

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY



Racing History Back To Life

January 2024

Inside...



Talkin' Racin'



Racing Nuggets



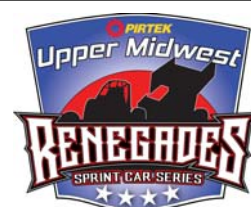
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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

As the 2023 season came to an end, I quickly realized that I was completely wrong about one of the programs that took place during the season. I've been wrong plenty of times before, and this probably will not be the last. Throughout my involvement in motorsports, there have been events/programs/awards that didn't pan out. Using the phrase "didn't pan out" is the polite way of saying people didn't get paid. When I was younger, I thought drivers not getting paid was a thing that only happened in the moonshiner days, but I've seen it happen as recently as the last few years.

The program I was completely wrong about was the Women in Motorsports North America. I had no idea how big this program really was. They did some social media promotion, but not over the top. The drivers in the program did their part to promote their involvement, but I couldn't seem to find out what the

***I Was Wrong
&
2023 Season Wrap Up***

actual prize package was going to be. When their awards banquet was held following the NASCAR finale in Phoenix, I was floored at what the actual prize package was. Julie Jorgenson received a check for \$125,000 and her good friend Taylor Goldman O'Meara received a check for \$50,000 for second place. To put things in perspective, this was more than the NASCAR Weekly Racing champion received, and more than Julie and Taylor had won in their entire careers in racing. It was a damn good pay day that went out to two deserving Women in Motorsports.

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Lisa Tuma Jorgenson photo

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RACING CONNECTION



Preserving The Past

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To wrap up my season, I went to a couple of big events out of state. I had heard many things about the old Desoto Speedway in Bradenton, FL but had never made it there prior to it being shut down several years ago. A few years ago, YouTube sensation Cletus McFarland purchased the shuttered facility, cleaned up the joint, made some improvements and renamed the place "The Freedom Factory." This year, the Billy Bigley Sr. Memorial race moved from 4-17 Southern Speedway to the Freedom Factory. My good friend Bryan invited me to spend a weekend at his dad's house in Sarasota and go to the Bigley Memorial Race. I couldn't pass up this opportunity. The Biglely race pays really well for pavement short track racing (\$30K to win) and is not a marathon event. They practice Friday night and Saturday afternoon and race on 1 set of tires for big bucks. It is the type of race that is needed for pavement Late Models to survive. The car count was great, and the crowd on hand was phenomenal.

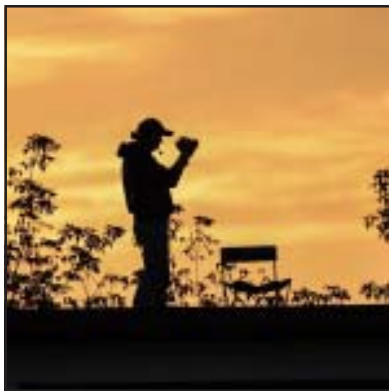
The close out my 2023 season, I made my second visit to the Gateway Dirt Nationals held at The Dome at America's Center in downtown St. Louis. If you have not been to this event in person, I would highly recommend it. Dirt racing indoors on a bullring is exciting to say the least. After seeing how crowded it was during the Friday show, my first thought was they would need to open additional seating for next year. Lo and behold they ended up opening the seating for the final night on Saturday. It has grown into a pretty big deal. The word on the street is the owners of the Dome in St. Louis aren't big fans of the event, but it sure seems to draw a lot of people to town. Everywhere I went during the day, I saw race fans with racing apparel on. Hopefully, this event continues as long as they have the Dome in St. Louis.



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Dangerous Dan**Dan Margetta**

Another year has flown by and usually this is the time everyone reflects on the year that has passed. I'm no different than anyone else but this was the first time in a long time where I had to deal with some hard realities of life. While dealing with the loss of two very close friends in Jerry Priesgen and Ed Cluka would have been enough in itself, I was forced to come face to face with cancer which is something I would have never imagined until it happened. I am very grateful for everyone in the racing community and the many friends I've met along with way as I leaned on them heavily to soldier on this year. People always asked in the past why I liked racing so much, and I always said it was for the people and that was never more evident than in 2023. I figured for the last column of the year, I'd lay it all out there, the good, the bad, and the ugly of what was 2023 and the toughest fight I've had to date. It may get a little long winded and ramble on, but hey there's not much else going on and in the end, I hope you all realize just how much everyone in the racing community means to me and how you all played a huge part in keeping me going this year.

I guess you could trace the beginnings of what would become this year's main theme to early February. Back in March 2021 while I was in Las Vegas for the NASCAR race, I felt something pop in my right collarbone and by the time I got home from the Phoenix race the following week it didn't hurt as much and although I should have had it checked out, due to stubbornness I didn't. A bump had formed there and I just kind of dealt with it until February of this year when it seemed to be getting bigger. I found myself getting tired as well but mostly dismissed it to just getting older and besides Daytona was coming up and I certainly didn't want to ruin that. I have a photographic memory and can look back on moments with clarity by literally burning a snapshot in my mind. Sometimes it's a song playing in the background that "clicks" the snapshot and on this February evening I was having dinner with my parents at the Outback Steakhouse with whatever was going on with the lump on my collarbone weighing on my mind

when I recognized the song playing in the background but couldn't remember the title or the artist. I discreetly "Shazam-ed" it on my phone and it was "A Long December" by the Counting Crows. The date was February 6th according to the App history. I didn't think a whole lot of it but for some reason I went home that night thinking I probably should do something about whatever was going on with the lump when I got back from Daytona the following week. I went to Daytona with Brian Schmitt, who is one of the partners on our LTN radio show, and we met another good friend, Tim Becker (or "Miler" as everyone knows him) for a day of adventure before heading to the dirt races at Volusia that night. We wound up at a memorabilia and autograph session on top of the Streamline Hotel where we ran into Rich Bickle who was one of the many drivers sighing autographs.

