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**THE MIDWEST'S SHORT TRACK AUTO RACING AUTHORITY**

## 2017 USA Nationals



## Dixieland 250



September 2017 Vol. 21, No. 5

**Inside...**



Triple Crown at MIS



Pictures from the Past

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## Publisher's Note

### *Racing According to Plan*



### Dan Plan

Since purchasing this publication from the esteemed Publisher Emeritus Rob Hahn, I've found that I've rarely attended races in the past 10 years or so just to sit in the stands and watch and enjoy the action. I don't really consider what I do for the paper at the track as "work", as most of the work I do for the paper takes place at home on weeknights. Taking the occasional picture, shooting videos or interviewing a driver is fun (for the most part). Sometimes I end up missing something on the track. I've also found the work I end up doing on weeknights has cut into my ability to attend weeknight shows without taking a day of vacation from my "real" job.

This year, on several different occasions, I attended some different events without the intent of getting content for the paper. I bought tickets to the grandstand just simply to sit with friends and enjoy the action on the track. I found that it is still just as fun on the grandstand side as it is in the pits. I'm pretty sure

## *I'm still a race fan*



*Race fans checking out the action from their lawn chairs at Thunder Hill Speedway*

my mom sat with me in the bleachers while I was wearing diapers in 1967, and enjoyed things then just as I do now. I mean, how can you go wrong with going to the Sibley County Fair Stock Car Race, eating a corn dog and cheese curds under a covered grandstand? To top it off, the show started right on time at 7pm, had no intermission and was done by 9:15pm on a Wednesday night.

I also made a few stops in at Red Cedar Speedway in Menomonie, WI for weekly shows, including the Duane Mahder Memorial. I never would have imagined 31 Late Models would have shown up in support of this event. Hearing the crowd go wild as Chad Mahder charged from 12<sup>th</sup> to win the B-feature and transfer to the main event was worth the price of admission alone. And to top things off, I had a front row seat with my old man for the whole deal.

The most recent event I attended solely as a race fan was the Outlaw Kart Nationals at Thunder Hill Speedway. I figured this was just going to be a big

*Publisher's Note continued on page 4*

*The Midwest*

## **RACING**

*Connection*

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*Publishers note from page 3*

payday for the drivers in the Wisconsin area. Lo and behold drivers were on hand from California, Idaho, North Carolina and Oklahoma. Seeing Travis Kvapil's kids race in their home state and Dale Earnhardt's granddaughter Karsyn Elledge race was pretty cool.

Once I realized there were Kvapil's and Ellidge's on the track, I did break out my video camera for a bit, but then I returned to my lawn chair on the hill. Some nights I'm a race fan with responsibilities. This night at Thunder Hill, I was just a race fan with a cooler to tend to.



*Matt Bohl photo*

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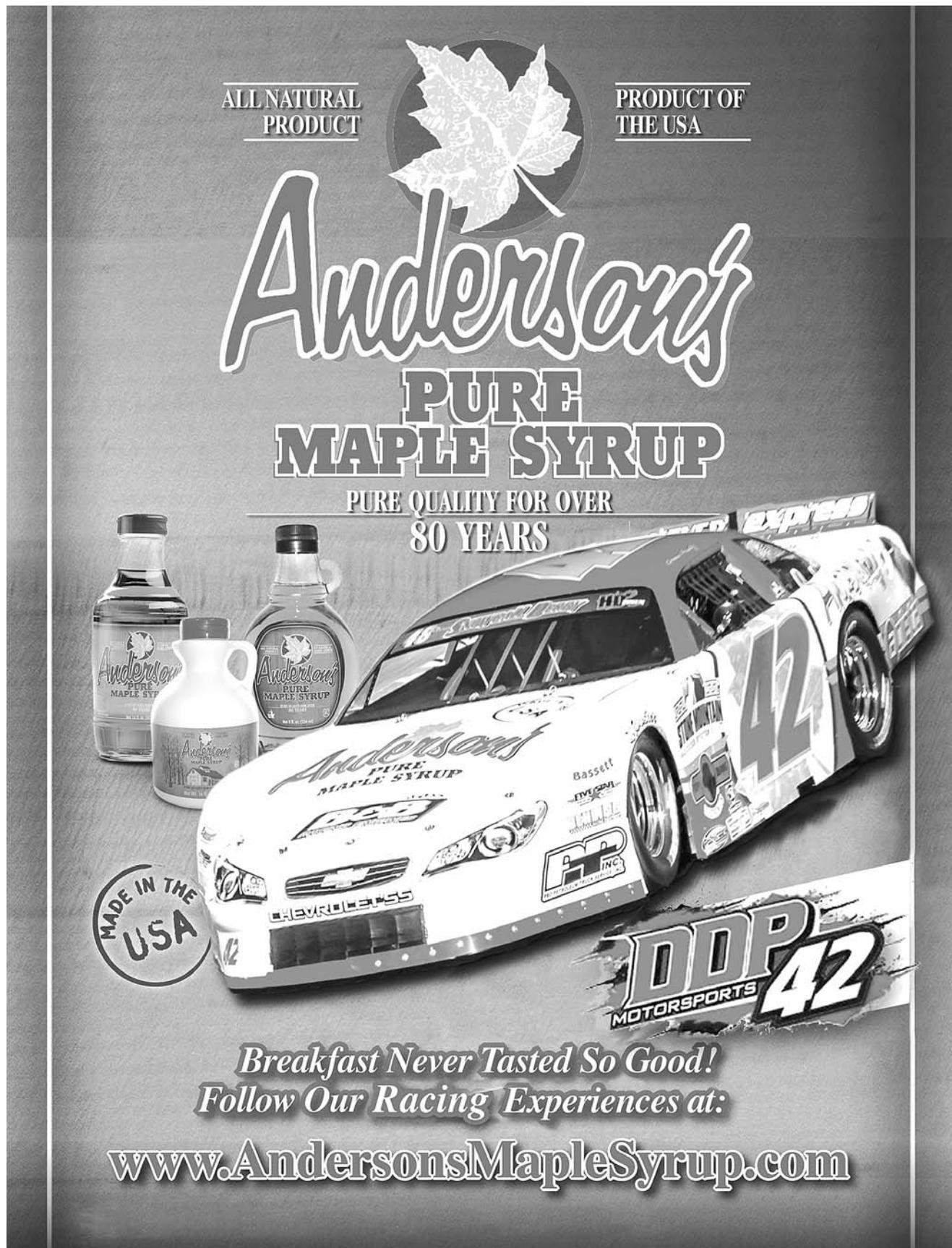
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## Racing Nuggets



### Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman

My mom was notorious for great advice when things got overwhelming. She would tell you to take a step back, leave whatever is troubling you alone for a bit, and return later with fresh eyes to evaluate the situation. That advice has served me well in my life, and I have said the same thing to my husband when he is struggling with something in the race shop. He won't admit it, but it's worked wonders for him too.

