Short track racing is alive and well as shown by this aerial shot from the 2015 USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway (Bruce Nettleman photo)
The Midwest Racing Connection
September 2015
Vol. 19, No. 5
P.O. Box 22111
St. Paul MN 55122
651-451-4036
info@theracingconnection.com
www.theracingconnection.com

Publisher
Dan Plan

Contributing Writers
Shane Carlson
Dale P. Danielski
Jacklyn Daniels-Nuttleman
Kris Peterson
Dean Reller
Jason Searcy
Charlie Spry

Photographers
Jim Ambruoso (815-623-3200)
Martin DeFries (651-346-1199)
TJ Harron (608-301-5258)
Doug Hornickel (920-563-0993)
Mark Melchiori (414-463-0131)
Bruce Nuttleman (612-860-6622)
Vince Peterson (612-419-6372)
Mary Schill/Forte Design (608-792-1317)
Shawn Swanstrom (651-261-3686)
Jerry Zimmer (715-792-2174)

Dan Plan

Publisher's Note
Racing According to Plan

The past 10 years or so, we’ve all heard about the struggles of short tracks. We all understand that race tracks need to make money to survive. We all need money to survive. Sometimes you just have to work harder.

Race Fans – The Underutilized Resource

There are a number of different ways for tracks to increase their revenue, or raise payouts for the drivers. Raising prices is always an option, but doesn’t seem to be a popular one. There’s a simple idea that a couple of tracks in Wisconsin have been doing for several years now, and I’m amazed at how well they work and how much money is raised. I’m still in shock more tracks haven’t tried to copy these ideas.

The one thing that seems to be missing at many short tracks is fan participation. There were two events in the month of August that highlighted having a fan based event can bring in a lot of money and big crowds. They are simple ideas, but do require some legwork. It’s not like starting a website funding campaign and expecting the money to just roll in. These two events have people that “beat the streets” and talk to people in person to bring in money for their events.

The USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway has been hosting their FANSFund event for eight years now. The original concept was to encourage drivers that weren’t able to come up with funds to cover their travel expenses when the price of fuel skyrocketed. This year’s event featured drivers that were voted in by race fans, and then these drivers were eligible for a separate FANSFund dash race. The 12-lap dash race ended up with a $23,000.00 purse. That’s a pretty good payout for 12 laps of racing. Races fans that donated $30.00 or more also get a poster, t-shirt and are invited to a special luncheon to meet the drivers up close and in person. It’s a great concept and a pretty good bargain for race fans.

Now the one event that has phenomenal race fan participation, and raises a huge payout for the drivers is the Street Stock Little Dream race at Rice.

continued on page 8

A large contingent of race fans participate in the FANSFund each year (Vince Peterson photo)
Frisch, Dennis Smith Jr., and Robert Stoltz each won one feature. Vern Brown got the championship in the Super Cups, grabbing four feature wins, while Trevor Addams also got four wins, with Elliott Pritchett getting the other one. Dwight Dunlap won the “fendered” division of the Misfits group, recording six wins to Kyle Voss’ two, while Vern Brown got another of his many championships in the open wheel class, getting five wins. Vern has been racing and winning since 1971, and always gave his trophies away to a lucky youngster in the audience. Tim Roach, Jason Dull, and David Demeny each recorded one feature victory. Spectator drags are run every Wednesday, with some real tough competition on many nights. While no formal champion is named, surely Charlie Roland and his sinister looking black Camaro would be the champ.

On another note about Rockford, it was real nice to see late model rookie Danny Gerke get his first feature win in the top division on a Saturday night in mid-August. The third generation racer has raced in the sportsman division for quite some time, but made the step up this year, and has his share of misfortune, so it was nice to see him get that first win. He’s also one of the nicest guys you could meet.

Late model racer Michael Bilderback is right in the thick of the championship title run here, and I’m sure he would be the first to tell you that a top notch crew is essential to success on the track. One thing that turns heads is that his Grandmother is a very vital member of the crew. At 49 years of age, Liz Bilderback not only does all the little things that each member must carry out, such as taking notes, times, keeping track of tires and whatever, but it is also not at all unusual to see her underneath the car changing gears and other duties not traditionally done by a female. In other words, she gets very dirty. Along with all this, Liz also holds down two regular jobs, and does all the normal chores around the house such as cleaning, cooking, and other things more normally associated with a “Grandmother.” Crew member/spouse Dave Gough is eighty years old, and is the elder statesman of the crew, and says that he is mostly an advisor to the crew, as he has been around the sport for a long time. He had plenty of good things to say about the sheer stamina of Liz, keeping pace with the other crew members who are mostly in their 20’s. Great job by these two and the rest of the crew as well as Michael, as they make the march towards the championship.

