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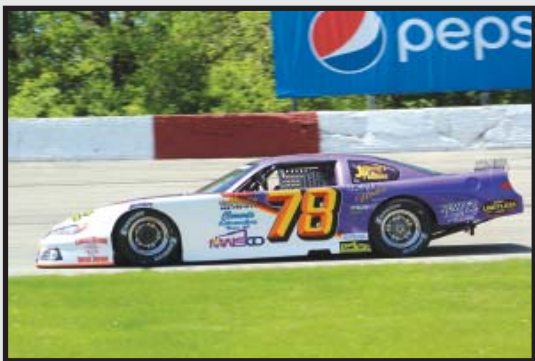


Vol. 27 Issue 2 June 2023

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Going in Circles



Throwback to Dad

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PRODUCT

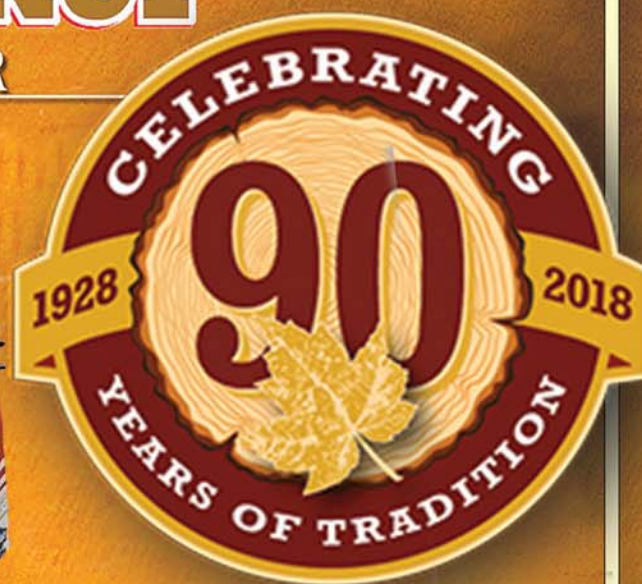
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Publisher's Note Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

I took my first racing road trip of the year to start off the month of May. I've been lucky enough to take several trips to Wisconsin solely to attend racing throughout my life. Sometimes with my family, sometimes with friends and other times just by myself. The first trip of the year was a solo trip. My original agenda consisted of the opening night of The Dairyland Showdown at Mississippi Thunder Speedway, the season opener at Tomah Sparta Speedway,

Unplanned Events

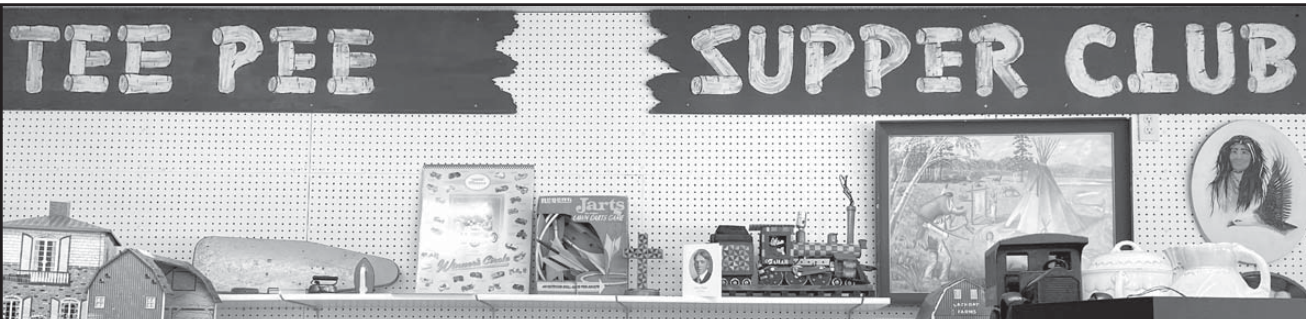
the season opener at Dell's Raceway Park and the Joe Shear Classic at Madison International Speedway. The weather and my own stupidity altered my agenda slightly.

When I arrived at Mississippi Thunder Speedway, I realized I had left all of my video and camera gear at home. That's pretty stupid for a "media guy."

After watching a fantastic show at Mississippi Thunder, I headed out for Tomah Sparta Speedway Friday morning. I had plenty of time on my hands, so I stopped in at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway and spent some time chatting with new General Manager Austin Wells. I think the folks in West Salem are in good hands with Austin starting the new era for LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway. The weird thing about this visit was, I hadn't planned on stopping in and two teams from Minnesota (Michael Beamish and Nick Beaver) were practicing on a Friday afternoon.

After leaving West Salem, I still had plenty of time on my hands and stopped in at Wehrs Machine & Racing Products in Bangor, WI. Even though I showed up unannounced, Chad Wehrs took some time out of his busy schedule to give me a personal tour of the facility. It is impressive. Lots of cool items, tons of stuff designed by racers and some really cool new products. When I asked Chad if he ever imagined

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The sign and other artifacts from one of Dick Trickle's early sponsors - The Tee Pee Supper Club - are on display in the Tomah Area Museum

The Midwest

RACING

Connection

June 2023

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The Midwest Racing Connection is published six times during the summer racing season by

The Plan Company, Inc.

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651-451-4036.*

Cover photos by: Branden Aeling and Dan Plan

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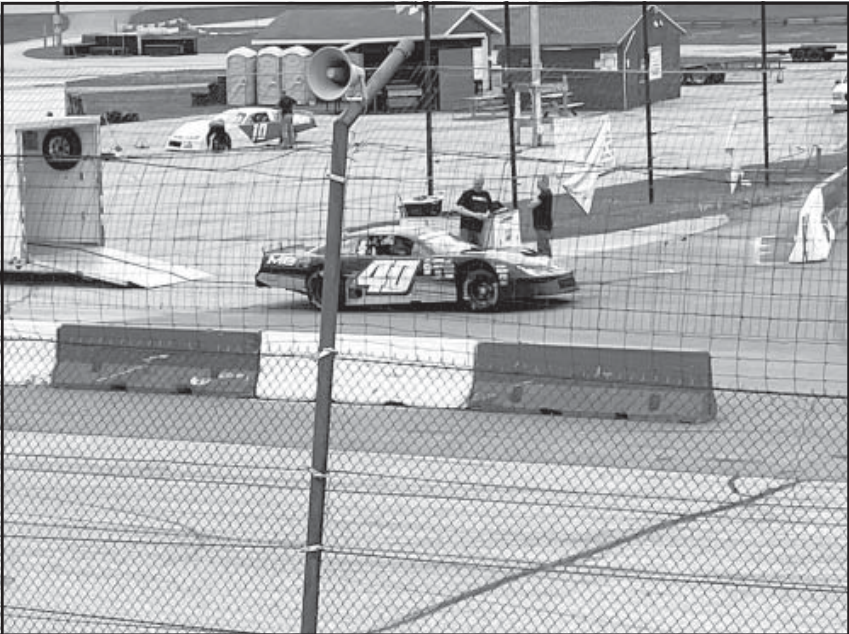
Publishers note from page 3

having a business this big over 25 years ago when he started Wehrs Machine, he simply answered; “I just wanted to build parts.” The good news for the short track industry is, he’s still building parts.

After my two unplanned stops, I was off to Tomah Sparta Speedway, but I was still going to be really early. I took a drive through Tomah and decided to stop into the Tomah Area Museum. I remember seeing pictures of Dick Trickle’s early race cars having Tee Pee Supper Club as a sponsor. The Supper Club was demolished years ago, but they still have a few signs and other artifacts in the Tomah Museum. That was pretty cool to see in my book.

When I finally arrived at Tomah Sparta Speedway, Greg Oliver mentioned his concern for the weather forecast. I had not looked at the forecast in a few days, but on this particular Friday it did not look good. Greg ended up cancelling early to allow fans and

racers an opportunity to make other plans for Friday night. The good part for me was Greg took me on a walking tour of the track and personally explained who raced there in the past and how the track was re-configured many years ago. After walking a lap around the track, Greg gave me detailed directions to visit the lost speedway in Black River Falls. I had heard about the track but was never sure where it was. Thanks to Greg, I was able to walk a lap around Black River Falls Speedway later in the day before the rain came. As I’ve said before, rainouts ain’t all bad and now I’ve also learned you don’t necessarily have to stick to an agenda for a trip.



Pre-season practice for Michael Beamish and Nick Beaver at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway



The Wehrs Machine & Racing Products showroom (left photo) and the remains of Black River Falls Speedway (right photo)



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RACING NUGGETS



Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

The month of May started off with, of course, RAIN! Most tracks in the midwest had to do battle with mother nature, and she can be very fickle in the month of May.

Rockford Speedway did the best they could with adverse weather, and the regular season opener and following weekly shows went on as scheduled. I think we are going to see a lot of different drivers racing here this year for one or two nights, some more that will race all year, and some of the regulars who do tribute paint schemes.

One of the drivers making a comeback is Russ Goodwin. Russ got his start in racing here back in the early 1980's in the Roadrunner division. "We had a whole bunch of '70 Impala's sitting around, and we used those for the first couple of years, then I switched to a '70 Monte Carlo," Noted Russ. He would then go on to race late models at various tracks including Lake Geneva, Columbus, and later Jefferson. Most of his cars had what others would consider bad luck, a green paint scheme. "Everyone called it dumpster green," He laughed. One other trademark that Russ always had on all of his cars was the number spelled out on the back panel of all of the cars, "Eleven." Which was and is his racing number since day one.

He is now back and racing in the American Short Tracker division, saying, "This might be the only division that I haven't raced in yet." While Russ had a

fair amount of success in every division he has raced in, he is taking it one step at a time now, after not being behind the wheel of a race car for twenty years, saying, "I just want to get better and better as time goes on and get faster." His Mustang carries his traditional green and gray paint, and of course, carries "Eleven" on the back panel. Crew chief is his son, Matt, who also did some racing of his own in the four-cylinder Bandit division at area tracks a few years ago.

