

THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

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***The End of an Era
or the Beginning of a New One***

October 2026

Inside...



Thunderstuck 93



Racing History

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Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan



Dan Plan

I've followed the UMSS Traditional Sprints since the inception of the class about 16 years ago. What started as a four-car exhibition race back then

**The End of an Era,
or The Beginning of
a New One**

blossomed into a division that saw several events with 30 or more cars through the years. On the other hand, I've seen several Traditional Sprint events with 10 or fewer cars in the last few years.

It was announced early in the month of September the UMSS Traditional Sprints would no longer exist in 2027. It will be the end of an era in this part of the country.

I've also known Ron Bernhaggen for over 20 years, and knew in my heart this was not an easy decision for him. The Traditional Sprints were his passion. He wanted to bring Traditional (or as others call them "non-wing") Sprints back to the Twin Cities/Metro area, and he did it successfully. As time went on, more drivers and tracks were interested in the Winged version of Sprints. Personally, I enjoy both, but the opportunity to see the traditional version of Sprint Cars on a regular basis was a welcome addition to my Summer racing schedule the past 16 years.



I know first-hand racers are a passionate group. I knew in my heart this was an extremely difficult decision for Ron, so I reached out to him to get an explanation. As I expected, it was not an easy decision. I had the opportunity to speak with Ron, and he gave me an explanation for this decision.

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continued on page 4*

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Publisher's Note continued from page 3**What lead to shutting down the Traditional Sprints?**

First Dan, I want you to understand, and everybody else to understand, the last thing I wanted to do was make the decision that the Traditionals weren't going forward and that 2026 would be the last year. Mostly, it was a business decision. Over the last 4 years the car counts have diminished. Fans want to see a full field of cars when they come out to the race track. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer tracks wanted to run the Traditionals and more and more tracks wanted to run the Winged Sprint Cars.

How difficult of a decision was this for you?

I've got a lot of money and time into it and I'm the number one non-wing Sprint Car fan in this state. It was hard decision that way. Probably one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make. From a business standpoint, knowing that we probably wouldn't have had a home track next year, that part was easy.

If somebody would want to run a Traditional Sprint series, outside of the UMSS umbrella, would there be any issues with that?

No, absolutely not. The reason I announced it as soon as the season was over was so anybody that wanted to do that could do it. As a matter of fact, if we're not racing the Winged cars on that night, I'll let them use all of my infrastructure, so we keep the thing going.

Now if somebody wants to step up and start a new series, Ron has the rules, tools and tech procedures available to use. I sure hope somebody steps up to the plate to keep a Traditional Sprint series (or weekly show) going somewhere in this area of the country.



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Talkin' Racin' with Jason



Jason D. Searcy

The 6+ hour drive up from South Beloit (IL) to Elko Speedway was definitely worthwhile for Randy Sargent who took the unique guitar trophy home with him after winning the 93 lap Late Model main event during Thunderstruck93. 10-time ELKO Champion Jacob Goede #72 was the fast-timer of the 33 cars that qualified and Sargent was the second quickest, but then Goede rolled a 12 on the dice so the fastest two cars started way back in the 5th and 6th rows. Many drivers mentioned that they were concerned about the tire lasting to the end, so there was strategy on how hard to push it. Young Colin Stocker led quite a few laps during the race but then he developed a slow tire leak and nursed it home for a fourth place finish. It was really cool to see travelers like Mike Lichtfeld, Andrew Bornreger, Kody King, Jesse Bernhagen, Jason Stark, Max Larson and Nick Nolden racing a non-tour type event at ELKO and the race brought back some familiar names like Joe Prusak, Michael Haggard and Jake Ryan who had not raced here in a few years. The John Manke car had mechanical problems and dropped fluid on the track on lap 10 causing mass chaos with many of the top cars spinning out simultaneously in corner one, Billy Mohn got the



Thunderstruck 93 Highlights



worst of the damage but numerous cars were involved including Jeremy Wolff and Grant Brown. It was a close call for the ELKO point title contenders, both Chris Marek and Chad Walen were spun out but continued. Randy Sargent #11 was able to gain the lead at about the half-way point, by lap 50 Goede was passing cars left and right and up to third and shortly thereafter he was up to second place.

The biggest moment of the night was with 16 laps remaining in the race, it was after a restart and Goede was under Sargent and they were battling side by side. It was just hard racing for the lead with the fastest two cars, Goede ended up tapping the left rear of Sargent's car in corner one and Sargent spun.

At ELKO the fans are accustomed to seeing a lot of side by side racing for the lead, it is very rare that a race is decided because of contact that creates a spin. Goede knew that he was going to the back and he did the gentleman's tap-out at the flag stand (which gives Sargent his spot back), he then retired his car to the pits. Goede has won two guitar trophies in the past, the inaugural race in 2009 and 2019, he finished runner-up four other times during Thunderstruck. This time he will go home empty handed, but he gained a lot of respect from fans and other drivers alike. The defending Big 8 Champion Randy Sargent then ran to the checkers and won by 1.826 seconds over an exhausted 9-time ELKO Champion Donny Reuvers who had wrecked his primary car earlier this year and was running an older Camaro clip car without power steering. Michael Ostdiek was really fast late in the race and jumped up to finish third place.