Madison International Speedway has seen its share of first time winners in the month of August. Veteran Rusty Hansen got his very first NASCAR late model feature win here recently, saying, “I’ve been racing here for thirty years, trying to win a feature. I’ve gotten lots of heat wins and semi-feature wins, but never a feature. I’m ecstatic.” Young Justin Nottestad hasn’t been racing for thirty years, but his first feature win in the Legends division is likely a memorable one. Sportsman division rookie Steve Anderson has looked strong all season for a rookie, and he also got the job done recently, getting his first feature win. He is a veteran member of Bobby Wilberg’s crew, so he is very much on top of things. I’ve enjoyed watching the new “Six Shooter” six cylinder division take off. Starting with only two cars for the first few weeks, the division suddenly shot up to eight entrants with more expected. This division is for first time racers, or at least those with very limited experience, and the racing is fantastic. Stock rubber howling in protest as these rookie drivers try to manhandle these absolutely stock machines around the quarter-mile “Ring of Fire” is something to see. Nice to see a new sportsman division racer show up at MIS. Tim Wondrash has some prior racing experience. He raced in the old “Road Warrior” stock street division at Jefferson in the late 1980’s/early 1990’s for a couple of years, then got out of racing since. Now he is back once again. Racers never truly quit.

Columbus 151 Speedway saw a revival on August 21st, as the track was reopened for the annual Dick Moore memorial race. At this point we are all hoping that racing will continue in 2016 and beyond, but it is unknown at this time. Racers and fans alike showed up in huge numbers for this event. I don’t ever recall seeing lines that long to get into the track, and cars parked all the way out to the road in the parking lot. I heard that MIS had a good crowd for their racing on the same night as well, so that is great to see. I had a chance to ask a couple of drivers what their favorite memory of racing at the Columbus 151 Speedway was. Bruce Havel hasn’t raced for quite a few years, but he was very active here for many years. After some thought, Bruce said, “I won the late model feature and the backup feature on the same night two times. I guess that would probably be it.” Jim Rohrbeck was present with a sharp ’71 or ’72 Chevelle, painted purple with A&W restaurants logo on the side, similar to Dick Trickle’s Mustang from the early 1970’s. Trickle had even signed his name to the car at some point. The car was borrowed and was the 2002 track championship car at the Dells in the street stock division. “I have to thank Dave Gawronski for all he has done,” Said Jim. As for his favorite memory, Jim said, “One night I held off both Bud Riedner and Chico Riedner, all the time lapping cars.” His worst memory was when he went out for time trials in his sportsman car one night and the throttle stuck and he impacted the turn 1-2 wall at full speed. “I ended up with compressed vertebrae in my back with that, and a foot injury. I remember the night before working on the rear end of the car, and had the air cleaner off as well doing other things. Someone stopped by, and when they left I got back to work on the rear, but didn’t pay close attention to the air cleaner when I put it back, and the throttle got hung up on the plug wires.”

Columbus is the track where I personally have turned more laps than anywhere, and had the most success. My favorite memory was when I won my first ever race in my rookie year in the Bandit division, holding off Rikki Bishofberger for the win. Rikki was one of my favorite people to race with. She could have taken me out or got into me, but never a touch. Hard to find people like that. You never forget your first win.
I watched in horror, the replay of IndyCar driver, Sage Karam’s accident at Pocono Raceway. The announcers seemed strangely indifferent as they finally figured out that the reason Justin Wilson’s car went into the wall was because he was struck in the head by some of the wreckage from that accident. I knew immediately it wasn’t going to be good. They didn’t seem to grasp the severity of the situation; that or perhaps they were trying to be stoic journalists? I really don’t know.

I don’t profess to be a proficient commentator. I’m merely a blathering idiot on the radio, but I know I would have handled that situation differently. Of course, I understand the challenges of doing a live program, but not one of the announcers seemed to be remotely aware that this was as serious as I perceived it to be; and I was just watching it unfold from our living room sofa. Not one announcer exhibited emotion. And maybe that is part of the reason why I prefer stock car racing over IndyCar.

Darrell Waltrip, love him or hate him, would’ve certainly pointed out that it was a serious situation and even expressed a request for prayers for Wilson, who was sat motionless in his machine against the wall. We would have felt the weight of what actually occurred—had our eyes (or their broadcast cameras) missed what had just transpired on our screens. I’m not trying to make an argument of IndyCar announcers vs. Stock car announcers. I’m just pointing out that the handling of the broadcast after that accident was rather glib, and unaffected—as if there was no real comprehension of the brutality of what we had all witnessed. I don’t know.

What I do know is that it’s bananas that there are still open cockpits in racing. In this day and age, where speeds are pushed beyond 200 mph, it just seems unnecessarily risky to keep an open cockpit; particularly in those open-wheel types of series, as those cars essentially disintegrate upon impact—creating multiple missiles in varying sizes for oncoming drivers. We witnessed the tragic outcome unfold with Karam’s car as Wilson’s entered the path of destruction.

I fully realize that there are some purists, who will retort that this was a fluke, and there is no reason to sanitize the sport, as some say in reference to what the National Football League has done with their rules in an attempt to avoid unnecessary injuries to player’s heads or to a quarterback.

