity to tell those around me that's the kid whose name I

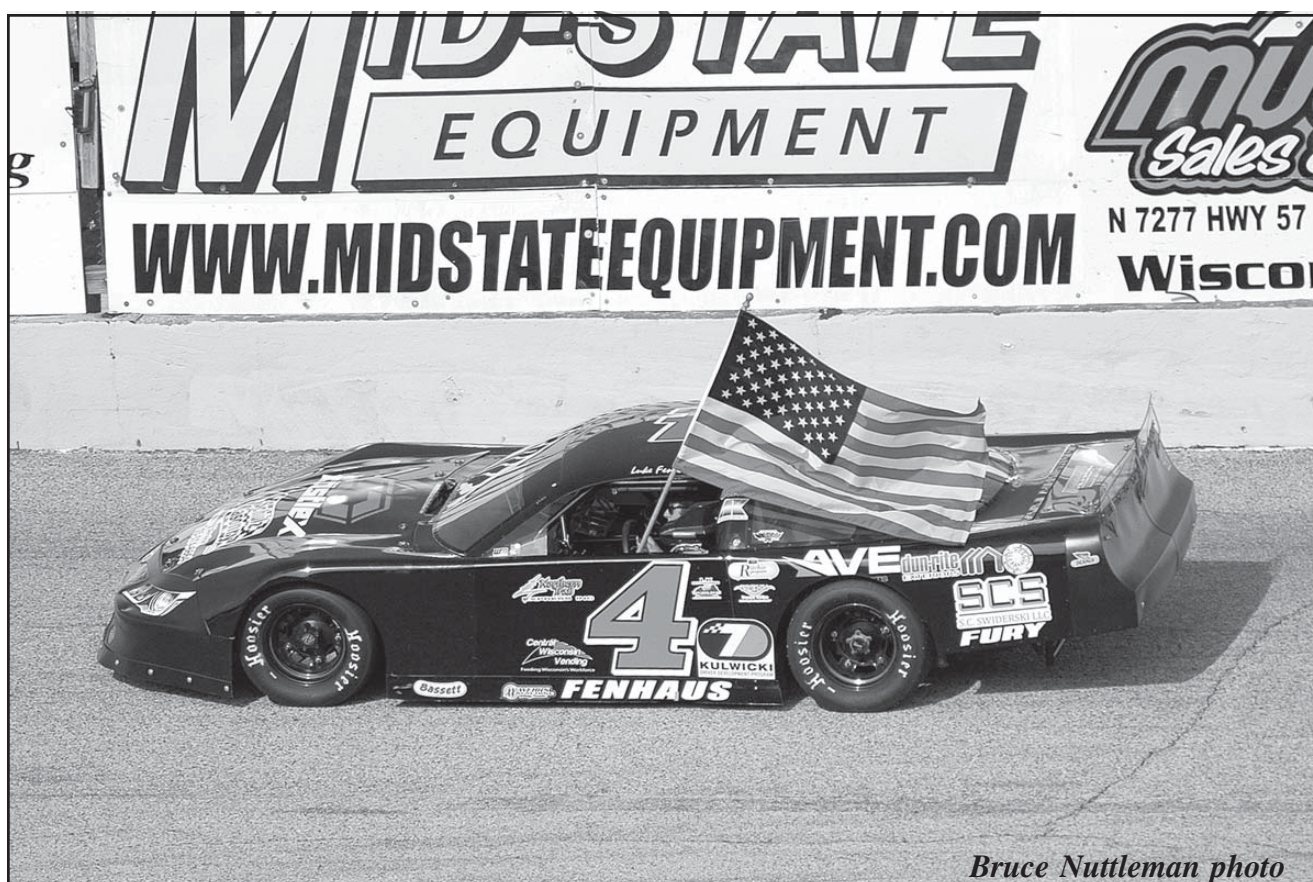
couldn't spell right.

