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May 13, 2010 Vol. 14, No. 2

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Rock and Race**Paul Pittman**

Well, here we are. The racing season is firmly upon us and the weatherman has once again surprised us with a prediction of SNOW. Yes, there's that 4-letter word again. Oh well, what are yah gonna do about it anyway. We can all sit around and talk trash; tell each other war stories over a cold beer while we watch the weather beat us in yet another round of racing. But that is part of the fun, isn't it?

I remember when I was a kid growing up in Central PA. As the weekend got closer, the excitement would build. Then, come Friday night, as long as the chores got finished in time, it was off to Williams Grove. You see, it really didn't matter if the weather sucked. We had family close by who also loved to go racing so if the weather didn't cooperate, we would go to my aunt and uncle's place and spend the evening anyway. Dad and my uncle would tell stories and I would listen. Soon I began to draw pictures of my favorite cars while they talked, which usually prompted yet another story. My favorites back then: A few guys you may have heard of or may not: Keith Kauffman, Bobby Allen, Steve Smith, Kramer Williamson, Smokey Snellbaker, Mitch Smith and Jan Opperman. Then there was Elmer Ruby. You see, I grew up in PA, not in WI and so when many in the racing community around here stand aghast when I can't tell them I remember when so and so did this, it's because my references are different. It would be like me asking if they remember watching Jan Opperman crossing the track at Hagerstown from outside turn one, slipping and falling when he was almost into the pits, only to stand up and grab a handful of mud and throw it like a snowball at a friend laughing. Or how about the time that Steve Smith and Bobby Allen ruled the area; or how about when Kramer Williamson was unbeatable at the Grove. Every area has their greats. Personally, I feel blessed to have grown up watching those guys. It really gives me a sense of history at this point of my life.

Another thing that I miss is the thrill of watching the cars pull into the track as I sat and waited for the evening to start. The days of open trailers made it so much easier to imagine yourself racing down the front stretch under the wing of that sprinter. It gave everyone the excitement of knowing which car was there, but wondering who was driving. Of course that all ushered in the era of car counting too. Nowadays, a fully enclosed semi trailer seems to be the necessary mode of transport for any team

in order to be competitive. I am not knocking it but merely expressing regret for the old days. Face it, Joe Symoens is the last traveling guy I can remember who regularly towed everywhere in an open trailer. Now that he has retired, well, you get the picture. Hell even Late Models have gone the same route. I remember talking to Pete Parker one evening about this very subject. His opinion was the same. He liked giving fans the excitement of seeing the car pulling into the track. Of course, the money saved on a semi and full semi trailer could now be redirected back into the race car, but hey, who cares as long as you look the part, right?

Then there is one other thing that I remember. I remember picking up the racing paper at the gate or the concession stand and catching up on everything that had transpired from last weekend. Do you remember reading about last week's big race while getting ready for tonight's racing action? Well, here's a hint, you are doing it now. This is what it was like. Getting to the track a little early, finding a good seat and sitting down to read the paper while you waited for things to start. Back then it was fun. Walking through the pit area and talking trash because you made the paper. Or worse yet: Trying to hide because of an embarrassing photo or story. Fans got into it as well because you would see them walking around with the same papers collecting autographs. Those souvenirs from last week's races that would soon find their way to the bathroom.

Back when I started writing that was my goal. To write a story that would read well while in the bathroom. I figured that if a story read well during a good sit-down, it would accomplish many things at once, none the least of which would be to bring everyone up to date on what was going on. As time went on, along came the internet. At first, there were the usual skeptics. Then there were a few of us, (yes I am including myself here) that really pushed to get things out there. Ask Steve Sinclair some time when you're looking for stories. When we first met, the biggest thing I brought to him was the possibility of exposing the IRA and educating the general public that IRA was more than just a group of terrorists running around and bombing things in Ireland. It took a while. Steve's first reaction was, "if you can talk the guys into it, go for it". Eventually they came around. Soon we all found ourselves caught up in the whirlwind of technology and were even breaking ground by broadcasting live sprint car racing over the internet. Now, here we are and the idea of even trying to run a team without using the internet to market yourself is unthinkable. You can tune in and catch the races anywhere in the world via the internet so long as there is someone taking the time to broadcast it. And then there are the results. They cannot be posted fast enough. Whatever happened to the days of buying a ticket to find out what happened at the track? I think that is when I really began to get burnt out on things. It never mattered how hard you tried, someone was always pissed because the results were not posted as soon as the checkered flag fell. It got so bad that I actually began to hate going to the races simply because I knew someone would complain about one thing or another. Then there was the politics involved. In case you have not heard, I despise politics! When I got elected to the board in Antigo on the premise of helping up there, the politics soon entered into the picture. It ceased being fun.

