

# GOLDEN WHEELS

FRATERNITY  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*



Issue #4 - 2009

We have lost yet another Golden Wheels Hall of Fame member and it is with sadness I post this message from Dan Blair.

**HARRY STRYKER** - October 22, 1931 - July 5, 2009

On the morning of July 5th, 2009 Golden Wheels lost one of the more prominent members of recent times.



Harry Stryker, with his wife Helen and family moved to the Northwest in 1977 from Northern California. After being bitten by the racing bug he got involved with Midget racing with the Bay Cities Racing Association. Some of Harry's accomplishments in BCRA were Championships in 1963 indoors with driver Charlie Lawlor his childhood friend and an overall championship in 1966 with Billy Vukovich Jr.

Drivers who drove for Harry include Billy Vukovich, Jr., Harry Stryker Jr., Hank Butcher, Bob Tattersall, Charlie Lawlor, Gary Arnold, Mike McGreevy, Tommy Morrow, Tommy Copp, Jan Opperman, Danny O'Neill, Gary Koster, Gary Ponzini, Bill DeChamps, Bob DeJong, Dee Hileman, Colby Scroggins and Gary Bettenhausen just to name a few.

Harry was a journeyman Offy Mechanic and not only had a hand in keeping most all the offy midgets in the Golden Wheels club running, he wrote an overhaul manual for the 110 offy. While in the Northwest he restored three Kurtis Offy midgets of his own and I know of five midgets he restored or helped restore for GW members. The cars he restored for himself and he will be best remembered by were his black, red and white No 5 and No.10.

In the twenty or so years that Harry ran with the Golden Wheels I can only remember two nights when he broke and had to put his car on the trailer before the night was through. One of those nights was at Yakima when he lost a fuel pump and while unloading his car the next day he found his back-up fuel pump in his trailer, he had forgotten about.

Once I asked Harry where he learned his craft of working on Offys and he told me his teachers were Jack London and George Bignotti and you can't ask for any better teachers than that.

Since Moving to Las Cruces, NM in 2005 he finished building his bright red with white scallops 1923 T Track Roadster, a hot rod powered by a full house Ford flathead. After working on the track roadster for about ten years with help from his sons it was finished about two months before his passing. With every email he would send me with pictures attached was a note saying last week we took the track roadster to a car show and got first in class or best in show. His last email with thirty-seven pictures attached he mentioned a photographer from a magazine was here with a model and took 500 plus pictures. You could always expect one thing from Harry's work and that was perfection and the track roadster was no exception.

I am sure most everyone reading this will remember the Kurtis Offy midgets with the name Stryker Offy across the hood. Harry, his cars and his willingness to help anyone in need will be remembered by many and missed by all.

Sympathy, condolences and prayers to Harry's wife Helen, his family and many friends. Rest in Peace, Harry. You will be missed.

### **President's Column:**

While the "Hottest Summer on Record" continues, we at Golden Wheels have not been sitting idle. Since my last report, we have completed on track exhibitions at the quarter mile asphalt track at Port Angeles, Washington over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend followed by the annual Art Pollard Memorial July 17th and 18th at Roseburg, Oregon.

This past weekend we took our show to the half-mile asphalt track at Yakima, Washington. For some, myself included, this was the first experience on a track this big. While some regular participants stayed home, feeling the track was too big for their cars, we had a very good turnout of four midgets and the Edwards Samco, and five sprint cars plus the track roadster of John and Debbie Steves, which they towed up from their home in Northern California. I won't give a blow-by-blow report on these events as Nita Volz does far better race reports, which will appear in future issues. I will say for my part, both Port Angeles and Roseburg continued the frustration I have been experiencing with the #14 Hal's "HAL". Right now, you're all asking the burning question; but what about Yakima? Well, with all the help and support I've been getting from fellow club members, I actually completed a trophy dash-my first complete competitive laps since blowing up at Cottage Grove several years ago. So, it was only 4 laps, but it was trouble free and it looks like some of my problems are behind me. And boy, does my little racing car love that big track!!!

Was very gratified to see Mel Anthony drop by the weekly Tuesday night dinner. Accompanied by daughter Vicki, Mel wanted to assure us that he was doing better. He's lost a lot of weight, but reports that Vicki's cooking has put 10 lbs. back on. He looked great for someone who has experienced what he's been through, and says he expects to be in his and son Dennis's Shilala midget next year. Great news Mel, and can't wait for you to be back in the fold full time.