The month of August opened with the opportunity to attend some big-time national road race events as Road America hosted the IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship on August 1-2 and then the following weekend the NASCAR Xfinity Series came to town. Weather was a factor in both events and rain played a part in making both races exciting. A monsoon-like storm better suited for boats than sports cars ambushed the track during the IMSA main event and really provided a challenge for the drivers. As I prefer to roam about the course for these events as opposed to being stuck in the media center, I got totally drenched but it was well worth it. For the final laps, I went up on the roof of the main building by the start/finish line and braved the wind and the rain along with the NBC cameraman as I couldn't miss seeing Helio Castroneves' first win in nearly two years in person as opposed to a television screen. Rain played a part in the NASCAR Xfinity race a week later and while it didn't play to much of a part in Austin Cindric's win, it was fascinating to see the drivers try to wheel the heavy stock cars on a wet surface. I was proud of Wisconsin driver Josh Bilicki who got to lead his first laps in NASCAR competition. Josh is a guy who works hard to just get the opportunity to race often times in less than stellar equipment. The rain combined with the road course configuration was a great equalizer and it provided Bilicki the chance to showcase his skills. When opportunities arise in NASCAR, drivers must take advantage of them and Bilicki did so here and while he didn't win the race or even finish in the top ten, the laps he spent up front racing and fending off challenges from the top tiered drivers showed that on equal grounds he can run with them.

I spent the middle portion of the month donning goggles and adding some dust to my drinks attending some great dirt track events. Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, was the day to be able to be two places at



*Stacy Revere/Getty Images*



*Bruce Nuttleman photo*

*Dangerous Dan continued on page 16*



Dangerous Dan continued from page 15

once and since that was impossible, I had to choose between the ARCA Midwest Tour Dixieland 250 at Wisconsin International Raceway or the World of Outlaws Late Model Series event at Beaver Dam Raceway. Obligations at my regular job and the timing that went with that had me going to the dirt late model race where upon seeing both Jimmy Owens and Brandon Sheppard in the pits meant a showdown was set up between the two hottest dirt late model drivers in the country. Owens won the battle on this evening as Sheppard had an uncharacteristic off night. Once again, the World of Outlaws Late Model Series saw another strong field of cars at a Wisconsin show as they paired up with the Dirt Kings Tour, which brought many of their top contenders to take on the Outlaws regulars. Speaking of the Dirt Kings Tour, it has been a long time since I have witnessed a race that had so much drama and excitement as their Diamond 42



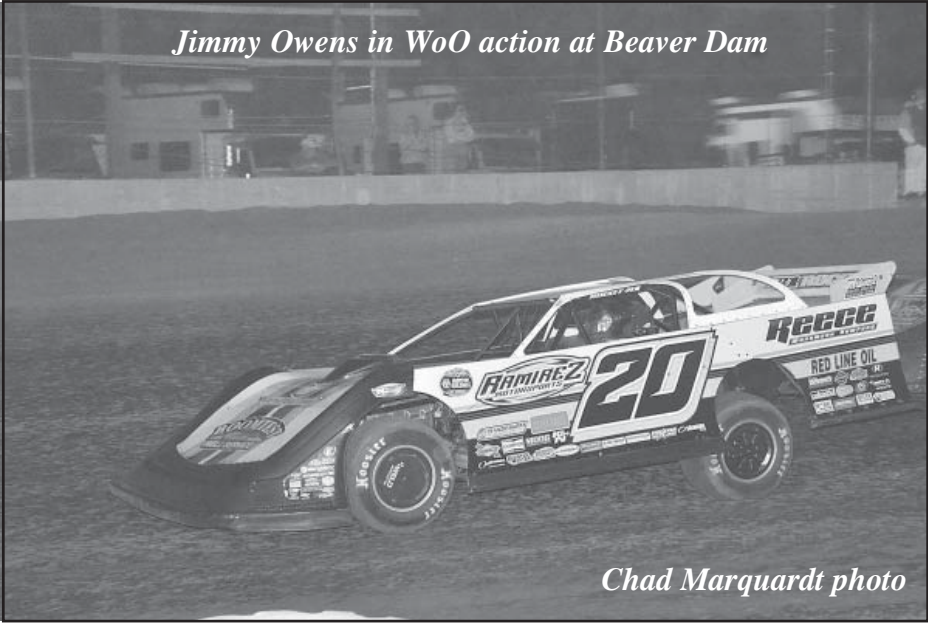
Jesse Glenz picked up the Dirt Kings win at Plymouth

Dirt Kings photo

event at the Plymouth Dirt Track on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Another strong field of cars coupled with a high purse featured a lot of aggressive racing which dinged up some cars and in the end Jesse Glenz walked away with the trophy and the big check. Now I realize that I don't own the cars or work on them, and certainly don't pay for them so I understand the displeasure with the aggressive driving in that race from the pit area but the perspective from the other side of the fence in the grandstand with the fans, that race had a special event kind of feeling when all was said and done.