Maybe I’m wrong, but I just think that given the speeds being reached with those cars, it would be in the drivers’ best interest to have an enclosed cockpit. I feel the same about go-karts these days, and again, I fully anticipate people to argue with me on that as well.

I get it that go-karts are not likely to reach 200 mph, like IndyCars, but it’s still a bit too unprotected for my tastes to have inexperienced kids behind the wheel without an additional safety barrier around them. For many kids, go-karting is their first foray into auto racing. An enclosed cockpit would be a welcome addition to many a nail-biting mom in the stands watching her kid race around a track. Roll bars have begun to be implemented and that is a step in the right direction, but I still stand by my concern for flying debris, or even a rollover. A helmet can only do so much.

Like most situations, a solution doesn’t come to fruition until there have been a string of tragedies. There will likely be much ballyhooing over the circumstances to determine if it warrants a major change. For IndyCar, engineers will need to become involved and lest we forget—the almighty sponsors and sanctioning body will also have to get their opinions in there as well.

The powers that be are revisiting talks of a canopy, much like the fighter pilot variety for the cars. There were talks of this last year in May when debris struck James Hinchcliffe’s helmet during the Indianapolis Grand Prix, and again in October after Jules Bianchi was left in a coma for nine months, before succumbing to the injuries and dying. Maybe this will be the incident that finally pushes plans through for establishing an enclosed cockpit.

In the meantime, I’ll ask you to do what those TV announcers SHOULD have done—and Darrell Waltrip surely would have asked, had he been on the mic: Please say some prayers for the family of Justin Wilson—his wife, Julia, and their two daughters, Jane and Jessica, who are 7 and 5-years-old, respectively. It’s likely going to be a long time—if ever—before they return to some normalcy in their lives.
Nick Clements is also in the same boat in the Sportsman Division as his 8 wins have put him in the track championship driver’s seat with just Oktoberfest racing to go in 2015. The track still implements the ruling of having to move up a Division or sit out the year if you win the Championship. Clements isn’t totally certain at this point what will happen but indicated, “I still have my NASCAR Late Model”.

Thunderstox Division racing has a close point’s battle going on between Andy Moore and Charles Vian Jr., but with Vian Jr., intentionally taking out Moore in the feature 8/22/15 who knows what is going to transpire come Oktoberfest.

The Outlawz Division will more than likely see a new champion as last year’s titlist Cole Scholze has missed a couple events which puts long time racer Ron Lockington in the proverbial driver’s seat for that crown as he holds a 22 point lead heading into the Oktoberfest finale.

A number of drivers still have a shot at the Hornet Division track crown with Nate Towner leading at this juncture by just 9 points over Garrett Thicke.

The Street Stock Division saw immense growth in 2015 and that class finds John Eron leading everyone home in the track point standings. The division has seen 23 different drivers participate this year and those numbers will more than likely grow even more next season as it has proven to be competitive, economy racing at its best.

We say it every year but it’s hard to believe our summer of racing is nearly complete. The racing Saturday at Lax Fairgrounds was the last as far as the regular weekly shows and it’s now time to gear up for the season ending specials.

Here and there…Looks as though Lax Fairgrounds will be allowing Crate engines in the NASCAR Late Model Division in 2016. Probably a GM version, and definitely no Ford Crates allowed. An official announcement on this will be made at a later date. The Crates appeared in some Sportsman Division cars this year and with the exception of Nick Clements who has had a phenomenal season the division has been very competitive…Caught the Trailer Race of Destruction 8/1/15 at Lax. Frgnds and saw Cheyanne Stanfield take the win. I thought this was supposed to be a race of destruction as in people crashing into each other? Her tow vehicle and trailer showed zero signs of wear and tear. She won by crowd vote, which is how the winner is always determined, so I guess they liked what they saw…The Central Wisconsin Racing Association is having their final event of 2015 at Dells Raceway Park, Wis. Dells, WI., on Saturday September 26th. The Jim Back Memorial event will be held on that night with the CWRA Reunion preceding it starting at noon…Speaking of Reunions, planning is underway for the Champions Reunion at La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway as part of Oktoberfest racing weekend Sunday, October 11th, 2015. The show will run from 11-2pm with a number of celebrity drivers and track promoters to be on hand. A number of restored race cars will also be on hand. Now don’t blow the horn too loud yet but there is a good chance racing star Mike Miller will be attending the Champions Reunion as part Of Oktoberfest this year. Now how cool would that be! In case you are wondering, all fans with a ticket to Sundays racing will be admitted to the event free! We encourage any drivers interested in attending contact this writer at the address below…And in case you weren’t aware Oktoberfest racing weekend runs from October 8-11th, 2015 this year at the track…Good to see former LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway Hornet Champion Mark Bornitz pick up a huge win worth some big time cash in the 4 cylinder

continued on page 7
2015 Richert Memorial Preview

By Stan Meissner

Jerry Richert Sr. began his racing career at local tracks around the Twin Cities and western Wisconsin. One of his early rides was a Supermodified wrenched by my relatives and as I have mentioned in the past their involvement prompted my dad to take me to my first race at the old Twin City Speedway. Richert eventually left the local scene and became one of the greatest Sprint Car drivers in the history of the sport. The Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial to be contested at the Cedar Lake Speedway on Saturday September 12 will be the fifteenth running of this tribute to a legend.