While talking with Rich, I met Dave Wick and his wife Jayne who were race fans from Wisconsin who listened to our radio show and while we had connected as Facebook friends, I had never met in person. While speaking with Dave, he noticed the lump by my neck and collarbone and asked what was going on with it. I told him I really didn't know but was probably going to get it looked at when I got home. We commented on how you never know with these things as you start to get older and right then and there I made the decision that no matter how scared of hospitals and doctors I was, I definitely was going in as soon as I got home. We went to the dirt races that night and as the program went on I found myself silently counting down the number of laps and races until we could leave which never happened at a race track and was a sure sign something wasn't right. We attended the NASCAR Craftsman Truck and Xfinity Series races along with the Daytona 500 which included a live broadcast of our show before heading home. At the Orlando airport as I was going through security, the TSA guy asked what was bulging by my neck and I had to show him it was a lump and there was nothing under my shirt which further affirmed the need to have it looked at as soon as possible.

I got home and the following night I went to Urgent Care because I really didn't know where to start with things like this. The last time I had been to a doctor or hospital was when I broke my leg playing softball back in 1998 and after leaving with a rod and screws in my right shin I never went back. They obviously noticed something wasn't right and while all they could do was refer me to a regular doctor, at least the ball was rolling on figuring out what was wrong. I saw Dr. Ko a few days later and she ordered a CAT scan and blood tests and I saw Dr. Nunag, for the first time. Dr. Nunag was my regular doctor who before then I just put his name down on paper for insurance purposes as he was my parent's doctor but I never saw him. He was really cool and I quickly realized how stupid I was for not keeping regular appointments. I canceled plans to go to the Vegas and Phoenix races along with Spring Training games as I

didn't feel right being so far from home without knowing what was exactly going on. The blood tests came back very good with most cancer markers negative which was encouraging and I had my very first CAT scan where you have to drink a huge cup of some type of Iodine contrast before being run through the tube. I couldn't have an MRI because I think it might have ripped out the metal in my leg. The CAT scan showed a definite mass centered around my right collarbone which had shown significant destruction from a pathological fracture (I think that was a fancy way to say it had broken in two). As Dr. Ko put it, that was a problem as the broken collarbone should have hurt like hell and didn't because of the mass growing around it. I'll never forget her words "this is worrisome for Sarcoma" before doing a needle biopsy to get tissue samples to figure out exactly what the mass was. The good news was nothing had spread anywhere else beyond my collarbone which I thought was a minor miracle because I had been dealing with this on and off for about two years. For the biopsy I had to lay on a table and the lump area was numbed before she stuck a huge needle in it and clicked off three small pieces and put them in a jar. I asked to see them after she stitched up the hole from the needle and they looked like three little white worms but were really just samples of tissue. This was a pretty grave appointment because deep down I knew this was now serious and the unknown prognosis was scary. I remember her telling me we wouldn't know for sure what it was until the pathology came back on the samples and to not give up hope just yet. I also remember telling her that even if it was as bad as I thought it could be that I would "just have to fight that too." I had spent a lot of time googling (which can be your friend and your enemy) the possibilities of what was going on and knew Sarcoma was a bad form of cancer that didn't have good survival rate odds. I was told not to go through this living alone and decided to pack a suitcase and move in with my parents until this was over. I'll never forget the car ride from my house to theirs as it was a time I had to myself to really let my emotions out. I didn't want to worry them or anyone else any more than needed and figured by the time I got to their house I needed to be strong for them and the rest of my family. Plus, I had to figure out how I was going to handle if this really was the end and there was no coming back from this. Besides it was dark out and no one could see in to see me crying behind the wheel. Remember when I told you about how songs sometimes take the snapshot for me to vividly remember moments in time? My phone was hooked up to the car stereo and random songs that were in my phone were playing. The song "Lions" by Skillet came on. Skillet isn't a band I really follow and the only reason the song was in my phone was because they are one of my niece's favorite bands and

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she sent me songs to listen to in 2022 before I took her to their concert. It was totally out of the blue, but at that moment, the chorus of that song...

If we're going to fly we fly like Eagles
Arms out wide
If we're going to fear we fear no evil
We will rise
By your power we will go
By your spirit we are bold
If we're gonna stand we stand as giants
If we're gonna walk we walk as lions
We walk as lions

Became the inspiration to fight like hell and on the drive down Pennsylvania Avenue from Layton Avenue to Rawson Avenue I proclaimed that cancer had never faced Dan Margetta before and it had no idea what it was in for. I was sent to see an oncologist, Dr. Jella, two days later and I'll admit it was very humbling to walk into the cancer clinic for the first time as a patient. I was kind of jumping the gun by seeing Dr. Jella so soon after the biopsy as he explained the results usually do not come back so quickly. He said he could try to call pathology to at least get an idea of what we were dealing with so as to not make this appointment a waste of time and after a few minutes, his computer dinged with an email. It was from pathology and while they couldn't determine exactly what it was just yet, it was a lymphoproliferative process. That meant it was a form of Lymphoma and not Sarcoma. I knew from my google knowledge Lymphoma had way better treatment odds and I think he could see the relief on my face (I really let out a big sigh) as he gave me a thumbs up. It further fortified my belief I could beat this and at that time I was like "Let's go!" A PET scan was scheduled with a follow up appointment to set up a treatment plan. I left the clinic and immediately went to my regular job at the South Milwaukee Police Department. I've worked there for 32 years beginning as a 911 dispatcher before moving into the Records department and handling the IT issues. They have been outstanding throughout this whole process and I let them know I fully intended to beat this and planned on using as little sick time as possible. They were very understanding and extremely supportive and I will always be grateful for that.