I closed out the month by attending the All Star Circuit of Champions/IRA Sprint Car event at the Wilmot Raceway where Tony Stewart returned to action and Corey Eliason drove to the victory on August 21<sup>st</sup>. I followed that up with a trip to the Grundy County Speedway in Morris, Illinois for the rescheduled ARCA Midwest Tour Wayne Carter Classic on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was my first trip to Grundy in about five years and the new LED lighting the track installed was impressive. Paul Shafer Jr. is the guy to beat at Grundy this year and his dominance continued in the Midwest Tour event. Shafer led every lap and clearly dominated the race to capture the win over Ricky Baker, Gabe Sommers, Casey Johnson, and Jonathan Eilen. Rich Bickle Jr. also had a nice run with a sixth place finish after having to pit early for adjustments.

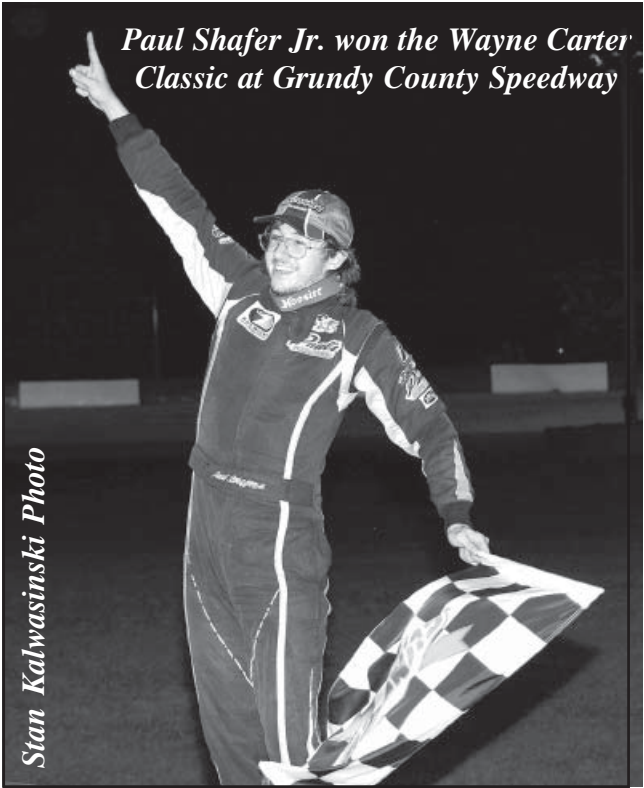
It's hard to believe September is almost here and the racing season that many weren't sure was even going to happen is beginning to wind down. The Fall traditionally means a lot of racing specials at area tracks and with other major sports still not allowing fans to attend, we need to continue to support those short tracks and take the opportunity to introduce new



Jimmy Owens in WoO action at Beaver Dam

Chad Marquardt photo

fans to our sport. As always, I'll be at as many of those specials as I can and you should too. I'll see ya at the track!



Paul Shafer Jr. won the Wayne Carter Classic at Grundy County Speedway

Stan Kalwasinski Photo

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## Talkin' Racin' with Jason



### Jason D. Searcy

Covid-19 and the restrictions surrounding it shut down Elko Speedway and many other Minnesota race tracks for the first half of our 2020 summer. During that time I started off with a good attitude and tried to take advantage of this opportunity to visit a few race tracks that I never seem to have time for during my normal race summer. I loved the throw-back atmosphere at Tomah-Sparta (WI) Speedway, sitting on a board nailed between two stumps and how the kids would run up and down the hill laughing and playing during the races, you can feel the history of that track and it feels good. I got to watch the Traditional Sprint cars race at Cedar Lake (WI) Speedway and go back to where I got my first full-time job announcing races at I-94 Speedway (now called I-94 Sure Step Speedway) in Fergus Falls (MN). I was very impressed with how smooth the track surface was and reminded of how incredibly powerful the WISSOTA Late Models and Modifieds are, that rumble is what hooked

me on racing when I was just a kid. I also found out that it is possible to go to LaCrosse (WI) Fairgrounds Speedway *before* Oktoberfest weekend and have a really good time with good people.