So why are you reading this column right now? I think

that is a good question. It is certainly valid. When Dan approached me about writing for The Midwest Racing Connection, the first thing that we discussed was how the publication was done. If it was going to be another internet racing site, thanks for the offer. But it wouldn't be. Here is a publication that is looking at its roots and its fans! The more he told me, the more he had me. In all reality, he had me at a "printed paper", but we won't tell him, will we? SO that is why you are reading this. Face it. If you want the results, you can look them up online or even on your phone. If you want news, it's all over the internet. You are reading this because you were intrigued enough to pick it up and see what fans did back in the day before point and click. You are either an older race fan who can identify with everything I mentioned in this article, or you are a young fan exploring this fascinating new concept. Newsflash! It's not new and it certainly is not a flash. What we have, is something you can read time and time again while you are waiting for the races or enjoying a nice long visit in the throne room. Either way, I hope you are enjoying yourself and want to personally extend my thanks for a little bit of hope in an otherwise paperless racing environment.

Publisher's Note

Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

This year I've had several fans approach me about their concerns regarding car counts. From what I've seen at the tracks we've attended, the vast majority of facilities in our region of the county seem to be doing just fine. All of the shows I've attended this year have had great car counts, with most approaching and/or exceeding 100 cars in the pits. There are plenty of other people out there that know a lot more about these types of things than I do, but from my view, the sport looks healthy. It may not be as good as we would all want it to be, but most short tracks have been able to keep their drivers and fans happy during these tough times by providing affordable family entertainment. While I was talking to LaCrosse flagman Greg Oliver, he brought up the fact that even though those of us that refer to the "Good Old Days" of racing may not realize it, but right here and now are the good old days for the kids just getting into the sport.

I can remember a time when I was younger, the names like Back, Murgic, Prziborowski and Sauter had their kids started racing while their parents were still racing. Some of the drivers from the past were even lucky enough to race against their parents. Now we have the Carlson's,

Holzhausen's and others racing against their dads. In some cases, we even have third generation drivers now racing in this part of the country. Hurry up and watch these guys race together, before the changing of the guard is complete. The good news is, there's a new crop of drivers to keep us entertained for some time to come.

A weekend in Wisconsin

And while we are speaking of car counts and the changing of the guard, we attended a couple of asphalt shows in the great state of Wisconsin at the beginning of the month of May. Instead of making the entire trip to Madison in one day for the ASA Midwest Tour season opener, we decided to leave a day early and check out a weekly show at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway. Steve Carlson showed why he is still on top of his game. During the Late Model feature, Carlson was sent to the back after an incident on the front straight with Todd Korish. Carlson was sent to the back of the pack passed 14 cars in the final ten laps to work his way to a fourth place finish in about 10 laps. This is the kind of action hard-core race fans look forward to, and probably helps bring first-time fans back to the track. While Steve may not have been given all of the credit he deserves in the sport, the folks in LaCrosse are pretty darn lucky to see him compete on a weekly basis. Shawn Pfaff picked up the win, with the Legendary Bill "Doc" Niles picking up his career best finish in third position. Niles had to hold off a charge from Carlson on the last lap to secure his podium spot.

One of my favorite divisions at all tracks is the Sportsman/Hobby Stock type class. This group at LaCrosse puts on some great racing, and has a wide variety of body styles. While there may presently be some controversy regarding some of the cars in West Salem, I'm thinking they all looked pretty cool. Jerrod Loring was able to hold off the rest of the 26-car field for the win. Just so I don't leave out the other drives on hand, but the Thunder Stox and Hornets put on a great show as well.

After spending the night at the Nuttleman farm and completing my morning chores, it was off to Madison. All three divisions for the ASA Midwest Tour group were on hand for this event (Late Models, Sportsman and Trucks). With the new Sportsman series debut washed out at the Dells a few weeks ago, all three divisions kicked off their season with the show at Madison International Speedway. It came as no surprise that Steve Carlson won the main event, but Ross Kenseth finishing second may have surprised a few. I'm going to go out on a limb and say this kid might have some talent, and might make a name of himself one of these days. Travis Sauter finished third, and Illiana regular, Jeff Cannon, had an impressive run to finish fourth.

There have been plenty of people with famous relatives in NASCAR through the years. More often than not, they don't live up to everyone else's expectations. I don't see this being the case with Ross. We've been lucky enough to see Ross run a few times in the Big-8 series, and hopefully



Doc Niles had a career best finish at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway
Dan Plan photo

a few more fans will get to see him run a Super Late Model this year.