Steve Rubeck took the popular win in the late models on opening night. He got the lead when the two leaders had a bit of an altercation, opening the door for Steve to get the lead back and ultimate win, which was not easy with Jon Reynolds Jr. and Michael Bilderback hounding him. He was emotional in victory lane, as his dad had passed away just days before. "I had nothing for them," said Steve of the two cars that had passed him by and appeared to be headed to victory. "When that happened, it opened the door for me again. I think Dad gave me one."

I asked Steve when he had last won a feature, and he said, "In May of 2021, right about this time of year. It was with this car. It's a good car but hasn't been raced much. I think this is only the sixth night I have raced it, so it is two-for-six."

Jacob Vanoskey will be back racing here all year in the late models after racing just Slinger the past couple of years. Bill Balmes makes a return, as well as Steve Vaughn. Brandon Laing also has been racing weekly. Like I said, there will be many different faces here throughout the year.

The Sixer class was scheduled for the second weekly show, and they responded enthusiastically, with a reported forty-one of them on hand. They put on quite a show! The Lady drivers are not left out, as they have some "Powder Puff Sixer" races scheduled.

Marcie Brockmann was about to embark in her first ever race on asphalt. "I'm glad that they have kept the powder puff events for this year so that I get a chance to race on this track," said Marcie. "I just want to go out and learn and see how it goes from there. I did race a couple of times on the dirt at Sycamore" She ran well, kept a groove, stayed out of trouble, and has a great attitude about it. She did well.

If the Brockmann name sounds familiar, it should, as Husband Bart has built and raced cars for several years and went over this car with a fine-toothed comb and a quality rollcage before letting Marcie race, saying, "It's all about safety. The driver has to feel comfortable and confident with the car." Brockmann Built Race Cars is becoming a familiar name, and he even has a couple of dirt late models in his stable, now. He builds quality cars.

One of the new drivers this year in the Roadrunner class is Josh Grenlund. Josh got the racing bug from his dad, David, who raced at Lake Geneva in the late 1990's and early 2000's, then with a modified on the dirt

at Wilmot for about three years. Josh started racing in the Weapons division at Lake Geneva and the Midwest Enduro series, racing at Lake Geneva the final two years the track was racing. His last race prior to this year was back in 2010.

The desire to race does not go away, and Josh wanted to get back into it, saying, "I always wanted to race a Roadrunner car at Rockford, so we decided to build this one. This was before we even knew that the track was going to be in its final year in 2023. Now it became even more important to get out here."

The car is a bit different from the norm. "It's a 1983 Malibu Classic four-door." I am a kind of old school guy, and I wanted to build a car like used to be raced here back in the day. I don't have all of the stuff the other guys have; it is what these cars used to be. My Wife hand-lettered it. It is old school, "said Josh. It is definitely not your cookie-cutter car and is very cool.

Talked with Jarrod Sutherland in the pits one night. Jarrod raced hobby stock type cars around the area quite a few years ago but moved to other places including Hawaii (we should all be so lucky). Jarrod may be racing around this area sometime this summer, as he noted, "I moved to California and have a business there. I came back and bought a hobby stock again and am keeping it here, with the idea of racing it, hopefully for most of the month of August. It's Mike Krueger's car from the Tomah area." So, we may be seeing Jarrod making the rounds later this year. Look for "The California Kid" at a track near you. Jarrod came back to wheel Justin Tyler's Sixer to a feature win here at Rockford a couple of years ago.

Later in the month of May we also saw the return of late model racer Willie Nelson. While he is all business behind the wheel, he has a bit of a jokester side to him, saying, "It is good to be back here racing again. I guess I am "back on the road again." He looked fast right away.

Bobby Frisch was also out for the first time this season in the Roadrunner class, with a car that is lettered as a tribute to his dad, who raced a Roadrunner car with this type of paint scheme back in 1993. He was also fast right away.

Took in the Joe Shear Classic for the ASA cars at Madison on a sunny and actually hot day in early May.

It was interesting to see so many drivers from all areas of the country and one from Canada. I had only heard about these drivers but never seen them race, and there were some that I had never even heard of. This made for something new and fun to watch.

Not normally a fan of segment racing, ASA did this for this event, and I have to say that I enjoyed it. It brought forth a new dimension to the event, and you never quite knew how it was going to play out.

Thirty-eight cars were present, with only twenty-eight making the big show. This left some pretty big-name drivers on the sideline. of those twenty-eight that



Branden Aeling photo

Going In Circles continued on page 6

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made the show, fourteen were from Wisconsin, four from Minnesota, two from Illinois, and one each from California, Massachusetts, Florida, Ohio, Indiana, Mississippi, and Georgia. One Canadian driver from the province of Nova Scotia, Cole Butcher.

I was impressed by Butcher's run to the front. He started near the back of the field, steadily passed cars, and was up to ninth at the end of the first segment. He ran near the top all day from there forward, until at the start of the last segment something became awry on his car.

Ty Majeski got the big win rather unexpectedly, as the winner was DQ'd. I heard that Majeski didn't even know of his victory until he was a ways down the road going home.

Wisconsin racers Gabe Sommers and Levon VanDerGeest made a good showing, as both ran well and were there at the end, finishing third and fifth, respectively.

Bubba Pollard got second prize, and I figured he would be in the hunt all day. I had never seen Casey Roderick race, and he was right there all day as well.

Like other tracks, the Lafayette County Speedway has battled the weather early in the season. The first attempted night went fine up until time for hot laps, then the rain came. The second night never even had that chance.

Hobby Stock racer Manny Bennett took a trip down to the track in Maquoketa, Iowa the week before the season began here. He reports getting damage done to the car after spending all winter completely re-doing his car. "We went with a different color this year, and re-did just about everything over the winter. All of the bars have even been replaced other than the main cage bars. It was really bent up."

Four cylinder racer Jonathan Walton came out to the practice day here and promptly blew the engine. He quickly got another engine in while he goes over the old one, that he thinks he caught before doing much damage. A faulty oil filter was to blame. He also has another race car in the garage, as he got Charlie Emery's old hobby stock after Emery got a new car for the 2023 season. Emery sponsors Jonathan as well as other cars and after sponsoring cars, decided to try racing himself last year.

Modified racer Dan Evans has been around racing for awhile and says that he just likes to have fun while racing, no big aspirations or stipulations, just have fun! "I've been racing now for 23 years," Says Dan. "I started out at the old Freeport Raceway in what was a street stock type car. Then, when Freeport closed a few years ago, I took about five or six years off from racing, thought I was done. The sport is very addicting and I got the bug to do it again." He then bought a car for the outlaw stock car class at Maquoketa, Iowa, and raced there for a about three years, then quit for awhile again. Finally, about three years ago the urge to race hit again. "I got my current car, which is a 2016 IROC chassis to race in the Sportmod class here at LCS. I really like this track, and they do a great job of track prep," Said Dan.

Dan feels no need to put any pressure on himself, but just enjoy what the sport has to offer, and he enjoys racing here on Friday nights, saying, "Racing on Friday nights give myself and family time to do other things the rest of the weekend. It is mostly just my Wife, Daughter, our two dogs and me doing this, so if I miss a week here or there that is just fine. I don't put any pressure on myself other than just race when I want. My sponsors understand that and are OK with it."

His car has a bit of an unusual style number, as the 76 on it's doors are fashioned in a kind of old school Union 76 design. "My Wife hated it at first, but she got so that now She kind of likes it," Noted Dan. The car is also lettered the old fashioned way. "I am an old school kind of guy, and it even says that on the back, "Old Skool Cool." Dan also noted that the "76" number came from his football jersey number in his playing days.

This old school lettering is accomplished by one of his sponsors, Scott Stichter graphic arts. The car looks good and stands out. Other sponsors gracing the car include Cory Gustafson Trucking, Channel seed, Oppold truck service, M&W feed, Pivot Bio, IROC Race Cars, Kaus seed. Rod's Welding, and Rosco Racing Carburetors.

One of the racing memories that Dan has is the year that he almost won the street stock championship



Branden Aeling photo

at Freeport, leading the points until the final night, but ultimately finishing second.

Four-cylinder racer Josh Chambers had his new car present the first night of racing. "I built the new car so that it would be IMCA legal and could race at some tracks in Iowa. Lots of people can be fast at one track, but I want to be fast and capable of winning at more than one track. It would be fun to try to race the nationals at Boone," said Josh. So far, he has traveled to tracks in Iowa and has done very well, so mission accomplished. He builds quality cars that are fast and drives them well. His night on opening night here was not without problems, though, as upon starting the car he heard an engine knock and put it back on the trailer, drove the short distance home to get another car, came back, started at the tail of the feature, ultimately getting up to fourth place at the end.

As we move on into the month of June, hopefully the weather will cooperate a bit more.

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Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

Two high profile female drivers who race at Elko (MN) Speedway have been chosen to be a part of the 2023 Women in Motorsports (North America) competition. Taylor Goldman, a current Thunder Car driver, 30 time feature winner and 2018 Elko Speedway Power Stock Champion and Julie Jorgenson a 15-time feature winner and two time Power Stock runner-up in Championship points will both be competing against other women 21 and older who race at NASCAR sanctioned events across North America. Busch light

is the presenting sponsor. Each driver's results in both qualifying and feature events at NASCAR sanctioned events in any division or series will count towards a season point total where the winner will take home \$125,000, second place \$50,000 and \$25,000 for third place.

The Co-Founders of this organization are Lyn St. James who had seven starts at the Indy 500 including being the 1992 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the year, and Beth Paretta who has been a successful business leader for numerous automobile manufacturers and motorsports organizations including Aston Martin and Fiat Chrysler.

A new executive director of Women in Motorsports was named on May 23rd of this year, her name is Cindy Sisson, she was previously the marketing director for the LPGA and has worked with NASCAR on numerous charity and fundraising events in the past.

The Women in Motorsports organization researched Nationwide for potential strong candidates for this competition and Cindy Sisson personally called both Taylor Goldman and Julie Jorgenson to encourage them to apply for this program.

"I got a random phone call one day and it was



Women in Motorsports



Cindy asking me to consider being part of this program, at first I didn't know if it was for real," said Taylor Goldman. "It will be a fun challenge, I'm really excited to be a part of this. I don't think it has hit home yet how cool it is to be a part of this."