All our fun is not "on track" as many members get much pleasure from the fellowship the club offers, and the static display of our cars that is such an important part of what Golden Wheels is about. In keeping with this aspect of what we do, several members donated their time and cars to a little static show we put on for the residents of the Foss Nursing Home. Some of you know that wife Kay is an activities director at Foss, and was behind this event. Thanks go out to John Nelson for bringing his famous Zink champ car, partner Gary Berg for showing his track roadster project, Bob Scott who brought his CAE sprinter, his recently purchased '41 Lincoln and his SSR daily driver. I brought the #14 HAL powered Solar and the club show car with it's incredible V8/60. We had a steady stream of residents (mostly wheel chair bound), but very interested in our cars. The Foss management was very happy with their first ever car show, and would like to make it an annual event.

Finally, as many members know, we never fully developed the Golden Wheels WEB site. It was taken as far as our tech knowledge would allow, which for most of us was close to zero. When I became president at the first of the year, it was my commitment that I would see the club have the site it deserves, and one we can all be proud of. While I am not able to announce anything at this time, I want to tell you that I hope to have some very exciting news for members in the near future, as a very generous offer has come to us about building a site from certain people in the club. This will all be spelled out when I feel we are at the point where we feel comfortable about the product.

Hope to see some of you at the City of Shoreline annual car show on Saturday, Aug. 15th where we will have a couple cars on display, and see everyone at the next big on track event at Cottage Grove, Aug. 21st. & 22nd.

**Hal**

### **Birthdays - Birthdays – Birthdays**

Putting one more notch on the Birthday Tree in July were; Lenora McMurtry, Janie Choate, Gail McClure, Shelley Berg, Stu Donaldson, Glenn Nickell, Daryl Hedman, George "Cokey" Williams, Sanford Bray, Jr., Randy DuBois, Murray Ferris, Delmar McClure, Don Cook, Jr., Thomas Welch, John Gregg, Dave Imrie, Perry Ashworth, Don Henry, Brian McMurtry and Jerry Day.

August honorees celebrating are; Mel Anthony, Brenda Jarrett, George Todd, Dan Blair, Art Waller, Jack Goffette, Joe Winkler, Ralph Zbarsky, Cliff Spalding, LD "Dud" Burnett, John Ross and Jack Corley.

Best wishes to you all!!!! May there be many more in the future!

### **Better – Better - Better**

Great to hear that Anita Volz is evidently back to her old self and trying to catch up with stories, good times and all that goes awry with illness. Also, great to see that Mel Anthony is out and about again.

Just goes to show you that race cars and good times are the best medicine and what keeps us young.

**A Bit of History** – I'm sure there are many members that have never read about the beginning of Golden Wheels. I have scanned several articles by Pike Green that were printed in Racing Wheels, including the first letter about the forming of our group. As room allows, I will be putting these early articles in the newsletter. This issue has the first letter, first column and the report on our first banquet. Enjoy.



## A Deal You Can't Refuse Golden Wheels Fraternity

by Pike Green

Seahurst, Wash. . . Since a growing number of dedicated, lifetime auto racing fans have been talking this subject to death during the past several years, we believe the time has now come to take positive action.

Much discussion has been centered around forming a club for auto racing's old timers, but we would like to see this concept carried even further, with a definite purpose in mind. We can no longer ignore the fact that a large number of former participants and fans of auto racing are still very enthusiastic supporters of the sport. So why not have a fellowship that anyone interested in auto racing can join while participating in Jan Opperman's USCRY (US Concerned Racers for Youth) project.

Here is a list of suggested traditions:

**Membership**-The only requirement for membership in the Golden Wheels Fraternity is an interest in any type of auto racing. However, our activities will favor the racers of yesterday. We believe that "Yesterday's Hero is Alive and Well."

**Rules**-We have no rules. Let's keep it simple.

**Meetings**-Meetings will be held whenever and wherever two or more members are gathered. Meetings will come to order when anyone mentions the words "Remember When". No minutes will be kept, so BIG LIES will be permitted.

**Dues**-We have no dues or fees, but we will have expenses. Membership cards will be sold by mail for \$1.00 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. However, members who wish to donate \$10 or more to Jan Opperman's ranch for youth who are recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction (USCRY) will receive (1) a membership card, (2) a window decal, (3) a bumper strip and (4) a certificate of sustaining membership.

