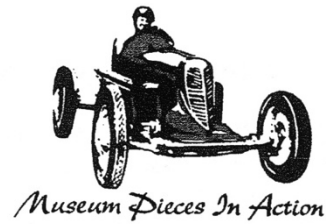


# GOLDEN WHEELS

FRATERNITY  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*



Issue #2 – 2024

**President's Message:** First thing I want to say, is don't pay any attention to details I put in newsletters. In the last newsletter, I announced that the club was having an annual dinner on Saturday, March 10th. No, not Saturday, it's **Sunday, March 10th**. Starting at 1pm on Sunday, the first day of Daylight Savings, until we've told all the lies we have and run out of things to say. **That's Sunday, March 10th**.

Kay and I have worked with the 125th. Grill to have a buffet meal similar to the one everyone loved last year. The price of the meal is \$33.00 per person, and you can send a check in advance to the club's P.O. Box or pay at the door. We have guaranteed the restaurant a minimum of 30 people, so I hope you will come and enjoy the comradeship of your fellow members.

Because the dinner falls on the day after our monthly breakfast meeting, to keep those that drive a long way from travelling two days in a row, I am cancelling our meeting scheduled for Saturday, March 9th. So don't come!!! We will have our short mandatory yearly meeting on Sunday, before dinner.

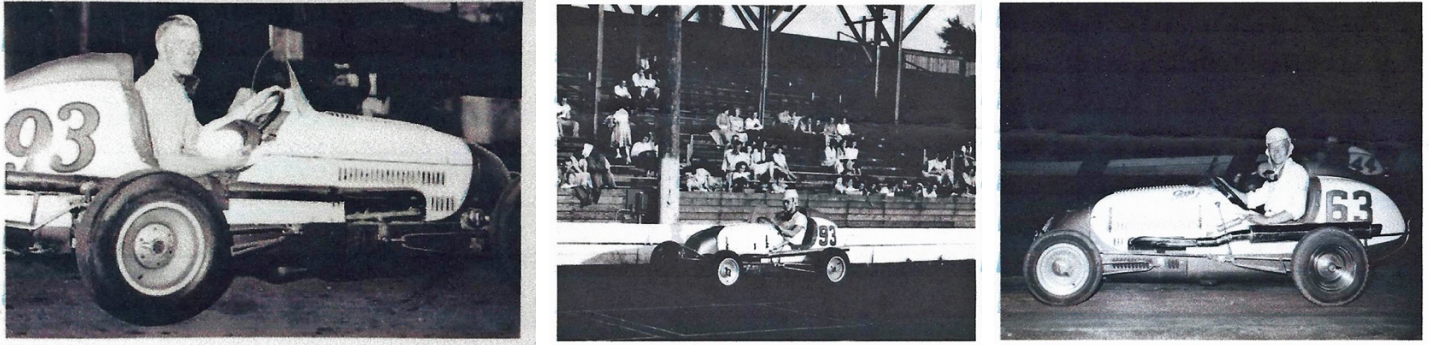
This newsletter has a great story, and request for information from Roni Mcfadden about her father Johnny Goss. A well-known name in midget racing during the golden era. In fact, I have a picture of Johnny over my right shoulder in his #93 car taken at SeaTac in 1949. It is one of 6 pictures from SeaTac, apparently taken that day and included some other names you might recognize, like Alan Heath, Frankie McGowan, Robert Harris, Don Hale and Shorty Templeman. Roni's story has taken me back many years ago to when I used to work for a living. I was a district sales manager, covering Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. I had heard the stories of our NW midgets going to Alaska to run, and the mystery of what happened to them. So, when making my trips to Alaska to call on my accounts, I devised a plan to contact the local paper in Anchorage and place an ad for any information I could dig up. I guess in those days, I paid too much attention to my job, and unfortunately, I never did it. Hope you enjoy Roni's story, and see you on **Sunday, March 10th**. at the 125th. St. Grill. *Hal*

The following is the Johnnie Goss story and as Hal mentioned, it is very interesting with a lot of local history included. Enjoy.