The Governor relaxed some of the restrictions in August and Elko Speedway was finally allowed to reopen. The car counts have been very good and the fans are showing up to see Racing again as all six divisions are participating with double features on every race night.

The Late Model field and the way they race is beyond impressive, how about going four complete 25 lap features in a row, that's 100 laps without a caution and zero lapped cars. Newsflash\* Six-time Champion Jacob Goede is still good! It's also nice to see Chad Walen and Chris Marek run so well, nine-time Champ Donny Reuvers is back up front, Michael Haggart continuing his winning streak and great to see Andrew Schultz get his first career win all in the first few weeks.

The Modified are going through some growing pains but we all knew it wouldn't be easy to build a new division but one thing is for certain, they are a very cool looking race car and having three different winners the first three nights is great.

Bryce Blohm and Conrad Jorgenson have renewed their rivalry in the Thunder Cars, great to see Jeremy Wolff back full-time and Adam Wiebusch has already won a couple times, very impressed at how well the car count has sustained in this division.

Nick Oxborough has not missed a beat coming off his second Power Stock Championship last year and Joe Prusak has never looked stronger, he now has over 200 wins in his illustrious career. Julie Jorgenson's car has looked like a rocket so far and it's awesome to have a couple new drivers become competitive immediately: #5 Ben Behne and #25



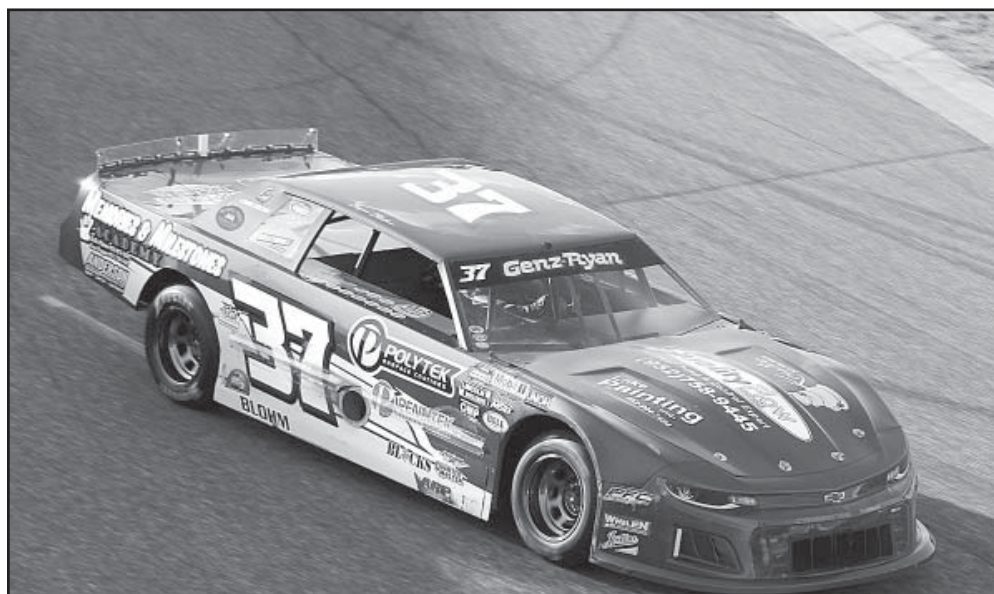
*The Bandolero pits have been full each weekend at Elko*

Michael Joines who drives all the way up from Quimby (IA).

Tim Brockhouse only raced at ELKO a few times last year but he is committed to race full-time at his hometown track this year, he won four of the first six races and now has 208 wins in his career. Veteran drivers like Baiden Heskett, Jon Lemke and Rob Thurston have been right up front but the trio of fourteen year olds are making some noise, Colin Stocker and Teddy Kottschade are leading laps and first time winner William Sawalich has really impressed. A few drivers are now part-time as they have returned to college including defending Champion Cole Klein and Matt Allen who won for the first time in over four years on opening night.