Jerry Richert Sr. was one of the best of the IMCA Fair circuit having won titles in 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1968. He was the runner-up with IMCA in 1967 and 1970. Richert won the Knoxville Nationals in 1962 and is enshrined in Knoxville’s Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum. Jerry Richert Sr. retired from driving Sprint cars in 1986 so it’s likely that most of the drivers and fans in attendance at this year’s Jerry Richert Sr. Memorial never saw him drive. I would encourage everyone to check out the memorabilia on display and listen closely to the Memorial ceremonies incorporated into the night’s program. Nothing I can say in these pages can even begin to touch the excitement of that era or the exploits of this famous driver.

Despite the historical significance of this night racing fans will be coming to see the cars and drivers of our current era. The talent level at this year’s event promises to be the best we have seen thanks to the emergence of the FVP National Sprint League. The Interstate Racing Association will still be involved and they have teamed up with the NSL to incorporate into the night’s program. Nothing I can say in these pages can even begin to touch the excitement of that era or the exploits of this famous driver.

All divisions are sure to put on a great show but the onus will be on hand.

The talent level at this year’s event promises to be the best we have seen thanks to the emergence of the FVP National Sprint League. The Interstate Racing Association will still be involved and they have teamed up with the NSL to incorporate into the night’s program. Nothing I can say in these pages can even begin to touch the excitement of that era or the exploits of this famous driver.

All divisions are sure to put on a great show but the onus will be on hand.

Racing Facts, Observances and Opinions from page 6

Invitational event at Mississippi Thunder Speedway, Fountain City, WI., here Friday August 21st. Bornitz got the win over a stout field of 48 small cars at the 3/8 mile dirt track...Looking back, on June 24th, 1965 it was Jim Back #61, winning the feature event at Dells Motor Speedway of Wis. Dells, WI. Following Back at the finish was Nelson Drinkwine, Lyle Nabefeldt, Everett Fox and John McFaul...On June 10th, 1967 it was Jim Back in his 1962 Ford winning the 30 lap Feature at Dells Motor Speedway. Following Back to the stripe was Dick Trickle...With finishes of 2nd and 3rd in the two 100 lap Feature races it was Jim Back being declared the overall winner of the 13th Annual Oktoberfest 200, October 3rd, 1982 here at LaCrosse Interstate Speedway, West Salem, WI. Back drove his BAC-KAR #61, 1981 Camaro to the Oktoberfest crown. Ron Lockington won the 20 lap Hobbystock Feature on the day outdistancing Lynn Peterson, Dave Kauss, Terry Mashak and Dick Peardot.

News, notes and comments welcome to Dale P. Danielski at Starmaker Multimedia 967 10th Ave N Ste A, Onalaska, WI54650, at 608-783-5827, 608-518-2478, or at dale@starmakersmultimedia.com, www.starmakersmultimedia.com
Going In Circles continued from page 4

Cars from several area tracks showed up to race. I got a chance to talk to late model racer Andrew Brocker, who normally races at Jefferson. Andrew said that he began racing in spectator drags on the asphalt, then raced at the old Hales Corners Speedway on the dirt. He then went back to the asphalt with a first generation Camaro, which I asked him about. Turns out that the car was an old USAC car. He then took several years off before returning a few years ago. Nick Nolden took the win in the late models. He had to hold off a very strong Brady Liddle for the win. Pete Moore took third, and Adam Peschek looked good finishing fourth. We had several drivers with vast amounts of experience racing in the division, including Jerry Eckhardt, Bill Retallick, Russ Grossen, and Gary Krueger. I think there is probably 200 years of racing experience amongst these four, or very close to it. Randy Bruenig took control of the street stock feature. He is a good driver and the car is fast. Tough to beat. Dells, Jefferson, Slinger and MIS cars joined in on the fun. Nice to see Phil Denikas return for this race, as well as Scott “Chico” Riedner, who has been plying his trade on the dirt for the past few years. Terry Helmbrecht showed up with an outlaw looking early 70’s Camaro dirt car which was very cool. Rick Lamberty also returned with his Torino. Hobby stocks showed up with the best count in many years. Chester Williams took home the big win. Several Rockford Roadrunner class cars came to run, which was nice to see. Also good to see Mr. Lightning’s return. Approximately 25 Bandit cars showed up to race, a number which far exceeded what I thought would be present. Keith Erickson took the win in a borrowed car from Ken and Dillon Scott. Keith won the championship last year, but sold his car to put family first, as he started a family, got a house, etc. Jefferson, Dells, Rockford and MIS cars joined in on the fun. George Wachuta took the win in the backup race to close out a very exciting night.