John Goss intro & story: My name is Roni Goss McFadden and I am the daughter of Johnnie Goss, a midget racer in the late 1940's – 1952. He mainly raced on the west coast in Southern California before taking his cars to the Pacific Northwest, and then on to Alaska. Sadly, I never knew him as he was killed on July 6, 1952, in Alaska flagging a motorcycle race at Rendezvous Speedway when I was just 8 months old. However, I do have all of his logbooks, race records, and scrapbooks kept by my mother, as well as his trophy's that were won.

John Goss owned two cars, #63 and #93 which were both dubbed the "Goss Special". Once he established himself on the circuit, he hired others to drive for him. The three most well-known of his drivers were Paul Pold, Louis Sherman and Shorty Templeman. In fact, Sherman was at the wheel when #93 caught fire and was badly burned in the incident.

He was also well known for the custom double decker trailer he designed and built to haul BOTH race cars on. I sure would love to find his cars and trailer, but I have been on that quest for a dozen years with no luck. Back in 2015 race historian Kevin Triplett did a feature on his blog about Johnnie Goss when researching the history of midget racing in Alaska. I am forever grateful to Kevin (who sadly passed away last year from Covid) for the research he did that helped me know more about my father and his small role in racing history. Following is Kevin's article as well as the link to his blog. <https://tripletttracehistory.blogspot.com/2015/07/history-of-midget-car-racing-in-alaska.html>.



John Goss Midgets #63 & #93

### **A brief history of midget car racing in Alaska-July, 4 2015 by Kevin Triplett**

"Alaska, the largest of all the fifty states of the United States of America, is the least densely populated, and has few auto racing venues.

Permanent racetracks were (and remain) rare- there are currently only six operating tracks in the entire state. There is little or no documented history of Alaskan auto racing available, let alone any history of the short-lived period of midget auto racing in the state.

A discussion with Tom Schmeh, the curator of the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame (NSCHOF) in Knoxville, Iowa, brought the lack of information home. Mr. Schmeh asked for help concerning the history of midget auto racing in Alaska after an Alaskan NSCHOF member contacted Tom seeking additional information about a recently uncovered collection of old midget parts.

While talking to Tom Schmeh, I recalled a conversation that I had years ago with the late Don Radbruch about racing in Alaska. Don mentioned that he heard a story of some midget racers that had toured Alaska after World War 2, but that he never been able to track the story down.

After speaking to Tom on the telephone, he coordinated a group of historians to pool our knowledge as an Alaskan midget racing research project. I received valuable help from many sources, each of which provided a piece of the puzzle. This article is the result of the research group's findings.

The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum in Fairbanks, Alaska has three pre-war midgets in its collection, a 1938 Elto, a 1935 Offy, and a 1937 V8-60. Although the Museum purchased these cars from a Long Island collector and they have no Alaskan racing history, Museum staff members Willy Vinton and Nancy DeWitt both provided key historical information.

Tom Schmeh contacted John Nelson of the Golden Wheels Fraternity vintage racing organization, who provided several key pieces of information, and Mel Anthony, Golden Wheels member, vintage racer and author of *Smoke, Sand, & Rubber*, an excellent history of Northwest midget racing, provided me with several important details.

This story also could not have been completed without the help of Roni Lynn McFadden, and Jonnie Geber who provided photos, articles, and recollections of their father, Johnnie Goss. Larry Jendras and Hal Schlegel of the [www.RacingHistory.org](http://www.RacingHistory.org) group also provided valuable research assistance.

Beginning in 1947, a tall young man from Alhambra, an eastern suburb of Los Angeles, named John Steven "Johnnie" Goss bought a midget and began to race with the tough post-war United Racing Association (URA). The URA dominated the Southern California midget-racing scene, with the hottest cars and top drivers such as Bill Vukovich, Rodger Ward, Sam Hanks and Norm Girtz.

Eventually, the Goss Racing Team grew to two midgets, numbered 63 & 93. #93 was a gold and white Kurtis Offenhauser while #63, was a blue and white Ford v8-60 powered Richter chassis. The pair of cars traveled to and from the races riding on a unique double-decker trailer towed behind Johnnie's tan Studebaker pickup truck.

His mother, Edna Goss co-owned Johnnie's race cars and maintained the records. Johnnie typically worked on his cars, and used other drivers, but on occasion, he would climb behind the wheel of one of his cars and race.