I had the PET scan at the end of March and it's where they inject a radioactive dye into you before you lie still as they slowly run you through another tube-like contraption. You go to the Nuclear Medicine department for this and they take the dye out of a metal box like you see in sci-fi movies. You can watch the time count down before you move another couple of inches until you are all the way through the tube. At the end, the guy told me not to wait to see the doctor which told me what I had was serious. Besides the lump had grown since the biopsy and was now the size of a tennis ball. The PET scan confirmed the mass but found it began in my chest wall and grew to break the collarbone and it lit up white hot on the

scan. The biopsy came back and it was determined I had Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma, the most common kind of Non-Hodgkins. It was very aggressive but also was very treatable. Treatment would be six rounds of R-Chop chemotherapy 21 days apart. Think of it as getting run over by a truck and then 21 days later doing it again. I went to the Milwaukee Brewers Opening Day before the first round as my parents said they would like to go at least once. I figured now was not the time to let moments go to waste and we went and met up with our radio engineer Matt Losee and his family to tailgate. I hadn't told anyone what was actually going on yet and at one point I almost slipped up when I made the comment to Matt about never knowing when it may be your last opportunity to do something. He asked what I meant and I brushed it off casually as I wasn't going to tell everyone until a few days later just before chemotherapy started. Before that I still had other things to take care of like getting an echocardiogram to make sure my heart was strong enough for the chemotherapy and having a picc line put in my right arm. When I went in for the picc line after work, I didn't realize it was like a full blown operation until they had me put on a gown and were wheeling me into an operating room. They put me on a table and had me look to the left before lowering what felt like a vice so I couldn't move my head. There was a screen which I could see and I watched as they threaded the line through my right arm. I could feel it under my arm and in the back of my neck as I watched the line snake on the screen toward my heart. It was over pretty quick and I had a line with a cap on it in my right arm that would stay there until the chemo treatments were finished. That would mean months of having to rely on Press N Seal (Press N Cling didn't work so good) to wrap around my arm to try to shower without getting the line or bandage area wet. I also couldn't lift anything over ten pounds or bend over for extended periods of time so as to not damage the tip of the line that was in my vein near my heart. I had a bit of a scare when I got home and noticed blood dripping from the bandage. After receiving no answer at the number I was to call if issues arose, I hurriedly drove back to the hospital only to find everyone from the area I was just at, had left for the day. I went to another area where I could find some people and asked the woman at the desk if I should be concerned about the blood leaking from my arm. She found another nurse to at least look at it and she told me some initial leaking was expected and the bandage was sealed so it shouldn't be a problem. Relieved, I went home and began to prepare for chemo round one which was scheduled in the morning.

I officially began fighting back against the cancer on April 11th with round one of the R-Chop chemotherapy. R-Chop is a combination of the chemo drugs Doxorubicin, Vincristine, and Cyclophosphamide along with the targeted therapy drug Rituximab and the steroid Prednisone. Round One lasted almost nine hours as they had to figure out how I would react to the drugs the first time. You literally sit in a recliner the whole time while they pump the poison in

you. I told the nurses I would just pretend I was on a nine hour flight to Hawaii. The nurses there were all great and over the course of the summer Kristina, Allison, and Karlene were rock stars in answering my questions and just helping to get through it all. For each round I took the Prednisone first which was two pills for the day of chemo and four days after. The first drug to go in was the Rituximab which had to start slowly because more than half of the patients experience severe allergic reactions to it. The IV drip started at the rate of 25 ml/hr and increased every 30 minutes with the goal of reaching 500 ml/hr without any serious reactions. I was told I could start to shake uncontrollably, sweat profusely, have trouble breathing and break out in hives but luckily none of those occurred as I hit each level increase and "shifted the gears" to reach the 500 ml/hr goal. Following some quick medicine to help keep you from puking, it was time for the chemotherapy drugs. The first drug, Doxorubicin, was the most intimidating and it's known as the "Red Devil" because of its bright red color. It came in two big syringes and the nurse had to put on all the protective clothing before administering it. Apparently it can eat your skin if it gets spilled and it was the main reason I had to have the picc line in my arm instead of just a normal IV. It also turns your urine red and in extreme cases could make your eyes bleed. Of all the drugs, Doxorubicin was the one I felt going in the most and while my eyes didn't bleed, I did pee bright red for a few days which I've got to admit kind of freaks you out. The other two chemo drugs were nothing compared to the "Red Devil" and I walked out of round one very tired but not sick. They told me to take off work for three days but after feeling tired on days one and two, I went back to work on day three and from then on only took off on the day of chemo and the day after for each subsequent round. You do suffer from "Chemo Brain" and my mind was a little foggy after that first round. I did the Racing Nuggets podcast with P.J. Nuttleman and Dan Plan about a week after the first round and to be honest with you I really couldn't remember much of what I said without watching the archived episode. A big goal of round one was to be able to make the Slinger Speedway and ASA Midwest Tour opener on April 23rd and I was very happy to be able to do that. Although it was super cold, it felt really great to be able to run the camera for the internet stream broadcast and just seeing everyone at the race track was a huge boost going forward. Afterwards there were many people waiting by my car just to see how I was doing and I was really touched by that.