Julie Jorgenson will be returning to race in the NASCAR Power Stock division at ELKO with the aim of winning that elusive points Championship in 2023. Taylor Goldman will be starting her third year in the NASCAR Thunder Car division. Because of this competition, both drivers plan on racing more than their usual schedule just at Elko Speedway, they will also travel to other nearby NASCAR sanctioned tracks as well.

"I will be at ELKO every night that we race, that is my Home Track," said Goldman. "I don't ever want to go away from that, but we will be racing other events when ELKO is off, like LaCrosse (WI) and maybe Hawkeye Downs (IA) occasionally."

Taylor Goldman, known as "Roller Girl" to her fans, finished fifth in Thunder Car points at ELKO in 2022 but is still searching for her first win in that ultra competitive division.

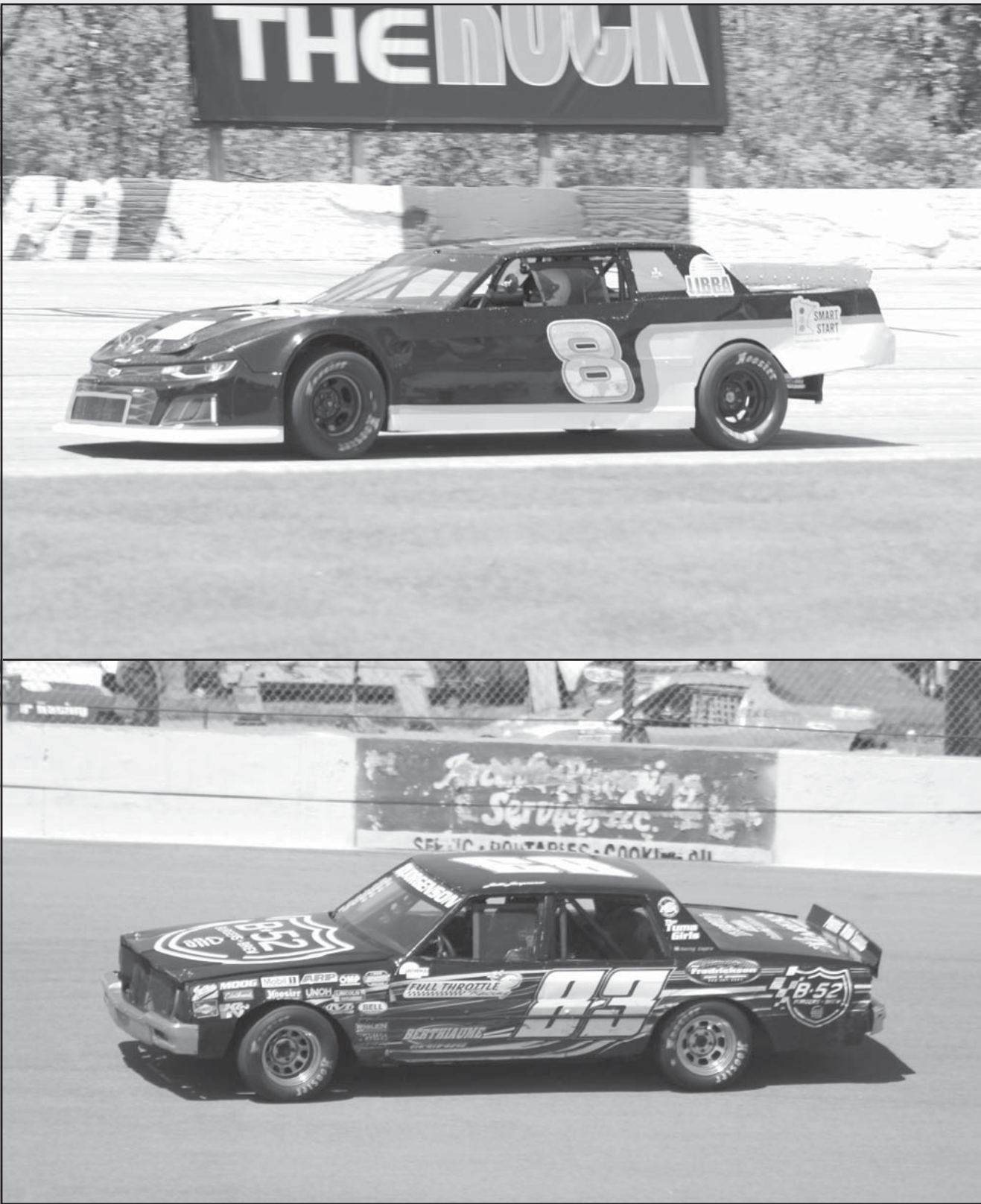
Talkin' Racin' continued on page 8

Talkin' Racin' continued from page 7

“It was a humbling experience moving up to the Thunder Cars,” said Goldman. “The talent that it takes to set these cars up was a whole new experience, I had to go back to school and had to ask a lot of questions to really understand how these cars work. I want to be hands on with these cars, I need to really understand this car to be confident with the adjustments of the car. It was eye opening,” said Goldman. “I feel like I can be more aggressive now (in her third year). People liked the fact that I was aggressive in the Power Stock division, not overly aggressive, but enough to make my point be known. I think I need to get back to that attitude in the Thunder Cars. At first I thought that I might be in over my head in the Thunder Cars, but I just didn’t know enough about it, so now having more knowledge of car set-up and being able to properly communicate with my dad (crew chief Dave Goldman), it’s going to have a very different outlook on this years results, so I am excited to see how we do,” said Goldman.

Race fans from the Northland have long recognized the talent that both Taylor Goldman and Julie Jorgenson have displayed because we have seen them compete for wins on a weekly basis for numerous years. But now, thanks to this Women in Motorsports competition, both Julie and Taylor have the opportunity to attract the attention of the entire NASCAR Nation.

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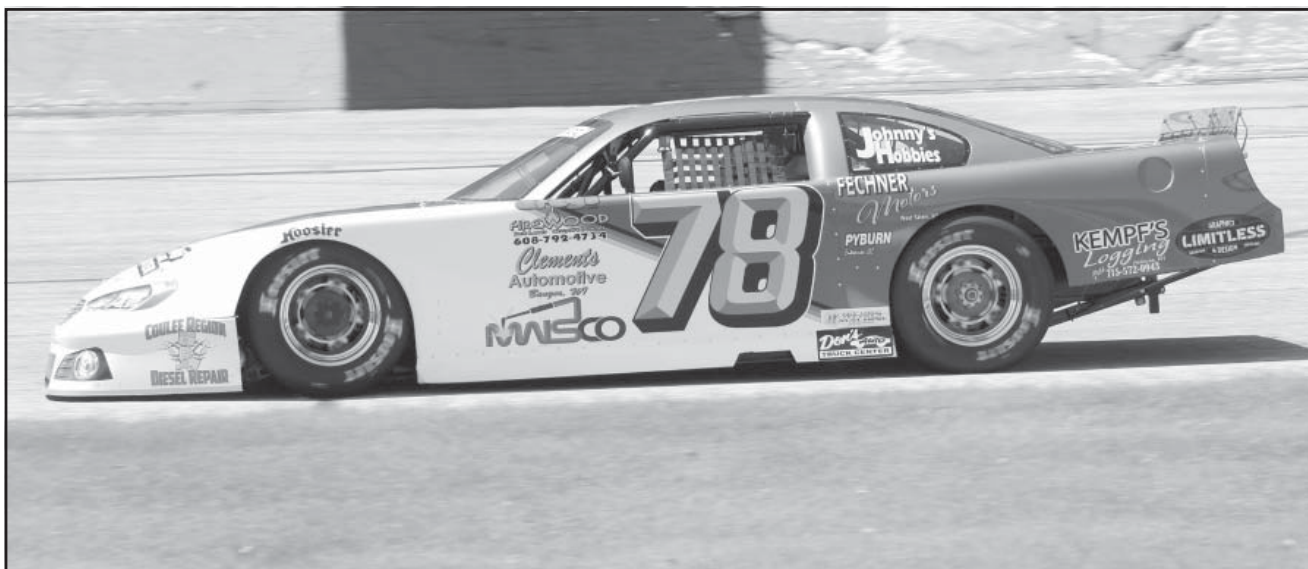
There have been many world problems solved in the race shop late at night over some cocktails... that is if you believe the guys when they're telling stories and laughing. However, this bunch—along with Johnny Gilbertson were spitballing ideas about getting a late model back out at La Crosse Speedway. The resounding name that kept coming up was Skylar Holzhausen.

I love it when a plan comes together, especially when it's something that brings joy to many. Late in the off-season, my husband Toby started talking to me

about the possibility of Skylar coming back to race full time at La Crosse. It was a delicious thought, and this group of guys would surely put together a competitive piece.

It was late March by the time things finally materialized—which didn't leave much time for the guys to get the car prepared and ready for the opener at La Crosse. There were a LOT of hours poured into putting the car together. Steve and Toby would work on

Throwback to Dad



it during the day; Skylar and a few others would join in after they got off work.

Go figure, the old guys were hard at it during the day. Steve definitely pushed himself a little too hard with his still-injured left foot from that throttle sticking incident years ago at Dells Raceway Park. Nonetheless, he continued to push through. I have to admit whenever I'd stop out to the shop and see both Steve and Toby working on that car, it made me smile. Those two were like peanut butter and jelly in their careers. They belong together with their hands on a race car.

Skylar definitely put in a lot of overtime working on the car as well to get it ready. One of the coolest things he did was decide to make the car look like a throwback to what his dad's car looked like in the 80s when Steve and Toby were running all over the Midwest together.