In 1949, 28-year-old Johnnie Goss and his family relocated to the area of Lake Chelan, Washington (180 miles east of Seattle) to operate a resort. While searches of the limited URA post-war race records do not list Johnnie Goss as a feature winner, when he moved north, he found success.

Goss won at least four features at the high-banked 1/4-mile Digney Speedway in Burnaby British Columbia, in 1949 and 1950 and at least one Washington Midget Racing Association (WMRA) feature in 1949. Frequent drivers of the Goss Specials included Louie Sherman and northwest standout Clark "Shorty" Templeman who won 42 WMARA features with 5 Washington and 3 Oregon championships in his career.

While in Washington, Goss also tried his hand at promoting midget races, most memorably at Bellevue High School. Johnnie convinced the school board to test out a couple of midget cars on the new school track; it had rained the night before the test, conducted by Goss and another driver. The test ended unhappily when the two midgets threw mud "halfway up the grandstand", including the board members who sat in the first row.

In early 1952, Goss sold the #93 Goss Special to Al Riggs and relocated to Fairbanks with his #63 V8-60 midget. After he established himself in local racing circles, Johnnie contacted his northwest friends and persuaded a group of northwest car owners and drivers to visit the Alaskan Territory for a summer series of races. As many as 12 midgets were shipped to Alaska including the Carsten #44 previously driven to many wins to Allen Heath and the ex- Homer Norman Kurtis rail frame Ford V8-60 powered midget.

Driver Johnny Ellis is thought to have traveled to race in Alaska, but the full roster of drivers remains largely unknown. The first Alaskan midget races were likely held on a cinder track on the Kenai Peninsula located on the south coast near Anchorage, Alaska's most populated city before moving on to race in Alaska's Interior Region. The 'Interior' was (and still is) largely wilderness- the largest city in the Interior is Fairbanks, Alaska's second largest city, with a population in 1950 of approximately 5,600 people.

At the northern edge of town, on the Steese Highway, stood the Club Rendezvous, owned by three men - Frank Caruso, Satch Bianchi, and Jack Tiemeir. Fairbanks was home to Ladd Airfield, and the club catered to the Air Force personnel from the nearby field.

In addition to the nightclub, the three men also owned the adjacent Rendezvous Speedway, the next stop on the midget racing tour, where Johnnie Goss had become the track's official starter. Rendezvous Speedway had opened sometime after the end of World War 2, perhaps 1948, and hosted Jalopy racing on a crude 1/4-mile dirt oval lined with dirt berms and no grandstand. During the wintertime, the track hosted sled dog races.

By 1952, both the track and its competitors had grown from their crude beginnings, with the cars now known as "Hot Rods," organized by the Alaska Auto Racing Association (AARA). AARA staged a 17-week racing schedule (from Memorial Day through Labor Day) on a now oiled dirt surface to keep down the dust) for crowds nearing 300 spectators. Starting in 1952, a local motorcycle club, the 'Arctic Rippers' convinced promoter 'Satch' Bianchi to let them stage motorcycle races at Rendezvous Speedway on Sundays.

The midget racers arrived to take part in the big Fourth of July weekend program at the Speedway, which would be touched twice by tragedy. On Friday, July 4, 1952, 24-year old service station employee Don Wida died after an accident - his car flipped over during the hot rod trophy dash after spinning. The crushed car came to rest in the turn nearest the entrance of the Rendezvous Club with the mortally injured Wida trapped inside.

Just two days later, on Sunday July 6, Johnnie Goss was flagging the finish of the motorcycle races when a passing motorcycle hooked his sleeve as he waved the checkered flag. Johnnie was thrown onto the track directly in the path of another cycle, struck and killed. Fellow racers raffled off Johnnie's midget, and several weeks later, on July 9

Rendezvous Speedway held a benefit race to help the families of the two fallen racers.

Wida left behind a wife and three-year-old son in Minneapolis, while Goss left a widow with an eight-month-old daughter and a pregnant girlfriend who gave birth to another daughter just five days after his death. For the benefit race, admission increased to a flat \$3.00 over the regular \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for Service personnel.

As the benefit program featured only hot rods and motorcycles, it seems that the visiting midget crews and drivers returned to the Northwest soon after Johnnie Goss' death. At least seven midgets returned to the states, which could have left as many as six midgets in Alaska.