Round two of chemo was on May 4th and three days later I was at Madison International Speedway for the Joe Shear Classic. I met Brian Schmitt near my house and he drove most of the way because I wasn't sure how wiped out I would be when the race was done. The first person I saw when I entered the pits was Rich Bickle and he immediately asked how I was doing. I watched the race from the suite and spent

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a lot of time with Dave Watson, Scott Hansen, Al Schill, and Ted Dolhun. Those guys were all my heroes growing up and it was amazing to think back how watching from the stands had grown into genuine friendship just by watching cars go around in circles so many times over the years. The following week I kept my already scheduled vacation days from the regular job and headed out with Brian to Illinois for dirt late model races at Lincoln Speedway, Farmer City Raceway and Fairbury Speedway. We met up with the usual dirt racing Wisconsin gang which included John-Boy, Ben, Randy, and Popsicle at Lincoln and then got rained on halfway through the show at Farmer City. I was lucky enough to head for the car early and missed getting totally soaked which was a good thing because I really couldn't get the pic line in my arm wet. We ended up passing on Fairbury due to the forecast and instead went to Wilmot for the sprint car races where we ran into some more dirt racing friends. While I felt ok, I didn't actually realize just how bad the chemo was beating up my insides and after the dirt racing trip I had a cough and cold-like symptoms. At my scheduled appointment with the oncologist, they did a blood test and my white blood cell count was one which is really low. The Neutrophil count was down to .1 (could it be zero?) and that concerned the nurses because Neutrophils are what fights off infections and I essentially had none. I didn't have a fever but they kept me there for an hour to make sure I would be alright and said if I had a fever they would've wheeled me straight to the emergency room. I didn't tell them I had spent the previous week breathing in dust at the dirt races. I was given an antibiotic to take which seemed to do the trick but it made me super dizzy. I only took three of the five doses I was supposed to take because I hated being dizzy and the symptoms had subsided. I didn't attend another dirt race for the rest of the year and it wasn't because I didn't want to (I love dirt racing) but it was more of a necessity health-wise. I again felt better the following week and Brian and I went to the NHRA drag races in Joliet as neither of us had been to one and we really wanted to check it out. It was super cool and words can't describe how much you feel it inside when the Top Fuel dragsters launch off the start. I guess you could say I got baptized into the drag racing scene by breathing in a shot of Nitro while standing behind one of the cars in the pits. I silently wondered and hoped that wouldn't show up on the next blood tests later in the week. After the drag races, I had to engineer the LTN radio show on Sunday morning as our regular engineer, Matt Losee was in New York for his father's funeral. Right after the show, I headed to Slinger to video the races on a much nicer day than the opener. Once again, the race cars blocked out reality as when the races were done and I put the camera equipment away I was really exhausted. Dean Strom saw me and gave me a ride to my car and later told me I looked pretty rough that day.

Round three was the Thursday before Memorial Day and two days later I ran a camera at the ASA Midwest Tour race at Jefferson. Dean Strom picked me up so I wouldn't have to drive and before the races I was able to talk to more friends by the tech line. I remember talking with Casey Johnson who was battling his own health issues and discussing how we couldn't believe how here we were—two people who love racing so much having to be on the sidelines. I felt better after the Jefferson race than I did the previous week and filmed Slinger without a hitch on Sunday. Any races on Memorial Day were out of the question as I had to make sure I was good to be at the regular job the next day. Once again, two weeks after the round was my low point concerning the blood counts and while they seemed to always bounce back, they were way down again. I worked the camera for the Madison Alive for Five super late model race on June 2nd and found out heat and humidity were not my friends during this ordeal. It was hot out and during the event I felt myself cramping up and getting super tired. I even checked my phone to see about booking a hotel room because I wasn't sure I was going to be able to drive back to Milwaukee. However, after drinking a bunch of water I felt better by the end of the night and made it back okay.

Because I was handling the chemo treatments well, they pushed round four back a week which allowed me to attend the Indycar weekend at Road America feeling more like normal. I continued working the Slinger races and about a week after the fourth chemo round, Brian Schmitt and I went to the NASCAR Chicago Street Race. It really was a cool event and we spent Friday walking the makeshift garage area and got to take a double-decker bus tour of the track. We talked to many racing colleagues, and it amazed me just how many NASCAR people were

aware of what I was going through. Friday's walking really tired me out and with Saturday's super-hot temperatures, I spent the day watching from our hotel room which overlooked the back portion of the track. We endured the rain on Sunday and enjoyed the race. Matt Losee filled in for me at Slinger and this was the only Slinger race I missed all season. I had another PET scan to see how things were going just before Trans Am Weekend at Road America. It was my hope that the scan would come up clear and I could be done with everything early. You can see the results on a health app which means you kind of know what the doctor is going to tell you when you go in. I got the PET results while waiting in the media tower just before qualifying for the Slinger Nationals. I debated looking at them but couldn't resist. They were not bad but they were not good either as it showed while way smaller than before, the lymphoma was still there. It was a big let down but I kept a straight face and ran a camera for the Racing America internet stream. During the program Todd Behling called me out on the PA and the huge crowd gave me a pretty big ovation. I remember hearing the director from the truck in my ear wondering what the huge cheer was for asking if they somehow missed something for the broadcast. I was too choked up to tell them it was for me and that moment will always be forever special.

