

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY

April, 2012



Molly Rhoads Spotlight



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Minnesota State Fair?

The Inside Dirt



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Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

In our last on-line issue, you may have seen a few pictures of my prized, Heart O' Texas can cooler as it made its way across the great state of Florida. Yet again, I received several emails which included pictures of my can cooler, so I set my plan into action. I was going to track down the culprit and get my can cooler back.

Those of you that are familiar with the publication know that I enjoy just about any type of motorsports. Short track racing tops the list, but if there isn't any short track racing around, anything with a motor will do. As you can see by the pictures of my can cooler, it was last seen in Las Vegas.

Now, as a race fan, I would have much rather gone to Las Vegas during the Cup race weekend, as the pictures indicate the can-cooler was there. But, with a kid that enjoys monster trucks more than Cup racing, I went with another option. Having a high-school friend that lives in the Las Vegas area now, the kid on spring break from school, and the Monster Jam World Finals at Sam Boyd Stadium made for some good times.

I've been to the Metrodome for several Monster Jam events, and seen exhibitions at our local short tracks



several times. The event held in Vegas each year is quite the spectacle. The number of monster trucks on hand was more than a full field for many short track classes these days, and boy did they wreck a ton of them while we were there.

Little did I know, but The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway also had some drag racing going on during our visit. I can honestly say I have never been to a real drag race in person. Well, there were those times at North Starr Speedway as a kid when I could see the final rounds from the top-row of the oval track bleachers, or the highly illegal races at Red Rock in Newport back in the early 1990's. This event was the first legitimate time of watching real drag races on a legal quarter-mile. The event was not the big NHRA event at Vegas, but rather a smaller regional event. I say smaller based on the size of the crowd, but not on the number of cars on hand. There were a ton of really fast cars. As is the case with most other sporting events, watching it on TV does not do it justice. Watching a drag race in person is quite impressive. The events on TV just don't capture all of the sights, sounds and smells of being there in person. My ears are still ringing after watching the Funny Car warm up their motor in the pits. I also came away with an idea that I wish short tracks could incorporate somehow. At the drag races, your ticket to the stand is also a ticket into the pits. For the low price of just \$6, my son was able to walk around the pits all

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The Midwest

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afternoon. The low ticket price amazed me, and so did having somebody over the age of 16 walk through the pits without signing a waiver. Sure, most of the cars aren't moving, but it was pretty cool to be up close and in person.

Like I've said in previous columns, we always hear about diversifying our savings accounts, or diversity in NASCAR. I've done my part to diversify on this family vacation by not going to any oval track races. Instead, I saw the straight liners go over 200mph on a drag strip and Monster Trucks soar through the air. Sure, I didn't get to see any roundy-round cars, didn't find my can cooler and spent a boat load of money, but it was still a good time. I got to hear really loud motors with my kid and a bunch of other rednecks. Not a bad day in my book.



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Skol NASCAR Vikings and Racing at the Fair

Could stock car racing be coming back to the Minnesota State Fair?

There's absolutely a possibility, according to someone close to the idea. And here's the kicker: the Minnesota Vikings could use the same venue.

Here's how it could work. The Vikings, still looking for legislative support for a bill that would get them a new stadium, would be the primary tenant of a new facility to be located where the current State Fair Grandstand sits. Through a revolutionary design, low level seats would actually cover the race track surface during football games, and the field turf could be covered or removed during races. Since the NFL regular season doesn't start until after Labor Day, Vikings home games would not interfere with the dates of the State Fair or the return of the Labor Day race.

This is not the first time this idea has been discussed. Years ago, former *Midwest Racing Connection* (then *Minnesota's Racing Connection*) publisher Rob Hahn broached the subject with local radio show host Dark Star on WCCO-AM as a possibility for a new Gopher stadium. Both agreed the idea had merit and warranted further discussion. Now, nearly ten years after that conversation, the concept seems to be gathering traction (all puns intended).

"I think there's a great opportunity for all parties involved," said Hahn, a former Independence Party candidate for governor. "With so many Minnesota-based Fortune 500 corporations now involved in NASCAR, it would make sense to bring a Cup or Nationwide event to this facility during the summer months."

Considering State Fair attendance averages more than 100,000 per day, there's ample parking and sufficient public transportation to handle the 65,000 or so that would attend a Vikings game or NASCAR race.

Hahn, who's met with a number of legislators this session primarily to discuss other issues, says this idea could be just what's needed to get skeptical legislators on board and get a stadium bill passed before the end of the session.

"The biggest hurdle to this idea at the Legislature and beyond is it just makes too much sense," Hahn said.



Top photo - The starting lineup for the final event held at the Minnesota State Fair race track. Bottom photo - Donny Reuvers discussing pre-race strategy with the legendary Dick Trickle prior to the final race.

Dan Plan photos

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NEW RICHMOND, WISCONSIN 2012 EVENTS SCHEDULE