Midget racing continued sporadically at Rendezvous, but never matched the popularity of the hot rods. In June 1953 frequent race winner Don Boam, driver of a Kurtis-Kraft V8-60 midget, in an interview with the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner explained the problems. Boam stated that there had been three midgets out for each race in 1953, but that "there were two more here, another enroute now, with plans to bring two more from California in the near future.

Boam further explained that it was hard to keep the midgets in racing condition because of, the delays and costs in obtaining parts. An understandable situation, given that those were the days before factory-built race cars and parts sold by racing parts superstores delivered via overnight shipping.

Newspaper articles in the Fairbanks newspaper were carefully written to disguise the actual number of cars at the track. In 1953 in an effort to stir up more statewide interest in auto racing, cars and drivers from Fairbanks and Anchorage traveled to both tracks on successive weekends.

Joe O'Rourke, the Speedway promoter made one final push to promote midget racing for the 1955 season and enlisted local entertainer Margary Gale to purchase a Ford V8-60 rail frame car from the Seattle area.

The July 4 1955 Rendezvous racing program promised as many as 12 midget cars in the program which featured 37-inch tall 'Wizard of Oz' actress and singer Tiny Doll (real name Dolleeta), taking some laps in a midget car, before she appeared that evening at the Club with Jimmy Durante. However, as time passed, following the trends of the day, stock cars at first supplemented the hot rod and midget racing program but by the end of 1956, stock cars were the only program.

In August 1956, the Club Rendezvous burned to the ground (which also destroyed one midget car) but the fire did not damage any of the track facilities, and racing continued while the Club's owners rebuilt.

In 1958 Jack Johnson, owner of another local nightclub, the Fireside, built a quarter midget track next to his club, believed to be the first quarter midget track in Alaska, while stock car racing continued at Rendezvous Speedway though the 1961 season.

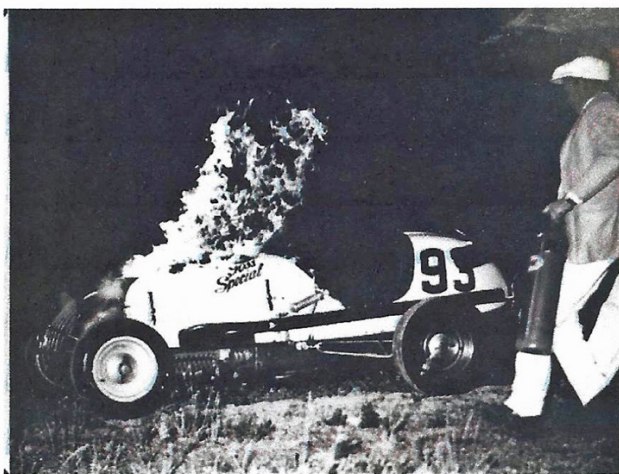
In the 1970's, Fairbanks grew because of the oil boom; crews dismantled the old Speedway grandstand and the area eventually became a pipe yard to support the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

Although Rendezvous Speedway is gone, the Fairbanks area currently boasts two oval speedways- the 1/4-mile dirt Mitchell Speedway hosts a regular program of winged sprint cars, and the 1/4-mile paved North Pole Speedway hosts karts and legends cars. Like the old Rendezvous Speedway, North Pole Speedway shares its property with a tavern.

While the history of Alaskan midget racing (and the 1952 midget tour) is an interesting story, there are still large gaps in the story - for instance, what happened to rest of the "Alaska midgets?" One Alaskan collector has a pre-war stamped aluminum frame midget that he suspects (but has not confirmed) has an Alaskan racing history.

There doubtless are more Alaskan midget car racing stories still waiting to be told; if any readers know of information concerning Alaskan midget racing, or can identify the cars in these photos, please contact the author."