More than 40 Super Late Models were on hand to qualify. With Chris "Suitcase" Clark in the announcer's tower, it sure seemed like we had gone back in time. The Truck and

Publisher's Note continued on page 5



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continued from page 3

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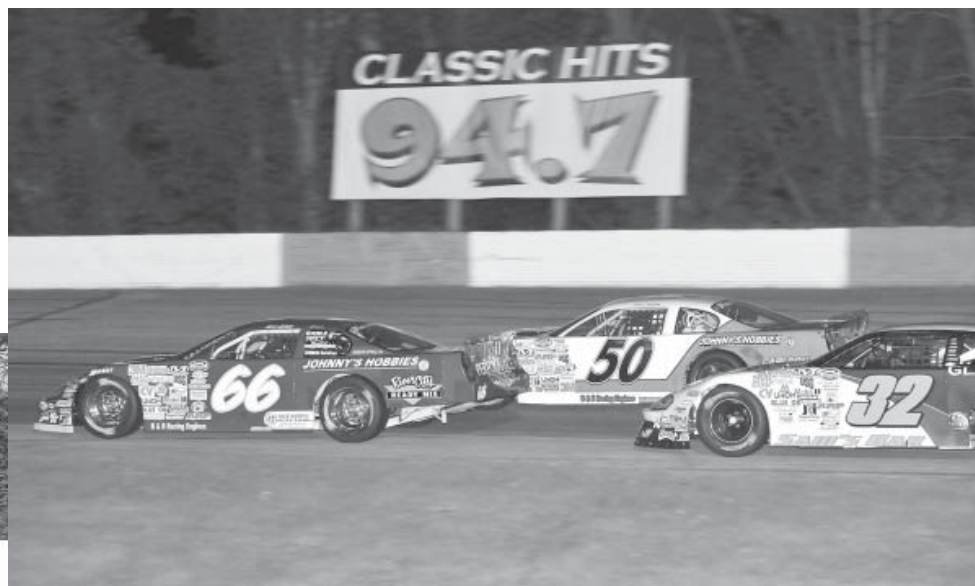


More details coming soon

Sportsman series both put on great events and made for a good, solid three division program. I'm sure the officials were hoping for a few more cars (and trucks) to turn out, but all-in-all, they were enough competitors to put on a good show. Jerry Wood topped the Truck race over world renowned Conrad Jorgenson, Tom McClintock, John

Wood and Bret Widdis.

Bobby Wilberg's hot-rod Dodge captured first place in the Sportsman race over Jay Kalbus, Scott "Chico" Reidner and Chris "Cruiser"



Marek. Jerry Thompson rounded out the top-five. As mentioned previously, I really enjoy watching this type of car race. Another wide variety of body styles were on hand and some great side-by-side racing on a big half-mile track.

Yeah, I live in Minnesota, and we have some pretty good racing here. But man, Wisconsin is pretty cool.



The Inside Dirt



Stan Meissner



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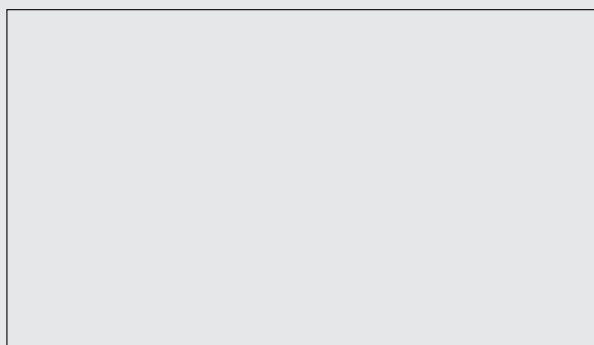
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***Auto Racing Facts,
Observances and
Opinions***



Dale P. Danielski

Dale's Picture from the past



In The Drivers Seat



Martin DeFries photo

Mark Lamoreaux

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



LaCrosse announcer Dan Deicher congratulates Shawn Pfaff
Bruce Nuttleman photo



Corey Jankowski holds off Scotty Ollerman opening night at The Dells
Jeff Blaser photo



Three in a row for Doug Schmitz at Raceway Park
Martin DeFries photo



Jackson Speedway World of Outlaws action
Jacy Norgaard photo



Rockford Road Runner winner Gene Marocco
Jimmy Ambruoso photo



Jake Redetzke in victory lane at Cedar Lake Speedway
Jerry Zimmer photo

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Mike Lloyd with the checkered flag at Rockford Speedway
Mark Melchiroi photo