I won't say it's been overwhelming—more like frustrating for me to see people using social media to bash the track they just attended either as part of a team that feels maligned after an incident, or as a spectator in the stands upset about something. I think we've all witnessed it at some point. I'm not trying to belittle any legitimate issue people might have, but seriously—wouldn't a phone call or private talk be more productive?

While the negativity doesn't exactly impact me directly, as I do not own or manage the race tracks that have been the target of negativity—make no mistake; it does impact me and you too for that matter. If you enjoy attending races, public maligning by anyone of a track (or series) has the ability to contribute to its demise.

Another little piece of advice came from my grandmother, who was always quick to remind me when the chips were down for me—someone, somewhere always has it worse.

By combining those two nuggets, it has brought to light just how lucky we are here in the Midwest.

Allow me to illustrate this with a quick story.

I co-host a morning radio show in the La Crosse area, and the guy I do the show with—Phil, is a casual race fan. He made the comment the other day that he didn't realize how many asphalt race tracks were in

## A Treasure Trove of Tracks

the Midwest—particularly Wisconsin alone—until I started working with him and sharing the exploits of our race weekends with him each Monday morning.

I hadn't considered that point until he said it. Isn't it amazing what a fresh pair of eyes can reveal? I had been taking for granted that we DO have a LOT of asphalt tracks around here.

This season alone, I've attended a total of nine different tracks in Wisconsin for various races. If we count tracks in neighboring Illinois and Minnesota that we've already raced at or are slated to yet this season, it brings the total up to 13 tracks. That's a pretty amazing number of facilities that are still putting on shows—and it doesn't even take into account the number of dirt and go-kart tracks, road courses, drag strips, or other asphalt tracks that haven't been on the schedule for my husband yet, such as Sparta-Tomah.

There have been a few weeks for my husband when he's had two and three races on the agenda. While those were some of the most stressful weeks, he really seemed at his happiest. I'm guessing because it harkened back to the days when he was running around the Midwest with Steve Holzhausen. They'd run La Crosse on Wednesdays, Wausau on Thursdays, Madison on Fridays, Dells on Saturdays, and if there were any specials on Sundays—they'd run them too.

But we live in a different era. Those guys did it with one race car, a cube van with an open trailer, and a big ol' Coleman 54 cooler that was filled to the brim with icy-cold beer. As much as we resist change and

You may not realize it but all of the glorious race tracks that are still operational—asphalt or dirt—have owners or promoters who need to secure insurance to cover their assets. It's the nature of the beast; we now live in a sue-happy society.

If you think what you pay for health, auto, or home insurance is steep; you ought to look into what track owners or promoters have to pay for insurance to run events in the case of the unthinkable—on the track or in the grandstands. The inherent risk and danger showcased at every single event in the form of crashes and destruction is the equivalent of an expensive, incurable, pre-existing condition that could wipe them out of business.

Then there's the daunting task of finding good workers to help run each event—from the ticket-takers to the concession stands—safety crew and tech inspectors; it's a lot to cover to get a show put on for us. I know store-front business owners that struggle to find employees who are willing to show up on a regular basis to do their jobs during the week. Imagine the difficulty in finding good help willing to work on the WEEKEND, when most people prefer to socialize and have fun doing their own thing.

Running a track or series is not an easy proposition, which makes the original point so amazing: We have a TON of racing facilities in the Midwest! So whether your flavor is asphalt or dirt—we are truly blessed in this part of the country.

Take a moment to thank your track or series operator the next time you see them. Be sure to make note of the businesses that are on the billboards surrounding the track and in the programs; try to patronize them. And ALWAYS try to post an awesome picture to social media to help spread the word and the love of auto racing. But above all, try to bring someone new to the race track and introduce

them to our sport; especially kids. If you can hook them early, like so many of us were—it will help to keep the heart beating for another generation.

*Another little piece of advice came from my grandmother, who was always quick to remind me when the chips were down for me—someone, somewhere always has it worse.*

lament about the “good old days,” time marches on so we need to find a way to keep in step as best as we can.

Running a race track or series is no easy feat and we're lucky we have so many people in the Midwest who are willing to stick their necks out to keep so many of them operational. Lest we forget the lesson from my grandmother—somewhere somebody always has it worse than you. We should probably take a moment of silence for those tracks no longer with us; Illiana, Lake Geneva, Columbus, Raceway Park, the historic Milwaukee Mile, and more that I'm sure I've missed.

**THE MIDWEST  
RACING CONNECTION**

## Dean & Jason Talkin' Racin'

### Dean Reller

Racing is one of the most exciting sports out there. Filled with excitement, thrills and colorful personalities, so why is the fan base shrinking? And what can we do about it before it's too late?

Recently, we've seen a decline in attendance at not just the national levels of NASCAR and IndyCar, but most importantly at the local short tracks as well. The racing is just as good if not better at all levels, but the number of fans in the seats are beginning to become more obvious as there are always "good seats available". I don't claim to have all the answers, but here are some of the problems and possible solutions to help get our sport figuratively "back on track" with other sports. First off is the competition amongst other sports. Yes, baseball and football are not new players on the scene, but they are doing things to attract and win over new fans. They take high priority on the "Fan Experience". US Bank Stadium is an example of taking the experience to a new level. Structurally there was nothing wrong with the now defunct Metrodome. Physically it could have lasted dozens of more years, but increased demand by fans for better sight lines, more luxury seating and other amenities prompted a new facility. Likewise on the NASCAR side, Daytona recently completed a major renovation which removed some seating while replacing others with more comfortable and spacious seating.