If you have any information on where Johnnie's cars or trailer ended up, please contact me at: [bluejayn@instawave.net](mailto:bluejayn@instawave.net)



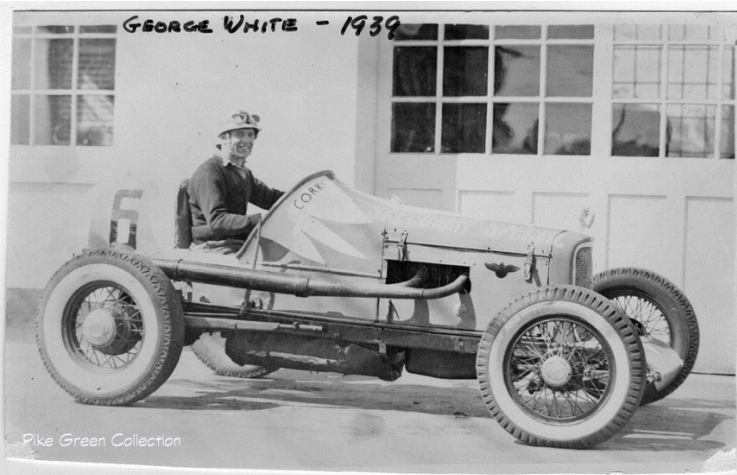
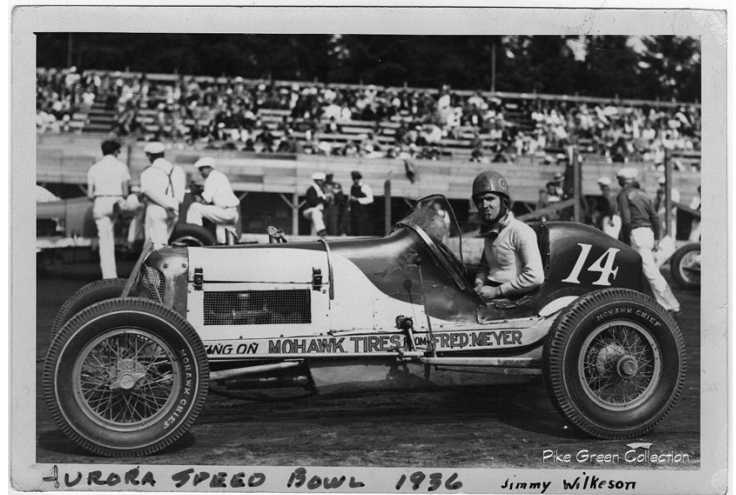
Louis Sherman #93 fire



Goss Double-decker hauler

A very interesting story and a big thank you to Roni Goss McFadden for providing this addition of info to Golden Wheels and the history of racing in the Northwest.

Some old photos from Pike's collection to fill out the page. May have been posted in earlier newsletters.



**BIRTHDAYS!!**—No February birthdays.. Deanna Williams, Ralph Hunt and Donald Kane will celebrate in March. **Happy Birthday to All and Very Best Wishes for the coming year!**

**Don't Forget Breakfast:** The Feb, 9th breakfast is canceled because of annual dinner meeting on Sunday. Next Saturday Morning Breakfast at Shay's in Shoreline will be March 9<sup>th</sup>. Meeting starts at 9:00 am but you can come early and stay late if you so wish. Hope to see you there.

Weather is still giving many people lousy driving conditions so guess we should still watch for those problem areas to be safe. Always be alert and be sure 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 babbit 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**



**FOR SALE**  
**40's - 50's era midget race car PROJECT**  
**Chassis Kurtis Copy Halibrand Q/C**  
**Airhart disc brakes. Norden steering. rear torsion bars.**  
**front Hollywood spring New front clip,**  
**radius rods and drag link.**  
**Fresh v8/60 engine, built race ready**  
**Rolling chassis. \$5,950.00 engine \$5,950.00**  
**engine and chassis can be purchased separately.**  
**Dan 206 878 7242 Dave 206 498 7442**

**Golden Wheels - 2024 Membership / Renewal - Golden Wheels**

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/SO Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Month(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Web Address \_\_\_\_\_

Member-\$30 Spouse/Significant Other-\$10 Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (US \$)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Golden Wheels, P.O. Box 33832, Seattle, WA 98133**

**Please Patronize Those That Support Golden Wheels**



Carla & Gaylon Stewart  
 (425) 327-7522  
 CarlaRacing@comcast.net  
 Northwest Focus Midget Series L.L.C.  
 PO Box 14119 Mill Creek, WA 98062  
[www.NorthwestFocusMidgets.com](http://www.NorthwestFocusMidgets.com)