DATE (1)	ALL RACES START AT 6PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED (1)	Adult(2)	Stdnt(2)	Pits
Thu, Apr 5	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
Fri, Apr 6	54th ANNUAL SEASON OPENER DAY 1 - NASCAR RACING Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets (Complete Show)	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Sat, Apr 7	54th ANNUAL SEASON OPENER DAY 2 - NASCAR RACING Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets (Complete Show)	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Thu, Apr 12	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
Fri, Apr 13	SEASON OPENER MAKE UP (If Necessary) Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Sat, Apr 14	NASCAR RACING or SEASON OPENER MAKE UP (If Necessary) Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Sat, Apr 21	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mod along with School Teacher Races (4)	\$12	\$6	\$25
Thu, Apr 26	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
Sat, April 28	SPRING SPRINT CAR SPECIAL featuring UMSS SPRINTS, NASCAR Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, & Hornets	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Sat, May 5	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mod along with School Teacher Races (4)	\$12	\$6	\$25
Thu, May 10	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
Sat, May 12	SCHOOL BUS SPECIAL-MW Mods, Hornets, Vintage Cars, and School Bus Races! (5/19 Rain Date)	\$12(3)	\$5(3)	\$25
Sat, May 19	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods & UMSS Traditional Sprint Cars!	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, May 26	PACK THE TRACK NIGHT! FREE GRANDSTAND ADMISSION! Full program of Modifieds, Pro Stocks, Midwest Mods, & Hornets	FREE	FREE	\$25
Sat, Jun 2	THE TRIPLE CROWN! \$3,000 TO WIN IRA OUTLAW SPRINT CARS, \$3,000 TO WIN NASCAR LATE MODELS, \$3,000 TO WIN NASCAR MODIFIEDS, and the first 3,000 people in the Grandstands get a FREE Triple Crown Tshirt!	\$25(3)	\$12(3)	\$35
Sat, June 9	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mod along with School Teacher Races (4)	\$12	\$6	\$25
14TH ANNUAL MASTERS EVENT (JUNE 14TH-16TH) 7PM start time each night				
Thu, Jun 14	MASTERS Day 1 - Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets (full show)	\$12(3)	\$6(3)	\$25
Fri, Jun 15	MASTERS Day 2 - UMP DIRTcar Summer Nationals Touring Late Models and USMTS MODIFIEDS (complete show in both classes)!	\$25(3)	\$12(3)	\$35
Sat, Jun 16	MASTERS Day 3 - UMP DIRTcar Summer Nationals Touring Late Models and USMTS MODIFIEDS (complete show in both classes)!	\$30(3)	\$15(3)	\$40
Sat, Jun 23	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, Jun 30	5th Annual NIGHT OF DESTRUCTION featuring a HUGE Demolition Derby! Wildman Clay Gallagher will also entertain with death-defying stunts. Also running MW Mods and Pro Stocks!	\$12(3)	\$6(3)	\$25
Fri, Jul 6	ANNUAL WORLD OF OUTLAW 410 SPRINT CARS (Plus MW Mods)-7PM	\$30(3)	\$15(3)	\$40
Sat, Jul 7	FIRECRACKER SPECIAL - NASCAR Late Models, Pro Stocks MW Mods, & Hornets (This is our Annual HUGE Fireworks Display)	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
Sat, Jul 14	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, Hornets & IMCA Old Timers	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, Jul 21	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, July 28	SUMMER SPRINT SPECIAL!-UMSS 360 Sprint Cars, UMSS Traditional Sprint Cars and NASCAR Late Models, Modifieds, & MW Mods	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$25
25th ANNUAL USA NATIONALS! (Aug 2nd-4th) 7PM start time each night				
Thu, Aug 2	CORNBELT CLASH OPEN LATE MODELS - \$5k to win! Plus MW Mods	\$25(3)	\$12(3)	\$35
Fri, Aug 3	NATIONALS Day 1 - World of Outlaw Late Model Qualifying, Heats, & Dash for \$50k to win event & complete show of NASCAR Late Models	\$25(3)	\$12(3)	\$35
Sat, Aug 4	NATIONALS Day 2 - World of Outlaw Late Model Semis, LCQ & 100 lap \$50k to win event & complete show of NASCAR Late Models	\$35(3)	\$17(3)	\$40
Sat, Aug 11	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, Aug 18	3rd Annual FASTER PASTOR RACE! Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets as well as Faster Pastor Races featuring local area churches.	\$12(3)	\$6(3)	\$25
Thu, Aug 23	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
Sat, Aug 25	NASCAR Racing - Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, & Hornets (Fan Appreciation Day & Elmer Cook Memorial - FREE Corn on the cob!)	\$12	\$6	\$25
Sat, Sep 8	12th Annual Jerry Richert Memorial IRA/KNOXVILLE 410 SPRINT CAR CHALLENGE & UMSS Sprints & Vintage Cars	\$25(3)	\$12(3)	\$30
Wed, Sep 12	OPEN PRACTICE (6-9PM) \$30 per car & driver	NA	NA	\$5
THE 6th ANNUAL LEGENDARY 100! (SEPTEMBER 13TH-15TH)				
Thu, Sep 13	Heats, B Mains and Qualifying feature (top 12 to big show) for Hornets, Street Stocks, and MW Mods (6PM Start)	\$15(3)	\$7(3)	\$30
Fri, Sep 14	Heats, B Mains and Qualifying feature (top 12 to big show) for Pro Stocks, Modifieds, & Late Models (6PM Start)	\$18(3)	\$9(3)	\$30
Sat, Sep 15	B-Mains and A-mains for Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks, MW Mods, Street Stocks, & Hornets (5PM Start)	\$20(3)	\$10(3)	\$30
Sat, Sep 22	8th Annual \$10,000 to-win ENDURO! (5:30PM Start)	\$12(3)	\$6(3)	\$25

Notes: (1) Unless otherwise noted, races start at 6PM. Grandstands open at 5PM. Pits open at 3PM. (2) Students are age 11-16 and kids age 10 and under are FREE except on those dates with a footnote below. (3) Prices noted are at the gate, day of the event. Advance discount tickets and/or reserved seats may be available online for this special event at www.cedarlakespeedway.com. Student age for this event is considered 6-16. (4) School Special features local elementary school teachers competing in Hornets. Very entertaining!



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Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'

By Jason D Searcy

Molly Rhoads started racing thirteen years ago while in High School along with her brother AJ and twin sister Megan. The summer after graduation, she realized how much she loved the sport, everything about it, and wanted to do it for as long as possible. She raced at the I-94 Raceway tracks in Sauk Centre and Fergus Falls (MN), where she won her first race in the Super Stock and Thunder Car divisions.

"Racing at I-94 opened my eyes to the real family that is involved with racing," said Molly "everyone that was there, from the other drivers to the employees and even the fans, were literally the best people I had ever met in my life."

Soft spoken Molly Rhoads was a crowd favorite at I-94, as the track announcer I would help arrange driver autograph sessions during intermission. Because of the incredibly long lines waiting for

Molly's signature, we would have to put her on a separate table from the other guys just to even out the crowd.

She was also very popular in the pits with her fellow racers. "There were many nights that I showed up there without a crew and different drivers and their crew members would help me unload my car and spot for me. If I ever had any problems there were always hands on deck to help me get fixed back up and ready to race, that is why I always looked forward to going there" said Rhoads.

Molly eventually moved up to the premier Super Late Model division in 2004 competing with some of the best drivers in the Midwest, she became the first female driver to win a Late Model race at Raceway Park in Shakopee (MN). She was then accepted into the NASCAR Drive for Diversity program two times where she was given instruction and tutoring from some of the top teams in NASCAR.