NASCAR race which was planned for the next week. He said to go ahead and when I got back we would start with 25 rounds of radiation. They measure radiation in grays and when I would be done I would have had 50 grays (not 50 shades of grey, just 50 grays). Radiation was pretty fascinating, and it wasn't as bad as chemotherapy. They use images to pinpoint

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where you will get zapped and you have to lie still on a table while this big circle machine whirs around you. The machine has several ports that are opened and closed while it circles to make sure you don't get zapped anywhere you don't need it. I wore a Slinger Speedway shirt to one of the rounds and found out the technicians, Jessica and Brian, were both from Slinger and knew about what I did at the racetrack. The hardest part of the process is having to lie still while the radiation is administered, and I would listen to the music in the background because it's hard to keep still if you keep thinking about it. On the final round, I did

smile though when the song that played was "A Long December" which was the song I shazam-ed back at the restaurant in February when this whole deal was getting started.

Next, I will have another PET Scan near the end of January (hopefully the fourth time is the charm) but I was told at my final radiation appointment they fully expect that to come up clear. Looking back on this year, I am able to take some positives out of going through the whole cancer process. I met some of the nicest people in the clinics going through both the chemo and radiation rounds and while I only know them by their first names and have no way of finding them, I really hope they win their fights. It's

made me a better person and I have really come to appreciate the little things we sometimes take for granted. I am so grateful to have supportive family members, co-workers, radio partners, slot-car buddies, and I'm thankful for the many, many racing friends I leaned on this year. You probably don't realize how much you all mean to me. I'm looking ahead to a cancer-free 2024 season which will begin at New Smyrna and Daytona in February and like that Long December song says, "Maybe this year will be better than the last."



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Talkin' Racin'
with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

Julie Jorgenson #83 from Lakeville (MN) has been named the 2023 Minnesota Asphalt Driver of the Year.

Jorgenson won the Power Stock Championship at Elko (MN) Speedway scoring 4 wins and 17 Top 5 finishes out of 21 races. She is only the second woman to win a regular division Championship at ELKO in the 58 year history of the track, Taylor Goldman was the first, she won the Power Stock division title in 2018.

“The key to my success this year was having fun, we went out there and did what we could, we raced hard and did everything we could but the main key was having fun, if we are not having fun what are we doing? It’s been engraved into my brain since forever,” said Jorgenson.

“We put a lot of hard work and determination into this year, our goal was to get the track championship because it was going to be my last Power Stock year.”

“My goal was to win a Championship in each class before I moved up, so it was really awesome to



know that my hard work did pay off and that I was capable of being a champion. Now we are just going to keep trying now that I know that I can be one,” said Jorgenson.

In addition to the Power Stock title Jorgenson also succeeded in the Thunder Car division by winning two races while running a limited schedule of 16 events at ELKO. To top off her incredible year, Jorgenson also won the National Women in Motorsports North America contingency program sponsored by Busch Light and was awarded the \$125,000 top prize at the Women in Motorsports summit held during NASCAR Championship week in Phoenix (AZ).

“The whole experience was incredible, just walking into the Summit and seeing all the people there who are supporting Women in Motorsports and realizing just how many women are high-up in the motorsports industry. They are everywhere, it was very empowering and enlightening. I learned a whole bunch of things to further my career, if I wanted to, or how to talk to people to get farther along networking, it was a really great experience,” said Jorgenson.

“It was really awesome having (Taylor Goldman) with me onstage and being able to navigate everything with her as two best friends who raced together and finished first and second in this contingency program. Being able to do this entire racing thing with her has been awesome,” said Jorgenson.

Julie Jorgenson raced against her younger brother #3 Jimmie Jorgenson who also had a good year in 2023, he won four races in the Power Stock division at Elko Speedway and finished third in the standings. The racing family connection does not stop there, her father Conrad Jorgenson is a Minnesota racing legend, scoring 12 track Championships and over 160 feature wins at ELKO and Raceway Park during his 30 year plus racing career. Conrad Jorgenson won the MN Asphalt Driver of the year in 2017.



2023 was a successful season for Julie Jorgenson and the future looks bright for the young racer. “Because of the Women in Motorsports Competition being renewed another year, we will be in the Power Stock again at ELKO (MN) and Thunder Cars full-time and we will see where it goes from there. We will be racing at LaCrosse (WI) some, not sure if in the Power Stock or we did just buy a 602 Late Model for the Sportsman division. We will probably race at Hawkeye Downs (IA) a few times to get more (NASCAR) points but mainly Elko Speedway in the Power Stock and Thunder Car,” said Jorgenson.

Julie Jorgenson can now add her name to the impressive list of winners of the Speed Talk radio show Minnesota Asphalt Driver of the year. “I think it’s really cool because I am the first woman on the list, so I am very excited about that. I was not expecting this in any way, I am very thrilled to be on it,” said Jorgenson.