To close, I’d like to put out my condolences to the family of central Wisconsin pure stock racer Dan Weinfurter, who passed away in early August from injuries sustained in a highway crash. Dan was a third generation racer, as his Grandfather was Merle Weinfurter, long time fixture in central Wisconsin racing. His Dad, Greg, has also raced for many years, as well as uncles Jeff and Brian. Dan was only 19 years old, and was in second place in points at the Marshfield Motor Speedway. Heaven just got another racer to turn some laps.

Publishers note from page 3

Lake Speedway. Leading up to the event, fans and local business are encouraged to make donations to the purse. As a matter of fact, they even had other race tracks donating money to the purse. Race tracks that race on the same night as Rice Lake’s weekly Saturday night show donated to the purse. On the night of the actual event, one of the track announcers was constantly working the crowd during breaks in the action; encouraging fans to donate and providing updates on the winners take home pay. There’s almost a competition of sorts between local businesses to see who can up the ante on the purse.

The Street Stock Little Dream starts out with a guaranteed $500.00 to win. By the time the feature race rolled onto the track, the total purse had been raised to over $28,000.00 and over fourteen thousand dollars to win. This was for a Street Stock race, not a Late Model race. You could feel the electricity in the air at this event.

I’ve participated in the FANSFund most years since the inception. This year was my first visit to the Street Stock Little Dream. Let me tell ya, there were only a few empty seats, and a lot of hamburgers, hot dogs and popcorn walking out of the concession stand all night long.

And finally, we are now entering my favorite time of the racing season; The Month of Money. While the season is starting to come to an end, the big money invitational’s are now starting up and we all get to see how our home track drivers perform against travelers and on the road.

Upcoming Events

October 18th, 1pm - Memorabilia and Album Meeting
October 23rd, 6pm - Annual Banquet
November 22nd, 1pm - Year End Wrap up and Next year Planning Membership Meeting

All events at the Savage Legion

The stands were nearly full 30 minutes prior to start time for the 2015 version of the Street Stock Little Dream at Rice Lake Speedway. (Dan Plan photo)
2015 was the 22nd annual Dwain Behrens Memorial Race. It was great to see former track champion Steve Murgic (left photo) driving the car during opening ceremonies and Dwain’s daughters & grand children in the car.
Lance Matthees in action at Cedar Lake  
*Nate Blewett photo*

Nick Murgic’s winning ride in the Dixieland 250  
*Doug Hornickel photo*

USAC Sprints go three-wide at CLS  
*Scott Swensen photo*

Majeski wins the race and Miller wins the title at the MIS Triple Crown  
*TJ Harron photo*

One to go for the Six for Six dash at LaCrosse  
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*

Donny Reuvers and the Behrens family following the Behrens Memorial race  
*Martin DeFries photo*
Michael Ostdiek and Austin Nason battle for position at Kaukauna
*Mark Melchiori photo*

Jonathan Davenport during USA Nationals driver introductions
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*

Late Model action at Rockford Speedway
*Jimmy Ambruoso photo*

Courtney Force and crew at Brainerd International Raceway
*Dan Plan photo*

Brad Powell receives expert assistance on the left front
*Bruce Nuttleman photo*

Midwest Trucks on the high-banks of Madison
*TJ Harron photo*
DON'T NEGLECT
THE TOYS
POUR IN POWER, PROTECTION
& ADDED PERFORMANCE!

Justice Brothers products provide superior protection for all of your favorite extreme big-boy toys! By reducing friction and wear, keeping fuel systems clean and protecting engines against acid and corrosion, Justice Brothers additives will ensure that your toys run at peak power and performance, providing maximum enjoyment! Whether you ride for sport or for recreation, don't start that engine without Justice Brothers protection!

www.justicebrothers.com

- Justice Brothers Engine Tune Up
- Justice Brothers Fuel Injection System Cleaner
- Justice Brothers Gear Oil Treatment
The Highest Paying One-Day Show in Wisconsin

There were a number of big shows in the state of Wisconsin this summer, some with a large amount of money on the line. This led us to thinking, what was the highest winner’s payoff for a one-day show?

There were events like The Clash at The Creek at 141 Speedway. This race paid out 10 grand to the winner, but that’s a 3-day show with practice. The USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway pays out a whopping 50 grand, but again, this is another 3-day show.

Single day race events like the Slinger Nationals also have big prize money on the line. This year’s event paid $9,999.00 to win, with Dennis Prunty taking home nearly $16,000.00 with lap leader money. Technically, the Slinger Nationals isn’t a one-day show; as most teams (if not all) spend all day Monday practicing for the Tuesday night show.

The return of the Dixieland 250 at Wisconsin International Raceway was a true one-day show, with no Monday practice session. This year’s 250-lap main event paid an even 10-grand to the winner, Nick Murgic.