"Janet Guthrie and Lyn St James are very inspirational women that I have looked up to throughout my racing career." Molly also looks up to NASCAR hot-topic Danica Patrick, "she has spent here entire life working toward making her dream of being a professional race car driver come true. She has paid her dues and has been successful throughout her career." said Rhoads. "She also is using every

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continued from page 8

one of her assets to make the doors open for her and has helped get female racers noticed throughout the world."

Following her love for Racing has not been easy, it has been challenging in this economy to find enough funds to continue updating her cars and motors. When she had to take some time off from driving Molly worked in the pits as crew chief for Bryan Roach who was driving local Super Late Model races and in the ASA Midwest tour. Her popularity in the pits was rewarded with the

Craftsman "Mechanic of the year" award at Raceway Park in 2009. Molly has jumped around the last couple years racing at Raceway Park (MN) and Dells Raceway Park (WI).

This year Molly was accepted into Race4Girls.com. It's a national program that promotes successful female racers and helps them *improve* their race team. Molly says "www.race4girls.com is a great idea; Tracey Passantino is devoting her life to helping me and other female racers. You can donate as little as \$5 and ALL of the money (minus the paypal fees) goes to the driver. It is so easy to show some support and if even a handful of people you know donate \$5, it

will help me and other successful female drivers a ton."

Molly Rhoads is not the typical race car driver, here in Minnesota or anywhere else, but I think everyone is OK with that.

Molly plans on racing the full 2012 season in a Super Late Model at Elko (MN) Speedway and enter both ASA Midwest tour events in Minnesota. "Some of the best drivers have come out of Elko Speedway," said Rhoads "I am super excited to race with them every week and gain as much experience as I can."



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THE SOUL OF NASCAR

Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



By Dale P. Danielski

With the weather we've had it seems like we could be in the heart of the racing season. But, we aren't, so that means we'll go with a random thoughts column heading into April and the official start of it at least in these parts.

Of course you readers out there know I tend to pick on NASCAR and its ways on occasion so we definitely will include some of that here. Speaking of which, in the Cup race at Fontana, CA., Jeff Gordon dragged his gas can with the human filler attached to it into the next pit stall. No one was in that stall and it was pretty harmless but because NASCAR rules state that no pit work or equipment can be in another teams stall Gordon was penalized. Is that really the intent of the rule when a guy still attached to that equipment is dragged there, or teams relocating to perform said work in another stall? Should be able to make an exception to that rule with an instance of this

nature in my eyes...It sure seems like NASCAR's biggest event and the first of the season, the Daytona 500, gets screwed up in some shape or form practically every year. That can't be providing the event with the best image although; with the race finally being held on Monday night this year it did receive record ratings. Of course we can't predict weather accurately, and who would have imagined Juan Pablo Montoya wrecking a track vehicle and burning up the track forcing a 2 hour delay. Montoya, I'm sure at times would like to light a fire under his race team which seems to struggle more than it should but certainly this wasn't what he had in mind!...Of course many before me have talked about Chad Knaus with the Jimmy Johnson race team getting out of their Daytona infraction penalty, or at least most of it. It seems NASCAR has the uncanny ability to hit these teams where it hurts the least, in the pocketbook...Good to see Iowa racer Landon Cassill in a fulltime ride in Cup racing after losing out to Kurt Busch for the seat he held last year. We recall talking to Cassill at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway during Oktoberfest racing weekend several years ago and then watching him out fox veteran Eddie Hoffman to win a big race there. Shortly thereafter he went on to bigger things and certainly more than a few eyes must have witnessed that move which helped propel his career forward... Speaking of La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway they will be opening on April 28th this year on a Saturday night of course. One noteworthy addition to the schedule this year sees the Big 8 Series Late Models competing in a Tuesday night, July 3rd Holiday special. Sportsmen and Thunderstox will also be on the nights card...Good to see the ASA Midwest Tour appearing at some big as well as tradition rich venues this year. The Milwaukee Mile event should be great and going to the Iowa Speedway is always a good thing. First time visits to unique tracks Berlin Raceway of Marne, MI., and the I-44 Lebanon Speedway, of Lebanon, MO., will be challenging for drivers and very entertaining for fans...Well, we know running a race track at the short track level certainly doesn't get any easier and it's very possible new ownership at some point may be giving it a try at Golden Sands Speedway of Plover, WI., and the Marshfield Motor

Speedway of Marshfield, WI. Both the 1/3 mile paved 'Sands oval and the 1/2 Marshfield track are for sale as we write this although neither has been purchased and both have full schedules of racing planned for 2012 with Marshfield hosting their opener April 28th and Golden Sands getting started May 4th...Other tracks in our vicinity with schedules out announcing opening dates include Deer Creek Speedway, Racine, MN., April 7th, Mississippi Thunder Speedway, Fountain City, WI., April 27th, Upper Iowa Speedway, Decorah, Iowa, April 28th. The Cresco Speedway of Cresco, Iowa will again feature a limited racing schedule with their first race program set for June 21.

A look back in time...In 1972 at the Golden Sands Speedway opening race, April 16th it was Dick Trickle taking the feature win over Marv Marzofka and Lyle Nabbefeldt. Heat race winners were Rich Somers and Trickle with the semi-feature win going to Deb Langsdorf. Trickle also won the fast dash and set fast qualifying time giving him a sweep of all 4 events he participated in. When's the last time someone pulled off a feat like that?

News, notes and comments welcome to Dale P. Danielski at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650, at 608-783-5827 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com, www.starmakermultimedia.com

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Dale's Photos from the Past

Left photo - Jim Back in his first Pony car era creation, circa 1972, a 1968 Ford Mustang. Right photo - A couple Minnesota travelers in 1972 Jim Derhaag left and Bob Jusola in their full size Chevrolets.



