

# GOLDEN WHEELS

FRATERNITY  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*



Issue #1 – 2021

**President's Message:** When I was thinking what to say to the membership this month, I originally thought I would ask for a survey of how many members would be comfortable starting up our meetings again. Since then, there has been another threat of King County going back to faze 2. We currently are in a 2 week waiting period to see which direction the state will take. At any rate, it seems to me that if we could meet, to pack 22-24 people into that tiny meeting space, we would at least have to assure that all of us have completed our vaccinations. I am open to your thoughts, and hope you will let me know how you feel.

This year is the year that we would normally elect officers. Without meetings, and very little communication between members, we have not done this. I hope that when we can begin meeting again, we can catch up on all of our important business.

At this writing, I know of no opportunities to show or race our cars. Some things are opening up a bit. I hope we can do something this year. We do have people who are looking for opportunities to get our cars out and give them some exercise.

I want to thank Mike Atkins for stepping in as the guest columnist in the last newsletter, and this month we have another great guest writer in Ed Williams. Ed is a wealth of historic northwest racing information, having done it all over the years. His Facebook posts are a treasure, and I can't say enough about the historical material he has sent to Golden Wheels. Recently, Ed posted a story he wrote that I enjoyed very much. I asked him if I could include it in the newsletter, and he graciously agreed. The story is called Mike's Midget. It is a story of dreams, persistence, success and in the end, love. It is an example of what most of us have been through, and encouragement for those that choose to go down this path. So here it is:

## MIKE'S MIDGET

In 1955, Mike Patterson saw his first midget race at Olympic Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, when an uncle took the visiting junior high student, to a Sunday night show. Vito Calia scored a clean sweep of the night's event, Mike was introduced to Calia, a customer on his uncle's nail route. The midgets were interesting but after vacation Mike resumed his part time job at a Harley Davidson dealership and continued to race bikes on local short tracks, T.T's and Hill Climbs

Two years later, the Patterson family moved from Washington, D.C., to Kansas City. While finishing high school, Mike worked part time at a body shop owned by Clyde Sullivan. Sullivan had raced a stretched midget on the IMCA circuit and the shop was a hot bed of local racing activity. In addition to crash work on many of the local midgets and modifieds, Sullivan did body work for the Ford dealership owned by IMCA sprint car champion Jimmy Campbell. On occasion Jud Larson dropped by while local car owner and driver Ben Harleman had a roofing company next door and the Weld family shop was three blocks away.

After graduation, Mike joined the Army and spent three years stationed on Vashon Island near Seattle where he began to follow midget and sprint racing in the Northwest. Discharged in 1962, Mike resumed his motorcycle racing career and moved into outboard boats. His active driving career ended in 1983 with an accident in one of the boats.

In 1986, driving home from work, Mike spotted an Offy powered Edmunds midget in the showroom of a Volvo-Saab dealership (of all places). He stopped to look and met the owner, Bill Petter. Petter is a long time Northwest midget booster and participant who won the 1985 Washington Midget racing Association championship with his son, Terry, driving. During the bench racing session that followed Mike's interest in restoring a vintage midget surfaced. Petter introduced him to Homer Norman, a former Indy Car mechanic and WMRA championship owner who listed Jack Turner and Len Sutton among his drivers.

Aided by Petter, Norman and other members of the Golden Wheels Fraternity (the local old time racers club), Mike managed to find a local car that suited his needs. In December 1987 Patterson and Norman hauled Kurtis Kraft #152-48 into Mike's garage to start what became a 5 1/2 year restoration process.

When disassembled the car showed the results of nearly 40 years of competition, repairs and modifications. Stress cracks were evident on the frame from the steering section area forward and the steering system, shocks, brakes and left front spindle needed attention. The rear axle was good but the Halibrand 2" rear end needed rebuilding. The radiator and most of the body reflected the modifications and conversions of the last 40 years and needed to be replaced.

The existing Pinto power plant was obviously not the answer and Mike decided on a 1940 Ford V-8 60 to maintain originality. The motor was rebuilt including new rods, pistons and lightened crankshaft; a reproduction Isky "603" camshaft was installed. The manifold is an original Edlebrock with dual Stromberg 81 carburation. The Edlebrock heads on the engine had been machined and fly cut so many times that the valves hit the spark plug electrodes so new reproduction Offenhauser heads were obtained and installed. New headers completed the motor assembly.

Finishing touches include naugahyde upholstery, new dash, handbrake handle, and foot pedals. The paint is 1965 Ford "Poppy Red" (A.J. Foyt orange) with a custom white. The finish is clear coated.