Racing Nuggets continued on page 10

Racing Nuggets continued on page 9

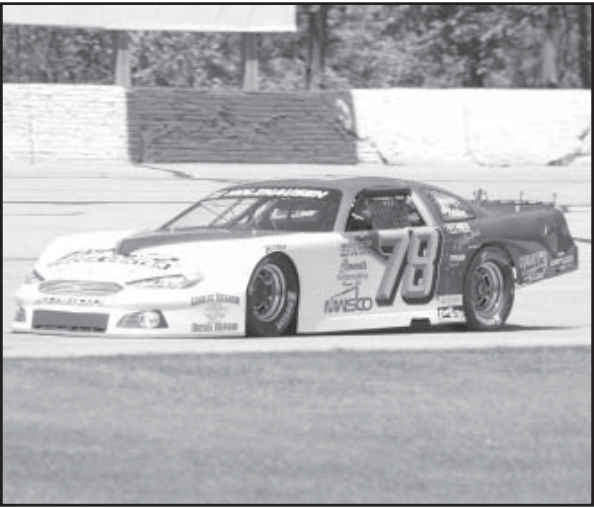
On opening night at La Crosse, that awesome purple and white car with the golden diamond-cut 78 made its debut in notable fashion. Skylar set fast time, missing the track record by just .009 seconds. He was looking mighty sporty in race trim too, until the motor failed him during the 25-lap feature. The cam broke, prematurely ending what was shaping up to be a stellar return to La Crosse for him.

But the comeback is always better than the setback. Rest assured; the father-son duo has been working hard to get things fixed so they can return to action. As of this writing, the night before the second night of the season at La Crosse—they continue to work on the machine to be prepped.

There’s a lot to love and appreciate about this team’s effort. The history, the throwback look, the father-son teamwork, and the fun they bring to the track—both during and after the races.

As of this writing, we are hours away from the second night of racing at La Crosse Speedway and thanks again to Johnny Gilbertson, Skylar will be back with a TomKat-built engine that has visited victory lane many times with Steve Carlson and Nick Clements.

I can’t think of a more triumphant way for the Holzhausen family to honor their racing history than to see Skylar, a third-generation racer drive his way to Victory Lane. It would be a fitting way to kick off the month that honors Dads; a nice thank you for his dad, Steve, his late grandpa, Bud—and make his little girls squeal with delight over their daddy winning.



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Familiar Faces

When visiting tracks across the state of Wisconsin, you may see familiar faces of track/series employees at different tracks.

Some may have their main role with a particular track/series but are willing to help out at another track when the need arises. The two most recent familiar face sightings were Tom White (top photo - Midwest Tour Flagman/Starter) flipping burgers at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway and Sharon Johnson (bottom photo - LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway ticket gate) working the overflow concession line at Cedar Lake Speedway. It takes a team to make the dream.





THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



Ty Majeski and Dan Fredrickson battle for the lead at Madison
Doug Hornickel photo



Mike Litchfield captured the Super Late main on opening night DRP
Doug Plan photo



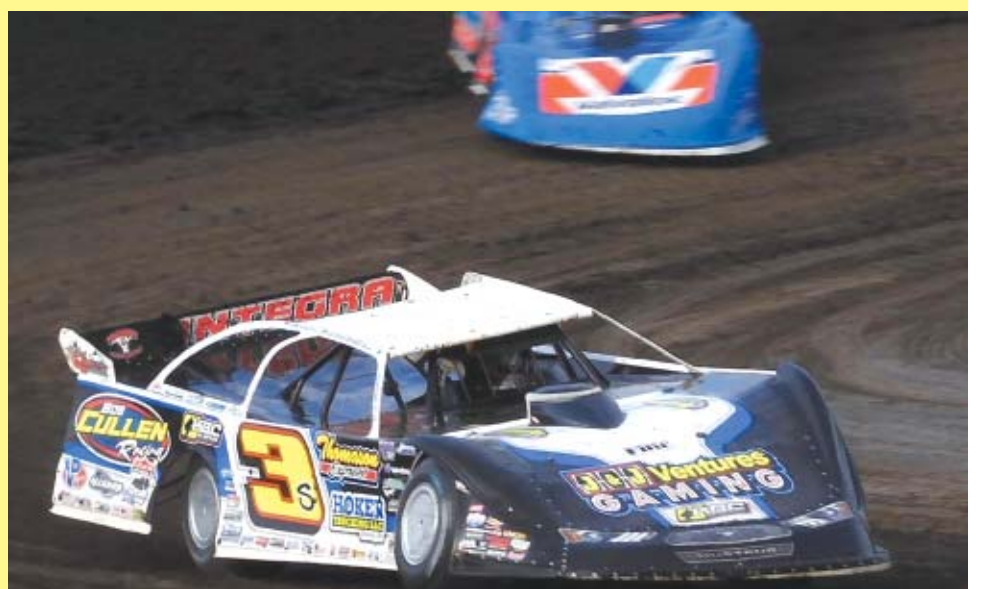
Austin Nason and Michael Bilderback battle for the lead at Rockford
Jeff Taber photo



Dave Evans in action at Lafayette County Speedway
Branden Aeling photo



Chase Friendt left the left front at home at Cedar Lake
Russ Wheeler photo



Brian Shirley in Lucas Oil Late Model action during Illinois Speedweeks
Brian Schmitt photo

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Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

When I was a kid Rich Bickle, Scott Hansen, Dave Watson, Al Schill, and Ted Dolhun were some of the drivers I cheered for at tracks around Wisconsin. I idolized those guys as I had their driver cards on the wall of my room and built models of their cars. I cut the photos out of the weekly Midwest Racing News and Checkered Flag Racing News of these guys and glued them in a scrapbook. Now fast forward to 2023 at Madison International Speedway and every one of those guys stopped me to see how I was doing and how round two of chemotherapy was going. It really kind of stopped me in my tracks when I thought about just how much those guys played a part in my becoming a part of the racing community. For the record, chemo is going as well as it could be going and I'm about halfway to being done. We were all at Madison for the Joe Shear Classic 200 which was the second race of both the new ASA Stars National Tour and the ASA Midwest Tour. Racing is definitely the best medicine and it was beautiful day to spend at the track, see lots of longtime racing friends, and watch a pretty good competitive field of super late models.

I watched the race from a suite with all those guys and it was quite an interesting experience to watch the racing action unfold while at the same time

getting the perspective of such legendary drivers. I spent a lot of time talking with Dave Watson and I can tell you, he's quite a character. I saw him win a USAC race at the Milwaukee Mile in 1977 when I was seven and it was fun reliving some of that with him. I remember that race because the main buzz was Bobby Allison coming up in an AMC Hornet and then some Wisconsin guy named Dave Watson kicked all their asses and won going away. It was the first time I ever heard of Dave Watson and I grabbed a bunch of AMS/OIL Watson racing stickers, two of which I used to mark our spot on the top row bleacher bars at the Hales Corners Speedway. I didn't realize (because I was seven) that Watson was actually a rookie in that race and the officials weren't all that pleased that he upstaged the superstars and I learned they spent an extraordinary amount of time combing over his Buick Skylark in post-race tech before finally declaring the win official.

Scott Hansen won the ASA race at Madison in 1993 and when a few in the suite doubted me on that fact, it was cool to have the man himself on hand to set the record straight. I remember that race because I worked as a spotter for the infield camera man on the scissor lift for The Nashville Network (TNN). I also remember that race because I was in my early twenties and bar-hopping with friends was a higher priority then so I drove back to Milwaukee after practice and qualifying to partake in the Milwaukee Saturday night bar scene. My friends all met at one house and another friend (not me) drove as we all piled into his car. Well, after visiting several establishments and being near last call, it was time to go home when lo and behold, our driver locked the keys in the car. There we were, stuck in downtown Milwaukee after 2AM and I had to be in Madison in about five hours to work the ASA race.

True story, as we were all trying to figure out how we were going to get out of this predicament, some total stranger heard us talking (I may have been yelling as I really needed to be in Madison) and asked if I was part of the LTN racing radio show. He heard me and evidently recognized my voice and when I explained what was going on, he gave us a ride to get a spare set of keys and long story short, I made it to Madison with no sleep but on time. Then Scott Hansen won the race and that's why I

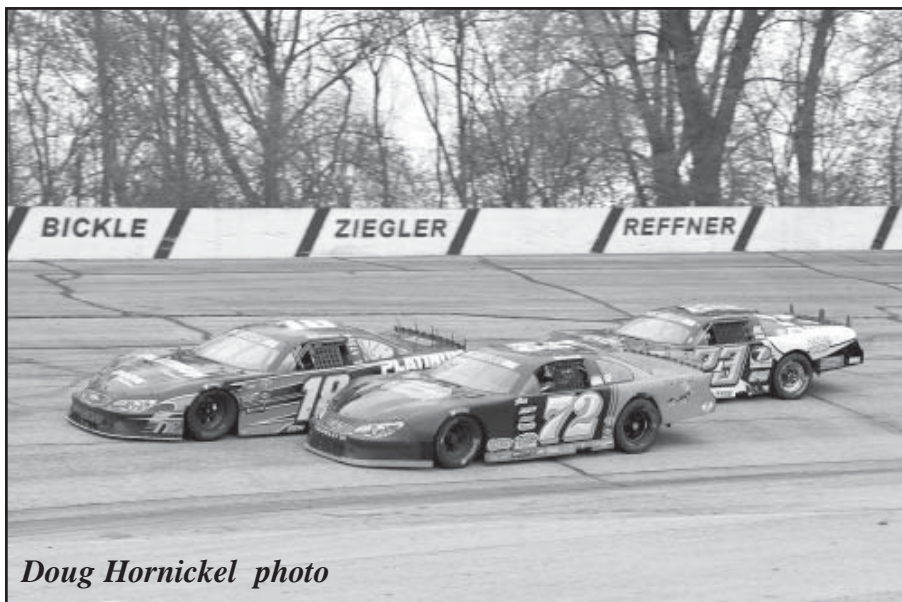


Brian Schmitt photo

remember that day so well.

The Joe Shear Classic was a pretty good race overall as multiple drivers including Ty Majeski, Casey Roderick, Steve Apel, Jacob Goede, and Dan Fredrickson all led at some point. Fredrickson took the checkered flag over Majeski but was later gonged in tech over a spacer height issue, meaning Majeski got the win. It was the only downer on the day as I really don't like finding out who really won after I already got home, especially over an issue that's obscure to most race fans.