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The Inside Dirt



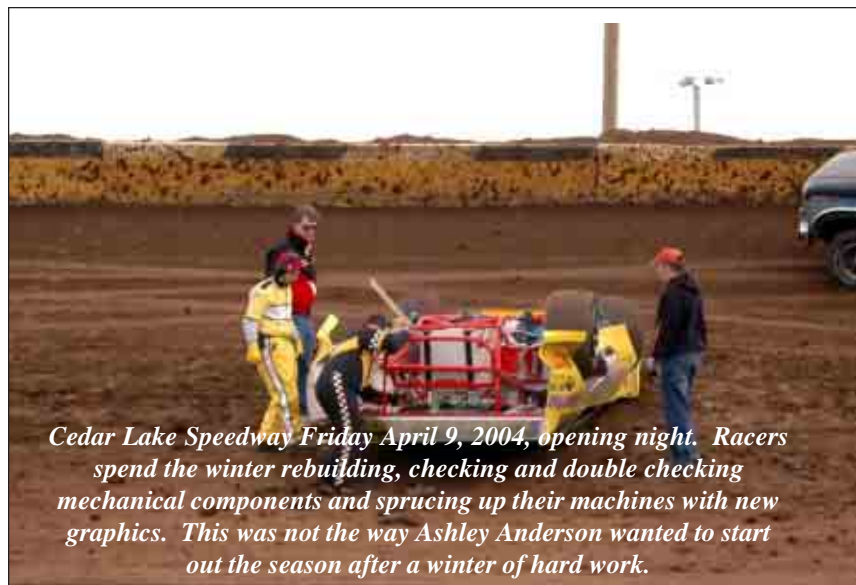
Stan Meissner

The weather has been more forgiving than usual this spring, so barring any drastic change, the racing openers should take place as scheduled. Racing continues to struggle to put people in the stands as illustrated by the number of empty seats at a recent Bristol race. Writers attributed the empty seats to changes in track configuration but I suspect that gas and lodging prices are the main reason for soft attendance. One thing is obvious, racing fans need to reach out to non-race-fan friends, neighbors and relatives and encourage them to come out and join us. Making new fans is not an easy task and can take persistent effort often over a period of years but it's well worth the effort.

My schedule is coming together nicely so I'll list the some of the races that I anticipate will be the highlights of my season. My plans put the emphasis on the most convenient destinations based on my location, budget and racing preferences.

April 6 or 7 Cedar Lake opener. Cedar Lake's opening weekend always draws a good field of cars and I will be chomping at the bit to shake the winter cobwebs out of my camera.

April 20-21 Elko Spring Dirt Nationals. I'm planning



Cedar Lake Speedway Friday April 9, 2004, opening night. Racers spend the winter rebuilding, checking and double checking mechanical components and sprucing up their machines with new graphics. This was not the way Ashley Anderson wanted to start out the season after a winter of hard work.

on being there Saturday night for sure with Friday penciled into my schedule. Hopefully the weather will cooperate this year because reports are that Elko's October UMSS Feature was a dandy. Jackson doesn't kick off their season until May and Knoxville doesn't have the 360's on the card that weekend. I expect a great field of cars and some awesome racing.

April 28 Cedar Lake Spring Sprint Car special featuring the UMSS winged Sprints. I anticipate a good field of Sprint Cars along with Late Models, Modifieds, Pro Stocks and Hornets. The UMSS came into existence during some of the worst economic conditions in our lifetime but has managed to buck the odds and gain a foothold in the local racing scene. All of their shows are entertaining but a few events such as Cedar Lake and Elko draw the best fields of the season.

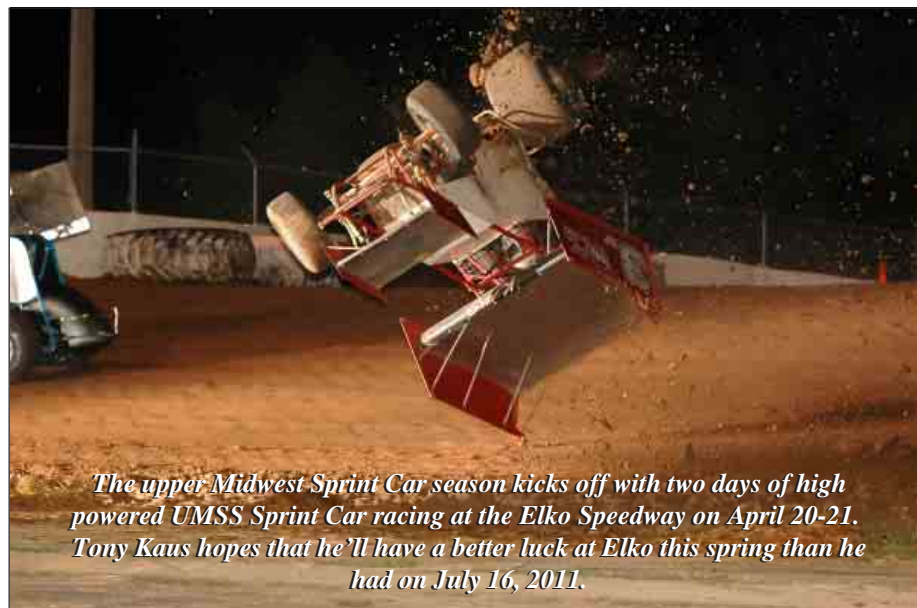
May 19 Cedar Lake UMSS Traditional Sprints. I love watching the non-wing cars and it's another opportunity to see the Cedar Lake regular classes.

May 25 Saint Croix Valley UMSS winged Sprints. This will be the first appearance of the season by the UMSS winged cars at SCVR. I'm looking forward to seeing the improvements to the facility. I've got access to a lake home five minutes from the track and plan on taking advantage of the opportunity to spend a few weekends there throughout the season.

May 26 Rice Lake Speedway UMSS winged Sprints. Rice Lake isn't very far from where I live but the effect of rising gas prices on my budget is the equivalent of moving RLS a few miles further up the road every week. Rice Lake is a fun track and I always enjoy going there so I hope that some of these penciled in dates work out for me.

June 1 Princeton Speedway Billy Anderson Memorial. Friday races are on my wish list until the entire I35e project is completed and we can see how the gas budget and vacation list look. We'll leave this one on the wish list and see what happens.

June 2 Cedar Lake Triple with IRA Outlaw Sprints. This first time event tried to happen last year but Mother Nature said no. The IRA is no longer a part of the Masters (formerly my favorite racing



The upper Midwest Sprint Car season kicks off with two days of high powered UMSS Sprint Car racing at the Elko Speedway on April 20-21. Tony Kaus hopes that he'll have a better luck at Elko this spring than he had on July 16, 2011.

weekend of the year) but the IRA still came out a winner because they're going to be the headliner (in my book) at the Triple.