It was the first time Randy Sargent had ever raced at Elko Speedway and he was impressed, "I thought there would be quite a few more cautions than what we had. It's a smooth track, the facility is nice and the racing is clean, I really like it here," said Sargent. The traditional electric guitar trophy

was presented to him in victory lane, "It's going up on my mantle because it's the coolest trophy I've got yet. I was going to smash it like Kyle Busch but I figured everyone would get mad at me so I didn't do it," Sargent joked.

Nine cars finished on the lead lap including the two drivers competing for the Late Model point title at ELKO racing for position, Chad Walen just edged Chris Marek by 0.872 seconds for fifth position.

Dusty Mann won the exciting Thunder Car 39 lap main event with 23 cars competing in this race and Brent Kane taking the ultimate challenge by starting in the rear, he was racing up through the field but had mechanical problems and finished 3 laps down.

Tristan Swanson was the fastest of 22 Legend Cars racing for the \$1000 prize, it was his 4th win in just 6 races.

Jimmie Jorgenson won for the 7th time this year in the 22 lap Power Stock race in honor of Jerry Thomsen with 16 cars entered.

Michael Ostdiek won the \$1000 Crown Vic race with 11 cars entering this new division and Christopher Flynn won for the 8th time this year in the Bandolero division with 18 cars in attendance.

Johnny Parsons and Kent Eastlick won the IMCA Old-timers races, they really put on a great show.

Prior to the start of racing 5 new members were inducted into the Elko Speedway Hall of Fame: 49 year employee and infield worker Al Chlan, respected track owner Tom Ryan, 40 year photographer Martin DeFries, long-time Jeff Martin crew member and current frame guru Greg Larsen and two-time ELKO Champion Mike Tuma. Thunderstruck93 was well attended and raised a considerable amount of money for "A Race Worth Winning" a charity endeavor which supports families of individuals who are battling ALS as well as money for research to find a cure.

Going in Circles



Charlie Spry

Some random thoughts and memories. Some current and some gleaned from memories of my fifty-seven years of involvement in the sport of short track racing.

I always remember some pretty amazing car counts from past times. One that many are too young to remember or they may not be aware of is at the old Columbus 151 Speedway. I remember not being able to get to this track in the late 1980's, when the street stock division was spawned forth from the enduro racing craze. They ran on Thursday nights at the time, and it was in front of a packed house every week. I would try to get there when I had vacation from work to see this class race. Sometimes, there would be eight heat races, a couple of consy's, a couple of semi-features, and for the fastest ones, a feature. This just staggers the mind now to remember car counts like this.

A fond memory for me was of my Dad taking me to the USAC stock cars at the Milwaukee Mile in August, every year from 1968 to 1977. We always went to the Thursday fair race. My Dad did not want to pay for parking, so we would park in the residential area and walk to the track. He was also teaching me to be frugal and save a buck when I can! Seeing drivers like A.J. Foyt, Johnny Rutherford, Bobby and Al Unser, Don White, Ramo Stott, and others. It was a real treat when I got to see Dick Trickle race here as I knew who he was from the local short tracks. Later it was Dave Watson and occasionally Janesville's own Steve Arndt who made some starts. I grew up in Janesville, so drivers from there were my favorites.

Speaking of Janesville, Wisconsin, in the 1960's and into the 1980's there were a tremendous amount of drivers from this city of less than 50,000 at that time. The Swartwout brothers, John Speer, Steve Arndt, Benny Olson, Evert DeWitt, Leonard Reimer, Mike Barlass, Terry Ciano, John Holdorf, Jimmie Pierson, Bill Leindecker, Jim Kersten, Ken Monroe, and Keith Selvog from nearby Afton were some of them. Frank Muth ran a service station near the hospital and raced hobby stocks. Lynn White raced a '56 Mercury, and a few others raced in this division as

well. The loss of the General Motors plant in Janesville changed things in the racing world.

The older I get, the more I have taken a liking to a wider variety of racing. I love both asphalt and dirt oval racing but have also gotten more into drag racing and road racing. I just like to experience it all.

One big difference that I have seen is between asphalt and dirt racing on the ovals. The dirt racers get to the track much later than the pavement racers. Some on the dirt side get there early, but not as early as the asphalt drivers, who sometimes get there five or six hours before the races, then practice and change setups several times before racing. The dirt racers sometimes get there an hour or even less before hot laps. Unload the car, then wait. Not much setup or checking tire pressures or anything. Just strap in and go. Makes it much easier to talk to them before the races!

Another difference is how far some of the dirt racers will travel, even to go to a weekly race. I know some are chasing national points such as IMCA, but many of them just seem to like to do it. I do believe that a more uniform rule package everywhere makes this happen so much more. I wonder how many asphalt racers would do this if they could?

Going to my first short track race back in 1968, some memories of drivers from that time stick in my head. I always have had a soft spot for the drivers that gave their all in the first heat. I remember Eldon Bronte in a maroon colored car with a #23 scribbled on the back quarter panel. I remember a guy by the name of Herbie Stoner, or H.K. Stoner as sometimes listed in the results. These drivers were just as important to me as the big name drivers. I still feel that way about those in the "slower" heat races. They were just as important to this ten year old kid.

Another really cool time to be a race fan was in the early 1980's. Capital Super Speedway re-opened in 1980 after being shuttered for most of the 1979 season, and the car count started off slow, but rules were adjusted to make the "two barrel late model" cars from tracks such as Rockford and Jefferson a bit more competitive. This brought out really good car counts by season's end. John McKarns was the track manager that year and was very good at looking into the future. Yes, that is his son, Gregg, who now operates that same track.