The Bando's have been entertaining as well with Ayrton Brockhouse and Alex Hartwig battling for the win each week and averaging over a dozen cars.

The racing has been great and the crowds have been even better this shortened year at Elko Speedway, the fans have been extremely responsive and they seem to be happy to be at the track. I think most race fans feel the same way, appreciative of what we still have, Covid-19 or not.



*Bryce Blohm (left) hopes to move up one position from last year's points and Nick Oxborough (right) is looking for his third championship*



Meet Nick Pistone

Nick Pistone grew in in a racing family, with his grandfather the great Tiger Tom Pistone, and his dad Pete Pistone. Nick transplanted himself from North Carolina to Minnesota over the off-season to work with the Great North Legends. *The Midwest Racing Connection* recently sat down with Nick at the Great North Legends Shop to discuss his racing past and goals for this year.

*Being from a racing family, did you have any interest in the media side, or just the racing?*  
All on the racing side.

*What was your first involvement in racing?*  
I started in go karts in 1992. In 1995 I started running Legend cars when I was 15 years old for my grandfather.

*What was your biggest win?*  
I would say the 2009 Legend Nationals, but they took it away from me on the last lap for rough driving.

*Have you done any other short track racing in your career?*  
I ran a full season NASCAR’s Goody’s Dash in 2001. I got to run Daytona, Bristol, South Boston, Memphis and Charlotte. It was a good experience.

*What lead you to switch from driving to working on cars?*  
Helping the young kids move up. I like building the cars for the kids and seeing them win races. I’ve helped a lot of them. Jordon Anderson, Matt DeBinedetto, Zane Smith, Noah Gragson and Riley Herbst. I did all of their cars.

*That answer is a good lead into the next question. What do you enjoy more; keeping the old guys fast or helping the young kids get fast?*  
Both, definitely.

*How did you end up moving to the Midwest and working with the Great North Legends?*

I’ve known Tim (Brockhouse) for 20 years and met him at US Legends. They were off the pace last year, and he wanted me to come up and see if we could get him quicker on these new tires, and we did.

*When did you move to Minnesota?*  
I moved here in the month of March.

*This about the time the world came to a crashing halt, and there was no racing. Were you concerned after moving here?*  
No, Tim took care of me the whole time.

*What goals do you have for the 2020 season?*  
The goal for this year is to help Tim win his second Legends national championship.





# The Month of Money

*Vince Peterson photos*


While Cedar Lake Speedway has hosted numerous, big-pay national touring events, this year they included something special for the local drivers. Originally scheduled for a 4-week stretch in July, Mother Nature extended the event into mid-August. The Month of Money featured \$5,000.00 to win shows for the four weekly racing divisions (Midwest Mods, Pro Stocks, Modifieds and Late Models.) Winners of the big money and Happy Gilmore checks were; David Swearingen – Midwest Mod, Shane Sabraski – Pro Stock, AJ Diemel – Modified and James Giossi – Late Models.