What can a local short track do? Take a look at what's happening in College Summer baseball leagues, where they have sports decks. Barstool type seating in an area where fans aren't squished into just a seat and have unlimited food and soft drinks, along with discounted beer is the attraction. All of this for a

ticket that is double the cost of a general admission seat, but greatly enhances the game experience. This can be done at a short track along with having tailgate areas, where fans can park their vehicle, watch the races and tailgate. Some tracks offer tailgating now and some physically aren't able to do this. But if the geography allows it, this is something to definitely consider.

Target recently announced that was leaving racing after 28 years. This is very disappointing especially since driver Kyle Larson is having a successful season and is a leading contender to win the championship. Target is leaving racing to focus on soccer. The move according to Target "Provided Target with a unique opportunity to reach our guests in a new place, and at all levels of the sport." In other words, the people working the marketing end of Target racing didn't do their job to find ways to interact better between the racing and the fans. If they did something more than slap a name on the car, it might not have come to an end. Lesson to be learned here is, are you just taking the sponsor's money? Or are you offering something of marketing value in return?

On a positive note Kevin Harvick only needs to record a top ten finish at any NASCAR Cup race and fans are treated to a free Bloomin' Onion on Monday's following the race at any Outback Steakhouse. A great promotion that gets lots of attention and makes the sponsor money since no one just comes in for the free item and leaves. If Harvick doesn't get a top ten, it costs the sponsor nothing. A win win situation and a marketing success. Can this be done on a local level? Of course it can and it could be an easy sell to a sponsor by changing it to if the driver wins, you win too. This creates some excitement and gives fans someone to cheer for.

Race tracks offer big \$10,000 to win shows figuring that the more money you pay into the purse, the more cars will be there and the more fans that will come out. Now the driver that wins is really happy about the big pay check, but race fans don't get anything from it.

### SOS: SAVE OUR SPORT

Now if you took that \$10,000 and put that into t-shirts to give away to fans as they came through the gate, think of how the fan experience just got improved? This goes without mentioning the advertising that is created when people are out and about wearing those shirts. Another variation would be that that the race track along with a sponsor randomly draws a driver's name during intermission. If that driver wins, then everyone there wins something too. It doesn't have to be anything big, but fans cashing in will spend additional money when they go to redeem their winnings at the sponsor's location.

Lastly, racetracks need to look at the shows that they are presenting. In days past, tracks had as few as two classes of cars and entertained the crowd which greatly supported the tracks. Now tracks have anywhere from 4 to 8 different classes of cars racing on a given race night. That's great for the pure race fan, but trying to attract and retain new fans may be difficult. Remember, that fan experience? Are people just going to the baseball game because they just want to see baseball? No, they want to be entertained. The same is true for racing. Case in point, Elko Speedway not only has nights of just racing, but also hosts several Eve of Destruction events that combine racing with other thrilling forms of motorsports. Things such as bus races, crazy stunts, jet cars and monster trucks along with racing creates a motorsports experience. Pure race fans might not enjoy all the extra thrills and spills, but the crowd numbers reflect it. Nights that feature only racing have smaller crowds than the Eve's of Destruction.

Like it or not racing needs to change to reflect the needs of today's fans and sponsors. What always worked in the past isn't going to cut it for today's "Fan Experience" world. After all, racers are constantly making tweaks to their cars to make them perform better. Why shouldn't we be making tweaks to other parts of the racing experience as well? I've gone to too many "Last Night of Racing" at race tracks. We can't afford to have many more of those.



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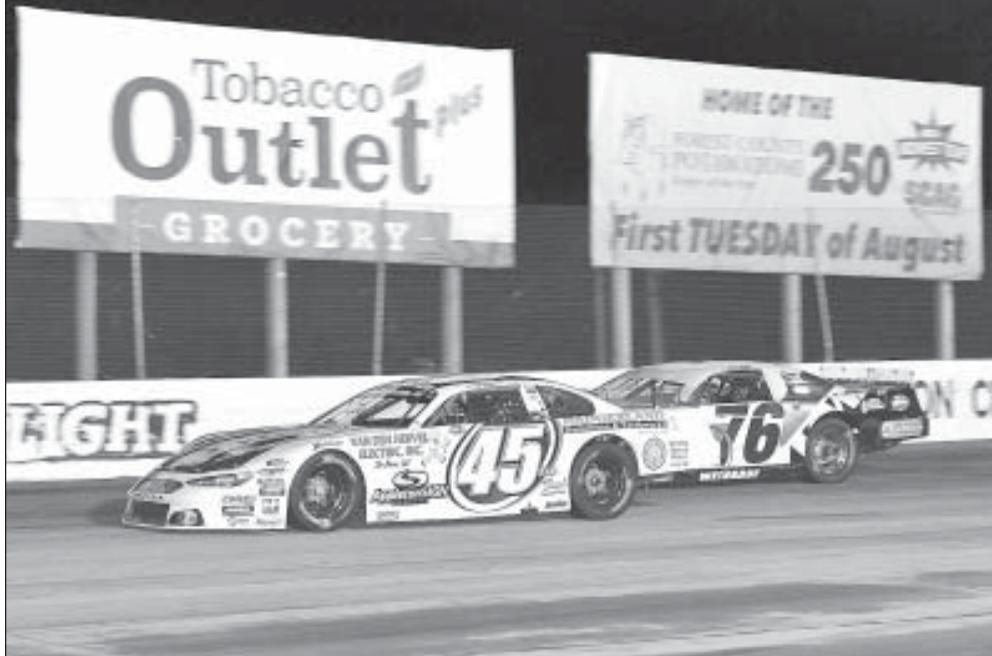
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# Dixieland 250 Gallery

The 2017 version of the Dixieland 250 had the appearance of one of the ARTGO shows held at Kaukauna back in the 1980's when the event first started. The inaugural race winner, Mark Martin, was on hand to sign autographs and NASCAR champion Kyle Busch competed against the Midwest competitors. Busch would cross the finish line first, but fail to make it through post race technical inspection. Casey Johnson would pick up the win. Snowmobile and Stock Car racers Cardell Potter and Jacob Goede run side-by-side (top left). Dan Fredrickson and Dennis Prunty battle for position (top right). WIR competitor Jeff VanOudenhoven and Jason Weinkauf (middle left). Pit stop action with Dalton Zehr and Austin Nasson (middle right). Eventual race winner Casey Johnson and Kyle Busch (bottom left). Casey Johnson and the McKarns family (bottom right).