Researching and completing the restoration involved vendors, volunteers and sources from seven states and one Canadian province (see sidebar for complete list). During a "parts run" to Kansas City via attendance at the Belleville Nationals, Mike contacted Vito Calia, the driver who made a big impression on him many years earlier. Calia, a widower, still lived in the area as did Mike's widowed mother. Mike introduced the two who dated for several years until Calia's death five years ago.

In 1993, the completed project car was exhibited in three shows and appeared in two Golden Wheels exhibitions. Mike plans a full schedule of Golden Wheels programs in 1994.

Having completed one successful restoration, Mike is looking for a new challenge. He has located both a 1940's track roadster and a 50's Harley flat track motorcycle. There's a chance that finances may dictate the sale of the Kurtis to finance a new project, there's also a chance that Kurtis Kraft #152-48 may have some company in the garage in the near future.

### **PARTIAL HISTORY OF KURTIS KRAFT #152-48**

While the restoration itself has taken most of Mike's spare time over the past 6 years, he has been able to compile a partial history of his car. With a little more time on his hands, this part of the story will be filled in later.

Kurtis Kraft #152-48 left the factory as a kit for owner Floyd Demmit of Los Angeles. After it was built by Clyde Adams, the Offy powered machine was raced in the L.A. area by "Pee Wee" Distarce at Gilmore Stadium in 1948 and 1949.

The car remained in southern California through the 1950's. Rosie Rousell's 6th place finish in the 1957 Turkey Night event at Western Speedway in Gardena was one of the high points.

Grant Bushong of Boise, ID, brought the car to the northwest in the 1960's. By that time, a V8-60 had been installed. Over the next two decades the car raced throughout the northwest primarily with the Washington Midget Racing Association. Clyde Lathrop, Sid Carr, Jim Glenn, Jack Corley, Jim Hendricks, Jerry Erberle, the Bassett family, Mike and Doc Gardner and the Rosler family campaigned the car with varying degrees of success.

The car enjoyed his greatest success during the sixties with Mel McGoughy and Don Olds at the wheel. In 1972 the Bassetts converted the car to Pinto power and ran with USAC at the club's rare northwest appearance that summer.

## Sources, Volunteers and Suppliers

The restoration effort on mikes midjet included help from seven states and one Canadian province. Without the assistance provided by these sources - both paid and unpaid - the project would never have been completed.

Harry Stryker, Sr., Everett, WA; Welded 4 brake backing plates, re-machined brake drums, replaced the radius rods and front frame section, fabricated a new front bumper.

Gordon Reelie, Vancouver, BC; Reworked the left, front spindle and made new dust caps for the outer bearings  
M&S Hydraulics, Bend, OR (now in Hillsboro, OR); Rebuilt and replated 4 Houdaille shocks.

Louie Shefchik, J&L Fabrication, Puyallup, WA; Fabricated and fitted new belly pans, fitted a new nose, tail section, radiator and rear bumper.

Bellevue Plating, Bellevue, WA; Chrome plating and polished 8 Halibrand 12" wheels.

Joe Whetnall, Marysville, WA; Metal polishing.

Don Samuelson, Seattle, WA; Engine machine work - crank and rods lightened, polished and balanced.

Ben Liesamaki, Auburn, WA; Final engine assembly.

George Pounden, San Sebastapol, CA; Rebuilt Barker V-drive 4 cyl. magnetos.

Curt Pearson, Autocraft Upholstery, Redmond, WA; Upholstery (Black Naugahyde).

Roy Siegner, Maltby, WA; Paint and Body work.

Ron Watts, Redmond, WA; Fabricated hand brake handle, foot pedals, exhaust pipes and brackets, shock links and Heim joints. Final assembly along with special brackets.

Norm Rapp, San Francisco, CA; Used Lincoln U-joint, rods, misc. chassis and engine parts.

George Newnam, Culver City, CA; New parts to rebuild Norden Steering

Jerry Weeks, Indianapolis, IN; New fuel tank

Doug Barley, Bremerton, WA; Machine work.

Bob Coutts, Portland, OR; Machine work.

"Army" Immerso, Rancho Dominguez, CA; New Headers

Auto Ron's, Davenport, IA; New 9:00 to 1 Jahns pistons, new '40 crankshaft.

Jack Corley, Portland, OR; Misc. engine parts, gaskets, etc.

Jere Jobe, Quality Restorations, Orange, CA; Edelbrock 2 carb manifold with Stromberg 81's, rebuilt for racing by Jobe.

Speedway Motors, Lincoln, NE; Repro Offenhauser heads, also drivers suit, helmet, etc.