- Previous winners:**
2023- Julie Jorgenson
2022- William Sawalich
2021- Jacob Goede
2020- Tim Brockhouse
2019- Jacob Goede
2018- Baiden Heskett
2017- Conrad Jorgenson
2016- Tim Brockhouse
2015- Jacob Goede
2014- Jacob Goede
2013- Ricky Martin
2012- Jonathan Eilen
2011- Chad Walen
2010- Brent Kane
2009- Adam Royle
2004- Dan Fredrickson

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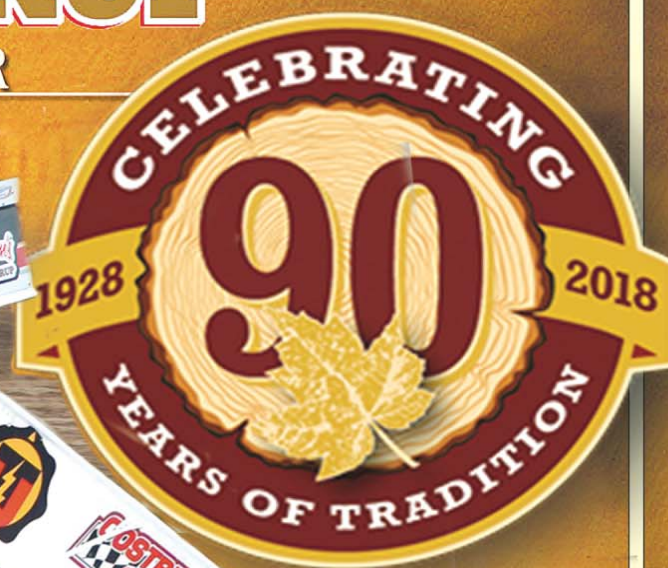
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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

People usually start making New Year’s Resolutions around this time of the year. I’ve never been a fan of that because they are usually huge goals requiring some setbacks. Most people don’t recognize that and invariably set themselves up for failure because they can’t stay the course.

I prefer to approach the New Year with gratitude and reflect on what went well the past year and how I can build on those successes to keep growing in the new one. Gratitude is a powerful practice that calms your brain when things go sideways and helps keep you poised for when opportunities come knocking.

Without even realizing it, my husband, Toby has



The Secret to Life

been a great example of this practice. I mentioned this to him, and he gave me that head-cocked look your dog gives you when he doesn’t understand what you’re saying.

Ever since I’ve known him, he’s been fully committed to racing. He knew he wanted to make his career in this sport he loves. He’s worked for a LOT of different people and teams just over the past dozen years—and while it seems like he’s “failed” a lot by having his hand forced to find new opportunities—

with each transition, he has learned more about his craft, the nature of people, and himself.

One thing I admire the most about him is that he refuses to burn bridges when things fall apart. I am sure he got that quality from his late father, Ervin. Like his dad, Toby doesn’t say much until it matters most. It would be easy to lash out when you’re angry about things—and don’t get me wrong, he can become quite furious when things happen—but when the dust settles, a cooler head prevails. Toby always leaves a door open to bridges he’s crossed.

My intention was not to make this column about Toby and his admirable temperament but rather to invite you to try to channel your emotions like he does—or, more aptly, his father did. Be slow to speak, open to forgiveness, and willing to learn and grow through everything life throws at you.

Toby even shows indifference when he walks around with a mustard stain smeared across the front of his sweatshirt. We all need to be a little more accepting of inevitable imperfections in our worlds.

I think about 9 years ago when Toby went through colon cancer. Don’t get me wrong—it was an awful experience, but I’m telling you—it brought us closer together. A squeamish wife trying to change and clean his stoma where the bag attached was a daily, painful ritual for us. I would sob and fight the urge to vomit and once it was all done, he would hug and kiss me with compassionate appreciation. Who would ever think THAT experience would be the root of the strength in our marriage?



Racing Nuggets continued on page 13

Racing Nuggets from page 12

Now, here we are at the end of 2023. Today is our 12th wedding anniversary. I'm grateful we selected New Year's Eve to get married. It's a great time to reflect on our past year and look forward to the new one together.

No one knows what 2024 has in store for any of us. An attitude of gratitude can carry you through anything. I like to keep my attitude rooted in faith. I highly recommend you give it a try, too. I've seen mountains moved with the winning combination of gratitude and faith.

