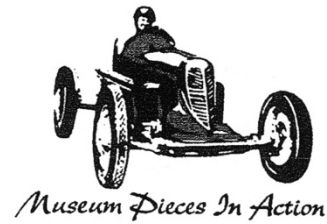


GOLDEN WHEELS

FRATERNITY
Auto Racing Pathfinders



Issue #3 – 2022

President's Message: With the end of the year staring me in the face, it looks like I should get something out to the membership as soon as possible. I'm not great at "as soon as possible", as you know.

First, Kay and I want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

It hasn't been the greatest of years in the Schlegel household. As many of you know, I broke my leg in early February, spending almost a month in the hospital and rehab. So, I haven't had the most productive year. And, it hasn't been the most productive year for Golden Wheels Fraternity.

At last Saturday's breakfast, it was pointed out that we had exactly 2, yes that's 2 events. The static show we put on for the racetrack in Elma, and the annual Shoreline Historical Museum show. No Dirt Cup or Outlaw show at Skagit this year either. It's a sad state of affairs when you can't come up with enough cars to offer any kind of show to a promoter. And we don't have anything lined up for next year. I have had a connection to the track in Republic, but little support for this so far. Very few cars available, and the ongoing projects as far from completion. Folks, we need new members, and we need new cars, it's that simple. We are open to any suggestions you might have to get us back in the game.

In a few weeks, it will be a new year, and a friendly reminder that annual dues will be due. We have purposely kept the dues low compared to other vintage groups, in fact, they are a bargain. So, I hope to start hearing from you right after the start of the new year. Nough said.

Look for some great entertainment following in this newsletter, and once again, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. *Hal*

Thanks Hal. I will have to agree with you that 2022 was a disappointment in the lack of events we had for showing our cars to the public. Thanks to the Shoreline Historical Museum for hosting our annual show again and a big 'Thank You' to Mike Adkins for all he did arranging the display of our cars at Grays Harbor Raceway's "Timber Cup". Hopefully 2023 will see more opportunities for our participation in events.

Let's start this issue with a few shots from the Shoreline Historical Museum show, including Prez Hal Schlegel receiving the well deserved "2021 Man of the Year" award. Also, Dan Blair has provided a story of how he got involved with a stock car in 1970 – 1971. And the closer, will be an interesting story on a car that Palmer Crowell drove.

Golden Wheels President Hal Schlegel receiving his "Man Of The Year" Award



A few shots from the Shoreline Historical Museum show.



The following story was provided by Dan Blair. It is the story of how he got involved with a stock car in 1970 – 1971.

Dan first met George while lettering his boss's son's quarter midget in 1970. Dan had a little experience working with Jack Jeffery and John Pappas on their NASCAR sportsman race cars. George learned the race car basics from Ken Worford's race cars that were driven by Gordy Haines. Dan and George were both from the Yakima valley. Now living in the Seattle area after serving in the Vietnam war and had a common interest together. They decided to build a NASCAR sportsman race car together. Both had steady jobs, but that doesn't mean either of them had any money. Being young and dumb, why should that hold anyone back from following their dreams.

George was a mechanic and machinist, and had a 427 Ford side oiler under his work bench. A friend and fellow racer, Bob Gregory, knew where there was a '67 Ford Fairlane that needed a new life. Being this was going to be a low budget car, like most of them were at that time. They did most of all their own work and accepted anything anybody would donate. After stripping the car down, they put the body on a 1957 Ford Custom 116in. Wheelbase frame and removed as much weight as they could, including the floor boards.

Their first big expense was buying some 4130 chromemoly seamless tubing for the roll cage. Boy do you know how much that cost? Nothing compared to what it is today. After the roll cage, door bars, and all the stiffening supports were welded onto the frame, they built the new floorboards. Dan built the firewall between the gas tank and driver. He remembers drilling about 300 pop rivet holes then putting the pop rivets in with a hand operated rivet driver. Fuel cells at this point had become mandatory so there went another \$300. Another bill they had not planned on.

George did all the engine work, built the front hubs and full floating rear axle on his lathe, reinforced the front A arms, and had four inch strips of metal rolled to widen the wheels, then welded another center into the wheels for more strength. Most of all the fabrication of custom parts were done by George and Dan. The exhaust headers were made by Murray Casler at his business, South Park Auto Parts.

After a little more than a year of construction, it was ready for a friend, Bob Calhoun (Bondo Bob), to paint the car. When it returned from the paint shop to George's one car garage, where it was built next to his home, it looked almost like a race car. All that it needed now to be complete was some lettering and the numbers. Since Dan was a sign painter, that was one of the easy jobs. During construction, they worked about three nights a week till one or two in the morning and most every weekend for that year. Sometimes their hardest job was getting up in the morning to go to work.