June 16 Cedar Lake Masters finale. I decided to forgive and forget that the IRA is no longer a part of the Masters. The UMP Late Models and USMTS Modifieds are too good of a show for me to hold a



Scotty Beirtzer's "win it or wear it" style has made him a lot of fans out on the IRA tour

grudge. I enjoyed the opportunity to chase Sprints for a couple of years but I missed the great racing at Cedar Lake and intend to get out there as much as my circumstances allow this season.

June 22 Back to the 50's Minnesota State Fairgrounds. It's not dirt track racing but where else can a person take hundreds of photos of cool cars without having to deal with the dust?

June 23-24 USAC non-wing Sprints Wilmot and Sun Prairie. My son Les suggested that we make this our annual father and son excursion. We've got a couple different options if the weather down by the Wisconsin Illinois border doesn't cooperate. Hopefully plan A will work out as Wilmot would be a new track to add to my lifetime total.

July 6 Cedar Lake World of Outlaws. I have only missed a handful Cedar Lake World of Outlaws races

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since their first show way back in July of 1983. The next night July 7 is the annual Firecracker so there's a pretty good chance I'll be spending the weekend in the campground.

July 21 Car Craft Summer Nationals State Fairgrounds. An encore on my schedule for the custom cars, my second big Street Rod show of the season.

July 27 Saint Croix Valley IRA Sprints. I scheduled a day of vacation so I can spend the weekend at the cabin and get to the track early. The UMSS winged Sprint Cars appear at Cedar Lake the following night so this will be a huge weekend of Sprint Car racing in western Wisconsin.

August 11 Cedar Lake USA Nationals final night. This is the biggest dirt track race of the entire season in our area and it's always a great night of racing. Maybe Friday too? We'll see.

August 24 Saint Croix Valley Raceway UMSS winged. The UMSS takes their show on the road to Rice Lake on Saturday the 25th so I'm hoping it's possible for me to double up.

September 8 Cedar Lake Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial. My favorite race of the season.

This list represents the meat of my schedule. Other additions could include Jackson, Knoxville and the start of a national Rat Rod run up in Mahtowa,

Minnesota. In addition to that I'll be adding some of the fall community festivals that include Street Rods and possibly some more weekly shows whenever possible.

The local Sprint Car community lost a car owner and good friend recently with the passing of Dave Tabor on March 18. Dave was the owner of the 34w and 34tw Sprint Cars. Dave's drivers have included Jimmy Kouba, Roger Rager, Tim Johnson, Brad Barickman, Jason Tostenson, Alan Gilbertson, Ron Erickson, Jack Zweber and Greg Gunderson.

The Jason Sides lawsuit against World Racing Group continues to be a hot topic. Sides has competed in all of the World of Outlaw races so far this season and was fourth in points at the time of this writing. Some who contributed to Sides' cause are second guessing themselves.

Danica Patrick recently announced that she will compete in a Dirt Late Model at Tony Stewart's Eldora Speedway Prelude to the Dream. Danica envy continues to rule racing message boards and social media and the announcement was met with mixed reviews. The little bit I have watched of her I've seen a talented driver working hard to succeed in a new form of racing. I hope she does well on the dirt but even a win probably wouldn't silence her critics. I

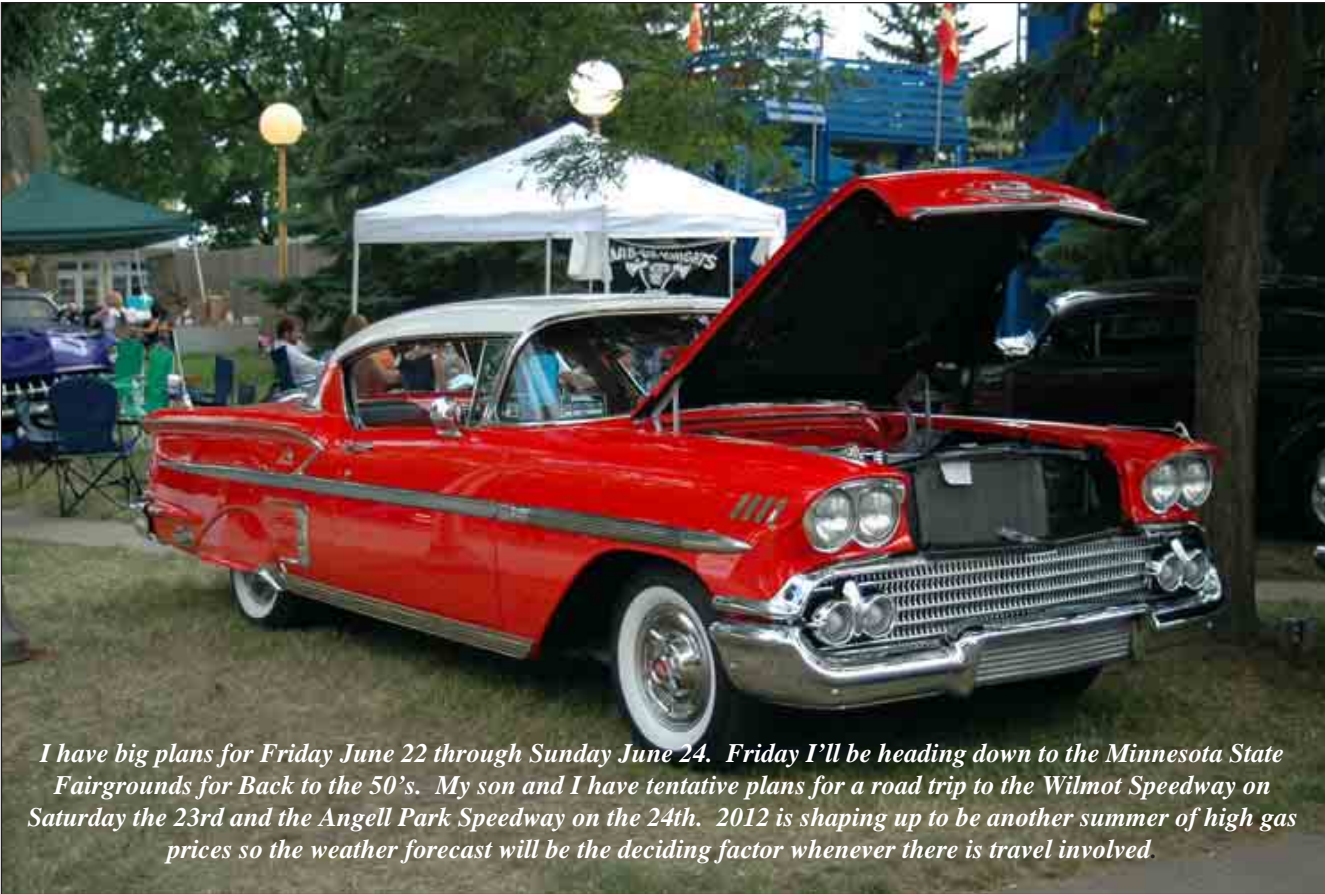
The Jason Sides lawsuit against World Racing Group continues to be a hot topic. Sides has competed in all of the World of Outlaw races so far this season and was fourth in points at the time of this writing. Sides picked up his front wheels at North Central