Photos courtesy of Doug Hornickel - Fast Lap Photo



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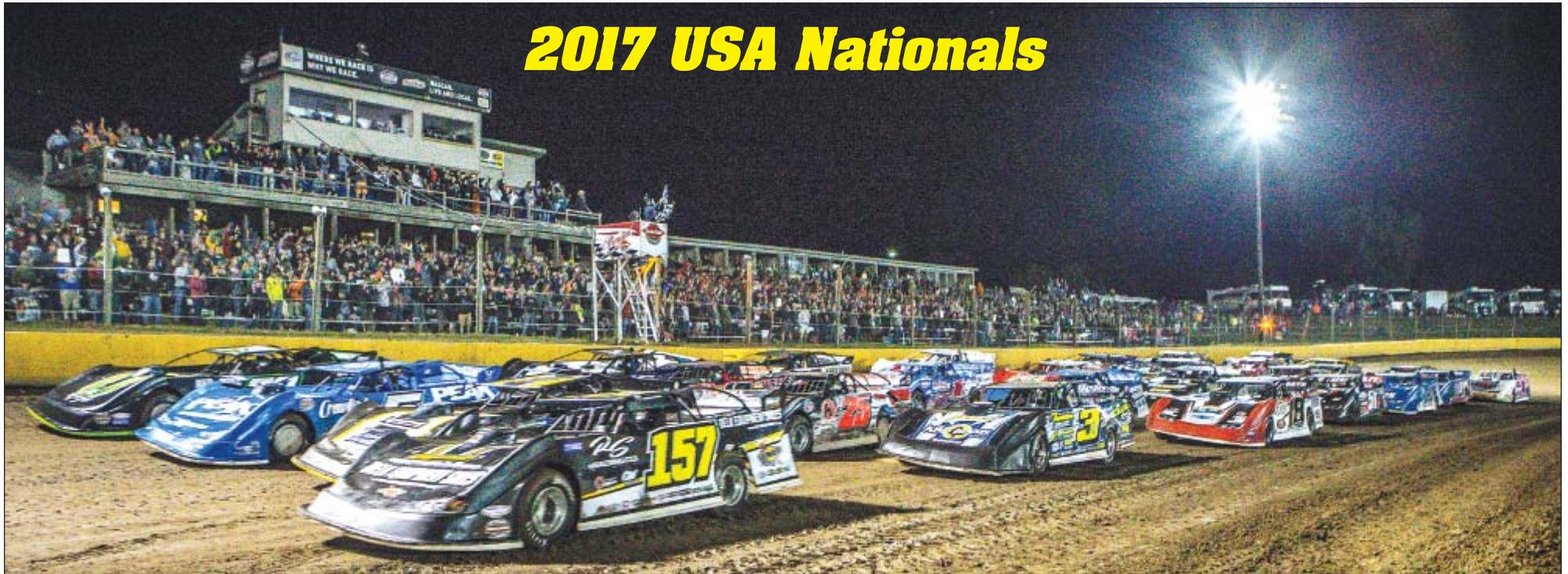
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# 2017 USA Nationals



*The 30<sup>th</sup> running of the USA Nationals once again featured top drivers from the World of Outlaws Late Model Series battling against the best of the Lucas Oil Late Model Series. The driver introductions did not disappoint the fans and the battle for the lead between O’Neil, Marler and Owens was short track racing at its best. O’Neil would go on to pick up his first win at the USA Nationals and take home the \$50,000.00 top prize.*

*Photos courtesy of Bruce Nuttleman – Ultimate Lap Photo*

## Thompson Tribute

*Former Elko Thunder Car driver Jerry Thompson passed away several years ago. Jerry was a top competitor on the track, always had a smile on his face and was an exceptional guest on Rob Hahn’s Race Show on TV. Current Thunder Car driver Darren Waltermann showed up mid season with this sharp looking tribute to Jerry.*



*Martin DeFries photo*



*Martin DeFries photo*



Charlie Weber photo

## Two-wheelin' at Cedar Lake

*FANS Fund driver Kent Robinson had an interesting weekend during the USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway. Charlie Weber caught this awesome shot of Kent getting up on two wheels during heat race action on Friday night of the weekend. Robinson would land on all 4 wheels and continued racing. For more photos, make sure to check out Fotos by Fizzle on Facebook.*

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### Tribute Night at Elko

Elko Speedway hosted their annual Tribute night, featuring the Dwain Behrens and Scott Kingery Memorial races. Dwain's nephew Michael Ostdiek (top photo) had the honor of sharing the track with his late uncle's car during opening ceremonies. Overall winners for the evening were Jeremy Wolff (left) in the Thunder Cars and Jacob Goede (right) in the Late Models



Martin DeFries photos



### Howie Lettow Memorial/Triple Crown at MIS

Madison International Speedway recently hosted the annual Howie Lettow Classic as part of its Triple Crown Challenge. Paul Schafer Jr. battled with Johnny Sauter in the late stages of the race (left photo) to pick up the win. Dan Fredrickson and Jeff VanOudenhoven (right photo) battle for position in the race. Fredrickson would set fast time and make his way to second place in the main event to capture the Triple Crown title.