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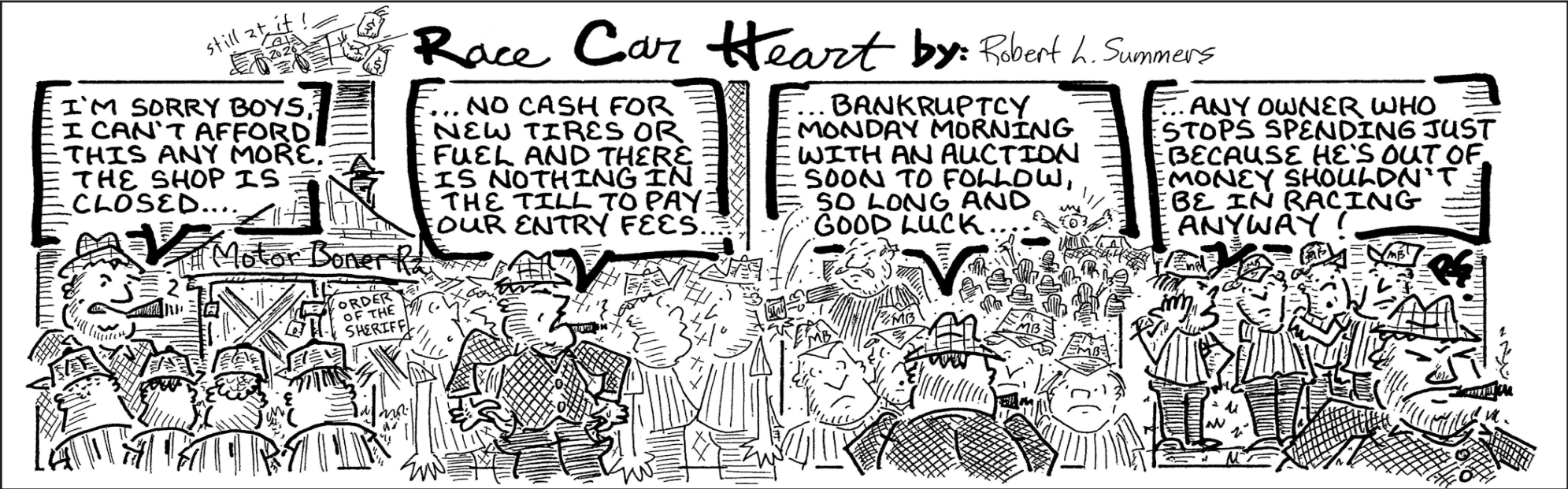
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# Traditional Sprint Challenge