guess some folks will never accept the idea of a woman competing in a male dominated sport. Her marketability is without rival and in today's racing world that is as big of a factor as driving talent.

I'll see you at the races!

The local Sprint Car community lost a car owner and good friend recently with the passing of Dave Tabor on March 18. Dave was the owner of the 34w and 34tw Sprint Cars. Dave's drivers have included Jimmy Kouba, Roger Rager, Tim Johnson, Brad Barickman, Jason Tostenson, Alan Gilbertson, Ron Erickson, Jack Zweber and Greg Gunderson. This photo comes courtesy of the Greg Gunderson collection. Left to right are Dave Tabor, Greg Gunderson and Margaret Tabor.



I have big plans for Friday June 22 through Sunday June 24. Friday I'll be heading down to the Minnesota State Fairgrounds for Back to the 50's. My son and I have tentative plans for a road trip to the Wilmot Speedway on Saturday the 23rd and the Angell Park Speedway on the 24th. 2012 is shaping up to be another summer of high gas prices so the weather forecast will be the deciding factor whenever there is travel involved.

Fun the Focus for Local Home Tracks in 2012

In past years, we have featured previews written by those of us here at MRC. This year, we decided to do something a little different and let the various tracks provide some quotes for the upcoming season. Here are the highlights of our conversations with several track representatives.

Brad Both – Cedar Lake Speedway

This year, you've added the Hornets to a number of the weekly shows and are also allowing fans the opportunity to rent a car and drive in these races. How did this idea come about?

We get so many requests each year asking "Hey, can I try that?" There are also the people that go down into the pits and wonder what does it take, or what's it like to race. This will give them the chance to try something. That's one of the reasons we are doing this. There's definitely a market of people out there that at least want to give it a try. They might not come back, or they might say that was the greatest thing ever and then they we get more people involved in the sport. That's the main focus, getting more people involved. We also wanted an entry level division back. During the years of a strong economy, we had some car counts that were getting astronomical, and our show was getting quite long. That was one of the reasons we cut back our program. We think the Hornets are a class that is a little more manageable class that might put a little more fun back into the show.

Any special plans for this year's 25th anniversary of the USA Nationals?

I'm not at liberty to say yet, I wish I could. As I said the other day, we have some ideas but I can't go into them yet. We haven't finalized any of the details, but I can tell you we will have something for sure.

Jim Burns – Elko Speedway

How did the Thunderstruck Memorial event quickly evolve into a two-day show?

Well, we had Tim Olson and Steve Einhaus from ASA wanting to expand on their presence at Elko Speedway. They contacted us, and everything was already in place with our Thunder Car Nationals program. We just thought it would be a natural fit to add the ASA Midwest Tour, and thanks to Gregg McKarns we've added the Big-8 series as well. With the support of Greg Peterson at Extreme Powder Coating and Conrad Jorgenson at Brother's Jorgenson Racing and the new Summer Thunder Series, it just made sense to have everything evolve into a two-day event. Qualifying and preliminary events will be on Friday, with Saturday being a day filled with features.

What are some of the fun activities planned around the weekly program for the 2012 season?

I don't want to say we are trying to re-invent anything or take a step backwards, but at times I think we may have gotten away from some of the ideas that worked in the past. We want to be focused on family friendly throughout 2012. We want to make sure when people come, they see different things happening for all ages.

We'll have petting zoos, exotic animals, Monster Truck rides for the kids and the Green Mamba Jet Car will be back. Our biggest challenge this year is showing our customers, our drivers, our sponsors and everyone else, that we truly care and truly appreciate their support as we go ahead in our 47th season.

Chuck Deery – LaCrosse Speedway

You are trying a mid-week special this year for the first time in a few years. What lead to the decision to try a mid-week special again?

The way the Fourth of July fell mid-week, the July 3rd date was very attractive to put on an event. We haven't had the Big-8 cars up here, other than 'Fest, so Gregg and I decided that would be a good time to bring them up. We'll have a nice show on that date.

You've done things like bringing back the dash races in the six for six format. What other changes do you have in store for your weekly programs this year?

We'll be filled with something ridiculous, funny, awkward every race night; whether it's a novelty event on the track or some type of fan interaction. On the competitor side of the deal, we are going to give a bonus to the race team that can guess their qualifying time, I saw this in Speedway Illustrated, and thought it was a great idea. They write their qualifying time on a piece of duct tape and put it on the fender. After qualifying, they'll pull the tape off. Whoever is closest to their time will get some type of prize. It's just a neat twist to make qualifying more interesting for the competitors. We are going to do a hard-charger award for the guy that passes the most cars throughout the season. Just another deal for the race teams to try and reward the guys that work hardest out there. Other than that, we are going to continue to do what we normally do. We know things are financially tight for some people; gas is over \$3.50/gallon, republicans hate democrats, dogs hate cats and we said the heck with it, we're going to have fun anyways.

Mike Hellendrung – Raceway Park

How did the idea for a special event for showcasing the Hobby Stocks on Labor Day come about?