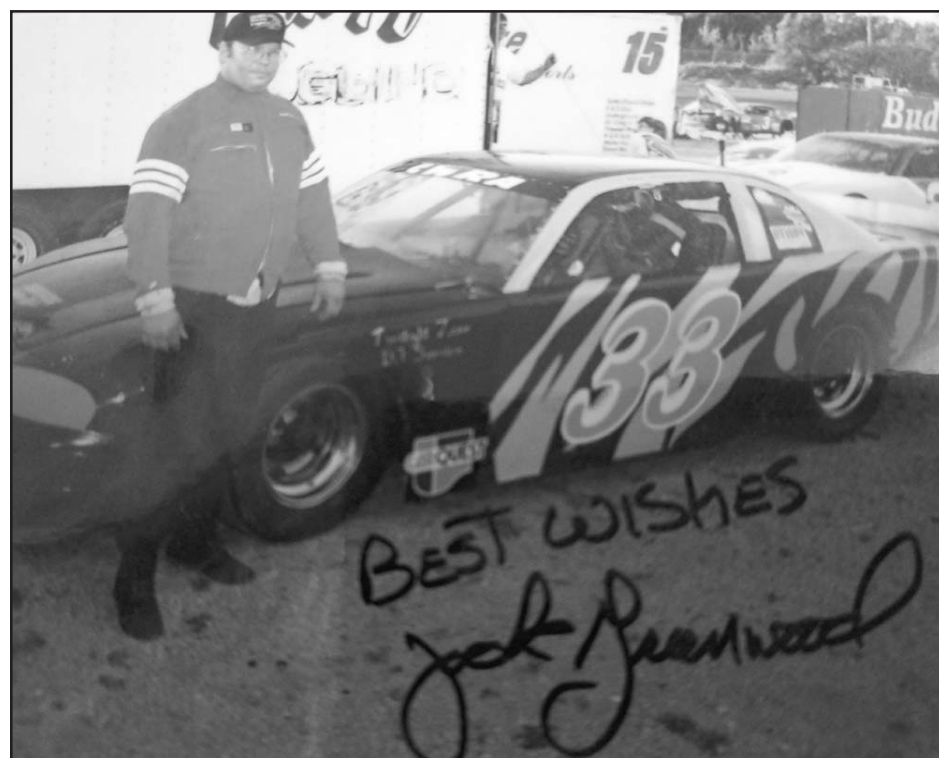
Hard to believe, but only two divisions were run at the track in 1980. All late models were grouped together and then the popular spectator drags were also run. These drivers basically had "street legal" cars run one-on-one. Several were trailered to the track and then surreptitiously

unloaded a couple of miles down the road and driven to the track. These drivers engineered their own kind of cult following. Jeff Schmidt, Scott Null, Ignacio Varela, Steve Smith, Kevin Swenson, Jeff Heling and Barb Goudy were the ones to beat. Another group racing at the State Park Speedway near Wausau also had their own group of races in a similar vein. Sometimes, the southern drivers would trek up north to Wausau to take on their regulars. It made for some interesting races with cars that now would be considered highly collectible and valuable.

The early 1980's saw the CWRA group run several nights a week and great car counts. Some raced all the shows while others did just one or two nights per week. Very good racing everywhere.

On a sad note, I must report of the passing of a driver that raced for a long time in the CWRA. Veteran Jack Greenwood was one of the first drivers that I got to know when I started writing for the old Checkered Flag Racing News back in the late 1980's. He and his buddy Todd Stapleman seemed to race all over, and that caught my eye. You might see them at Golden Sands, Wausau, Marshfield, and even Slinger. Jack was always fun to talk with and treated me right. Very honest and down to earth. He was the kind of guy that if you needed anything that he had, it was yours, even if he did without. I am going to miss seeing him very much. Our chats were those that memories are made of.

September was not a very good month to be a race fan. Numerous rainouts, flooding, high fuel costs, and other factors made racing harder for everyone involved. This will likely go down as a near record low race count for yours truly. As of this writing, I sit at 41 events attended for the year. My lowest count was in the Covid year, in which many tracks opened late in the year (38 events that year). My other lowest count was 48 events in 1987. My records only go back to 1983 for this. Years prior to about 1978 would be much lower.



Racing History**Dale P. Danielski**

We continue with excerpts from previous interviews and writings that will be contained in the book we are, yes, we are still working on. This time around it will be one of Minnesota's finest racers, John Boegeman, of Shakopee, MN.

Boegeman started his racing career back in 1963, experiencing success in Hobby stock and Sportsman division racing at Raceway Park, Shakopee, MN. That led to Late Model racing a couple years later. "I raced at Raceway Park for a couple years which was before Elko, (Elko Minnesota Speedway) was built. Once Elko was running, we didn't race there right away. Those were the tow bar

days of hauling your race car and we thought that was too far to go." Boegeman began racing at both tracks keeping everything close to home.

"We raced once at the old North LaCrosse Speedbowl, LaCrosse, WI., they had a special or something, but it was still the tow bar days so that was just a one time deal.