After Madison, my LTN Radio partner Brian Schmitt and I ventured to the dirt tracks for Illinois Speedweeks with the Lucas Oil Late Model Series. We packed up my new Lincoln and drove it to Lincoln Speedway in Lincoln, IL for the Thursday night Castrol Flo Racing Night in America. Lincoln is a typical Illinois dirt bullring that races real well and although Brian was there in 2011, it was my first time at the facility. The fans were super friendly and hospitable we made a few new friends while the late models and modifieds put on a show. When all was said and done, Hudson O'Neal drove the Rocket 1 car to the victory over Brandon Sheppard in the late model feature while Tyler Nicely topped the modified main event. We headed to Farmer City Raceway the following (Friday) night for the first of two Lucas Oil Late Model Series races with plans to attend Fairbury on Saturday before returning home. We got to the Farmer City Raceway early to put down blankets for some top row seats, checked into our hotel in Pontiac, IL, and then returned to the track to visit friends in the pits. All was going well as the Lucas Oil Late Model heats were run along with one of two B Mains. Then during the second B Main the skies began to open up and rain began to increase in intensity. I made it back to the car before the deluge began to stay dry but Brian wasn't so lucky and ended up being stuck under the grandstand. The rain was enough to postpone the remainder of the evening and we weren't going to be able to make the rescheduled date. The weather remained iffy on Saturday and after checking forecasts we made an executive decision in the morning to



Doug Hornickel photo

Dangerous Dan continued on page 16

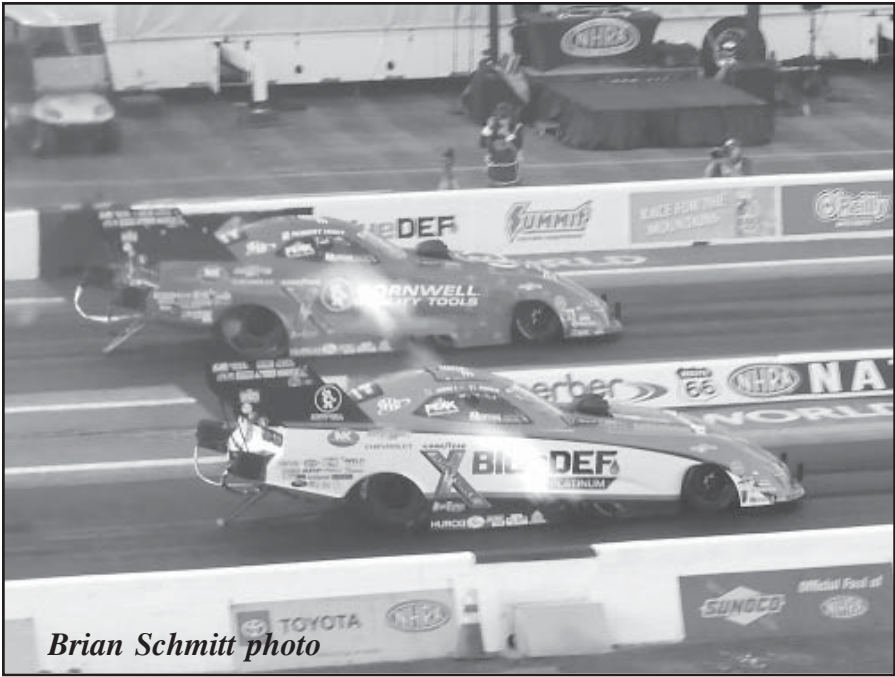
Dangerous Dan continued from page 15

head towards home and attend the All Star Circuit of Champions Sprint Car Series race at Wilmot instead of going to Fairbury. It ended up being a good call for us as Fairbury was delayed by rain into the early morning while Wilmot didn't have any weather issues. The new grandstands at Wilmot are impressive and the new lighting has really spruced up the place. We were told the grandstands actually came from Rockingham and they are a huge improvement from the old ones. While we were visiting in the pits, Dave Kallmann from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel was looking for an interesting driver to do a story on. Brian suggested Preston Ruh, who is a college student who actually speaks Chinese and a small family team. He likely wasn't going to win that night and it would be a task to just make the show but his back story intrigued Kallmann enough to conduct an interview for the story. As fate would have it, Preston Ruh was able to hang on to the final transfer spot in his heat race and made the All Star Circuit of Champions A-Main in his first attempt at competing with the series. It was fun to watch and cheer for as Ruh put his family operation in the A-Main and suddenly Kallmann's story got a lot more interesting. Wisconsin hot shoes Bill Balog and Scotty Thiel also made the A-Main but the race was dominated by Tyler Courtney. In all it was a good weekend at the dirt tracks even though we had to alter travel plans due to weather.

The following weekend it was time to check out

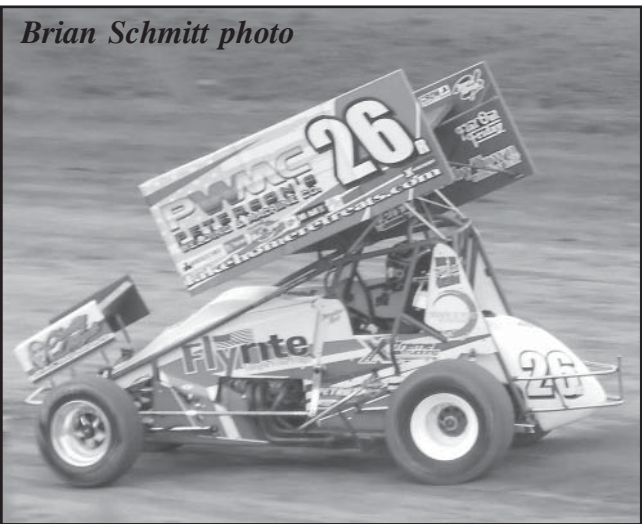
the straight line crowd as Brian and I went to our first NHRA event as we checked out qualifying day at the Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Illinois. We walked the pits before heading to our seats and I learned quickly what happens when you stand directly behind a Top Fuel dragster when they start it up. While I got a cool social media video, I was hit with a blast of Nitro Methane that really clears your sinuses and makes your eyes water. Who knows? Maybe it also cures Lymphoma and I wondered if I might have some explaining to do if it shows up in blood tests at my round three chemo appointment later in the week. We got to our seats in time to see the major classes complete their qualifying runs. The Pro Stock were up first followed by the Pro Stock Motorcycles but things really ramped up with the Top Fuel and Funny Car classes. Holy crap, when the Top Fuel cars launch it's not just loud but you can actually feel it in your heart. We jumped so much when the first pair took off, the guys from Michigan in the stands behind us were laughing and really razzed us with a few "Bet that doesn't happen to you at NASCAR races" barbs. Neither Brian or I had ever been to an NHRA event so we were surprised when a radio listener recognized us in the crowd. We spent time talking with Nick from Princeton and his family and once again we made another racetrack friend, this time at a drag strip. It was a full day and once again I'm glad I was able to attend as it checked off another motorsports event bucket list item.

There was little time to rest after the NHRA event as the next day I was up early to run the LTN Radio show as our engineer Matt Losee was out of town. I haven't turned the dials in a long time so I was relieved when the show went smoothly with few mistakes. As soon as we were off the air, I immediately drove to Slinger Speedway for round two of the Elite Eight Super Late Model Series and the 75-lap Race Against Cancer. The super lates never disap-

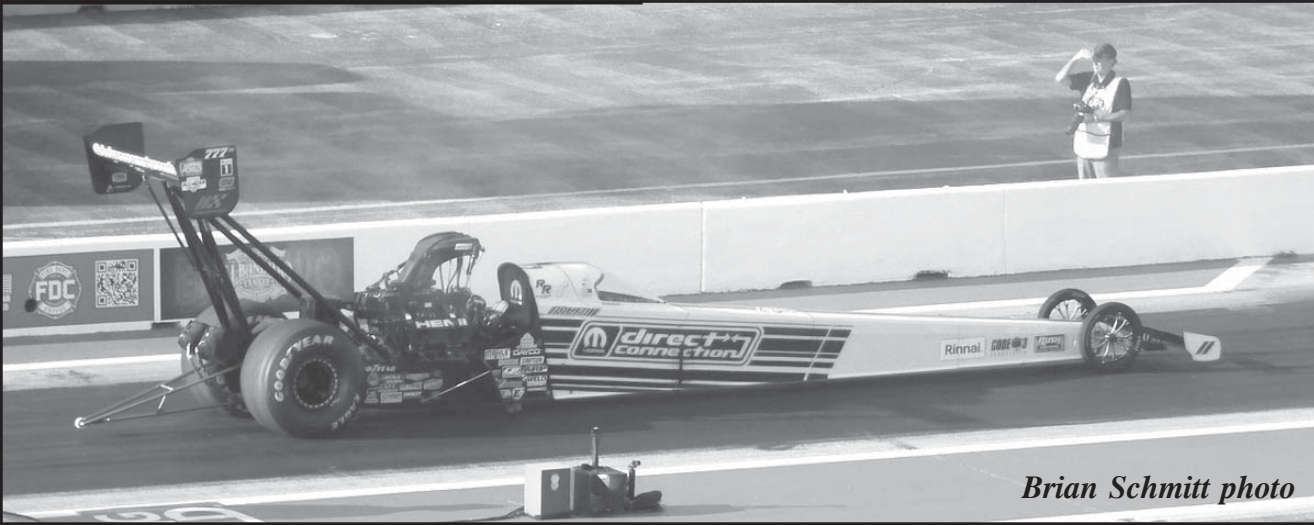


Brian Schmitt photo

point at Slinger and the feature lived up to the tradition. I ran the camera for the Racing America Live Stream and it was exciting to focus on a great lead battle between R.J. Braun, Jacob Nottestad, and Steve Apel. Braun and Nottestad traded the top spot for a few laps before Apel worked his way around both of them to lead late in the event. Nottestad kept Apel honest and the two raced aggressively but not egregiously for the win. Nottestad was able to pull alongside as the pair raced to the checkered flag but Apel edged out the victory by a mere .063 seconds. It was a great day and wrapped up a busy couple of weeks race chasing. With summer coming up things will only get busier and as always I plan to make as many races as I can. I hope to see you there!



Brian Schmitt photo



Brian Schmitt photo



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Racing History

INFLUENCERS OF WISCONSIN RACING

IN CONVERSATION WITH RACING PIONEER LARRY BAUMEL



Dale P. Danielski

Looking back through the years of establishing Wisconsin short track racing, a number of drivers come to mind, and one was Larry BaumeL. BaumeL was consistently fast, winning against the best racers of the time and having accomplished what he set out to do, decided to take on National in scope Series' of racing.