After reviewing the past few Labor Day events, we decided that the Enduro Series had run its course. Then our thought was to run an ASA Midwest touring event but, when you look at the purse and the lack of local participation from the drivers we thought we would prefer to offer a large purse for the Hobby Stocks. Raceway Park and Elko Speedway both have great numbers and drivers have shown they will support the local tracks. After reviewing the rules we also felt with a few adjustments we could gain additional participants from Wisconsin, as they would have the option to race on both Sunday and Monday. We have a couple of drivers that volunteered to test and see if they can make 75 laps without refueling,

but if we count caution laps it should be close. Our plan is to use the same format for qualifying as used during an ASA Midwest Touring event. We hope to start a new tradition to replace the Labor Day weekend race that had been held at the State Fair for all those years.

What are some of the fun activities added to other weekly shows?

We will continue to have many events for kids including rides in both racecars and school buses. We will continue the water balloon toss, bubble blow off contest, tire roll relay contest, penny toss, painting school buses and boxcar race. We will offer two separate track car race given away on both Mothers & Fathers Day. We also have the Demolition Devil Stuntman coming to Raceway Park on a couple dates. We will finish off the year with another official track car race and finish off the year with our 3rd annual Motorized Mayhem including: Purple and Green Auto Ball Bash, Two car chain race, figure 8s, flagpole race, school bus stunt and the WORLD FAMOUS FIGURE 8 TRAILER RACE.

Gregg McKarns – Rockford Speedway

Past years have seen just one Super Late Model event at Rockford Speedway. This year will have two. What lead to your decision to add a Super Late Model special in the summer?

In the past we have had crate models for our Miller Lite All-Star 100 which brought in a lot of rising stars like last year's winner Erik Jones. As a fan, I only related to a few of the names on the track last year, such as Eddie Hoffman and Rich Bickle along with Rockford Champion Ryan Carlson. My hope is that by adding the Super Late Models back into the mix for this traditional event that was first held in 1978, we will see more of today's stars battle at Rockford Speedway. I was watching an old All-Star 100 on

YouTube and thought, the quality of the stars in the 1980's still exists in today's

"it's my job to get them all on the same track at the same time"

Gregg McKarns - Rockford Speedway

drivers, it's my job to get them all on the same track at the same time. Whether it be due to different touring schedules, rule packages or the like, it is rare to see all of the heavy hitters in one spot, that was once so common with Trickle, Shear and Miller, our goal is to get those heavy hitters here at Rockford July 14. That being said, I think it will also help attract the best of the best to our National Short Track Championships at the end of September.

Rockford has been known for their unique events throughout its history. Any other new events or surprises planned for this year (novelty events, more appearances by Illini Midgets, fun stuff)?

Every night we do something different, whether it be


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‘The Race for the White House’ in which drivers will campaign by making stops across the country (track) or an added bonus like a 50 lap Figure 8 Race or our Late Model Showdown Races which are built like the NCAA Brackets. Fans have also reacted well to the

Illini Midgets, all racing creates its own form of excitement, their open wheeled action fits that criteria to say the least. Our goal is to have fun, both in the stands and the pit area each night, from the kids helping our Late Model drivers select their dash position, American Short Tracker drivers throwing


frisbees into the stands for fan prizes based on their finish, Sportsman drivers loading youngsters into their cars during post-race autograph sessions or our Roadrunners doing the four wide salute before they drop the hammer. Few things in life can match the excitement at a local short track.



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Going in Circles



By Charlie Spry

With our unusually nice spring weather in the Midwest, many race teams have been bitten by the racing fever a little early this year, and I think you will see more cars fully prepared and ready for the season openers this year. With that being said, I have a few updates on drivers and their plans for the 2012 season.

Dennis "Barney" Schmidt plans to return to racing after sitting out a year, and will be racing his late model in the Big 8 series, and will also race weekly at Columbus 151 to start the season. He noted that if he is in the top three in points at that time, he will continue to race at Columbus the rest of the year, but if not, may start racing at Jefferson.

Central Wisconsin four cylinder racer Josh Klopotek plans on racing mostly at Golden Sands, with possible trips to both Wausau and Marshfield. He will be owning three cars, as he has purchased a '92 Grand Am, which he will drive, and has also bought a '92 Mitsubishi Eclipse that John Engebretson will race, and will also field a '97 Jetta for Aaron Thorstad. All will look to improve on their points finishes from 2011, as Josh finished fourth at Golden Sands, John 5th, and Aaron 10th and rookie of the year.

Jim Lietz reported having a fun season of ice racing on Lake Dubay over the winter, as he finished 6th in points in his class, 9 points ahead of his dad, John. Jim

plans on racing a full schedule at Wausau this year in the mod four cylinder class. He will be racing alongside his dad, Dale Louze, and "Grandpa" Bob Dalsky around central Wisconsin, with plans to also compete in the combined points nights at Golden Sands. Jim says that he has been concentrating on school work throughout the winter, but had plans of finishing preparation of his car during spring break. He notes that his dad has been a big help in his racing efforts both financially and physically, and that he would not be where his is without his help, and also thanks "Grandpa Bob" for "keeping him in line."

Jefferson late model racer Chris Quam intends to stay with what he enjoys, namely racing his car weekly at Jefferson Speedway, where he traditionally is one of the fan favorites. "We are out to have fun and probably make more friends than win races, but that is what it is," said Chris.

Chris Schmude plans to race her Cavaliers again in four cylinder events, racing her dirt car at Central Wisconsin Raceway, and her pavement car at Marshfield. She also may race a couple of times on the dirt at Oskosh. This team has several cars presently, two dirt cars, three asphalt cars, one ice racing car, and one 6 cylinder racer, so they are very busy. Chris really gets in a ton of competitive laps throughout a year.

Colin Reffner will once again be racing for GEM Motorsports in 2012. In 2012, Colin finished fourth in super late model points at Golden Sands, and was named rookie-of-the-year. Other 2012 plans include the Detjens memorial race and the ASA Midwest race at Wausau, and Oktoberfest. They would also like to race in the ASA Midwest event at Milwaukee, and a couple of shows at Marshfield, depending if sponsorship comes through. They are also working on gaining sponsorship to enable them to run the full ASA Midwest tour in 2013.