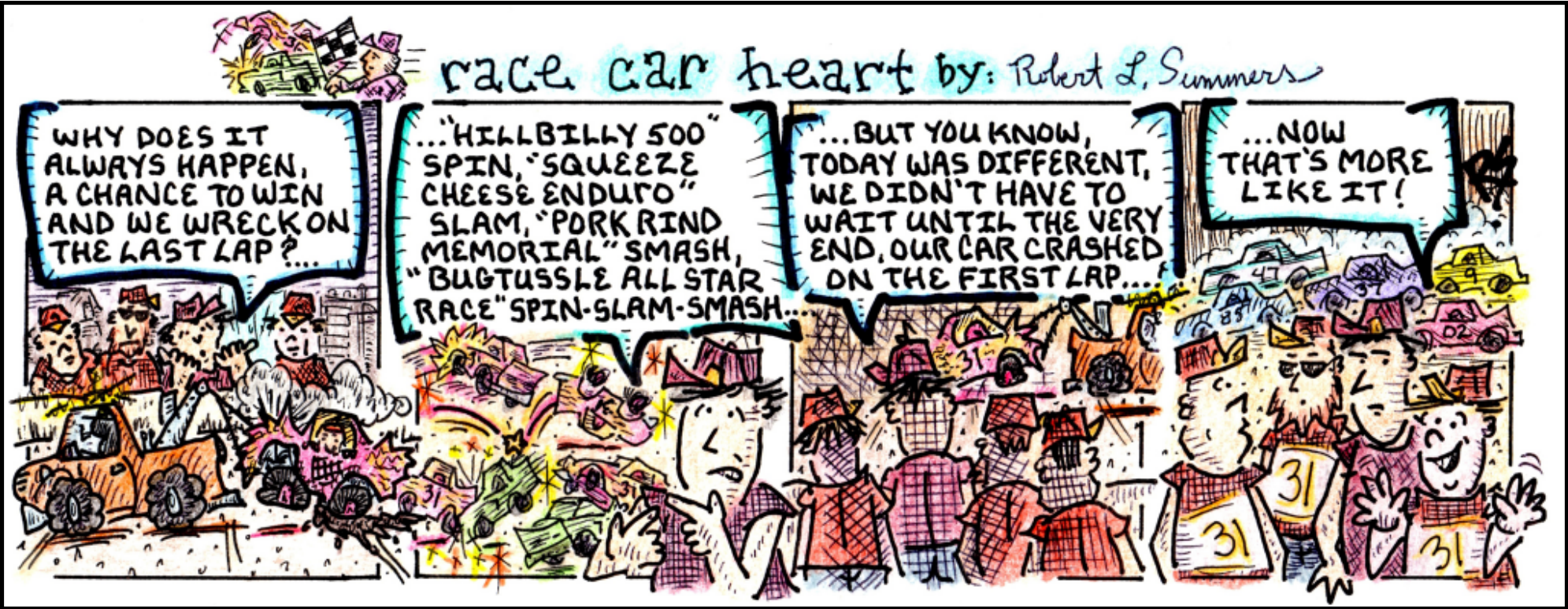


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Berlin Raceway	August 1, 2024
Cedar Lake Speedway	August 8, 2024
Track TBA	August 15, 2024



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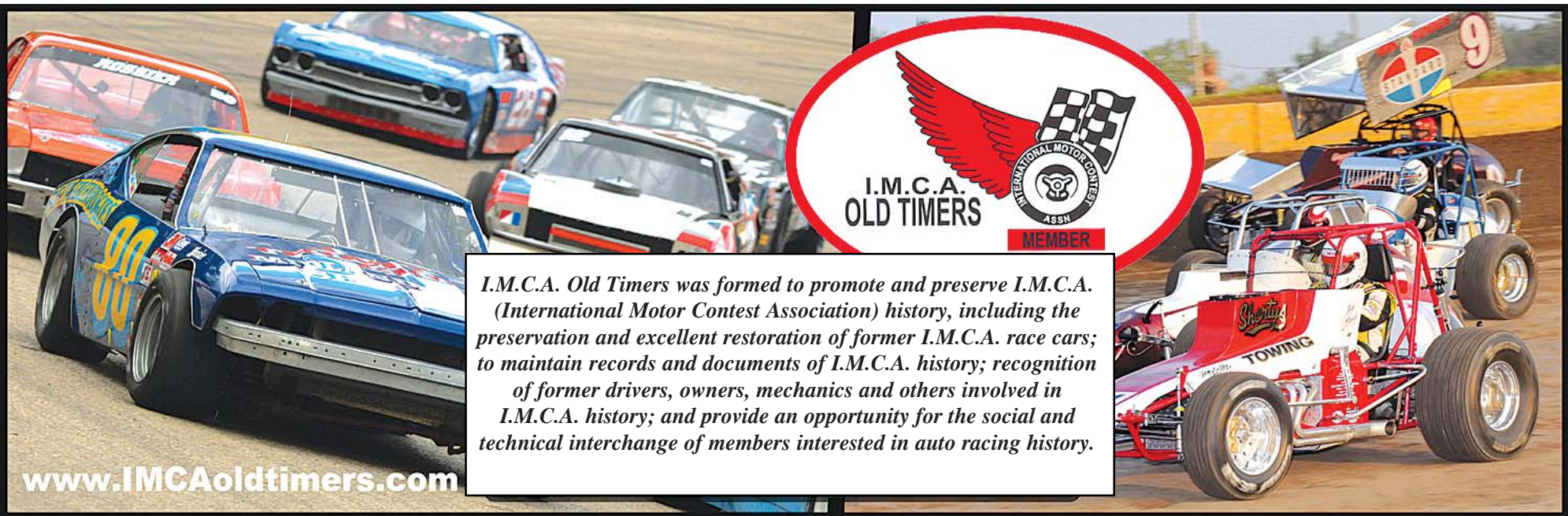
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Racing History Back To Life

During the American Speed Association (ASA) National Tour days under ownership of Rex Robbins, several revolutionary items such as spec chassis and Vortec engines were implemented. The Gillund Enterprises/Justice Brothers sponsored car was one of the most competitive rides of this era. The list of drivers that sat behind the wheel during this time frame included:

Bobby Gill
Jerry Foyt
Paul Paine
Tony Roper
Gary St. Amant
Jay Sauter
Sammy Swindell

The thing I find most interesting of this era in short track racing are the number of items the late Rex Robbins came up with that were later copied by NASCAR. Everything from car specs to race procedures. The number of items are too numerous to put together a complete list, but a few included; Fuel injection, spec chassis, number placement and stage breaks/competition cautions. Rex was thinking of the future, and definitely a pretty smart guy.

This particular ride has been owned by the Gillund family for 30+ years and has mainly been a show car for the past 20 or so years since the demise of the ASA National Tour. Recently, vintage racer Jim Kulseth picked up the car from the Gillund family and brought it back to his shop. The plan is to get the car back into

racing condition to have it on track with a few of the vintage racing organizations in the upper-Midwest during the 2024 season. Jim will get behind the wheel a few times, along with Rob Caho and the world famous Paul Gillund.





DirtInDecember

The 7th version of the Gateway Dirt Nationals was once again a huge fan favorite. The 2023 event featured the same format of previous years, with the field split in half for Thursday and Friday night qualifying events. While drivers generally prefer a smooth track, there seemed to be a general consensus that the track needed more “character” following the Thursday evening show. Most dirt racers say the track is rough, or like a plowed corn field, but it appears the guys that race for a living have coined the phrase “character.” Friday and Saturday definitely had more character than Thursday. The crowd for Saturday night was the largest in the event’s history with an additional level of seating being opened up for race fans. As usual, the event saw great racing on a 1/5-mile track, some carnage and a fantastic crowd.