Their first race was late summer of 1971 at Evergreen Speedway in Monroe, Wash. Nothing too exciting, the only thing broken were the headers when Dan was driving the car up on the trailer, so it was a pretty good weekend. Two weeks later they started towards Yakima with a borrowed trailer and a license plate from another trailer. While going down the first steep hill with Dan's new/used truck, the trailer started whipping the truck. Then came the flashing red lights. The officer took his drivers license back to run the numbers. All the time Dan's thinking to himself those trailer numbers aren't gonna match up. When the officer came back, he just said "I think you should turn around and go back home." They caught a lucky break!

Monday morning, Dan got a call from a fellow racer, Pete Campbell from Best Auto Parts, asking about why they missed the race in Yakima. When Dan told him about the tires on the pickup, Pete said to come out to his wrecking yard, as he just got a wrecked truck in that morning that had new tires. He said "I'll give them to you". That's a racer helping a racer. Of course the next time he needed his race car lettered, Dan was able to return the favor.

Over all, their racing career wasn't as glorious as they had hoped. Yes, they blew one engine and hit the wall at Spanaway Speedway once but that's racing. Running on a tight budget, they usually ran in the middle of the pack on a good night. George, who drove, only had one win, a B trophy dash at Yakima Speedway's championship race in 1974 and a first place trophy at a Seattle car show when the car was new.

Did they have fun? You bet they did, along with a lifelong friendship, which was the best part. Sure glad the wives didn't mind too much.

When you get to race with the best drivers in the NW like the Jeffersons', Dowdys', McGriffs', Bowns', Jefferys', Longleys', Eatons', and Halls', It has to be fun. Especially if after all these years, Dan Blair and George Dimoff can still smile looking back at these times.

The car has been restored by Rich Eley and was seen at the Shoreline GW car show. Rich did a great job restoring the car and it is now for sale for anyone who would be interested in owning a restored NASCAR sportsman from the early 70's. This article was also in the RODDING & RACING NORTHWEST monthly paper.

Photos provided by Dan Blair Before and after restoration



If you will check back to pg 6 in the last issue, the photo with two race cars wheel to wheel asked for information about it. Within 24 hours I had received the following message –

You had a photo in this issue of ‘Jack O’Dea and Aub Cherry’ wheel to wheel. This photo was taken on 20.3.1954 with Jack O’Dea on the left in a 6 cylinder Studebaker powered midget while Cherry’s car was originally a Kurtis kit car. It is powered by a 6 cylinder Holden (General Motors) engine. In 1966 Johnny Stewart drove this car to win the Australian Championship. It has been restored to the way it looked in 1966. This photo was taken 50 yards from the finish line and Cherry won the race. It was at Tracey’s Speedway in Melbourne (city), Victoria (state) Australia. The photograph was taken by Ken Wheeler who worked as a photographer for one of the local newspapers. He was very keen on speedway and five decades later his son would race a midget. Hope this information is helpful.

Barry Lane Historian – Vintage Speedcar (Midget) Assn (Queensland)

What are the odds of something like this happening? Pretty slim I would think. Barry has restored a vintage midget and has provided me with a story and photos which I will most likely get posted later. The best part of his contacting us is that he also provided us with a story about, and some photos of, a Midget that Palmer Crowell drove in the Northwest. Hope you all enjoy this.....

Queensland, an Australian east coast state, is known to have some good speedway engineers. On the Gold Coast, in the south-east corner of the state, there was none better than the Gardner Brothers. Their reputation was well known for quality builds and performance, and in 1979 a fellow by the name of Howard Kammerzell visited Australia for a vacation where he noticed a Midget sitting on a trailer outside a service station. Upon inspection he noticed this chassis was similar to an “Edmunds”, a respected USA built frame. He was impressed by the quality of the build and investigated further and contacted Gardner Engineering. Howard then ordered five chassis. The order was filled, and the cars sent over in kit form. It is believed Kammerzell was located in the north-west of the USA.

Kammerzell assembled the cars and had various drivers race them including his son Doug. This #26 midget was originally bought and driven by Palmer Crowell. After Crowell, #26 had several owners, including Kirk Eckland, Darren Linder, Stewart Goeing and Wayne van Raden who all had success of one kind or another behind the wheel.