**Dedication**-We are dedicated to the memory of those auto racers who are no longer with us, and to the youthful residents at the USCRY ranch.

**Purpose**-Our primary purpose is to join in fellowship and camaraderie while enjoying the good feeling that we are collectively supporting a worthwhile cause begun in the name of auto racing.

**Bulletins**-Racing Wheels will be our official organ. Items of interest to the club and its chapters will appear in column form.

**Goals**-To renew old acquaintances, to enjoy annual banquets and other social functions of common interest, to require reserved block seating while attending selected race programs as a group (sprints, midgets, stocks, modifieds, etc.), to eventually have an auditorium at the USCRY ranch dedicated to our fraternity (tentative plans are now being made for our first annual banquet to be held early in 1976), and much more!

**Charter**-We have no charter, but anyone whose membership request is postmarked by Nov. 5, 1975 will be considered a charter member (this list will be published in the Nov. 19 issue). Membership numbers will be issued on a first come basis.

Anyone interested in forming a local chapter in your area, please indicate. Address your requests, comments, opinions and inquiries to Pike Green, P.O. Box 864, Seahurst, WA 98062. Make checks payable to Golden Wheels Fraternity.

Now that the flag has been dropped, let's set about winning the race.

CHECKER

Seahurst, Wash. . . Congratulations, Charter Members. Your response has been overwhelming! The list of Charter Members at this writing includes members from Hawaii, Indiana, Florida, British Columbia, California, Oregon and Washington.

In the beginning, while preparing the membership list, I looked at the blank pages, wondering which number to select for myself. In a moment of wild optimism, I took number 100, hoping this number would be reached by the Charter Members. Since it is still too early to predict a final total, I can only say at this time that the goal of 100 Charter Members has been surpassed by a safe margin.

**OUR CHARTER** - We are now incorporated as a non-profit corporation operating under Washington State laws regulating such corporations. Our corporate officers are: President, Pike Green, Seattle; Vice-President, Racing Wheels publisher Gary Sterner, Vancouver, Wash.; and Secretary/Treasurer, Bill Hondle, Tacoma, Wash., an accountant by profession and a former well-known race car owner. Our charter provides for a board of directors consisting of not less than three, nor more than seven, members, so we will add four more directors to those mentioned above, completing the maximum number allowable by law.

**SILENT MEMBERS** - Since Victoria's Western Speedway has retired #27 in Billy Foster's honor, we have elected to follow Western's lead and issue #27 in Billy's memory. And in keeping with our fifth tradition, each 20th number thereafter will be issued in the memory of a racer who is no longer with us.

**YELLOW FLAG** - We have been slowed by a delay in the delivery of our membership cards and certificates of sustaining membership. We finally got them on Oct. 28, two weeks later than promised. However, the decal makers now have the necessary artwork and are busily preparing the final items for our club material packages. Our mailing of these packages should begin by mid-November, so we ask your indulgence for a few laps and believe you will be pleased when you see the results.

**NUMBERS** - We regret to announce that we can no longer accommodate requests for numbers in the first 100. The most requested number was 44, with no less than nine members asking for it. Perhaps it is fitting that #44 has been issued to Tom Carstens of Tacoma, whose #44 midget, crew chiefed by George Allen (18), carried Allen Heath (6) to a record 86 victories in 1946.

**NEW MEMBERS** - Now that the Christmas season is fast approaching, what better way could there be to express the true meaning of Christmas than by giving a sustaining membership in the Golden Wheels Fraternity to your favorite racing buff? We would like the whole world to know that we truly are "Concerned Racers for Youth."

**THANKS** - A special thanks to all of you who have written. Will try to reply when I have a moment between heats. Also, this week's trophy goes to the present-day Washington Racing Ass'n (WRA) for its excellent support, interest and cooperation.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP GOLDEN WHEELS FRATERNITY P.O. Box 864, Seahurst WA 98062

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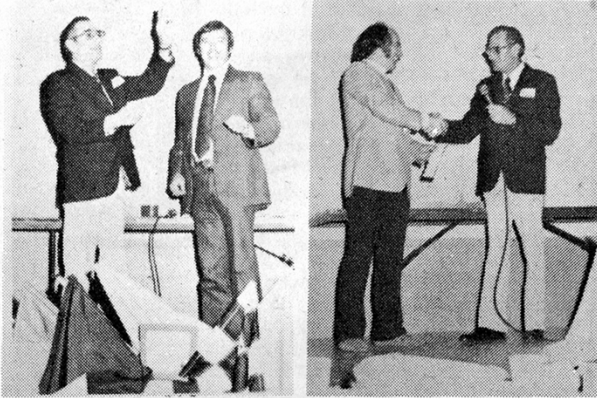
City ..... State ..... Zip .....