Michael Gilloman picked up his second Hobby Stock win at Raceway Park
Martin DeFries photo



Three in a row for Doug Brown
Martin DeFries photo



Ross Kenseth battles for position with Danny Fredrickson at MIS
Doug Hornickel photo



Andy Jones holds off Rapid Ron Schriener for the win at CLS
Jerry Zimmer photo



"Extra Crispy" Steve Anderson in victory lane
Martin DeFries photo



The Official Word

Greg Oliver - LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway

Position: Flagman and Hornet tech inspector

Favorite Food: Brats

Family: Wife Leslie, two daughters and a granddaughter

Item you enjoy most about your weekend job: The people. These are my heroes (the drivers), right here.

Most memorable moment: I would say being in the flag stand when my brother (Todd Oliver) won his first feature.

Most forgettable moment: I'm sure there are a lot of those. Probably the most forgettable is when you have to disqualify somebody. That part of the job isn't fun.



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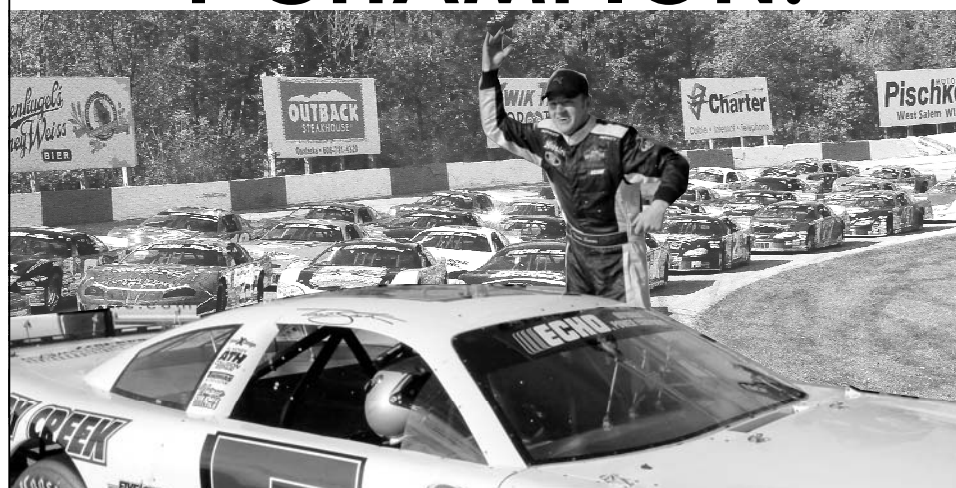
by Jordan Bianchi

Going in Circles



By Charlie Spry

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***The Lady and
the Track***