Part one: The story begins.

MRC: For Larry BaumeL the racing bug bit early, becoming an interest at a young age.

BaumeL: "I was born in Wis. Rapids, and my neighbor took me to the races at Crowns Speedway.

I was only five or six, but I remember Don Ruder, the 4 Aces car and some others racing. That was a big reason for me getting started. Soap Box Derby racing was big in the area too, and my Dad and I were interested in that."

MRC: It wasn't long and Larry got into stock car racing, experiencing success right from the outset.

BaumeL: "I was 21 years old when I started, it was at Sparta/Tomah Speedway in 1965. I was racing in the Feature right away. I had never raced before and I was running with the best of the best. That was a hell of a crew, the cream of the crop. Marcis, Walbeck, Trickle, Marzofka, Foxx, all those guys. I beat 'em all."

MRC: When you got started it was a hectic schedule of racing with tracks holding events throughout the State of Wisconsin and beyond.

BaumeL: "You could race 5 nights a week if you wanted. Adams Friendship, Black River Falls, Dells Motor Speedway, Griffith Park, Tomah, all over. I went from not having raced anything before in my life to racing almost every day of the week. The first time we took the race car out to practice when it was brand new, we took it to Black River Falls Speedway. Back in those days they'd let you run anything, they didn't even ask about the car. Ev Fox, he worked at a body shop by the racetrack, heard me and came out and had me on the clock running faster than the track

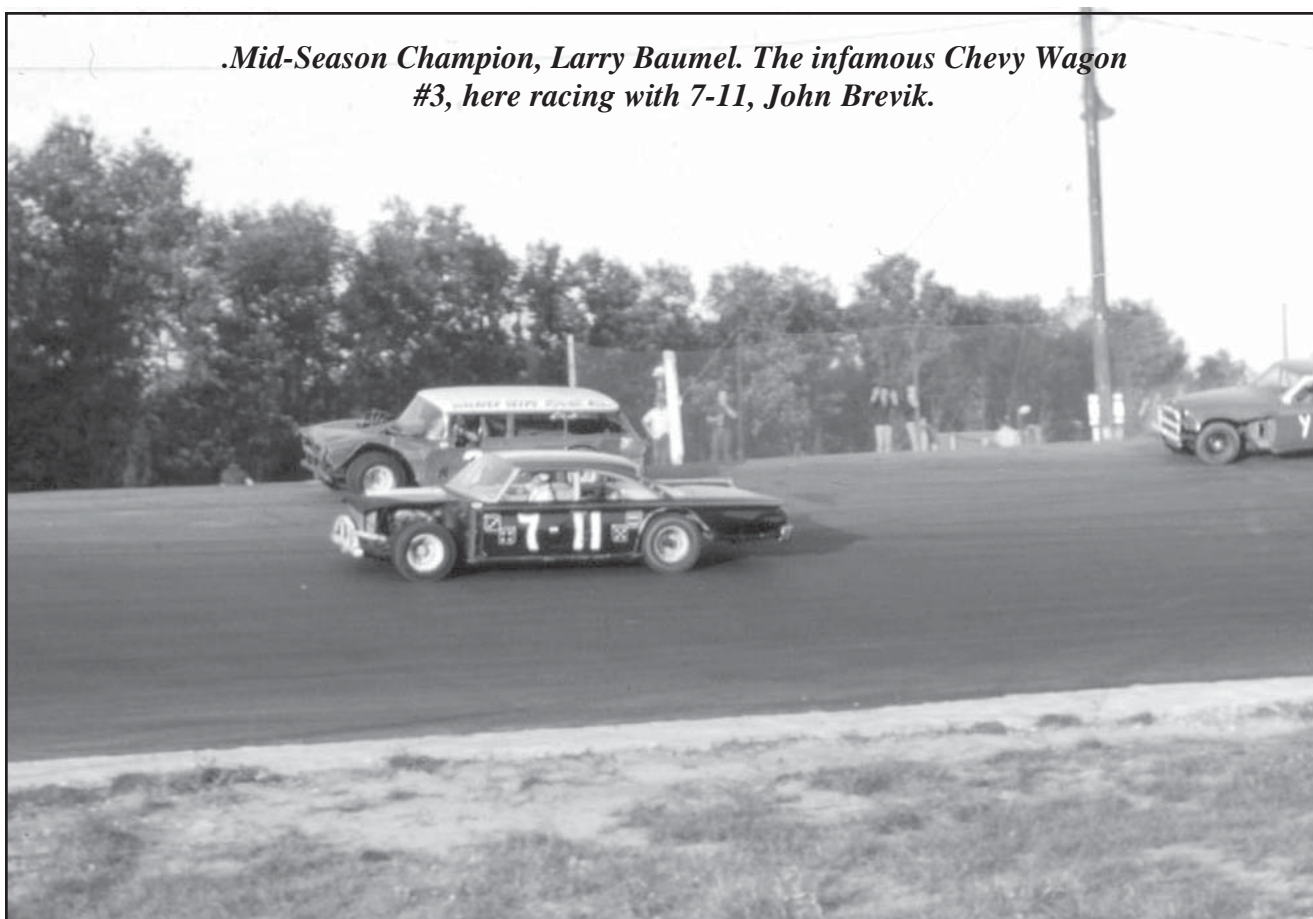


record, right off the truck, never raced before. That car was so illegal, it had a swing axle, just like Ev Fox had the year before when he won all those races with a Corvette chassis. Except now, because of that, they made a rule, no swing axles. My brother built a completely independent rear suspension which was technically legal, and we raced it."

MRC: Moose Peterson was a well-known racer and car owner from Black River Falls providing race cars for the likes of Fox, Jere O' Day, Marv Marzofka, Dick Trickle and others. He had good equipment and drivers won a lot in his race cars.

BaumeL: "I think everyone drove for Moose. He wanted me to drive that pony car he had, a Camaro. He'd catch up to me in the Tavern and say, I want you to drive that Camaro. I never did, but Moose was a wheeler, dealer. He was somethin' else. If we rained out, we'd be at the Tavern and Moose, drinking his beer, ever friendly with the ladies, would announce it's party time. He'd disappear outside, come back in, and soon he'd be arm and arm with another gal. Unfortunately, the beer got to him. He was out on his

.Mid-Season Champion, Larry BaumeL. The infamous Chevy Wagon #3, here racing with 7-11, John Brevik.



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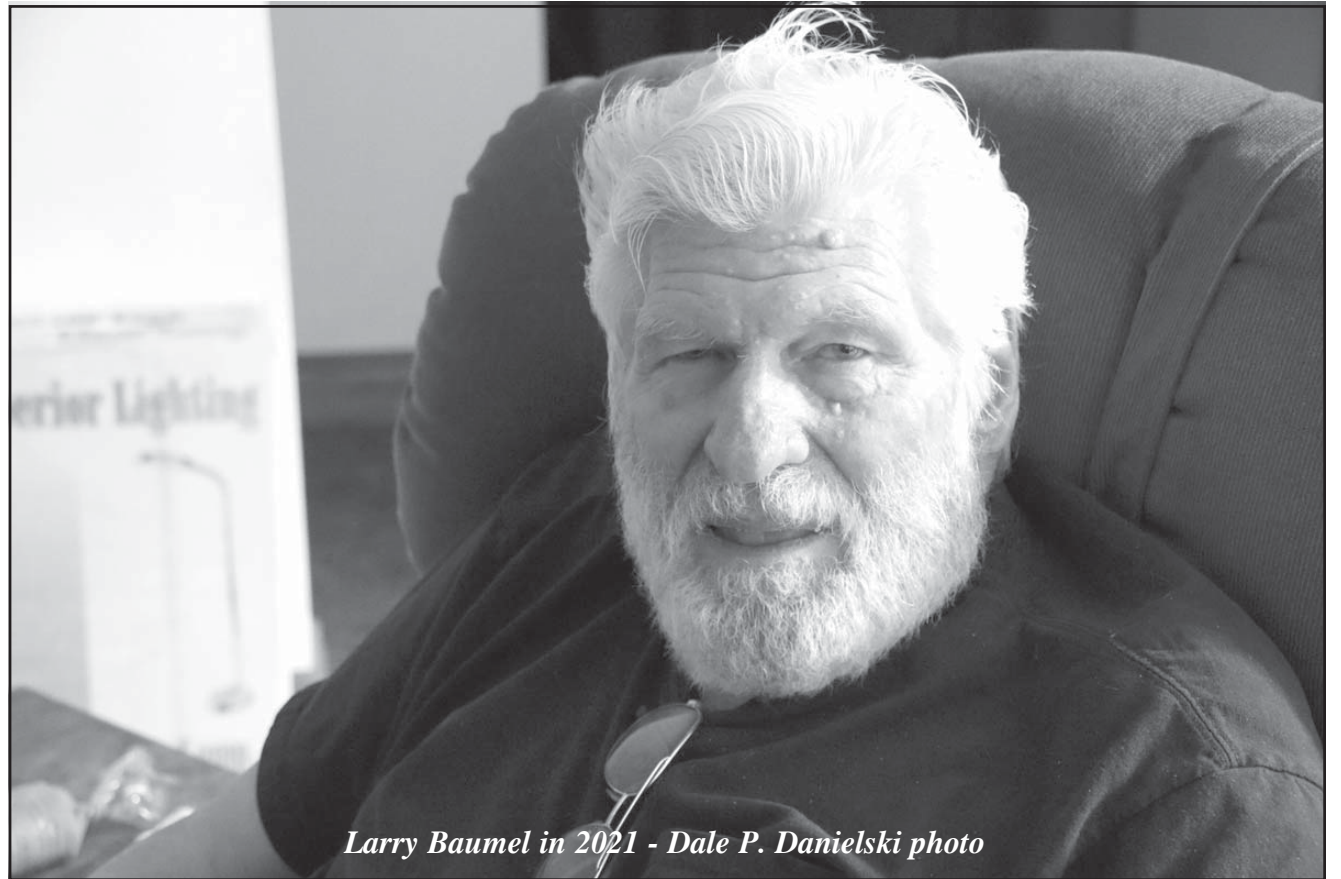
motorcycle, driving like a raped ape and crashed into a tree. It killed him.”