.... \$10.00 Sustaining Member (\$2.00 Club Material,

\$8.00 donation US Concerned Racers for Youth)

.... \$1.00 Member Only (Membership Card Only)

## Golden Wheels Banquet Smashing Success



Left: President Pike Green presents a membership card to celebrity Johnny Rutherford, 1974 Indy 500 winner and track record holder. Right: The Golden Wheels fraternity presents a \$2,200 check to Jan Opperman for his USCRY project. The money, Jan says, "goes to pay for the roof and doors on the church at the ranch" where he helps youths with drug rehabilitation. (Blackstock Photos)

by Dona Adams

Seattle, Wash. . . . The first annual Golden Wheels banquet Feb. 28 was a smashing success, with a total of 364 people entering through the pit gate.

The Seattle Moose Hall was cleverly decorated with miniature oval track centerpieces, designed by Johnny Dalby and constructed by June Dalby and Marie Steeves, and a huge "good ole days" picture board made by Earl Sedgwick, Mac McIntyre and Tony West.

The invocation was delivered by a most grateful Jan Opperman, whose US CRY (US Concerned Racers for Youth) ranch benefited from the gala affair. Later in the evening, Jan was presented with a check for \$2,225 by Pike Green from the Golden Wheels.

"The money," Jan said, "will purchase a roof, front door and back door to the church at the ranch."

Johnny Rutherford, 1974 Indy 500 winner, was a surprise guest speaker and was surprised himself when he was awarded number 501 in the fraternity - 500 for the Indy race and #1 for the last lap in said race.

There were a host of introductions by MC Dick Anderson of Sky Valley Speedway fame - such notables as Seattle may never see the likes of together again. Dick also presented 10 special awards. The first was the "Grand Old Driver Award," given to Devon Smith, who started his racing career in 1929. The "Grand Old Car Owner Award" resulted in a tie, with Neely Burkitt accepting for owning a sprint car and Kenny Hutchins for owning a midget. Both bought cars in 1935. A somehow confusing award was the "Henry Kissinger Goodwill Ambassador Award" given to Digger Caldwell for his efforts between the U.S. and Canada. The "Forgotten Man Award" went to Jim Seim. It seems that Jim held a track record of 12 years that was attributed to another driver. The "Indy Acrobat Award" was presented to Cactus Jack Turner, who performed his feat three years running, but most spectacularly in the '63 Indy race. Bob

Gregg was awarded the "George Blanda Award" for still being an active driver. After catching 18 board fences in one season, Bud Green was finally awarded the Weyerhauser Timber Trophy. A very popular award was one to Alan Heath of California, who accepted the "Evel Knievel Award." There's more than one story to go with this award, all hair-raising. The Rookie of the Year trophy was presented to John Fasnacht of WMRA, who started driving in August, 1975. The tenth and last award went to "Magician" Syd Carr and was accepted by his daughter. Syd was home with the flu.

The first door prize - a trip to Reno - was presented to Mr. & Mrs. Tony West by Horizons Int'l. (Did you notice the gal taking coats or the gent pouring mixer? Bill and Carol Williamson.) The other door prize - an 8 x 10 color photo of Jan Opperman donated by Blackstock Photos, was won by ticket number 92266 - oops!

Jade Green, lovely daughter of Bud and niece of Pike, was trophy girl for the presentations. The racing films were really exciting, but had to be cut short because of time.

The last half of the evening was spent in merry-making, bench racing and dancing to the Walter Susanj Trio. A job very well done, Pike, Judith, Valerie, June, Marie, Bill, Carole, Dick, Jan, etc., etc., etc.