The midget travelled far and wide, racing in various associations including Oregon, British Columbia, United States Auto Club (USAC) Western Region, Bay Cities Racing Association, and Rocky Mountains Midget Racing Association. When it was finally retired from racing around 2010 the car was purchased by Ken Stanaway and brought back to Australia. It was then that Doug Lucas learnt of its whereabouts, and convinced Ken to sell it to him on the condition that Ken help him to restore the midget.

Restoring the midget would be no easy task, as with all speedway cars it had led a rough and tumble racing career. The aim of the rebuild was to bring it back to original specs as it had been assembled in 1979. The biggest hurdle for Ken was reference material and information about the car when it raced in the US, and he racked up quite a few hours on the phone with Palmer Crowell to gain as much information as possible. Sadly, Palmer passed away shortly after.

The car was stripped back to the bare chassis and the SCAT air-cooled motor rebuilt. The bottom end of the SCAT includes a Scat 88mm crank, H-Beam conrods, Wiseco pistons, Seal Pro rings, Scat .560” lift camshaft, chromoly tapered pushrods and flat tappet solid lifters. The top end uses CB Performance heads with Autocraft 1.4:1 ratio rockers and stainless steel valves.

The exhaust is a work of art, and the custom mandrel bent 4 into 1 snakes and wraps itself over the engine and away down onto the left side. The whole system has been ceramic coated. The methanol fuel is supplied to the fuel injection system via a Hilborn fuel pump and the spark is supplied by a Scintilla magneto.

Power is transferred to the wheels via a direct drive Halibrand differential straight off the back of the crank. The Halibrand is designed for quick change ratios and the axles are splined. Brakes are drilled rotors front and back and the suspension consists of front and rear torsion bars and Carrera oil steel bodied shocks. The midget sits on 13x7 front wheels and 13x10 on the rear right and 13x8 on the rear left.

The single padded seat cabin is quite sparse and is decorated only with a Schroeder steering wheel coupled to a Schroeder steering box. Instrumentation includes an oil temperature and pressure gauge, and the two-pedal system - brake on left and accelerator on right - straddle the steering box. The only other piece of equipment is the direct drive disengage pull lever.

Every part of the chassis and drivetrain has been polished or chromed, and the fibreglass body was repainted in a custom blue to match the original. The decals were as per the 1979 car. It took Ken 4 years of painstaking research and attention to restore the car to its pristine condition.

One of the car's first public appearances was at 'VW Warwick 2017', where the car was actually started for only the second time. Since then, the midget was taken to the Gatton Speedway where it was driven in a 'spirited' demonstration around the Gatton Showgrounds.

***** One of the problems that Ken faced during the restoration was the bonnet (hood). The Gardner cars had a low line bonnet like the Edmunds but during the time that Crowell raced # 26 he fitted a more modern 'flat' bonnet (See early photo of Crowell). Ken had to chase around to find the right bonnet and when he did it required a lot of repair and modification to fit the car with the 4 into 1 exhaust system. He did a good job as can be seen in the photos of the finished car.

Some months later I was visiting another fellow in Brisbane, over the years he has brought a lot of American cars and parts into Australia, who spoke to me about # 26. He then disappeared and when he came back, he had the original bonnet off the # 26 Crowell Gardner! It had been amongst a big 'lot' of stuff he had bought. He happily handed over the bonnet to go with the car and no money changed hands.

The first photo is of Palmer Crowell racing in the Northwest. The rest are views of the restored car.



BIRTHDAYS!! –It's been a while since we posted Birthdays. Our celebrants were: Augus - Dan Blair, Mike Adkins, Joe Winkler and Ralph Zbarsky; September - Ruth Hesse, Joanne Edwards and Ken Ferris ; October – Bob Scott, Brian Pratt and Richard N. Phillips; November – Barbara Nelson and Vicki Westberg; December – Hershel McGriff, John W. Wood, Jr. and Dave Sweeney. **Happy Birthday to All and Very Best Wishes for the coming year!**

Don't Forget Breakfast: The "Saturday Morning Breakfast Meeting" will welcome 2023 on Saturday January 14th. Hope to see you at Shay's. Meeting starts at 9:00 am but you can come early and stay late if you so wish.

DUES- Yes, it is that time again. Please update any changes to your profile and remit your 2023 Dues.

With a New Year ahead, consider... It will be easier and safer to make your way through 2023 if you always remember to.....**Keep Your Wheels Down!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

◆◆◆◆◆ == BUY=SELL=FINN=TRADE == ◆◆◆◆◆

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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

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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,
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**In Memory
of
Jan Opperman
and
Silent Members
of Golden Wheels
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anonymous