While the tracks listed above hosted impressive shows, the MRC award for the highest paying one-day show goes to The Street Stock Little Dream at Rice Lake Speedway. Race fans and racing sponsors throughout the Rice Lake area raised the winner’s paycheck to $14,152.12 for this year’s race. This race was regular 30-lap race, had a huge 64 car field attempt to race into the show through heat races, and had no Monday practice. As a matter of fact, each driver only had 3 laps of practice prior to their heat races. The drivers all drove aggressively, but not dirty in front of a large and vocal crowd. Local driver Jimmy Randall went home with the big paycheck this year.

By Marty Gallagher

As Elko Speedway rolls to its final laps of its 50th anniversary season, the “Midwest Center of Speed” will be hosting its marquee event on the racing calendar Saturday night September 26th with the 7th annual Thunderstruck 93 in memory of Elko Speedway Hall of Fame member Dan Ryan who died of ALS. The night will include some of the best drivers in the Midwest with traveling stars of the ARCA Midwest tour and the Big 8 Late Model series competing against Elko Speedway’s hometown favorites. The night will support the fight against ALS with “A Race Worth Winning” to help programs and research to find a cure for ALS. Also on the racing card Elko Speedway will be crowning the champions in the highly contested Thunder Car and Powerstock divisions and point battles continuing in the Mini Stocks and Legends classes.

Dan Ryan who passed away in January of 2009 was a cornerstone to Elko Speedway and the support of asphalt racing throughout the Midwest. Dan began his racing career motocross but then moved to four wheels at Elko Speedway in Sportsman division, a class that his father Jack Ryan owned race cars in and also spent Saturday nights competing against his brother; Elko Speedway track owner Tom Ryan. Dan had successful seasons in the Sportsman division and made his transition to Elko’s premier division of Late Models with the famed Red #93, previously #39. Dan put his racing career as a driver to the side to help build DPR motorsports with the support of his family, wife Lisa Boyum, daughter Alison “Ryan” Gilbertson, and two racing sons Jake and Dan Jr. His sons went on to compete at not only Elko Speedway but tracks throughout the upper Midwest and races in a handful of other states. Dan was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease in 2006. He may have lost his battle to ALS but won his battle for loving family and living life.

Dan Ryan’s love for racing continues to shine with the support of the previous Thunderstruck 93’s. Competitors over the past six years have put cars previously torn apart back together for this event and drivers and fans have come from many miles to show their support for the Ryan family and the fight against ALS. Memories of Dan Ryan fill many of us when spending a night at the racetrack. Those memories ring even louder when his favorite song by AC/DC “Thunderstruck” is played.

When the end of September rolls on the calendar, fans from all avenues of life come together to celebrate the life of Dan Ryan and support the fight against ALS with a night of great door to door racing. Dan Ryan would have loved to see the competition that has shown up over the previous Thunderstruck’s and drivers that have made their weekend a mainstay at Minnesota’s only oval asphalt racing facility. Dan Ryan would have been more than happy to answer a question to help the “out of towners” just enough to make them quick. But he still wanted himself or his sons to be faster and then after the races probably give some more setup advice over a cold Bud Light. Dan would have been excited to see all the kids making their way into to the pits for autographs like so many of us once did. But most of all Dan would love to see the time and effort put in by each crew, family, driver, Elko Speedway staff and “A Race Worth Winning” volunteer, to make a night not for him, but for all of us through dedication that we all come together with our families and racing community to raise awareness and funds for the fight against ALS.
Bryan Roach and James Wenzel got up close and personal in this incident at Elko Speedway
(Martin DeFries photos)

LaCrosse Speedway Hornet drivers had a major traffic jam on the quarter mile
(Bruce Nuttleman photos)

Cole Anderson and Eric Connell get together in Big 8 action during the Dixieland 250 at WIR
(Kim Kemperman and Mark Melchiori photos)