Kim Kemperman photo



Kim Kemperman photo

## Going in Circles

### Charlie Spry

Rockford Speedway recently celebrated their 70th anniversary of providing racing action for the area. When you think about how long this is, and the changes in auto racing over the years, it's kind of a staggering statistic. It's the same configuration it has always been. Driving to the races there, you realize the vast changes in the landscape around the track.

Racing is still racing, however, and the 70th anniversary night had it all. The sportsman feature was won by Trevor Robinson. It was Trevor's very first feature win in a sportsman, although he had won many in the Roadrunner class. The Robinson name is synonymous with Rockford Speedway, as the family is very well known and respected here, and everywhere. To make the story even better, Trevor's brother Johnny finished second in a side by side finish.

Another close finish in the late models saw Jon Reynolds Jr. take the win over Michael Bilderback. Once again, both families have a real history here. Zach Rodriguez took his fourth feature win of the season in the American Short Trackers, and Adam Cartwright took the Roadrunner main event. AST veteran Aaron Rude informed me that his last feature win here a couple of weeks prior was his 25th career feature victory, including here and at Jefferson where he began his career. He thinks that he has had about that same amount of fast qualifying efforts as well. Pretty cool that he has kept stats.

Jefferson regular Ricky Sanwick brought his hobby stock down, racing with the sportsman cars. "I don't expect any miracles, don't care about how much money I get or anything, I just want to race. "I love his place, I remember coming here as a kid when I was about eight years old or so, that would have been about 1968." Jefferson had a special show on this night with their regular divisions off, and being a long distance truck driver, Rick gets limited chances to be home and race during the season.

Coming out to race late in the season in a late model is new driver Shawn Ogden. Shawn formerly raced in a four cylinder car, as well as in the Roadrunner division here several years ago. "I don't even know how long ago it was, but it was a long time," said Shawn. In talking about his new late model, he said "This car is an older Pathfinder chassis that I spend just about all of my free time working on. I already know of a few changes I am going to make on it after this one night. My hope is to race maybe once or twice more this season, then run for Rookie-Of-The-Year in 2018." In talking with Shawn, we realized that we raced against each other in the final race at Lake Geneva Raceway

back in 2006 in the four cylinder division. It's a small world. Shawn did a great job in his first outing in a late model, starting last, but moving up a few spots and keeping the car in one piece.

Late model veteran Jerry Gille was present late in the season, saying, "This is only the third time out for this car. It is going to be a good one, but the driver just needs to stop making mistakes." I don't think Jerry will make too many mistakes, as he has a bunch of experience and some championships to go with that. He is just being modest.

Veteran racer Billy McCoy made a start in the American Short Tracker division one night, laying to claim having ran at least one race every year in the last forty. He even won a heat and ran well in the feature. I remember him racing here with a brown late 1960's Firebird in the Roadrunner division, the same number 15.

Rockford's Wednesday night shows were plagued by rain or the threat of rain nearly every time they tried to race. There were some interesting things that happened on these nights, however, as if you weren't there, you didn't get a chance to see late model racer Jon Reynolds Jr. driving his first ever figure-eight race. This had to be a big change for him, not only in the type of car driven, but also the direction of travel. He ran both races one night, and kept pace and survived. That is doing well in my opinion.

The final Wednesday night featured the best weather of any previous attempt this season, with champions being crowned in all divisions. Josh Thiering only needed to take the green on the final night to secure the Roadrunner championship, but just for good measure he won the race, too. Likewise, Destiny Genre needed to do the same to secure the title in the Winged Women On Wheels division, which she did. She also finished in second spot for the regular Bandit division behind Kelsey Dobbs, who needed to finish eighth or better, with his sixth place getting the job done. The Original Sixer division recorded points for the first time this season, with Gary Ballard getting the title in a donated car. Richard Schinderling Jr. had to battle a lost driveshaft in his car during the Roadrunner races, driving a borrowed car in the figure eight to score enough points to win that title. It was a fun season of Wednesday night racing, just wish that the weather would have cooperated more. Rain, threats of rain, wind, and even tornado warnings were presented to hardy race fans and drivers, crews, etc.

We lost a great racing fan and ambassador early in the month, as Gary Prock passed away suddenly. Gary was associated with the Wagner Motorsports American Short Tracker racer driven by Shannon Stoltz, but also helped out veteran Jerry Gille and many others. He was very well known by all at the Rockford Speedway, especially for his huge smile and friendly demeanor. He always had kind words for everyone, and I personally enjoyed every chance I had

to talk with him, of which the last time was only a few days before I learned of his passing. He always spoke well of my writing and commented on how much he enjoyed it. Gary himself did some racing in the Roadrunner division back in the late 1970's, and I remember seeing him race then. So, Gary, I know you are reading this now, and I want you to know how much you will be missed.

Madison International Speedway ran their Badgerland Triple Challenge series race on what turned out to be a beautiful night outside. This three race series runs late models and sportsman cars with one race at three different tracks, MIS, Slinger, and Jefferson. Huge differences between those three tracks. A very nice field of cars showed in both late models and sportsman cars, with Slinger regular Paul Wagner leading the sportsman series points going into the night. MIS regular Mike Taylor won the feature, but not the series, as his Brother Jim races the car on Saturday nights at Jefferson. Terry Wangness finished third in the feature to get the overall title, while Wagner finished sixth.

Veteran racer Bobby Wilberg won this first feature of the year, but the overall title went to Dale Nottestad, who regularly races at Jefferson and has plenty of experience at MIS as well. The feature was a dandy, with a group of about six cars right there at the end.

The Hobby Stocks also made their second appearance of the season here, with Jimmy Robinson getting the win. I talked with Jimmy the Wednesday before at Rockford and told him that my money would be on him, as he likes the "Ring Of Fire," and knows his way around the track. The track really is the great equalizer, as it isn't a horsepower track, but more of a finesse track. Having raced on it, I'll say that it is actually challenging and fun.