Molly Vadnais


The Guilty Pleasure

Coming in the next issue of

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***ASA Midwest Tour
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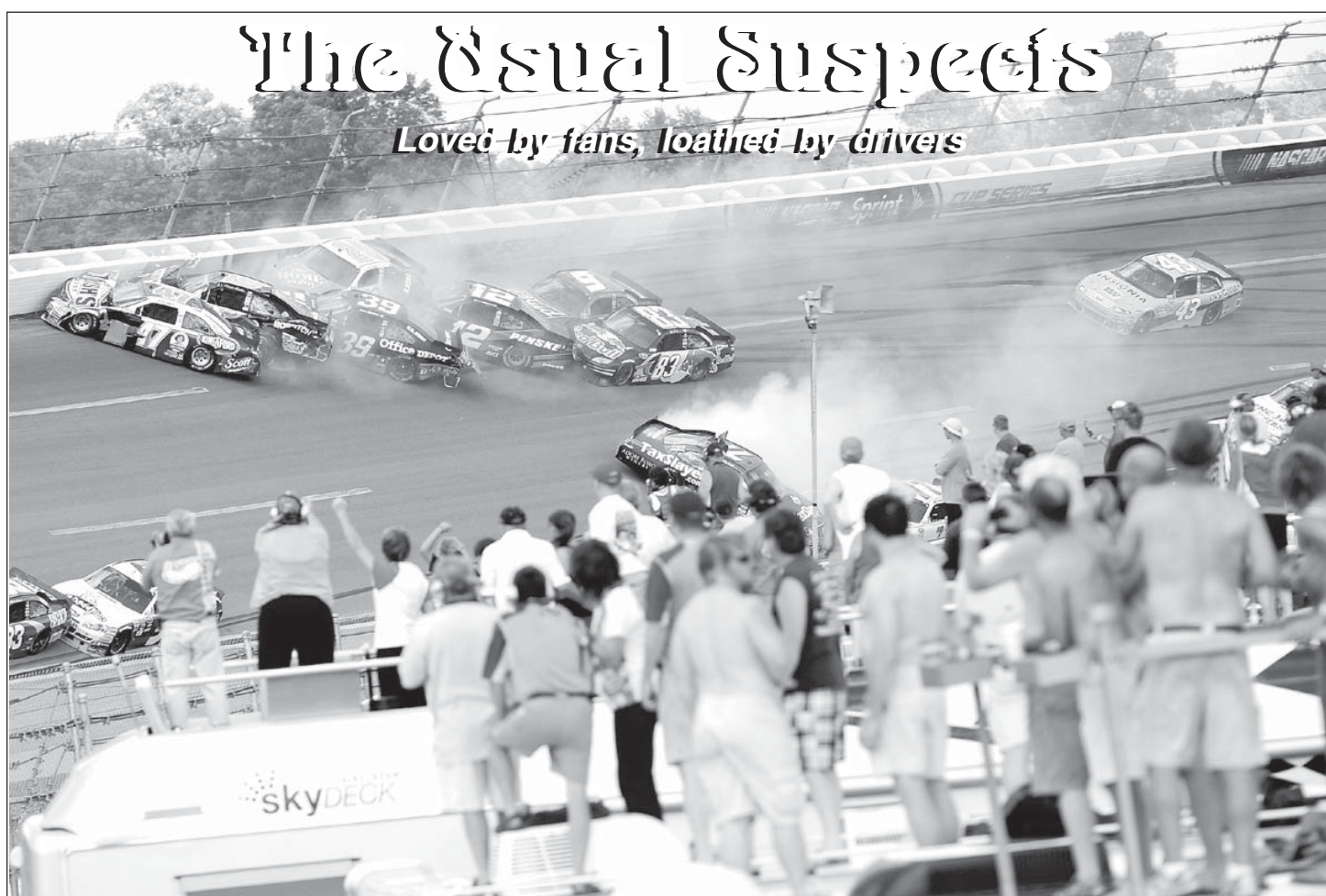
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From series, track and staff race reports

Regional Racing Recap

Continued from page 16

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Rock and Race from page 7

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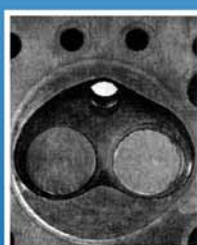
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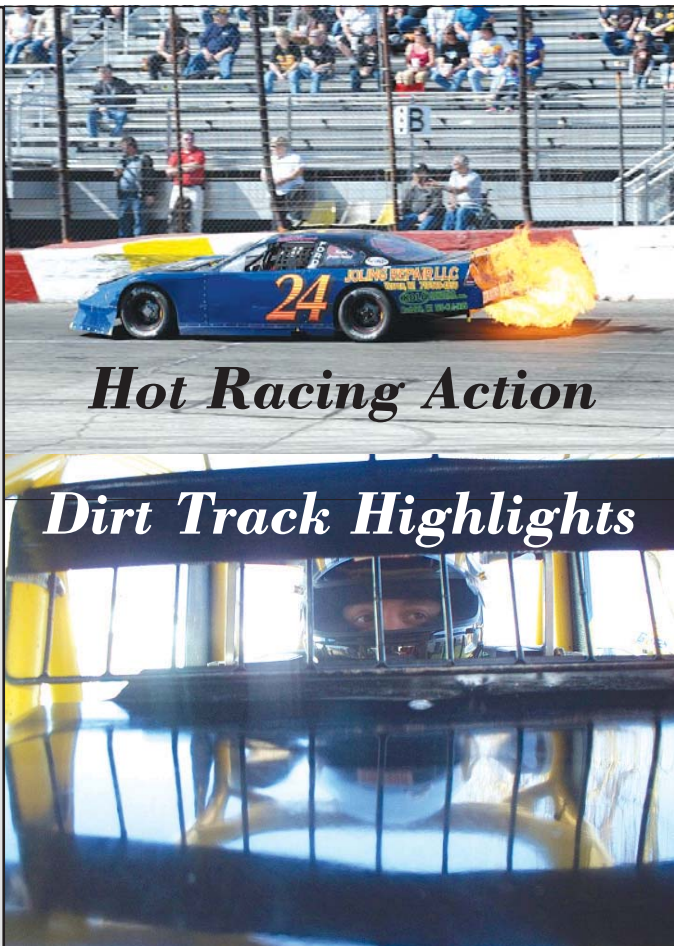
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