Success racing was on the upswing, but improvement escalated with the sponsorship from Superamerica gas stations. "Superamerica helped out a couple dirt guys, but they wanted to be in asphalt racing. My brother worked at Superamerica and he asked them if they'd be interested in sponsoring me. When the dirt guys bailed on the deal, Don Engelbrecht, (Advertising manager for Superamerica.) called me. It

was a partial deal at first, gas and \$1,500 or something, which was actually a lot of money then. It's funny too, I had gotten an Amoco station to back me, but I had to tell the guy I found a better deal. The car was all

lettered up and I told him I'd pay for the painting and lettering if he'd let me out of it. He agreed and I then became Superamerica sponsored." Engelbrecht had gone to school in Wisconsin which helped him as a Superamerica representative, become familiar with racing. "Don kind of played dumb with me, saying he picked up this guy from Wis. Rapids, a guy named Trickle, for gas and stuff. I said Dick Trickle!!?" Thus began the era of Superamerica Knights racing as Tom Reffner, who was in the same shop as Dick was added to the fold as well.

Boegeman continued to race the Minnesota tracks under the SA banner as Englebrecht felt that was the best representation for the company with stations only in Minnesota. "Rules changed and I wouldn't

HISTORIC VALUES*HISTORY THAT NO LONGER REPEATS ITSELF*

have been able to compete in Wisconsin without changing a lot including tires, so with NASCAR sanction, and street tires required I raced there. You'd slide around a lot on those tires, but it put a lot in the drivers' hands, not so much the chassis. I think I won 8 of the twelve features that year."

A championship soon followed at Elko, Speedway, and Boegeman wondered if the effort was worth it. "You know I tried every year to win the championship and when I did, I thought, is this all there is to it? I kind of lost my drive after that. I wondered how guys like Trickle could stay up for every race. When you win so much, how do you keep up your incentive? I was still competitive after that, but it just wasn't the same."

According to Boegeman, racing a schedule of 100 races probably was never going to be in the cards. "I thought of taking a summer off from work to race, but Tom (Reffner who had become a good friend of mine.) talked me out of it. He said John, it's so expensive, so I never did it. I'm not sure I could have made a full time deal work. The year I won the championship at Elko, I started out with \$5,000 in the bank account and that's what I ended up with. I spent more money that year than ever in racing. I think I ran \$60,000 through the account. My reward was always

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the tax break. I ran it as a business, I never really did make any money. I didn't go in the hole, but I didn't come out on it either. I don't know if I would have made it. But then, I look at Rusty Wallace, saw him race, and wreck a bunch at Rockford and look where he ended up."

Racing mostly in Minnesota Boegeman rates his toughest competition. "I think Norm Setran was one of the best drivers from the area. He could jump into just about anything and make it fast. Bobby Jusola was good. He was a clean driver. Dan Prziborowski was good, but he always had an edge with his equipment.



He was a good driver, don't get me wrong, but he was a dirty SOB on the racetrack! He'd run you into the wall. When he was leading, he thought he owned the track. "

As a member of the Superamerica Knight team, John Boegeman became the Black Knight along with Dick Trickle the Purple, later White Knight, and Tom Reffner the Blue Knight. "I was the first Knight, and Don wanted me to be perceived as the bad guy, so the Black Knight fit. Don was a very clever promoter, he says, you be the

bad guy, bump these guys, and all that. I said bullshit! I don't want to be the bad guy, everyone hates your guts. Anyway, the SA colors were red, white and blue, so that's what they wanted to go with, but Dick didn't want red, because he thought it was too girlish, like the Scarlet Knight he said, oh no, oh no, not that, that will hurt my image. So, he claimed since I'm so pure I'll be the White Knight. The Black Knight went over pretty well and Tom was good with the Blue Knight so that was what we became."

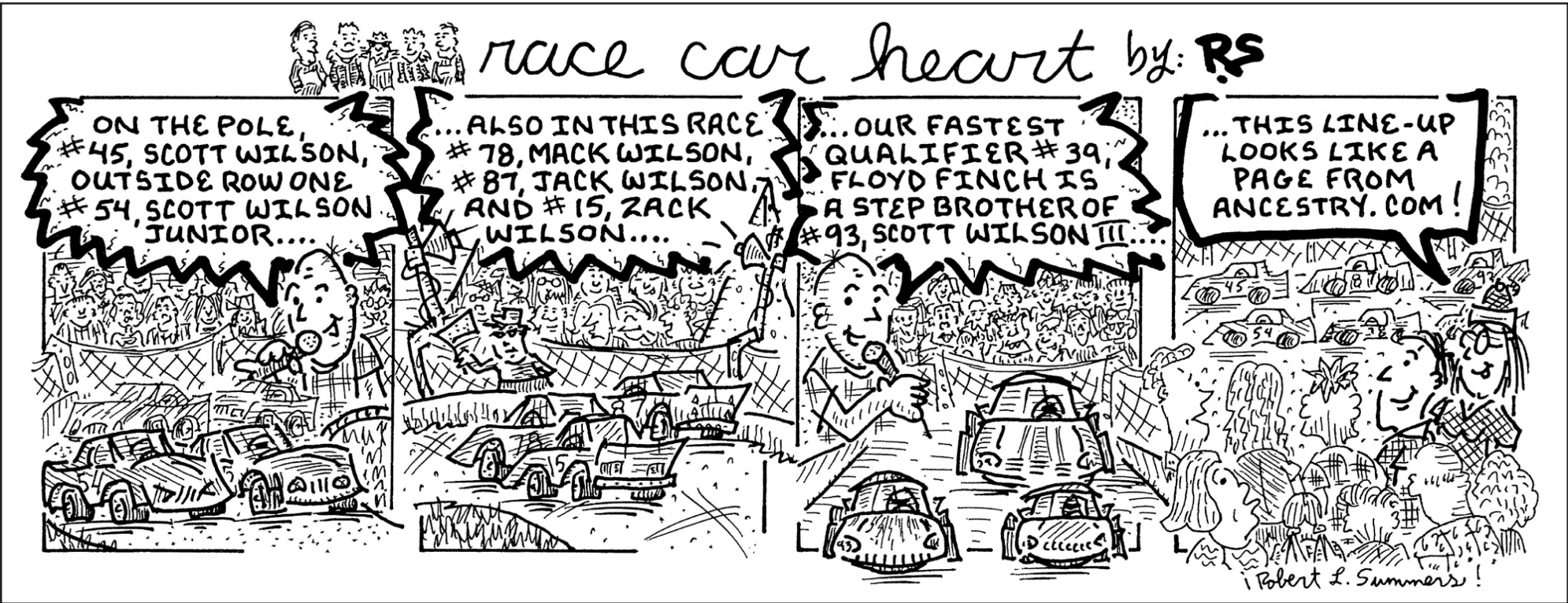
And how was life as a Superamerica Knight? "It really benefitted me. I never got show money, but Don sold this deal as a package, so we all got money to race. It was a great promotion, Don would