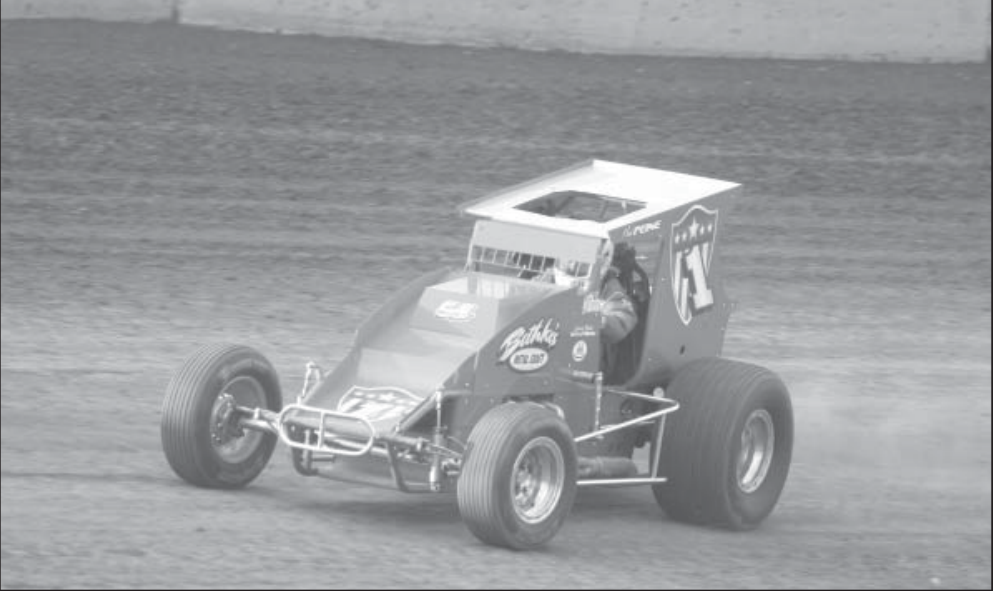
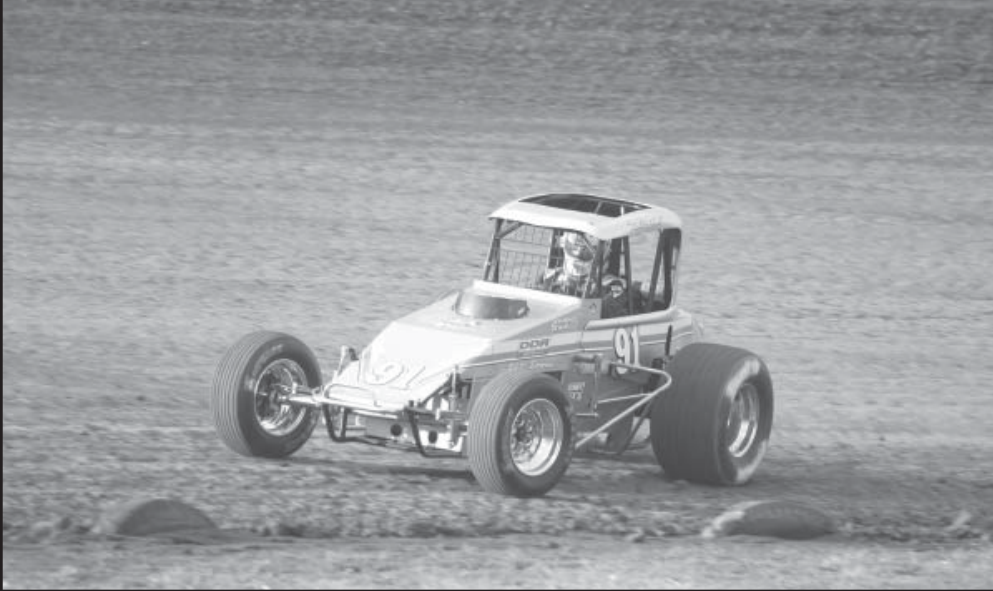
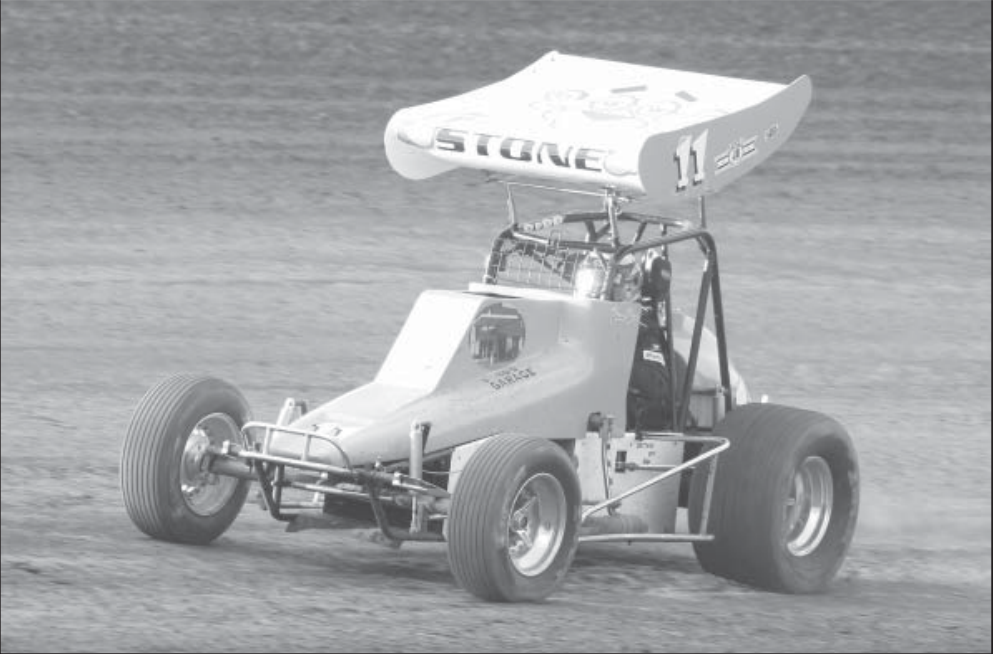


*The Pirtek UMSS Sprints held their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Traditional Sprint Challenge at the end of August. Once again, the event set car count records for the sanctioning body. The Friday night portion of the event drew a record 37 cars to the event. The record lasted just one day as 41 Sprints entered the Saturday portion of the two-day show.*





Vintage Iron



*The IMCA Old Timers and Northern Vintage groups worked together to bring a large number of vintage cars to the Traditional Sprint Challenge. Three separate classes were on hand, with the Vintage Super Modifieds turning the fastest laps. These cars probably didn't have the horsepower or tires of today during their heyday, but still put on a great exhibition.*

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