Racing in the NASCAR late model division late in the season were two real veterans of the racing wars in southern Wisconsin, as Russ Grossen and Gary Krueger made a couple of appearances late in the season. Both race on a strict budget, which is probably why they have been able to race for so many years. Russ won a track title at Jefferson in the late 1970's, and I believe Gary won one at the old Lake Geneva Raceway. Both have raced at many different tracks and have accomplished much during their racing careers. Gary ran the old ARTGO series back in the day as well. It is a real treat to see these guys still doing what they love. Many people don't fully realize what they have done in the past. It is always a treat to talk to either of them.

The vintage racers made an appearance at MIS recently, with Joe Darnell's Northern Vintage Stock Car group. Bobby Frisch took a heat win and then followed that up with a win in the feature. "I've never raced at this track at all, not even on the little track,"

*Going In Circles continued on page 14*

### *Going In Circles continued from page 13*

said Bobby prior to the racing. He took to it like a knife to hot butter, looking right at home immediately. Even though he hadn't raced here before, he has a ton of experience at his home track of Rockford Speedway. Some say that if you can race well at Rockford, you can race well anywhere, and this might prove merit to that. He was racing a car owned by Tom Webb.

Steve Rubeck, who also has tons of experience at Rockford, was racing Keith Selvog's Chevelle. "This is fun," Said Steve, "It reminds me of what it was like when I first started racing, even though I don't consider myself "vintage."

The Super Late Model Triple Crown series was won overall by Dan Fredrickson, who always runs good here. Paul Shafer Jr. looked good in winning the feature, so I guess you could say that he won the battle, but Fredrickson won the war.

Ken Morris is one of the new drivers to the Six Shooter division at Madison this season. Ken raced some fifteen years ago at Columbus with a '65 Chevelle street stock car. In talking with Ken, he said, "It's been a long time since I have raced. I'm fifty-seven years old now and wasn't quite ready to give it all up yet. This division was announced as a way to get into racing on a tight budget, and this is all I can

afford right now. This is probably my last chance to race, and I want to make the most of it." He has, as he has won two features this year. By the way, he reports that he still has that old Chevelle race car. It is good to see new, young, and some older guys all coming together to race in a division that most can afford.

One of Ken's employees at his business, Morris Auto Repair, also has a car to race, as Randy Grant says that his previous experience was in the backup division at Columbus, also years ago. The car was sitting in a parking lot for quite some time, as Ken noted, "It was sitting there for a long time, and it had these weird tailpipes sticking out the back that I kept hitting my legs on. It was infested with ants and snakes, and even some of the snakes had shed their skin, so there were snake skins still in the car. So, We named Randy the "Snakeskin Cowboy."

We also took a trip north to the State Park Speedway recently for a regular show there. We ran into sporadic rain about half-way there, and more showers after we arrived, but this track doesn't give in easily, as the track was dried and racing commenced.

Jerry Brickner won the super late model feature. This young man has had an outstanding career thus far, as he won the mini-stock title here in 2015, then the limited late model title in 2016, and now he is in the

thick of things to win the super late model title in 2017. He currently sits in second in season points to veteran M.G. Gajewski with one night left.

During the rain delay, I jumped into veteran driver Dale Louze's hauler and had quite a chat. Dale currently races in the mini-mod division, but has raced in many other classes at various tracks. I doubt there is anyone currently racing that has more laps on this track than Dale. As for the future, Dale noted, "In 2019 it would be fifty years of racing for me. I'd like to go all out and try to get one more championship, then maybe cut back to only a few races after that per year. I'd like to retire from work and maybe go on a cruise with my wife." Sounds like a plan to me. It is always fun to talk with folks like Dale, who have "been there and done that."

"Snappy" Joe Kuehn took the win in the mini-mod feature, while Brock Heinrich won his second limited late model feature in a row. The Pure Stocks ran as part of the Central Wisconsin Steel Frame Challenge Series, with Travis Volm ultimately scoring the win. Robb Wruck won the mini-stock feature, and completed another victory back-flip, while Alex Hartwig took the win in the Bandolero's.

The racing here is always enjoyable, as are the people at the track. Hoping to get back here for championship night in mid-September.

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## NASCAR Home Track Title Chaser



Jess Riedner photo



Jess Riedner photo

Minnesota's Nick Panitzke spent the 2017 season racing in Wisconsin. In addition to picking up several wins at LaCrosse Speedway, Panitzke ventured even farther East to pick up a win at Madison International Speedway.

## Auto Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions



### Dale P. Danielski

There's always added excitement when racers win their first ever event, or pick up a victory after a long drought. In this scribe's recent travels that occurred on a number of occasions.

Going back to August 4th, 2017 at the Golden Sands Speedway, Plover, WI., it was up and coming driver Jerry Brickner scoring his first ever feature win, it coming in the 50 lap Super Late Model main event there. Veteran, Mark Eswein closed in late but at the checkered flag it was Brickner over Eswein, Chad Devine Mike Litchfeld and Jordan Thiel. You can never again win that first one and a very excited Brickner celebrated hard in victory lane afterward.

On to LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway, West Salem, WI., August 5th, it was Adam Oxborough winning his first ever feature of any kind in the 15 lap Sportsman division main. Steve Bachman and Randy Humfeld both threatened at the end but Oxborough held them

off for the milestone win. Same night, same track, produced another first ever winner as Ty Reedy won the 25 lap NASCAR Late Model Feature his initial main event conquest. Reedy had veteran racer Brent Kirchner on his tail but was up to the task holding off Kirchner, Ty Majeski, Nick Panitzke and Mike Ehde who were tightly bunched up behind.

Nick Clements who has won in the top division of racing at La Crosse Fairgrounds before, but hadn't seen victory lane in awhile, changed that here August 19th. Clements captured the first of two 20 lap NASCAR Late Model features on the night ending the drought. According to Clements the team was ready to take a sawz-all to the car as frustration was setting in having not won yet in the John Gilbertson owned Steve Carlson Late Model. Frustration meanwhile doesn't begin to describe the season Sportsman driver Brian Hesselberg has had at Lax. Having only finished one feature all year at the track, Hesselberg after more costly repairs on his car from a wreck a couple weeks back, finally came through for the feature win here 8/19. The 15 lap main was tight all the way, but Hesselberg held his line and motored to the win over Randy Humfeld and Steve Bachman who finished nose to tail behind. For Hesselberg, who was strongly considering calling it a racing career after this season, hopefully winning means everything and the plan changes.