have us throw frisbees to the fans, give things away, nobody had done that before, not even NASCAR. Then, he decided to put out posters. They decided to try it out at State Park Speedway, (Wausau, WI.) I was the guinea pig. They let the announcer tell people what we were going to do. They were lined up at the gate and since I was the only one that had a poster I had to deal with the crowd. Tom and I were standing on our haulers and his eyes got big. I turned to face them and here they come like a herd of cattle! They tore the posters out of my hands, it was chaos! With that working like it did, it wasn't long and there were posters of all of us."

So what a time in racing it was for the Superamerica Knights. As far as any aspirations for

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THE MIDWEST RACING CONNECTION

Photo Gallery



*Westen Johnson leading the field in Traditional Sprint action
(John Luethard photo)*



*Mike Litchfield finished 3rd in NASCAR National points
(Dan Plan photo)*



*Nick Hoffman won the World 100 at Eldora Speedway
(Emily Schwanke photo)*



*"Top Jimmie" won the Power Stock Jerry Thomsen Memorial Race
(Junior Jackson photo)*



*Patrick Kletschka in USRA Late Model action at Red Cedar Speedway
(Brewster Baker photo)*



*Terry Lilo (Sprint) and Ryan Kough (Mod) at the Northern Nationals
(Grayson See photo)*

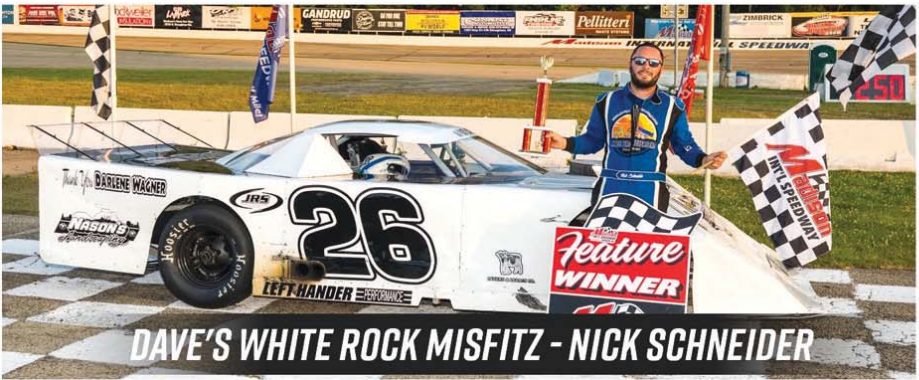


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Ty Majeski and Luke Fenhaus battle for position in the Jim Sauter Classic at Dells Raceway Park
(Doug Hornickel photo)

Racing History from page 8

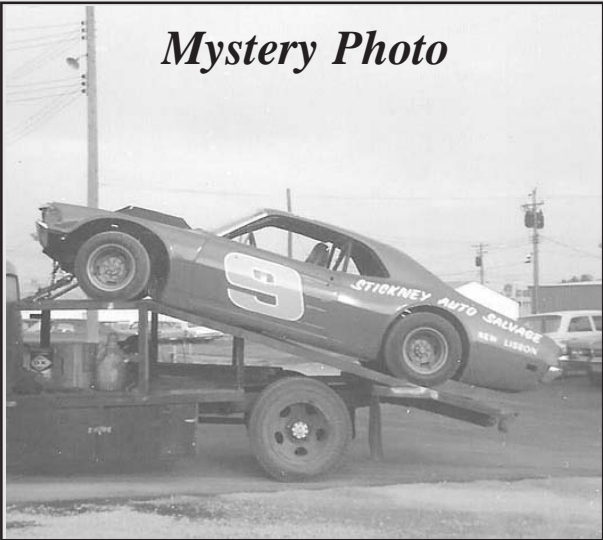
racing in NASCAR, John really never had any. “Now days all those guys in NASCAR are millionaires. They became millionaires for just driving. While we raced there really wasn’t that much money in it. In my days racing Elko, you could win every feature and still not be able to pay for a motor. The pay really never kept up with the sport’s costs. I think I probably would have run well in NASCAR as I was good in the long races. It just never happened.”