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
www.facebook.com/themidwestracingconnection
@MidwestRace
www.youtube.com/theracingconnection
Championship at Elko Speedway and former Raceway Park Thunder Car title. Kane is looking for his fourth
Brent Kane and Jeremy Wolff have had a great battle for the Pepsi Power Stocks will race for their Champion that night.
The Thunderstruck 93 weekend will have even more drama all the races though, seven different drivers have taken
been dominated by a defending champion, Chris Marek has
division 1. Jacob has eight wins and eight different drivers have gone to victory lane so far this year.
The HiWay Federal Credit Union BIG 8 division has also
been dominated by a defending champion, Chris Marek has
11 wins this year and a big point lead, he also is 6th in the Nation in NASCAR Division 2 points. Marek has not won all the races though, seven different drivers have taken home a trophy so far.
The Thunderstruck 93 weekend will have even more drama this year because both the Genz-Ryan Thunder Cars and the Pepsi Power Stocks will race for their Champion that night. Brent Kane and Jeremy Wolff have had a great battle for the Thunder Car title. Kane is looking for his fourth Championship at Elko Speedway and former Raceway Park Champ Wolff is trying to get his first at Elko Speedway.
Kane has the tie breaker, he has scored 8 wins so far and is currently 3rd in the NASCAR Division 3 National points, seven different drivers have won in this division so far.
The Pepsi Power Stocks continue to provide great racing and an incredible 20+ car count every week, the crowd noise ramps up when these cars hit the track and the buzz usually doesn’t end after the checkered flag is dropped. 15 year old Grant Brown still has his learners permit on the street but he proven himself over and over on the track. Brown tied for the Championship last year and then lost to Nick Oxborough because he never won a race. Brown said he learned from that experience and has taken the next step, winning 6 races so far in 2015, a couple of those wins in spectacular fashion becoming a YouTube Hero. Brown also leads the entire Nation in NASCAR Division 4 points.
Tom Doten and Taylor Goldman have also had great seasons and multiple wins, nobody ever runs away with a Power Stock race and every finish seems to have drama dripping from it. These drivers race so hard and push their cars to the extreme, they also expose their emotions to the elements and that is why they are a crowd favorite. Eight different drivers have won feature events so far and the Thunderstruck feature will be epic for sure.
The Hornets, Bandos and Great North Legends will determine their Champions on the last weekend of racing Oct 3rd during the Eve of Destruction. Justin Schelitzche and Ashley Bell are 2nd and 4th in NASCAR division 5 points standings, they also are racing for the Elko Speedway Hornets crown. Six different drivers have won the feature so far this year.
The Great North Legends title is being fought for by two guys looking for their second Championship. Derek Lemke won last year and Jaycen Brockhouse won in 2009. Five different divers have won so far and the car counts have been great, people who are in the know say that the quality field of Legends drivers at Elko Speedway is as good or better than anywhere in the entire nation. That is proven time after time when drivers who race at Elko win big races all over the country.
The Bando Championship will come down to either Owin Giles or Luke Allen, two of the nicest kids you will ever meet. Both of them are great role models for the young kids who are thinking of racing at Elko Speedway in the future.
It’s almost my favorite time of the year, time to put some names in the record books under the title of Champion.

Our 2015 summer of racing is near its end, but the drama will continue a few more weeks as the race for the points Championship heats up. This year the Champions at Elko Speedway will be crowned on three different weekends. The Super Late Models and BIG 8 cars will have their Championship on September 19th, the weekend before Thunderstruck. Jacob Goede has a big lead in the MN Corn Growers Super Late Model division over his brother Matt but that does not mean he will coast to the finish line defending his title, both of the Goede brothers are as intense as ever and neither of them are satisfied with a 2nd place finish. Jacob also is racing for the NASCAR Home Tracks point title, he currently is 7th in the Nation in division 1. Jacob has eight wins and eight different drivers have gone to victory lane so far this year.

The Hornets, Bandos and Great North Legends will determine their Champions on the last weekend of racing Oct 3rd during the Eve of Destruction. Justin Schelitzche and Ashley Bell are 2nd and 4th in NASCAR division 5 points standings, they also are racing for the Elko Speedway Hornets crown. Six different drivers have won the feature so far this year.
The Great North Legends title is being fought for by two guys looking for their second Championship. Derek Lemke won last year and Jaycen Brockhouse won in 2009. Five different divers have won so far and the car counts have been great, people who are in the know say that the quality field of Legends drivers at Elko Speedway is as good or better than anywhere in the entire nation. That is proven time after time when drivers who race at Elko win big races all over the country.
The Bando Championship will come down to either Owin Giles or Luke Allen, two of the nicest kids you will ever meet. Both of them are great role models for the young kids who are thinking of racing at Elko Speedway in the future.
It’s almost my favorite time of the year, time to put some names in the record books under the title of Champion.

Friday, August 28th marked a special moment for me in my pursuit of a career in motorsports journalism and broadcasting. Fellow Midwest Racing Connection columnist, Dean Reeler asked me to step in for him to announce at the Princeton Speedway while he had a rare weekend off. There was no hesitation on my part; I couldn’t let that opportunity pass me by.

That morning, I was sitting in one of my senior classes at Winona State, but my mind wasn’t on what the professor was saying, or what we were reading; instead, all I could think about was what that night would bring, the racercars, the fans, and trying to do my job as best as I could.

When I finally got to the racetrack, I started to feel some nerves, which is natural, but the questions began to mount in my head. I’ve never done this before, why would they pick me? I’m just a college kid who loves racing. There was no backing out at this point, and I’m sure glad I was thrust into the fire as I was. I learned so much, and it was one of the most memorable things I have done within my 22 years. When I was a kid, I never fathomed I would one day be the one on the mic calling the action.

There were six classes in action that night, and a lot of good racing, especially in the closing laps of a few of the features, but to be quite honest, I don’t remember a lot of what I saw or what I said. There was a surreal moment in the middle of the evening when I realized I’m actually calling the race. It was weird, because once I got into the rhythm, much like the racers on the track, things just felt natural for me.