Speaking of winning, the first time is anything but the case for Nick Panitzke as he won his 5th NASCAR Late Model feature at Lax. Fairgrounds here Saturday, August 19th. Panitzke's victory was in the 2nd 20 lap main on the night and it put him in the division point lead heading into the season Finale on October 5th, as part of Oktoberfest Racing Weekend.

Also included in recent travels was a visit to the Shawano Speedway, Shawano, WI., July 29th. Always great to catch a race here and tonight was no exception as an excellent field of cars was on hand to do battle. Taking the 20 lap Late Model main event win was the very popular Nick Anvelink who utilized a

late race restart to pass Troy Springborn which he held to the finish. Springborn held on for 2nd with Ron Berna, Joe Reuter and Brett Swedberg following.

Here and there...Back in July at Lax. Speedway, Nick Panitzke was guilty of a tire infraction in qualifying. Undaunted, the long haul Minnesota driver who had to start in the back of his 10 car heat race, moved from last to first in just three laps to win. Now that was fun to watch...Something not seen in five years at Lax. Fairgrounds is someone other than Steve Carlson leading the NASCAR Late Model points heading into the last event of the year. Nick Panitzke has an 11 point lead going into Oktoberfest Racing weekend over Carlson...Can't leave out the fact Justin Mullikan won his first ever Late Model race at Lax. Fairgrounds. Mullikan raced to a heat race win here on August 5th...The Central Wisconsin Racing Association Stars to Legends Tour has continued on in 2017 with recent winners being Mark Mackesy and Jeff Weinfurter, (Golden Sands Speedway, August 4th.) Jake Capek (First ever Super Late win by the way.) and again Mackesy at State Park Speedway, Wausau, WI., August 10th. One event remains on the Tour this year at Marshfield Motor Speedway, Marshfield, WI., Friday, September 8th and at least 6 drivers still have a shot at the season points championship...Hard to believe with this past show August 19th at Lax. Speedway that the next racing for most of the divisions is at Oktoberfest Racing Weekend, October 4-8, 2017. And, of course with 'Fest, comes the Champions Reunion from 11am-2pm on Sunday, October 8th in the Hospitality Chalet in the grand stand area of turn one. This years' theme will be 60 years of racing at the Fairgrounds featuring some drivers that actually raced way back then as well as past champions that raced through the years. One such driver's career that will be focused on is the late Ken Christenson, Sr., of the racing Christenson family. In addition, a replica car of one he raced back in the day will be on display. The Reunion is open to all

*continued on page 16*

## Dale's pictures from the past



*Cars line up at the North La Crosse Speedbowl, La Crosse, WI., back in the 1960s. The #2 car is that of early racing pioneer, Ken Christenson, Sr. (Ken Christenson photo collection.) A replica car looking nearly identical to this one will be on display at Champions Reunion IX as part of Oktoberfest Racing Weekend, October 4-8, 2017. Ernie Derr, the IMCA Late Model king won at La Crosse Fairgrounds back in the 1960s. Tom Reffner first ever Oktoberfest Feature winner in 1970.*

Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 15

past Champions in any division or series at any track, including an Oktoberfest main event win, that haven't raced in the past three years. Contact Dale P. Danielski at 608-783-5827 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com if you are interested in attending. Additional information is forthcoming via www.starmakermultimedia.com a Facebook Champions Reunion event page, and a mailer to past attendees...

Looking back in time on Wednesday, August 7th, 1957, it was the "Big Cars christening the new 1/2 mile dirt, Fairgrounds oval in West Salem, WI., with Johnny Pouleson in a Perdue Offenhauser winning the afternoon, 15 lap feature, and Buzz Barton, in another Offenhauser taking the 15 lap main event nightcap. Johnny Beauchamp in a 1957 Fuel injected Chevrolet would win both the afternoon 25 lap main, as well as the 100 lap feature nightcap in the stock car division, which competed for the first time at the track on August 14th... Jim Sauter captured the first ever pavement feature race at the Fairgrounds in West Salem on July 14th, 1970 in his 1967 Chevelle.. Following Sauter in the main were Jim Back and Dick Trickle. Dale Walworth won the semi-feature race over Tom Schaller while heat race wins went to Walworth, Bill Wirtz, and Marv Marzofka. Fast time went to Back at 21:39 seconds. Jim Hemker was victorious in the Hobby Stock feature... A Sunday event in 1963 found Ken Christenson winning the feature event at the Southside Speedway of Westby, WI. Christenson who also won a heat race was followed in the feature by Glen Henderson, Cecil Henderson and Dick Jones.

That once again wraps things up here and just remember, I repeat, get out there and enjoy life a little...please, get off the phone!

Questions, comments, opinions and other information welcome at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI 54650 608-783-5827 or at dale@starmakermultimedia.com