So John Boegeman after a memorable career in racing bowed out at the age of 39. I had a neck injury and just couldn’t keep my head up anymore. It was a tough decision to quit, it’s hard to give it up. I feel good about what us guys did though, without us there wouldn’t be a NASCAR today.”

And the mystery photo of #74 in our last column, which was driven and parked for many years at Griffith Park Speedway, Wis. Rapids, WI., was none other than, Jere O’Day, one of the earliest stars racing from Wisconsin Rapids. O’Day raced dirt, including IMCA stock cars, all the pavement tracks in Wisconsin when they got going and also along with fellow racing pioneer, Dean Spohn promoted the Golden Sands Speedway. Jere won the old timers race that this writer put on at Golden Sands Speedway as well. And, for this column’s mystery photo it’s the #9 Ford Torino that raced as a full size, long wheelbase car against the shorter wheelbased “Pony” cars in 1972.

Photos by Kurt Luoma, Rodney Dykeman. #61 John Boegeman dice car. #61 John Boegeman Nova. #61 John Boegeman competing at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI. #61 John Boegeman Cutlass. The mystery photo, #9 Torino driven by? Questions, comments, opinions and other information should now be directed to Starmaker Multimedia 314 3rd Avenue South, Onalaska, WI. 54650. 608-518-2478 or to dale@starmakermultimedia.com

Mystery Photo





2026 SCHEDULE

1 Sat, Apr 18 49 th Spring Classic Grundy Co. Speedway	2 Fri, May 22 Late Model Special Madison Int'l Speedway	3 Fri, June 5 Clash at the Downs XII Hawkeye Downs
4 Sat, July 18 Hawkeye Hoosier Classic Hawkeye Downs	5 Fri, Aug 7 Union 464 Night Madison Int'l Speedway	6 Fri, Sept 18 65th Bettenhausen Memorial Grundy Co. Speedway
7 Sat, Sept 26 61 st National Short Track Champs Dells Raceway Park		8 Sat, Oct 10 57 th Oktoberfest LaCrosse Speedway



DELLS RACEWAY PARK FALLOWEEN 100

Oct. 24th, 2026

Dangerous Dan



Dan Margetta

We've hit the stretch run of the racing season here in the Upper Midwest and that means it's time for the traditional Fall Specials. We like to race as long as we can up here before the dreaded snow flies as we try to squeeze just one more weekend at the track through October before we are forced to hibernate until next Spring.

My Fall schedule will begin out West with the NASCAR Cup Series in Las Vegas which uncharacteristically will be only the second NASCAR Cup race I will have attended this year following the season opening Daytona 500. I still followed the NASCAR scene weekly but things just didn't work out schedule wise to get to Cup races. The Vegas deal was kind of last minute too as I originally had not planned on being at the Vegas race. However, when Metallica decided to open at the Sphere the same weekend NASCAR was in town, everything kind of worked out. My friend Brenda, who I have known for over 30 years now, has gone to like 75 Metallica shows just about everywhere and along the way has become part of a group of friends that meet up at all these different shows. When I mentioned it would be cool to see Metallica at the Sphere, she told me the group was already work-

ing on securing tickets as they're all part of some band club that gets access to super early presales and what not. When working out the plan for the Vegas shows (trust me there's a whole process to this that I am just learning), the group expressed interest in attending the race since it was the same weekend and because they had never been to a NASCAR event. So...it was proposed if I secured NASCAR tickets for everyone, they would get me Sphere tickets to the concerts. In what was a no-brainer move, I got the NASCAR tickets and in turn, they got me concert tickets and now I'm going to Metallica at the Sphere and the NASCAR race with Brenda, and Tom from Michigan, Andrea from I'm not sure where, and Summer from Texas, all who I've never met. It may be an adventure but it will be fun and besides the recent Carson Hocevar-Ryan Blaney dust-up should spice up the racing side of the trip because Vegas has a pretty decent track record with fights. The only down-side is I can't be at two places at once so I have to give up my great Milwaukee Brewers baseball NLDS playoff seats that weekend, no worries as other family members have already scooped them up.

Right after returning from Vegas, I'll have two quick days to catch up on everything at the regular job (yeah I still have to go there) before heading out to La Crosse for the big Oktoberfest Race Weekend. For many it's the last big hurrah of the season with four straight days of racing and plenty of time to hang out with racing friends afterwards. I went to the baseball playoff games last year and missed Fest but after watching from home, it really bugged me I couldn't go talk to all those people I knew on my TV screen because, well, I wasn't there so I vowed not to miss it this year. I am scheduled to work the streaming

broadcasts for at least two of the days but I'll be there for all four. I am missing more playoff baseball games to be there but hopefully the Brewers take care of business and won't need to play the NLDS Game Five so I'd only miss Game One of the NLCS if they advance. Just about any division that races in the Upper Midwest runs at some point during the Oktoberfest Race Weekend and believe me when I say EVERYONE is there. It's a great way to unwind from the long season and hang out with your old friends and make new ones along the way. If you can't make it to La Crosse, Road America has the SCCA Run-offs the same weekend and one of these years the schedule is going to work out so I can be there (that old being in two places at once issue again), as I am told the Fall colors provide a really cool backdrop to the racing on the legendary road course.