Awards for special feats went to (Standing, L to R): Jimmy Seim, Forgotten Man award for a track record never registered; Kenny Hutchins, oldest midget owner and first WMRA president; Don Wohlfrom, original mechanic for Allen Heath in the winningest midget; Allen Heath, the Evel Knievel award for driving a midget the wrong way over a motorcycle jump at the end of a race he had won and breaking many bones; Neely Burkitt-Grand, oldest sprint car owners trophy; Sid Carr (his daughter accepting), the Houdini award for transforming a totally wrecked midget into a racer in one night after a race and running the next day; DeVon Smith, Grand Old Sprint Driver's trophy (he started in 1921 and was champ in 1933); John Basheim, rookie award (began racing in August, 1975); (Kneeling, L to R) Bud Green, Weyerhauser Lumber award for going through the most fences (10) in one season; Jan Opperman; Jack Turner, Indianapolis Acrobatics trophy for doing the longest and wildest flip at Indy; Digger Caldwell, the Henry Kissinger Public Relations trophy for almost starting an International incident by stealing back his race car which had been impounded at the Canadian border; Bob Gregg, the George Blanda Mileage trophy for the most miles driven in a race car.

**Events:** A look at the Golden Wheels schedule shows the following events to fill out the season. August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> is an on track exhibition on the always fun to run Cottage Grove Speedway's quarter-mile dirt bullring in Cottage Grove, OR. September starts off with a two day return to Ephrata Raceway Park in Ephrata, WA on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. This quarter-mile paved oval always seem to provide some great times and stories.

Things slow down on Sept 12<sup>th</sup> for the static show at Arlington, WA's Arlington Airport. It is the annual Arlington Drag Strip Reunion & Car Show hosted by the Port Gardner Vintage Auto Club (PGVAC) Lot's of memories and good stuff here.

On track action picks up again Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> as we travel to the quarter-mile paved track of South Sound Speedway near Tenino, WA. Another fine little track to play on. The final exhibition of 2009, October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, will be at Willamette Speedway in Lebanon, OR where you can play in the dirt on their neat quarter-mile oval.

Also occurring in October will be the return to our monthly Breakfast Meetings. Make sure you mark Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. Breakfasts are always the second Sunday of the month. Dinners are every Tuesday. Both at Shay's in Shoreline on Old Hwy 99. I have yet to hear any info on the 2009 Banquet, which usually also occurs in October.

**Any one Know????** We have received a request for information from a Mr. Paul Kierstein on the Fred Frame 1930/1933 Duesenberg Sprint Racer. He writes "This car was purchased by Briggs Cunningham from dealer Jack Stevens in 1951 (?). The car was on display at his museum in Costa Mesa California until it was sold. It is our understanding that John "Red" Mosekian had an interest in the car in early 40's. Dorothy Gruman, who called herself "The Duchess of Racing" either owned the car in the 40's or used it. She may have been the first women race car team owner/sponsor in the USA. She operated out of Portland Oregon and raced up and down the west coast. The car appeared in the Oakland Speed way driven by Gene Figone and in the Seattle area by "Duke" Dinsmore.

I did find where her husband Ralph died April 1,1977 in the Portland area. He was born 9-8-1895 but I we have little on her. We are attempting to complete the ownership and racing history of the car as completely as possible. CH Motorcars has this car as part of its collection. Any help you can provide will be most sincerely appreciated. Contact: Paul Kierstein, Assistant Photo Archives, CH Motorcars,LLC, 2500 Horseshoe Drive South, Naples, Florida 34104 Tel; 1-239-643-5783.

I'm sure if anyone has any info on "The Duchess of Racing", Dorothy Gruman, Mr. Kierstein would be delighted to receive it.

A couple of shots to close out this issue. Take care and make sure you.....

.....Keep Your Wheels Down!!



**Harry's Beautiful Roadster**



**Foss Nursing Home Show**

◆◆◆◆◆ == BUY=SELL=FIND=TRADE == ◆◆◆◆◆

NEW Contact Eric Lieder, phone 541-855-7146 NEW

**For Sale:** 1939 V8-60 Block, crank, oil pan & stock heads, intake & exhaust manifolds. Block well seasoned (Rusty). Belonged to Eli Vukovich family. \$200

**For Sale:** 1935 Midget Race Car No. 4 Wee Stinker, complete. Owned and driven by Pike Green 1977 to 1985.

Has approximately ten races on newly installed rebuilt Ford V8-60 engine. Some restoration still needed. Contact; Dick Fredell 360-629-2370 [rmf54@juno.com](mailto:rmf54@juno.com)

**For Sale:** Kane midget. All powder coated. 110 Offy motor. 7-12" wheels. Aprox 15-13" wheels. Lots of Offy motor parts. All tools for rebuild of motor. New hood & nose for Kurtis. T-Bars. Quick change gears. Spark plugs. Clean out the shop. \$35,000 Cokey Williams Ph. 510-537-8497

