

Reflections

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Since I have been doing this website, I've talked to many people while trying to obtain information, photos, films or anything connected with or about our race track. I ask questions and listen to the many stories that all of you have to tell and invariably the person I'm talking to, or I, will say something that will trigger a reflection or a forgotten memory.

If anyone would like to send me their recollections, reflections or memories, please contact us and we will be happy to post it on the site.

We'd like to share a few with you, if ya' have the time.



The 1st stock car race I ever saw was at P'ville and that was in the early 60's. If you went every week you usually sat in the same area and most times saw the same people and struck up friendships along the way too, but not to be forgotten were the rivalries in the stands, sometimes those battles were as fierce as those on the track between the drivers! (Claude Nelson who crewed for Bob Little and Jim Bruno reminded me

of that).

Then there were the smells of the track, the concession stand cooking hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage and peppers, you knew you were gonna get indigestion or something but ya' still had to have one. They didn't sell alcohol at the track, but there were plenty of spectators' cars that had a small supply

in their trunks. I remember this one guy I'd see every week, he *always* had a can of Colt 45 malt liquor in his hand.

Then there were the smells from the cars, the gas odors, the smell from the hot tires and my favorite was the smell of Castrol motor oil. Back in the flathead days they used that oil a lot in race cars; it supposedly had castor oil in it, so I was told. Whether it did or not, it had a very distinct odor to it.

I remember Jack Carty and me taking our Sears 106 motorcycles to the speedway in the off season. We'd come in from the gravel pit that was off the northwest corner of the track, run down the backstretch service road to the entrance to the track and race each other around the oval. Some times we would find parts from stock cars that had broken off when they hit the fence.

Now I know that may sound boring to some, but to be honest with you I'm glad we did that back in the day and I wish we could the same today but that will never happen as the track is gone forever.



I recall certain cars, the 77, 21W, 865, the Adventure Village Special #14, 5E, 6 7/8, 23X, #1 and the 3 Star. There were many others but these were the ones that I remember



vividly. One night, Johnny Bennett was driving the 865, got in an accident and was so mad, he got out of the car and began kicking the passenger door about 3 or 4 times.

Drivers also had their "Lucky driving shirts" I know for a fact Charlie



Angerman did, up until the time they made drivers suits mandatory. Look at any photo of Charlie and he will have a checkered shirt on and it was usually red and white, why do I know this, because he was my favorite driver at the time and I asked him about it one night in the pits.

Here was my owner/driver agenda for a typical week:

Go to work, arrive by 7:30, work 'til 5 pm, go home, catch a nap until 6 pm, then work on the car until 1 or 2 am. If there was extensive damage or work to be done, Ray, my crew chief would come over right from work and eat dinner with us. This would happen 6 nights a week. Of course Sunday was "play day" and we'd load the car, equipment and tires up, go to the track, do our thing, come home, unload everything and do it all over the following week. Sounds pretty easy and simple, right? My peers will you, it wasn't!

The woman in the photo is Tom Mc Andrews' wife, Kathy, helping out with some maintenance on the wheels.

The women, whether they were wives or girlfriends really played a pivotal role in racing. Those women that stuck it out with their husbands were of a very special breed and they were the ones who tried to balance out a very lopsided situation of raising a family under the stressful conditions of racing. Some were successful and some weren't. Racing is a very selfish sport as it really cuts down the amount of time the drivers and mechanics spend with their families because of the time spent working on the cars. I will probably have some people disagree with me and that's ok, I'll welcome all of your opinions or comments.



We used to get to the track around 3 pm, get the car unloaded and talk to our racing buddies as they came into the track, listen to the latest and best of the "BS" sessions, trade information, new ideas and just chill until the start of the races.

I was parked next to George Archer, his crew member was talking to Ray and I, he was drinking a soda and had put it down on the trailer, a while later he went to take a drink of soda and a yellow jacket had gotten into the can and when he took a drink it stung his friend on the lip...not a great way to start out the night.

How about the wild ride that Bob McCullough took, flipping 8 times down the front straight flattening the roof of the car, thankfully he was ok.



Then there were the sand hill fans that used to come into A.E.Stones gravel yard and watch the races from the sand hill, which was always pretty high.

Sometimes I think they made it that high so the people *could* watch the races from the hill, I know it didn't make Ken Butler very happy. Then there were the ones that climbed the trees to watch the races. Someone said Ken put honey or something on the trunks to attract bees so the people couldn't climb them anymore.....it didn't work.

Everyone still talks about the night Al Michalchuk came to our track and drove his car like he was on dirt, for 2 or 3 laps it was quite a spectacle with the smoke coming off the tires.

How about the intermission shows, When George Stockinger had the track, he always had a very impressive fireworks display on the 4th of July.

Lee Sparks, doing the bus jump; Art Arfon's "Green Mamba" turbine car; they would chain a car to the "Green Mamba" and proceed to literally melt the car, and then he would make a run down the drag strip. Also, Ken Butler's King of the Daredevils Thrill Show. Elaine Butler, Ken's wife also did some stunts, she was pretty good too. Bobby Isaac's K&K Insurance Superbird show car that made a special appearance at the track. Let's not forget Benny the Bomb, this guy would get into a box and literally blow himself up, it was outrageous! The track would



also run the "shopping cart" races on the tiny oval track in the infield until the local food markets complained that the people weren't bringing the carts back to the stores.

I remember George Dayton being knocked off the flaggers' stand, when it was hit by a car during a race; Harry McConnell's welding



The world's most spectacular auto stunt—'Ken Butler's Fantastic Bus Jump' over a full size school bus at 60 M.P.H. and crash diving into 10 parked cars.

truck in the pits.

Then, two unfortunate tragedies, 1st, the night that Howard Betts, our Nascar steward, was hit by a car on the speedway during time trials and died on the track. Fred Slunt, the Fire Chief for the Farmington Vol. Fire-Rescue Department suffered a fatal heart attack while carrying a fire extinguisher to a car that had been in an accident on the track. There were memorial races run in their honor in the years to come.



I couldn't wait for peach harvest season, Frank Ransom, owner of the "O" car, would always bring a huge basket of peaches to the races and tell everyone in the pits to "help themselves". I can say that I've never had a peach that could come close to a Ransom Raised peach, they were the best!

I think Bobby the 61 said it best he said “We used to wasn’t big enough, of the rough the track good closed for good wished we could go we just didn’t know what we had until it was gone, now all we can do is remember the good times”.



Keller who drove the 15x and in an interview I had with him, complain that the purse money the track ate tires up because asphalt and they didn’t clean enough, but the day the track was a sad day indeed and we back and complain some more,

These were some of the reflections and memories that we remember, we invite you to visit the “comments” page and tell us yours.