After Fest, I'll be all out of vacation days from the regular job so the only race I'm scheduled to be at will be the Alive for Five Series fifth and final round, the Falloween event at Dells Raceway Park on October 24th. On a side note, the only way I wouldn't be at the Dells that night is if the Brewers should still be playing because then I would be at Game Two of the World Series but I'll deal with that when we get there. It will however feel weird to not be at the Championship NASCAR Cup race at Homestead this year as it will be the first time I have not attended the Championship race since 1999 (not including 2020 when I was in Phoenix but couldn't go to the race due to Covid restrictions). Maybe I'll figure out the more time needed issue when figure out the being at two places at once issue and I guess I'll have all winter to tackle that. In the meantime, I hope to see all of you this Fall while we can all still get to the track.



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Racing Nuggets



PJ "Jacklyn" Nuttleman

If I were to create a BINGO Card game for the 57th Annual Oktoberfest Race Weekend, it would make for a very interesting game for us to play. We would start with the FREE space in the center because parking at Oktoberfest is free, after all.

From there, we'd have a square for seeing Sharon Johnson at the gate, busting someone trying to sneak beer or other alcohol into the stands in their blanket or bag. Sharon isn't mean. She's doing her job, and she's very good at it. She's actually quite funny and nice. Like racers who race you as you race them, Sharon treats you like you treat her. Piss her off, and well, let's just say you may get more than the side-eye from her at the gate.

I'd include a square for when you hear OJ Romskog announce over the track PA that delicious pork chop sandwiches and Queen's Apples are available at the east end of the track... or turn 1 for those of us who are directionally challenged. We'll

Bruce Nuttleman photo



need to add a square for those in the pits when Ray Loughlin announces that you can get Mama Lisa's pizza by the slice or the whole pie.

We'd need a spot on the card for when the 50/50 jackpot goes over \$3,000. Add another square on the board for when someone wins it and professes, "I NEVER win ANYTHING!!" while the rest of us groan at the virginal financial victory and flick our losing tickets into the trash.

Then there are the traditional squares for the racing action. One for a new track or Oktoberfest record in qualifying. One square for a solo spinner on the track. One for "The Big One," which invariably happens on Friday or Saturday night, relegating the unfortunate crew to laboring into the wee hours to prepare the car for a return the following day.

Let's include a square for a post-win interview that includes the phrase, "I can't thank my crew enough." That phrase is sure to help someone score a BINGO, while simultaneously forcing my eyes to roll into the back of my head. I hate to break it to you: You can keep thanking your crew. There is no limit. Go ahead, we'll wait.

We should probably have a square for a post-race DQ, although my husband, Toby, assures me he won't be the reason any of his prepared cars would help anyone to

score a BINGO this year. Perhaps include another square for him killing me when he reads that. In that same vein, we could have a square for if Ty Majeski wins and he gets more boos than cheers.

We'll need a couple of squares for what announcer, Eric Huenefeld wears on Sunday. Will it be the flashy blue jacket that makes him look like a disco-ball in the sunshine? Something new that will be debuted at Fest? Perhaps a bold red, white, and blue ensemble to celebrate America's 250th birthday?

Speaking of America's 250th celebration, the Oktoberfest campground will have a contest for the best-decorated site with that theme in mind. There will be three winners. One will score a Free reserved campsite for 2027, and runner-up prizes will be awarded from Nuttleman Grain Cleaning. (Shameless plug for my brother-in-law Kevin's business.) Let's put a square on the BINGO card for a site that puts Clark Griswold's outdoor Christmas light display to shame!

A square will need a prominent spot on everyone's BINGO card for a Mark Martin sighting or signing, since the NASCAR great will be on the grounds. Martin will be promoting his new book, written with Bones Bourcier, entitled "Never Lift." Maybe another square for if he brought his immaculate RV rig to the fest grounds as well.

Sidenote on the Martin deal: there will only be 3 planned book signings Friday prior to the Trickle 99, Saturday during the Memorabilia Show, and Sunday



Bruce Nuttleman

Racing Nuggets continued on page 16

Racing Nuggets from page 15

morning during the on-Track autograph session. That should make it easier for you to get that square checked on the BINGO card!

If you see Gregg or Angie McKarns with an ARTGO logo on their clothing or clipboard, mark that square on your BINGO card. That's harder than you might think, because they're generally in perpetual motion. If you spot my brother-in-law, Bruce Nuttleman, toddling along in his bright yellow Crocs and unknowingly dropping AA batteries or a camera lens cap from his shorts pockets, you can mark that square off too.