**For Sale:** '74 Edmunds-Kane Midget. 6 sets gears, 12 wheels, Chevy II, Halibrand & spare parts. \$16,000 w / open trailer or \$20,000 w / 2008 14' enclosed trailer  
Call: 360-387-4696

**For Sale:** Midget offset Bennett quick change housing w / side plate & rear covers. 4.44 to 1 Ford ring & pinion. Used Franklin 10 spline gear sets #7-8-9-23 special-35-41.  
Contact: Jack Corley: 1790 SE Regner Rd., Gresham, OR 97080 Phone: 503-667-1725

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**For Sale:** Midget Race Car - 1930's vintage. Looks like a Solar. Lots of LA Calif. history. No Engine or gear box.  
**Jack Corley**, 1790 SE Regner Rd., Gresham, OR 97080  
Phone: 503-667-1725

**For Sale:** Midget Race Car - 1930's vintage. Looks like a Solar. Lots of LA Calif. history. No Engine or gear box.  
**Jack Corley**, 1790 SE Regner Rd., Gresham, OR 97080  
Phone: 503-667-1725

**For Sale:** 1971 Bob Trostle midget. Very rare as only three (3) were built. Has new Chevy II engine, new tail & nose and chrome plating. Torsion rear, leaf spring front suspension. Car was in process of restoration. Death in family forces sale. \$11,000. Contact: Sam at 480-830-8883.

**Wanted:** Information on D.O. Hal engine recently purchased in Portland, OR area. We are told the engine came from up north 30 years ago. (Possibly Bremerton or Bellingham, WA) It originally came with a rocker arm Crager. Both on 'B' blocks and painted silver. The HAL is gold under the silver. A & W BRG 10/3/61 is stamped on the pan rail. Any information is appreciated. Contact: Gordy 360-694-7853 or Mark 360-798-2166.

**Smoke, Sand and Rubber - 'Methanol'** Mel Anthony, Golden Wheels' in house story teller's long awaited Midget & Big Car History in the Northwest. Soft Cover, 288 pages, 7"x10", 250 B&W Photos. ISBN:0-9787721-0-5. Priced @ \$29.95 + \$4.00 domestic shipping. \$8.00 foreign. Order from: Sylvester Publishing #133, 18405 Aurora Ave. N. Suite H, Shoreline, WA 98133

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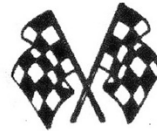
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of  
Jan Opperman  
and**

**Silent Members  
of Golden Wheels  
Fraternity**



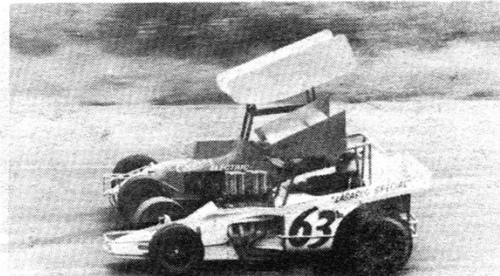
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**WRA Sprint Cars, Evergreen Speedway, Monroe, Washington, July 13**



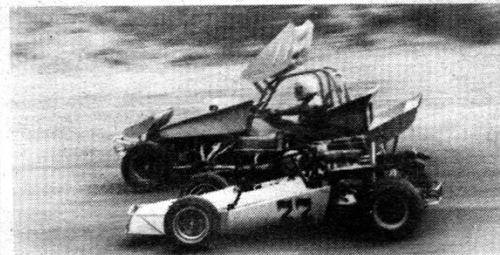
John Tharp, double winner in Sunday's back-to-back features. The dual 50 lappers were run with a 20 minute intermission, with timing for both mains. (Blackstock Photos)



Ken Hamilton (63) and Mike Blackstock duel in the second 50-lapper. Blackstock finished third, but Hamilton had engine trouble.



Don McLeod won the A dash and, as a special note, the trophy was presented to 15-year-old leukemia victim Randy Koetitz from Stanwood, Wa. Randy loves to go to the auto races.



Casey Stangel (77) set a blistering new track record of 22.071 on the 5/8-mile paved oval but had trouble in the mains. He ran short of fuel in the first 50-lapper, then lost his water in the second 50. Roy Smith (#7, outside) finished an impressive second in both events.