2023 Bigley Memorial Race

In 2016, the inaugural Billy Bigley Sr. Memorial Race was held at Desoto Speedway in Bradenton, FL. The following year, the track shut down and the event moved to 417 Southern Speedway in Punta Gorda, FL. In a strange twist of events, 417 Southern Speedway has now been closed down. Cletus McFarland purchased the old Desoto property in 2020 and renamed it The Freedom Factory. The Bigley Memorial race has now returned to its original home. This year's event saw Johnny Sauter lead the most laps, before Florida racer Jett Nowland got by on a restart. The race was also run on American Racer tires, versus Hoosier, which is rare in the pavement world. Several Midwest drivers such as Luke Fenhaus and Ty Majeski were on hand, along with a fantastic crowd.



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Nerd Goals

2023 Season Summary

By Dan Plan

My 2023 season saw my “nerd goal” accomplished for the second time in my life. During the 2021 season, Matt Bohl invited me along to attend the inaugural Sunshine State Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park in Florida in January to start of the 2021 season. Two years ago was the first time I decided to try and attended a race in every month of the calendar year.

Living in Minnesota, your options for attending races for about half of the year consist of booking airfare or driving an extremely long time in the car. For the start of the 2023 season, I decided to attend the ISS Chill Chaser Enduro on New Year’s Day at Tomah Sparta Speedway. The good thing for me about this show is it’s only about 2.5 hours from home. With January checked off, I thought maybe I could reach my nerd goal for a second time. I made my annual pilgrimage to Daytona for Speedweeks to check off February. The month of March, I went with my wife to Texas and snuck out one night to Kennedale Speedway Park on our last night before heading home to Minnesota. I was off to a good start, and then April came around. Just about everything in this area was rained out or snowed out in April of 2023. I was able to get one show in the month of April by attending a kart/micro event at the Cedar Lake Arena on the last weekend of April. Crisis averted.

May through October are easy to accomplish. I made my usual trips to close to home at Cedar Lake and Elko along with a few road trips. Although I experienced a couple rainouts, I made additional stops at Deer Creek Speedway, Dells Raceway Park, Dodge County Speedway, Mississippi Thunder Speedway, LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway, Madison International Speedway and Red Cedar Speedway.

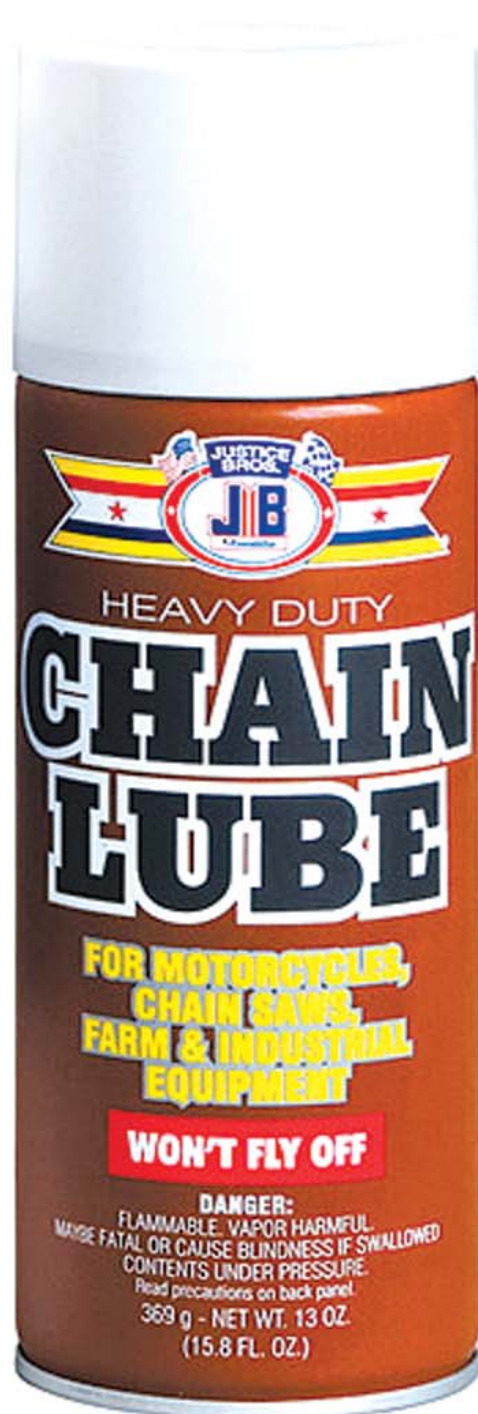
November saw a new track for me as I made my way to Bradenton, FL to the old Desoto Speedway, now known as Cletus McFarland’s Freedom Factory. The Freedom Factory hosted the Billy Bigley Sr. Memorial race, with several Midwest drivers on hand.

I wrapped up my year another vacation with my wife. I convinced her to tag along with me to St. Louis for DirtInDecember. We went sightseeing during the day, and I made my second visit to the Gateway Dirt Nationals at the Dome in St. Louis.

My total event count for the year was 51. Not a record number of events by any means, but also more than some years in the past. The highlight for me was getting my wife to the race track for the first time in several years. She didn’t actually go into the races, but came with and stayed in the RV. I’m pretty sure she was more interested in hanging out with her son for a weekend than she was speeding a weekend at the race track.



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