Colin Reffner will once again be racing for GEM Motorsports in 2012
Bruce Nuttleman photo

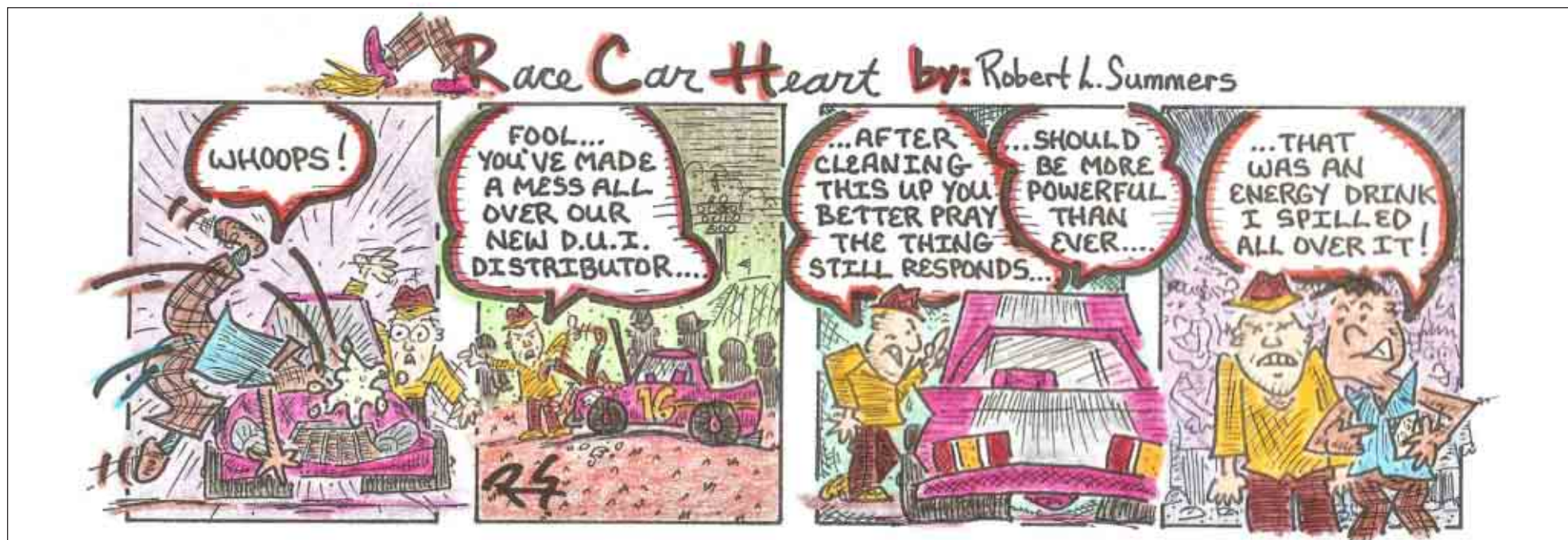
Veteran Gary Krueger will make a return to late model racing at Jefferson Speedway, racing a former Kevin Baldry car. Gary had been racing dirt modifieds for the past few years, after racing asphalt cars extensively since the 1970's.

Chris Matz purchased a unique Plymouth GTX, and plans on racing it in hobby stock events at Columbus and Jefferson in 2012. His car had been formerly raced at Grundy County Speedway and a few times at Jefferson in 2010, before being parked last year.

Scott Ciesielski will be concentrating on racing in the stock four cylinder class at central Wisconsin tracks after splitting his time last year amongst the two-man cruiser division and the four cylinder cars.

Robby Robinson made an off season trade of his Bandit car for a former Ken Scott hobby stock (roller), and will likely race at either/or Rockford and Columbus in 2012, as well as possibly Jefferson.

Former late model front runner Tim Noble told me that he plans on doing some racing again in a late model in 2012. This personable driver is always very enthused when talking racing.



Dirty Talkin'**Kris McMartin**

There is a new class of car taking the upper Midwest by storm, creating excitement with Drivers, Fans and is beginning to attract the attention of dirt tracks around the area. The Upper Midwest Sprintcar Series (UMSS) started a new traditional non-wing sprint car series as an upstart exhibition class in 2011. The traditional sprint car series has been developed with the idea of making this form of sprint car racing economical and to grow the series in the hopes of adding this class to a tracks weekly race program. The series raced most Friday nights at St Croix

*Vince Peterson photo*

Valley Raceway in Centuria, WI last year and had a handful of other exhibition races at various tracks around the Midwest. The UMSS traditional sprints are a value based racing class designed to give its drivers, tracks and fans what they want and need out of a racing weekend at a very reasonable cost. The popularity of this class is gaining momentum as more drivers, tracks and fans discover the economics of the series.

A race team can build a competitive car for \$6500-

\$10,000. The chassis is open to any sprint car chassis 1984 - present. The motor is the same as a Midwest Modified motor and have several block options listed in the engine specifications. There are spec motors that the UMSS has put together and Mora Motorworks in Mora, MN has teamed with the UMSS and are building motors for this class. The cars are fun to drive and push between 400 and 450 horsepower in a 1500lb car. This makes for some

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wild driving action that is exciting to drivers of any age. This class is very attractive to the economically conscious driver as you can get these cars on the track each week for roughly \$75 bucks a night. There are a few tracks that have discovered this class is a great addition to their weekly show. The attraction for tracks is simple economics. The UMSS Traditional Sprints offers reasonable rules for participants, an economical purse and an affordable race ticket. The series provides a fan-friendly atmosphere that will bring the fans to the track week after week.

As a fan I can tell you that these cars will put on some of the most exciting features ever. I attended most of the races where the traditional sprints were running in the 2011 season. Of all the racing that I saw last season the two best features were these traditional sprints. The small number of cars on the track seemed to personalize the racing experience.

As car counts increase I can only imagine how exciting the racing will become. It will be fast and furious on dirt; I am very excited for the 2012 season to get underway. This year, as the series evolves from the exhibition phase into a fully developed weekly feature, increased car counts can do nothing but enhance this innovative racing experience. The race fan is able to enjoy wild, fast, and volatile racing action at a value based price compared to most tracks that add the traditional sprints to their regular race program at normal or only slightly higher ticket prices. The series will be racing regularly on Friday nights at St. Croix Valley Raceway, Centuria, WI and bi-weekly on Sunday nights at Dodge County Speedway, Kasson, MN. Other tracks where the series will make an appearance include Cedar Lake Speedway, New Richmond, WI and Granite City Speedway, Sauk Rapids, MN. Be sure to get out and take in a race or two, these cars will provide a fan friendly race program guaranteed to excite the dirt track racing community.

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