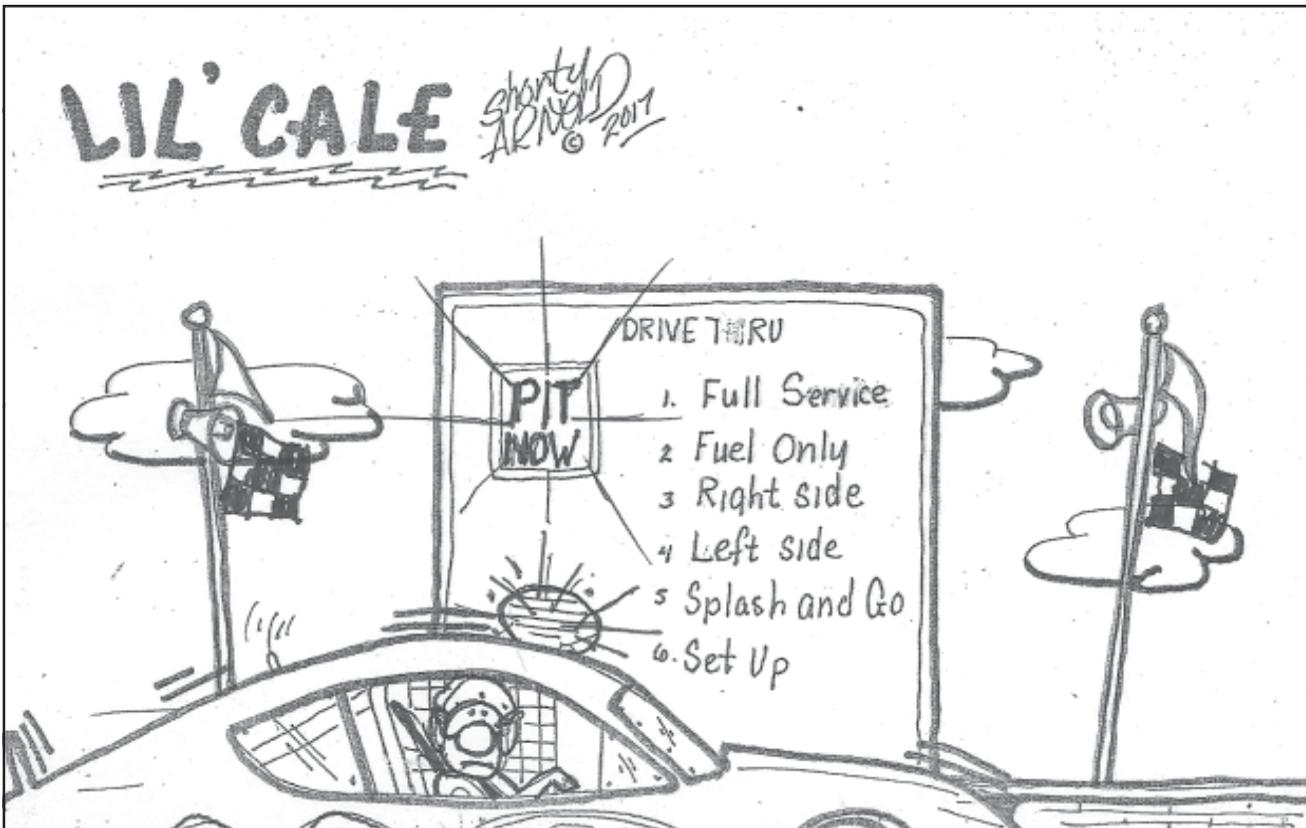
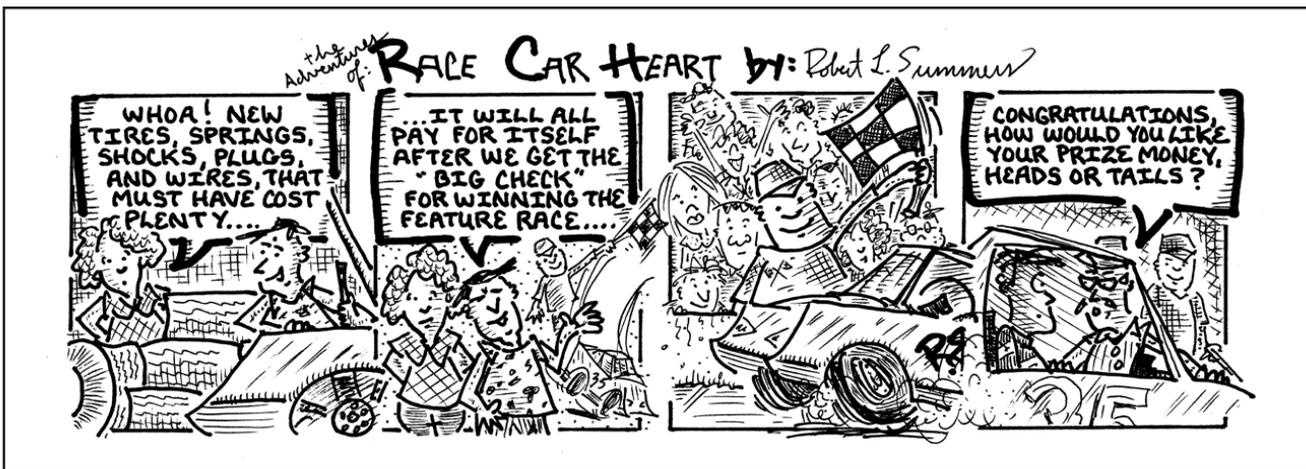


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## 3-Wide Short Track Racing

While 3-wide racing at places such as Daytona or Talladega are considered normal, it is not all that uncommon at your local short track. The three photos below show 3-wide racing at Elko Speedway (top), Madison International Speedway (middle), and LaCrosse Speedway (bottom). It should also be noted that no crashes occurred as a result of the 3-wide action in of these photos.



Martin DeFries photo



TJ Harron photo



Brewster Baker photo

## Discount Taxi Driver of the Month



Martin DeFries photo

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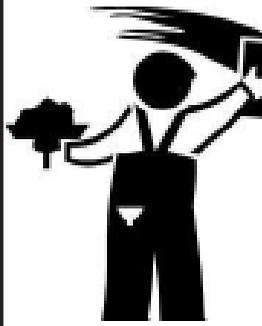
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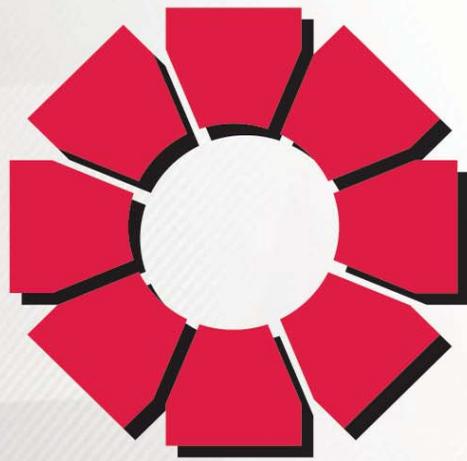
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