MRC: With your brother you were able to approach the sport via a significant improvement in wheels for racing.

Baumel: “My brother Stan came up with a unique design in wheels that you could use in racing. He built the first car I had and built the wheels for it from scratch. We only had 4 wheels that were on the car, so if I wrecked one, we’d come home at one in the morning, go to the shop and he’d start making another wheel. I’d get up at 8am and he’d just be getting done with the new wheel. He eventually got the wheel into NASCAR and was very successful with it. Bassett wheels were on the Daytona 500 winning cars more than 20 times.”

MRC: You continued racing at the local level winning a number of feature championship races, while expanding the track schedule to such venues as Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., North La Crosse Speedbowl, La Crosse, WI., and La Crosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI. With all that racing and winning, however, one race stands out. Of all things, a bicycle race at Griffith Park Speedway.

Baumel: “Between the heats and feature there, they decided they were going to have a bicycle race. I was fresh out of the army, 22 years old and in good shape, so you knew who was going to win that race. Being younger, they figured I was going to beat all the old farts in the race, so they got me screwed up, facing the wrong way, when they suddenly said GO! So I was last, but most of them died out on the first corner and I caught up. I was given ‘er and given ‘er,



Larry Baumel in 2021 - Dale P. Danielski photo

going down the back straight and the only guy left to pass was Rich Somers. He was runnin’ out of juice, so coming out of the 4th corner I passed him just like that and won the race. The crowd went crazy and I ended up with a portable TV for winning. I think Sam Bartus was running the track at the time, we called him Curtin Coat. Good promoter, but he’d never follow thru on what he promised the drivers. But I did get a TV out of him!”

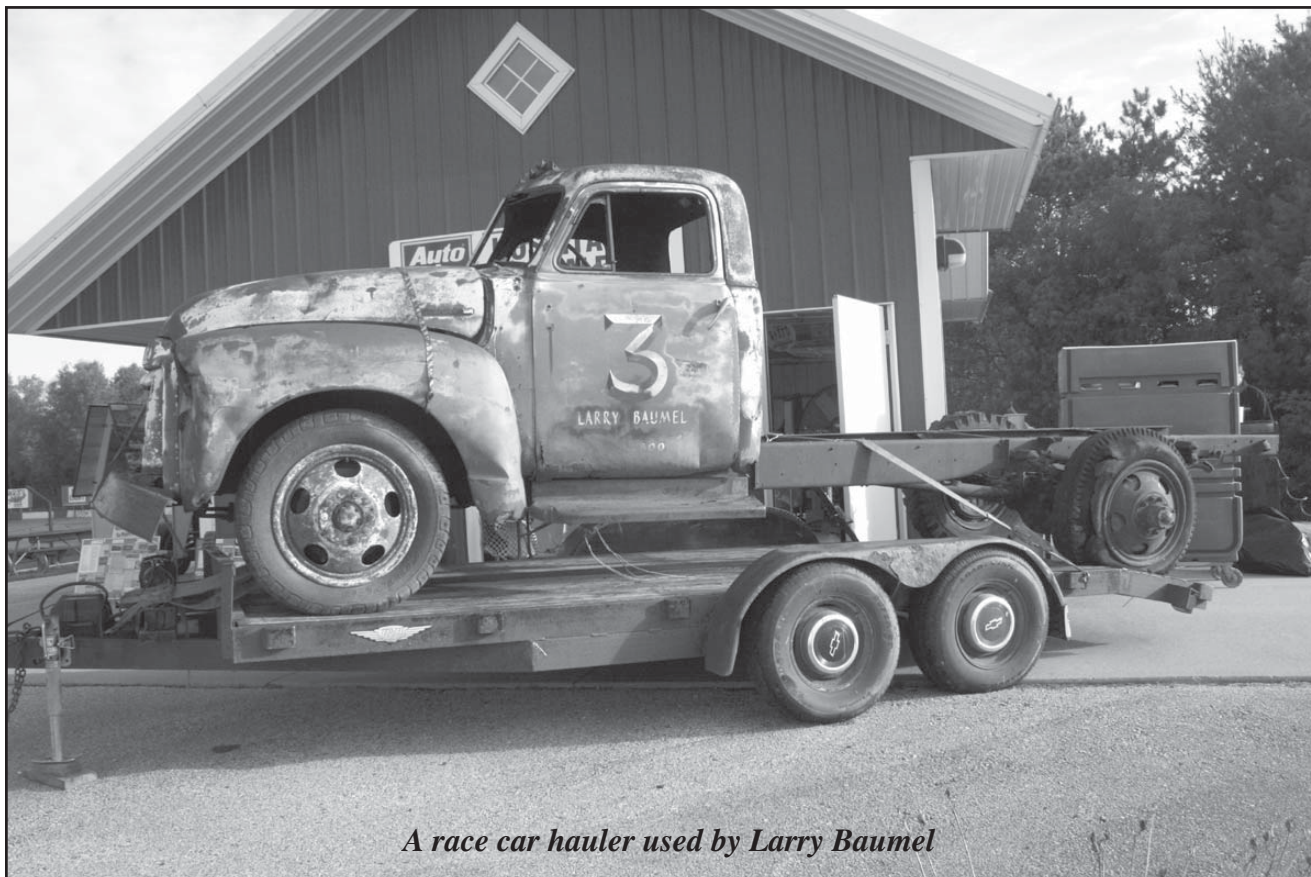
MRC: With new innovations in short track

racing a constant, and not a whole lot of money to be made, Baumel continued on enjoying the sport for what it was, fun, while he and his brother came up with new parts on their car.

Baumel: “We weren’t in it for money. Money was never a big deal for us, not that we were rich. You needed a good sponsor to keep going. One of the innovations at the time was the quick-change rear end. We were the first car in Central Wisconsin to have a quick change. First race car period, everyone else had stock, or truck rear ends. I remember Dick Trickle coming over at the end of the season, asking if it was worth it to put a quick-change in. So I asked him how many transmissions do you put in a year? He said 10 or 15, but I get them really cheap. I said you still have to change them out. With a quick change you just change the gears for the track. So that was the beginning of the popularity of the quick-change rear end.”

MRC: Although Baumel raced primarily on pavement, he did compete on the dirt on occasion.

Baumel: “When West Salem was still dirt, Loren Iverson who drove the \$3.00 car asked me if I wanted to drive it there. Of course, I’m a young punk, first year of racing, I said, sure I’ll drive it. It was an old Flathead Ford, and we had to run against Christensen and all those guys with 300 six cylinders. That son of a bitch was so unsafe, I don’t know how I didn’t roll it over. I got out in the heat race, and those 6-cylinder guys went by me so fast I couldn’t even read their numbers. I was running that old flat head flat on the floor and it got so hot it started making noises I never heard before. It cooled down for the Feature but it wasn’t a good day.”



A race car hauler used by Larry Baumel

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MRC: With sharp minds and always trying to come up with ways to get faster, Larry and Stan Baumel outdid themselves by racing a Chevy wagon. The car featured u-joints which operated the steering but was legal since the steering box stayed in a stock location. Baumel sat nearly in the center of the car driving it.

Baumel: "You know I wasn't noted for nice paint jobs and that, so the Rapids guys said, next week you're going to have to have a new body on that car or we won't let you run. I told 'em, ok, I'm going to put a wagon body on it. They all laughed, oh sure you're going to run that. I found a 2 door Chevy wagon body in a junkyard in Tomah and put that on the car. It was the same car but for that body. First race at North La Crosse with the car I was running side by side with Dave Marcis in the Feature. I ended up beaten' him and winning. Well, that was the end of that wagon. Big John in the pits said, don't bring that car to Plover, (Golden Sands Speedway) we won't let you unload, it's illegal. Like a wagon body car was going to do anything! I pulled in to Plover, paid to get in and here they come. Don't unload that son of a bitch, we ain't going to let you run. I pulled into the pits, unloaded and said, get the racers over here, we'll have a meeting. We had the meeting and nobody objected to me running. The only thing, and Reffner (Tom) said it, was paint a white cross on the door, it will look like an ambulance. Everybody got a laugh out of that, but they did let us run it, and that was the story of the wagon."

MRC: Ingenuity was taking over in the sport, and after the Baumel creation, Marv Marzofka with Moose Peterson and mechanic Cappy came up with more speed.

Baumel: "All of a sudden Marv (Marzofka) was running about a second faster than everyone else. My brother got to know Cappy and he told him, don't tell

anyone, but the reason we're going faster is we're running M&H tires. Things were changing fast and racers were finding more speed. So, then we had to get M&H tires."