Bill Petter, Kirkland, WA

Premier Fasteners, Indianapolis, IN

Spencer Aircraft, Seattle, WA; Fasteners

Homer and Jeanne Norman, Kirkland, WA

Eddie Hitze, Layfayette, IN

Bob Higman Racing, Layfayette, IN

Norm Rapp, San Francisco, CA

Clyde Sullivan, Sun Rise Beach, MO

Ben Harleman, Kansas City, MO

Vito Calia, Kansas City, MO

Bill Jones, San Antonio, TX

Ray Lee Goodwin, Polo, MO; Technical help & misc. parts

Wayne Helland, Bothell, WA; Car Assembled in his garage.

Jack Turner, Seattle, WA  
Helped set up suspension.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Ed Williams story on the Mike Patterson Midget. Ed sent me a photo of the car, which I have posted on page 6 the Buy/Sell page. Dan Blair does have a photo from a Spanaway Golden Wheels show but has no way right now to get me a scanned copy. When he does, I will post it. He did pass on this short bit which I think should be added to this interesting story.....

“I do remember one time Mike went down to Spanaway to run the car. I thought it was his only time out with the car but I could be wrong. He pulled into the pits, found a spot to park and got out of the truck and asked his wife to back it in right there. I went over and said "What's wrong Mike you can't back up a trailer", and he said "Not as well as she can, she's a farm girl and been driving a tractor since she was ten or so". Yep she backed it right in with only one try.

He had someone driving the car for him and I believe it could have been Dennis Kitts, but don't quote me on that. I remember they couldn't get the car to go or maybe it just wouldn't handle as they were playing with the suspension and having all kinds of first timeout problems.

I last saw that car in a magazine being towed by a custom pickup in I believe Northern Calif. so it probably met the same fate as my old #52. Mike told me the car had an extensive Calif. history and one of it's drivers was Pee Wee Distarce. I have read many articles about the #154 but never realized it was the same car.

If anyone has updated info on Mike, let Golden Wheels know. I'll try to send him a copy of the newsletter if any updated info arrives.

Hal pretty well covered everything in the way of problems that Golden wheels has put up with through the last year with our inability to get together in any way, shape or form, be at a meeting or at a racetrack, during 2020. Hopefully in 2021 we will be able to make some changes to that problem as I see race tracks opening and getting some programs ran. I will be contacting Skagit Speedway, Grays Harbor Raceway and Deming Speedway in the near future to see if they will have any type of openings for us in 2021. When I last talked with them at the end of the 2019 season, they were more than anxious to see us back in 2020 to repeat the programs and the displays that we had in 2019 with the possibility of more events included.

**Passings** – I just received information that Harold E. "Fuzz" Graham passed away on June 28th 2020 after a 3-year battle with heart and kidney failure. He had raced motorcycles and was also involved as an owner & driver in WMRA from 1971 thru 1977. Besides WMRA, he belonged to the VME, and VJMC. He leaves behind his wife of 61 years, Cherile, and 2 daughters; Lorraine Hardin and Corinne Taylor. Also, 5 grandkids and 5 great grandkids and his dear friend Bill Bowers. Our condolences to his family and friends. Rest In Peace, “Fuzz”.

**BIRTHDAYS!!** --Almost half the year has passed and the Birthday Wishes have piled up high. Let's start the catching up with these January celebrants: Laura Churchill, Warren Kindle, Hal Schlegel, Don (Pete) Samuelson, David Craver, and William Blackwell. Our single celebrant in February was Steve Beitler. Things picked up in March as Marileen Moser, Claudia Laster, Donald Kane, Jr., Ralph Hunt and Richard Nelson finished another lap. Without fooling around, Kay Schlegel, Sue A. Wood, Terry Robertson and Clyde Sullivan celebrated their April Birthdays. This month of May, we have Loren Day, Don McKeehen, Kenneth V. Wood, Gordon Rivenburg, Leslie A. Randall and George Hespe blowing out the candles on the cake. Getting ready to celebrate in the upcoming month of June, and hopefully with the ability to have bigger parties are Anita Volz, Margie Kane, Naomi Cruikshank, E. Jarvis Erickson, Michael Allan, Ramon Cruikshank, Gerald (Jerry) Robertson and Frank Volz. **Happy Birthday to All and Very Best Wishes** for the coming year!

**Smoke Sand & Rubber Video** – We have the Greg Brotherton DVD video of Mel Anthony's book for sale through Golden Wheels. There will be a special price of \$5 + \$3 P&H for Golden Wheels members.