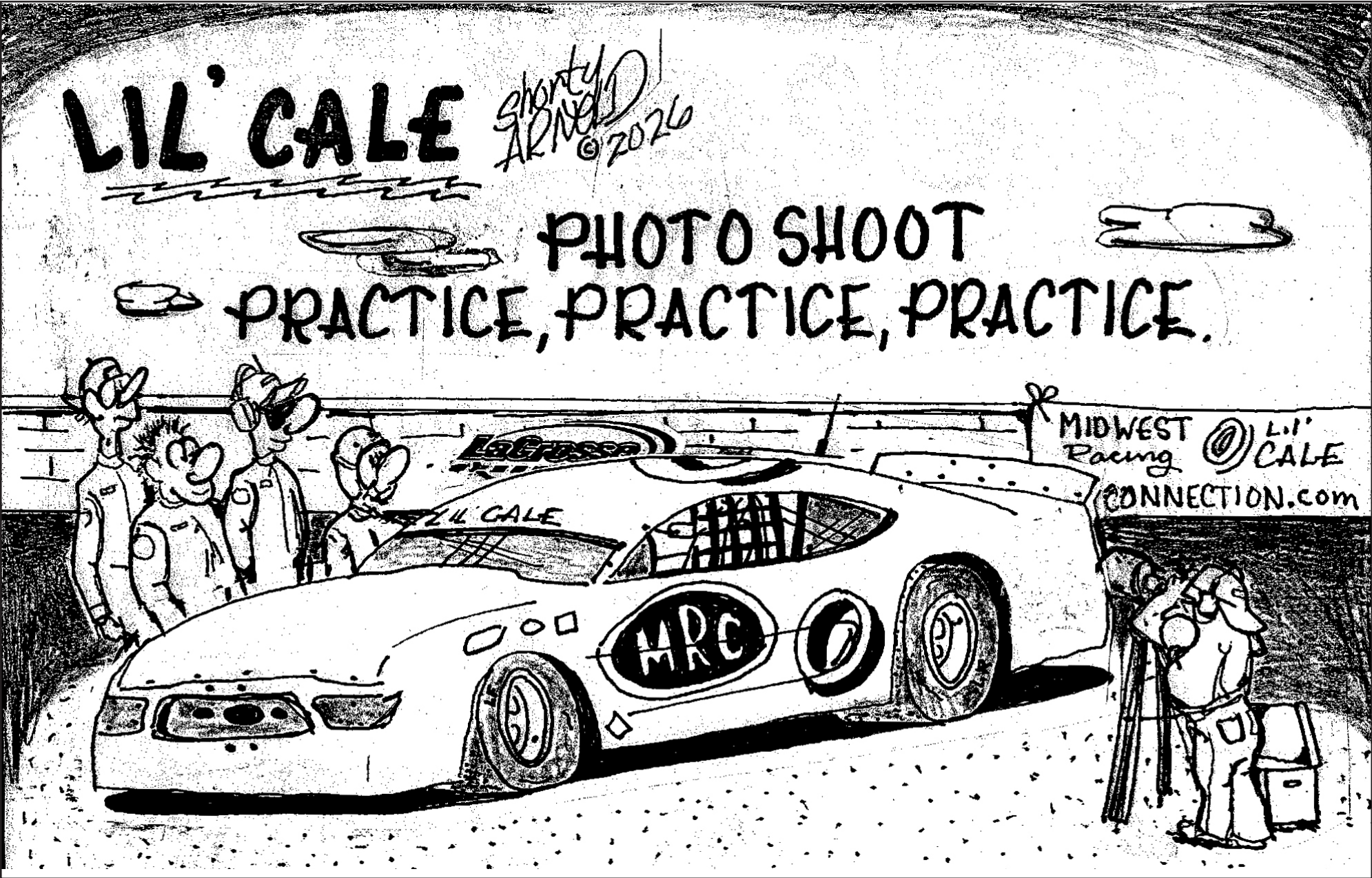
A square will be included for seeing John Schwedersky with a barley pop in hand, holding court during the races and talking about the "good old days" and why dirt is better than asphalt, yet he still shows up to enjoy asphalt races. God bless him. Mark that square.

There should absolutely be a square for if you see someone you only see once a year—during Oktoberfest—and you share a hug and/or

a beverage with great conversation.

We'll need the standard squares on this Oktoberfest Race Weekend BINGO card to highlight a visit to "The Pink Flamingo" in the campground, spotting the young, drunk dude trying to impress a lady on the dance floor at the Flamingo with incredibly bad dance moves, and the obligatory passed-out guy with Sharpie scribbles on his face and his "friends" posing for selfies with him in that sad state.

And finally, we'll have a square on everyone's BINGO card that is sort of like another "free spot" for when you thank anyone who is working to make the 57th Oktoberfest Race Weekend happen. It takes A LOT of hours and reliable, passionate people to pull it all together for our enjoyment. Everyone is capable of bitching, but the truly special people are quick to compliment and thank others for their efforts. Let's all strive to be the latter this Fest. Prost!



**The Twin
Ports Reports**



Grayson See



Jim Latvala, newest member of the Gondik Law Speedway hall of fame, running the middle in hot laps at the night two of the Northern Nationals.



Jack Rivord running hot laps in the 95 tribute car for Ricky Rivord who is currently battling ALS.

Tylar Alton and Zach Olson side by side finish for the 7th and 8th spot at the night one of the Northern Nationals at Gondik Law Speedway.



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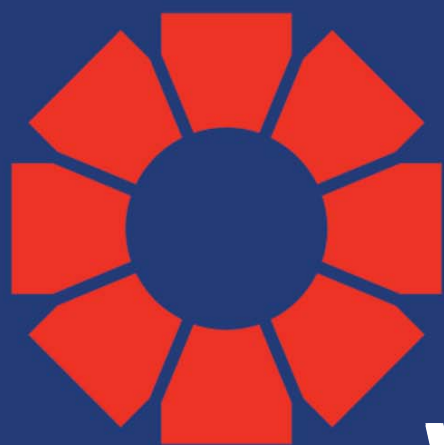


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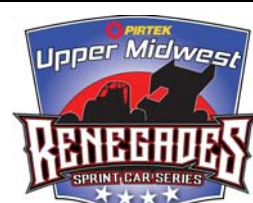


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