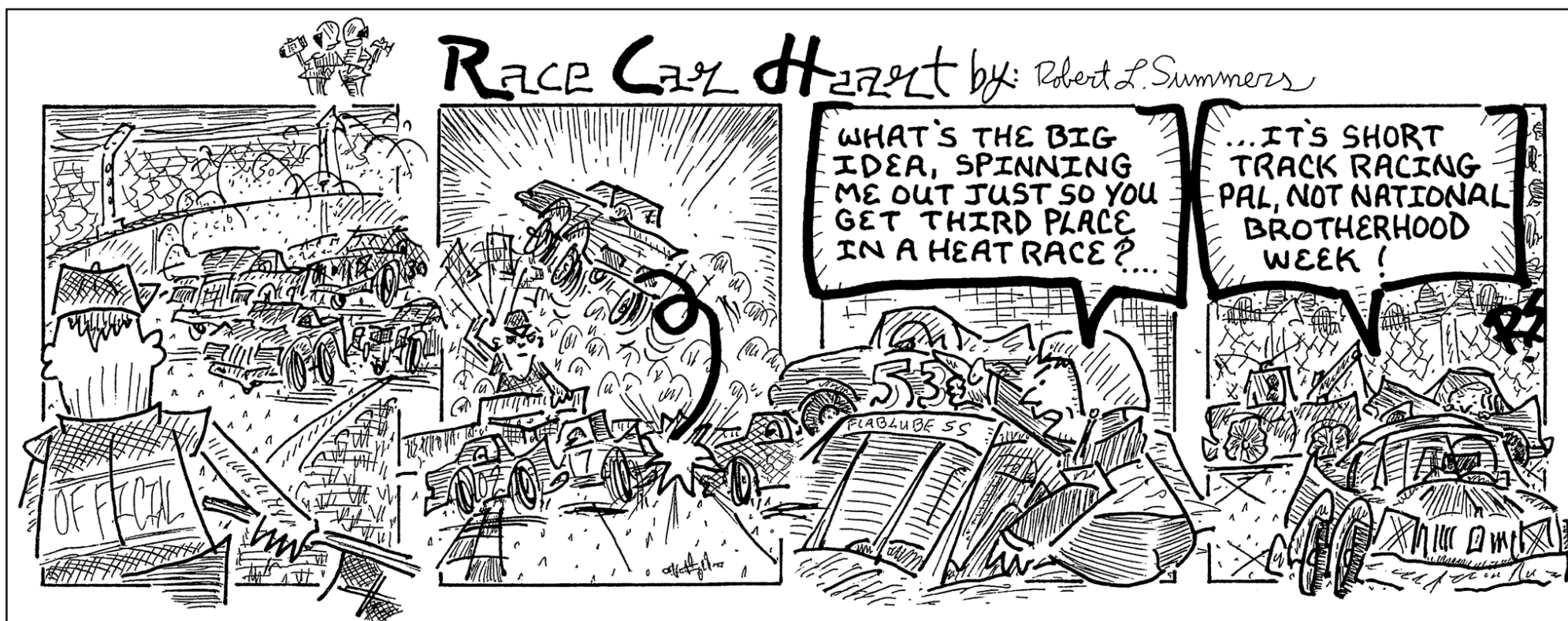
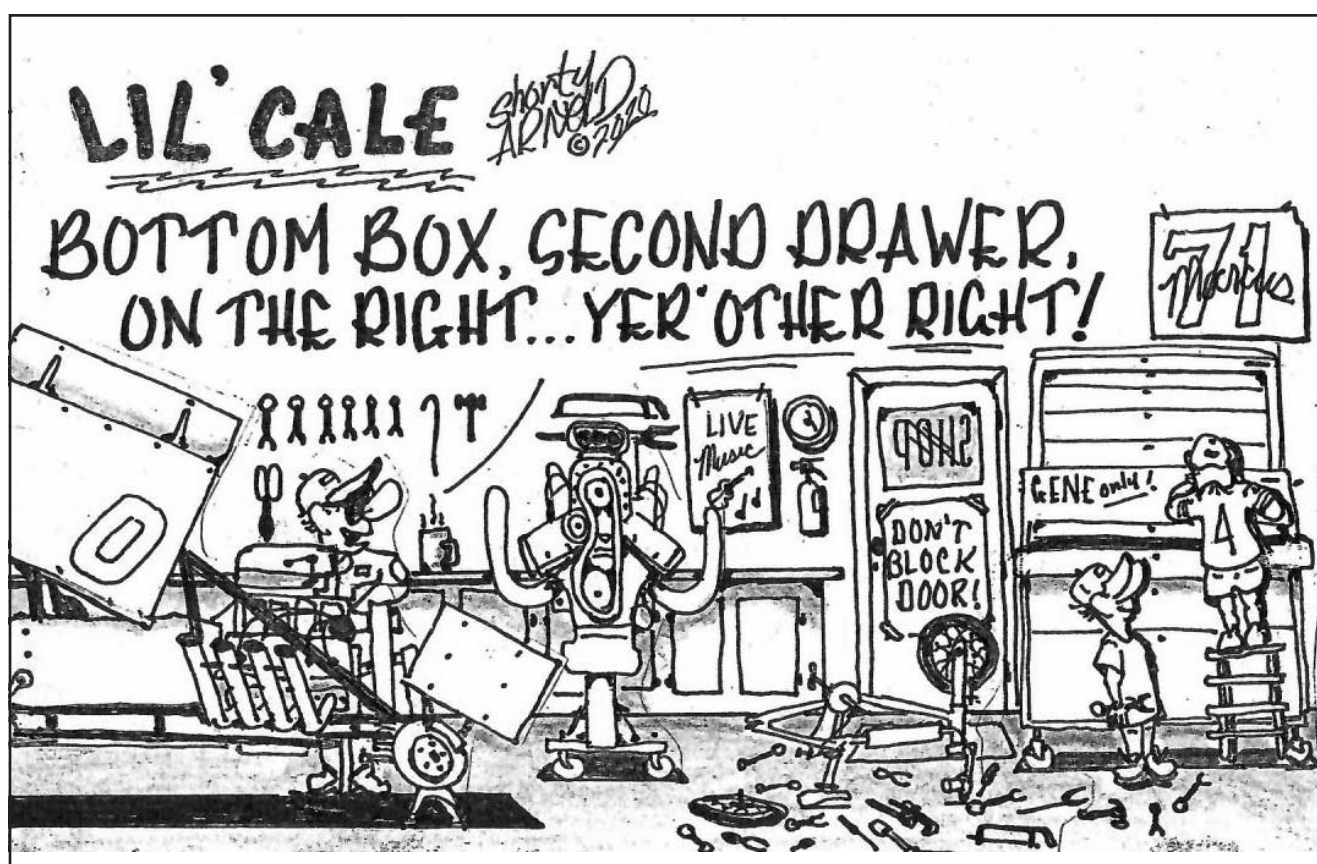
MRC: And with most battles conquered on the local scene, your brother built a Ford Torino race car. The car was supposed to be done for the 1967 race season. It took longer than that but nonetheless, it was time to take your racing program National, as in USAC and NASCAR racing.

Part two of the Larry Baumel story will chronicle that.

On June 24th, 1965, Larry Baumel set the fastest qualifying time of 14:25 seconds at Dells Motor Speedway, Wis. Dells, WI., in his 1956 Chevy. On

July 5th, 1965, Larry Baumel placed 3rd in his heat race and 9th in the Feature at the Adams Friendship Speedway. On Friday night, August 13th, 1965, Larry Baumel was nipped at the finish by Marv Marzofka in feature competition at Tomah-Sparta Speedway. Behind Baumel was Ev Fox, Nelson Drinkwine and Marlin Walbeck. On July 11th, 1965, it was Larry Baumel winning the Feature race at Griffith Park Speedway. Following Baumel in the main were, Jim Back, Ev Fox, Nelson Drinkwine and Marlin Walbeck. On August 12th, 1965, Larry Baumel won the Feature race at Dells Motor Speedway, besting a 12 car field.

Racing History continued on page 20



Racing History from page 19

He was followed by Ev Fox, Dave Marcis, Marv Marzofka and Dick Trickle. On Saturday night, July 30th, 1966, it was Larry Baumel winning the Mid-Season Championship 40 lap Feature at Black River Falls Speedway. Tom Reffner placed second. On July 31st, 1966, it was Larry Baumel winning the Feature race at Griffith Park Speedway, Wis. Rapids, WI. Following Baumel at the finish were Les Katzner, Jim Back, Marv Marzofka, Jere O'Day and Ron Beyer.

Sadly, Larry Baumel recently passed away before his story could reach print. It runs now in his honor and to give followers out there a chance to learn about and appreciate one of the true pioneers of our sport.

Here and there...It was off to La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., for the tracks season opener on Saturday afternoon, May 20th. NASCAR Late Model action found defending track Champion Mike Carlson taking the 25-lap feature win. He was followed by Chad Walen, Tony Bagstad, Adam Bendzik, Michael Ostdeik and Brad Powell. Andy Barney was victorious in the Sportsman feature for his first ever main event win in the division. Lester Stanfield was victorious in the Hornet feature while Andy Moore in hobby stock and Rob Stanfield in 6 shooters were other main winners...One of the best wheel men ever, Minnesota's Mert Williams passed away here recently. Mert won countless races on dirt and even won a Feature back in the early 1970s on the paved La Crosse Interstate Speedway of West Salem, WI. I was fortunate to be able to converse with him back in March at a reunion in Rochester. He was a wealth of information.

In the quote of the column, Larry Baumel. "If not for my brother Stan, I don't think I'd have been racing. He built my race cars, he had a wheel he designed that we and a lot of the other short track racers used, plus everyone in NASCAR raced and won with it. He was an innovator, a fabricator and a really sharp guy. He did well and really helped me do well."

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI. 54650. 608-783-5125 608-518-2478 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

Six time NHRA Pro Stock Champion "The Professor" Warren Johnson reads The Midwest Racing Connection. You should too.



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Big Events & Big Crowds

by Dan Plan



There are two short-track events in the state of Wisconsin in the month of May that are big events, and draw big crowds. The Joe Shear Classic at Madison International Speedway and the annual Bus Race at Cedar Lake Speedway.

These are two totally different events, but showcase big crowds at short track events. The Joe Shear Classic is what I would call a “traditional” pavement, short track

racing big event. Drivers from across the country have attended this race over the years, and even more so this year with the ASA Stars National Tour sanction. Even when the weather isn’t perfect, they draw a good crowd. The weather was fantastic at the start of the event, and the crowd showed it.

The Bus Race at Cedar Lake Speedway draws the facilities largest crowd of the year due to its unique format. I’m still floored that nobody has

copied it. They provide buses for local schools & communities and let them make them race ready. Everybody associated with each school/community shows up to see “their” bus compete. They also let a few of weekly divisions race each year to give them an opportunity to race in front of a packed house. I’m not exaggerating, it is a packed house, and the weather was terrible. Cloudy, cool and sprinkles. Yet, they still had a crowd that will hard to top this year.



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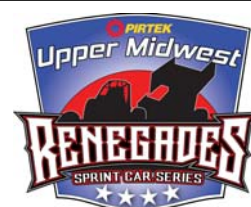
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- Protects metal from corrosion
- Displaces moisture
- Great fogging oil
- Good starting fluid

JB® HEAVY-DUTY CHAIN LUBRICANT - 13 OZ.

- Lubricates all types of chains
- Reduces friction and wear
- Anti-static formula
- Does not fly off
- Does not cake or gum
- Great for chainsaws
- Excellent for agricultural equip

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