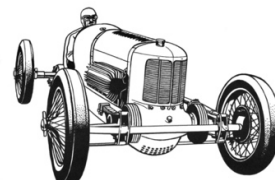
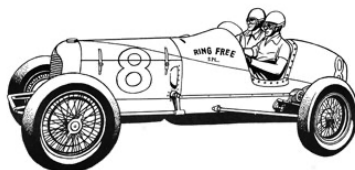
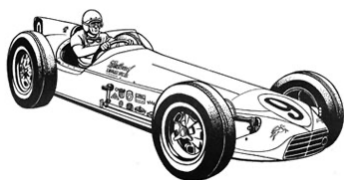
**Sunday Morning Breakfasts!!!** .... As Hal mentioned, hopefully we will be able to start our Sunday Morning Breakfast gatherings soon. Will be a great help in getting our 'Official Items' in order, along with being able to return to "Tall Tales, Big Stories & etc". Hopefully our Tuesday Dinners will be able to resume also. Stay Tuned!!

**DUES!!! DUES!!! DUES!!!** I know it sounds like I am nagging on all of you about dues, but here is a final reminder at the end of the newsletter. **The deadline for membership dues has been extended to JUNE 15, 2021.** If you have not sent in your 2021 Membership Renewal dues, **PLEASE REMIT ASAP.** THANK YOU!

I hope that I will, in the near future, be able to include some current event photos for everyone's enjoyment. That said, I will close out this issue with some shots from a 1995 visit to Spanaway Speedway. It looks like it's the pre-race pit meeting gathering with Dan Blair letting them know who will be the first to cross the finish line in the evening's feature event. And that is why we call them 'Exhibitions' instead of 'Races'.



It looks like the country is on track to the complete reopening of many venues, including our favorite Race Tracks & Related Events. Just a reminder not to get too carried away on that trip to our favorite spot. Take Care, Be Safe and remember – To make it to your destination you always have to .....**Keep Your Wheels Down!!**



◆◆◆◆◆ == BUY=SELL=FINN=TRADE == ◆◆◆◆◆

Email - [firstturn@comcast.net](mailto:firstturn@comcast.net) Mail - PO Box33487, Seattle, WA 98133 Ph. - 425-334-5763  
ADS ARE FREE TO ALL MEMBERS – PLEASE NOTIFY EDITOR OF ANY CHANGES – ADS ARE  
SUBJECT TO REMOVAL AFTER THREE ISSUES IF SPACE IS NEEDED FOR NEWER ADS – THANK YOU

**\* PRICE LOWERED!\*** FOR SALE: 1935 SAMCO Ford. Model B Ford Block; 0.030 overbore in very nice block; std.bearing crankshaft fully counterweighted & drilled for pressure oil; new babbitt main & rod bearings by Dave Johnson, Wilkerson, WA; Rebuilt Bendix magneto; Barns oil pump driven off front of cam; rocker arm head by Shaw & Mercill Machine, Seattle, WA one of only two remaining example. Has run two events since rebuild, runs very well. Frame & body special built; 1932 Ford heavy front axle; Model B Ford transmission; Model A Ford rear axle (Halibrand center section); Full floating rear axles w/28 spline late axles; Early Ford hydraulic brakes (rear only); 1935 Ford wheels. 4 dirt wheels & tires; 6 pavement wheels & tires; 2 unmounted wheels. One ugly but good towing trailer, with 3 new tires & Pro Tec tool box. One spare model B block; one spare crankshaft; one spare set model B rods; one stock model A head. \$19,000 Contact: **Jim Edwards – 425-277-0481**

## YOUR BY/SELL/FIND/TRADE AD COULD BE HERE

NOTE: Additions, Deletions, Corrections - Email – [firstturn@comcast.com](mailto:firstturn@comcast.com) or PO Box33487, Seattle, WA 98133

Here is a photo of the  
Mike Patterson  
Kurtis Kraft #152-48  
midget featured in  
the story by Ed  
Williams.

If you have any  
information on the  
current owner and/or  
location of the car  
please contact  
Golden Wheels.

Thank You.



**THE 2021 MEMBERSHIP DUES DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED  
TO JUNE 15, 2021 ----- PLEASE RENEW YOURS NOW!!**

### Golden Wheels - 2021 Membership / Renewal - Golden Wheels

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Brief Profile (owner, driver,crew, fan, etc) or change from last year. \_\_\_\_\_

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October 20, 1975  
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**The Object of Golden Wheels Fraternity**  
Encourage the preservation of vintage auto racing.  
Promote and advance the interest of said Fraternity.  
Honor those auto racers who are no longer with us.  
Join in fellowship and camaraderie.  
Collectively render such financial assistance as possible  
to worthy distressed auto racers, ex-racers, their widows,  
orphans and accepted humanitarian associations.

For information on Golden Wheels  
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**In Memory  
of  
Jan Opperman  
and  
Silent Members  
of Golden Wheels  
Fraternity**

*anonymous*