A lot of things made the night special for me on a number of levels, but the one that meant the most to me was having my younger siblings, Joey and Georgia, as well as my great college buddy, Jake, come to support me at the track. This summer, I’ve traveled to a lot of racetracks all across the country, but I haven’t been able to share those times with family or friends. Friday night I was able to do that. I also looked at my phone after the race and saw that a few friends had wished me good luck and wanted to know how it went. That was so cool. That’s the stuff I will take away from that night.

After the conclusion of the races, I was asked how I got to be where I am, and what advice I would give to someone who is chasing their dream. My answer: follow your passion, because it might just work.
Celebrating Earl Kouba’s Legacy in a Memorial Race

Memorial races are created to pay homage and to honor some of the great drivers in racing. In general memorial race events are some of the highest paying and most prestigious races run during the season, creating an atmosphere that draws a quality field of cars and in turn large crowds of race fans. The Kouba Memorial is one of my favorite races to attend each year.

This race celebrates the great Earl Kouba’s midget and sprint car racing legacy spanning over 40 years from 1939 to 1979. In keeping with the racing ritual started by Earl Kouba there will be two more generations of Koubas racing this year in both the winged and non-winged divisions. The Koubas are a tight knit racing family carrying on the family tradition with style and grace.

This memorial race has blossomed over the last couple of years into a 2-day and 2-track show, the Ethel Kouba Memorial was run in August at Princeton Speedway and the 23rd annual Earl Kouba Memorial will be held on Friday September 11, 2015 at St. Croix Valley Raceway and will feature the UMSS Winged and Non-Winged Sprint cars.

If you are a sprint car fan this is a must see event and this year the Kouba family has added some exciting new twists to the night. In honor of the family numbers of 55 and 5 this race will have a 55 lap feature race paying $5,500 to win. Adding to the excitement of the night the feature race will be run in two segments, the first segment will be 28 laps at which point the race will be stopped and the cars will be pushed to the front stretch of the race track for a 5 minute 55 second pit stop where teams will be allowed to fuel and make adjustments to the cars, afterward re-taking the green flag to continue and finish the remaining 27 laps to the checkers.

If you want to make it a weekend of sprint car memorial races the Jerry Richert Memorial will take place the following night just a short distance away at Cedar Lake Speedway.

Cedar Lake NASCAR Dash Championship

Pat Doar picked up a cool $10,000 for winning the championship in the 6-race NASCAR Dash series at Cedar Lake Speedway. Other champions crowned were; Darrell Nelson (Modified), Shane Sabraski (Pro Stock) and Jason Vandekamp (Midwest Mod)
While WISSOTA has taken some criticism recently regarding some of their rule changes, one of the things they have done right is allowing different body styles on Street Stock type cars, as shown by this Ford Torino bodied car at Rice Lake Speedway.
CELEBRATE ONE OF THE LAST WEEKENDS OF SUMMER BY ATTENDING THE LEGENDARY 100...
A WEEKEND PACKED WITH THE BEST SHORT TRACK RACING IN THE REGION!

Legendary 100

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 17th, 18th & 19th
CEDAR LAKE SPEEDWAY
NEW RICHMOND, WISCONSIN

RACING STARTS AT 6PM EACH NIGHT!
THURSDAY COMPLETE SHOW: HORNETS, PURE STOCKS, STREET STOCKS, & TRADITIONAL SPRINGS!
FRIDAY QUALIFYING SHOW: MIDWEST MODIFIEDS, PRO STOCKS, MODIFIEDS, & LATE MODELS! TOP 12 LOCKED INTO SATURDAY’S A-MAIN
SATURDAY B-MAINS, LAST CHANCE QUALIFIERS & A-MAINS: MIDWEST MODIFIEDS, PRO STOCKS, MODIFIEDS, & LATE MODELS!
SATURDAY TICKET PRICES: ADULT $25 & STUDENTS $12

THURSDAY
TICKET PRICES
Adult $15
Students $7

FRIDAY
TICKET PRICES
Adult $20
Students $10

GPS ADDRESS:
2275 County Road CC, New Richmond, WI 54017

www.cedarlakespeedway.com • 866-4-CLS-FUN
MPLS/ST. PAUL  PLYMOUTH
(651) 641-1414     (763) 475-0475
2161 University Avenue  11350 Highway 55
St. Paul, MN 55114     Plymouth, MN 55441

PIRTEK fluid transfer solutions for automotive, marine, off-road and custom applications work to your advantage and your budget. Get the right part the first time. No more leaks or endless trips to the parts store. No More Headaches!

Hoses-Adapters-Fittings • Standard-Metric
D.O.T. Certified Brake Hoses and Lines •
Power Steering • Oil Lines • Transmission
Lines • Fuel • A/C

PIRTEK HAS AUTOMOTIVE SOLUTIONS