**Your Ad Could Be Here**  
 Contact us to find out how.  
 Golden Wheels  
 P.O. Box 33487  
 Seattle, WA  
<http://www.goldenwheelsautoracingpathfinders.com/>  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*



**Skagit Speedway**  
**360-724-3567**  
 4796 Old Highway 99 North  
 Alger, WA 98233

*We do Fun at Full Throttle!  
 Bring the family for a night of  
 .....of Excitement!!!!*

Season opener April 17 Finale Sept 18

360 Sprint Cars  
 Sportsman Sprint Cars  
 Modifieds  
 Outlaw Tuners  
 NW Focus Midgets

**SPECIAL EVENTS**  
 John Carroll Classic/  
 HUGE Fireworks Show (presented by I.R.D)  
 DIRT CUP - ASCS National Event (3 Day)  
 Mid-Season Championships/  
 Presented by Les Schuab Tires  
 SUMMER NATIONALS (2 Day)  
 Presented by Bob's Burgers & Brew  
 WORLD of OUTLAWS (3 Day)  
 WoO 410 Sprint Cars/NW Focus Midgets  
 SEASON CHAMPIONSHIPS  
 Presented by Scrap-IT-Stow-IT



**Grays Harbor Raceway**  
**360-482-4374**  
 30 Elma McCleary Road, Elma, WA 98541

*Bring the Family for a Season of  
 Excitement!! Fast Action Racing!!  
 .....and FUN!!*

Season opener April 10 Finale October 2

360 Sprint Cars  
 Modifieds  
 Super Stocks  
 Hornets  
 Midgets

**SPECIAL EVENTS**  
 ASCS National Tour  
 Brownfield Classic (2 Day)  
 West Coast Modified Clash  
 Mid-Season Championship/Fireworks  
 Shipwreck Beads  
 Modified Nationals (2 Day)  
 Monster Slam 21  
 Limited Sprint Speed Week (2 Day)  
 World Of Outlaws  
 Season Championship/Fireworks Show

**PIED PIPER PUB**  
*Serving the Kent area since 1950*  
 Darts • Video Golf • Shuffle Board  
**(253) 852-9914**  
 Bobby Cell: (253) 929-9844  
 311 W. Meeker St. • Kent, Washington 98032



**Deming Speedway**  
 4065 Deming Rd, Everson, WA  
[www.demingspeedway.com](http://www.demingspeedway.com)

*Start your racing weekend at  
 Deming Speedway!  
 Featuring Fast and Hard Racing on a 1/6 mile  
 banked clay oval. It's Always a Fun Filled and  
 Memory Making night of OnTrack Action.*

1200 Mini Sprints  
 600's  
 600 Restricteds  
 Junior Sprints  
 Midgets.

**Special Events**  
 July 2, 2021  
 Mid Season Championship & Fireworks  
 July 15, 16, 17, 2021  
 IBEW/NECA Clay Cup Nationals  
 Sept. 17, 2021  
 Championship Night  
 Season Opener April 2  
 Finale Sept. 17

**Your Ad Could Be Here**  
 Contact us to find out how.  
 Golden Wheels  
 P.O. Box 33487  
 Seattle, WA  
<http://www.goldenwheelsautoracingpathfinders.com/>  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*

**Your Ad Could Be Here**  
 Contact us to find out how.  
 Golden Wheels  
 P.O. Box 33487  
 Seattle, WA  
<http://www.goldenwheelsautoracingpathfinders.com/>  
*Auto Racing Pathfinders*





P.O. Box 33832, Seattle, WA 98133

*Incorporated  
October 20, 1975  
Memories of the Past  
On the Track Today  
Museum Pieces In Action*

**Golden Wheels Fraternity**

*Preserving The  
Golden Age of Motorsports*

**2024 Officers**  
Pres: Hal Schlegel  
Vice-Pres: Brian McMurtry

**Board Members**  
Frank Volz - Jerry Day  
Dave Craver - Bob Scott  
George Hesse - (President Appointment)

PO Box 33832, Seattle, WA 98133

**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  
contact us at:  
Golden Wheels, P.O. Box 33832, Seattle, WA 98133  
Golden Wheels Auto Racing Pathfinders on Facebook  
[www.goldenwheelsautoracingpathfinders.com](http://www.goldenwheelsautoracingpathfinders.com)

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

*anonymous*