

MY LIFE IN RACING  
By Steve Elias

Most people start when they are 18 or 19. I never got interested until I was 24 and had two children. I started watching the stock cars at Yellow Jacket Speedway in 1949. The track was located at G and Erie Streets in Philadelphia. It was a fifth of a mile asphalt track. Some of the drivers who were running at that time are in the hall of fame today. Just to name a few: AL KELLER, BOBBIE CARTWRIGHT, PAPPY HOUGH, FRANKIE SCHNEIDER, JOHNNY CABRAL, WALLY CAMPBELL, and TOMMIE COATES. I know I have missed many others, but after all it's been over 50 years ago and my memory isn't what it used to be.

The following year I decided that it was now or never. A friend named HAROLD MITCHELL and I started building a racecar. We bought a '37 Ford coupe, stripped the inside of it, took it to a welding shop and had roll bars put in it for a total cost of \$12, which at the time seemed like a lot of money. We bought some GENERAL JUMBO wheels and tires, had the center cut out of the wheels and had '37 Ford centers welded in. We got hold of an old seat out of an airplane and a safety belt. I took the motor out of the '37 Ford I was driving on the road, took the heads off and took them to CAMDEN COUNTY VOC. SCHOOL and had them shaved to give the engine more compression. We took the car to a body shop where another friend of mine volunteered to paint the car at no charge. The color is a little hard to describe. He used what he called shelf paint; it's a mixture of whatever paint is in small quantities in cans on the shelf. It was sort of brown with a yellowish tint. We numbered the car 03. Now we were ready. The year was 1950, although I don't remember the exact month. We had some idea as to what we needed to make the car handle on the track. We had three guys stand on the left rear bumper and we chained the frame to the axle to keep the rear end from coming around. I was the designated driver and I was as ready as I'd ever be.

They gave me the outside pole in the heat race. One minor note I should make at this time is that I had a strictly stock engine except for the shaved heads. Every one else had modified engines.

We were out on the track taking our warm up laps and we lined up in are starting positions. The flagman, whose name was BILL NELSON was left handed. Well you talk about being sneaky. He

pointed his right finger at me and I thought "what am I doing wrong?". Next thing I know, he whips out his left hand with the green flag and every body takes off but me and I end up looking back into a pack of cars heading for me. Luck was with me. Nobody ran into me. I was put in the back of the pack for the restart, which suited me fine. The race was started again. After a few laps, I ended up on the outside rail with damage to the front end. I was unable to restart. We worked on the car to get it ready for the consolation race, which I started near the rear of the pack. I think I finished in last place, but I didn't care just as long as I finished. I did not qualify for the feature race so our evening was over. After some soul searching, I decided to look for another racetrack to run where I would be a little more competitive. I found one down in Delaware just north of DOVER and about 2 miles west of PIERSONS CORNER. We used to flat tow - that's towing with a hitch on the front of the racecar. It was about 70 miles one-way. We would cross the river on the PENNSVILLE FERRY. Sometimes when the tide was high the 39 Chevy tow car would have trouble getting up the ramp. We would start the stock car up and push the tow car on to the ferry. After crossing we would travel on down RT.13 to our destination. It was a half-mile track located on a farm. Most of the cars were in the same class as me. There were three or four that could go quite a bit faster. I won a few heat races and finished up as high as third in the feature. I had quite a few thrills at this track - like my first roll over. Not much damage to the car just a little to my pride. It really wasn't my entire fault. The track was so dusty sometimes that you couldn't see down the straightaway. You would have to judge where the turn started. If I were running pretty fast, I would count "1-2-3-turn". That usually worked pretty well except the time that I rolled over. Somebody had spun in the corner and I couldn't see him. I hit him and that's when I went over. I learned quite a bit that first year. I acquired some driving experience and I found out that it doesn't pay to own a car even with a partner because it's just too expensive unless one of you has a lot of money, which neither of us did. That was my first year of racing with many more to come.

#### YEAR NO.2 - 1951

I took the motor out of the racecar and put it my streetcar during the winter. So when spring came, I decided to try driving for somebody else. I went to ATCO SPEEDWAY. It was a third of a mile dirt and wide enough to run two abreast in the corners and not too dusty. My first ride was for a guy named NED STANTON in car no.01. It wasn't too fast but it was steady. We would take

it to other tracks once in awhile: fifth of a mile asphalt at HIGHTSTOWN, N.J.; third of a mile dirt at ARNY'S MOUNT, N.J.; we even took it to famous five turn track called ALCYON SPEEDWAY way out of our class, but at least we could say we were there. The money at that time was not the greatest - \$5 to win a heat and \$25 to win a feature. One night up at HIGHTSTOWN, they were giving away flashlights, lunch buckets, and other things in place of cash. On our way home from encounter with Hightstown the tow car broke down and I had to push Ned the rest of the way home with the race car, lucky for us we didn't get caught.

JIMMY DE'NATALE owned the ATCO track. He also owned the bar that was out at the road at the entrance to the track. When the races were over, you had to go to the bar for the payoff. By the time you got your money, you had most likely spent that amount already.

In other circles outside of racing, JIMMY had another name - "JIMMY THE BRUTE". Now I'm not saying he was part of the mob, but there were rumors and nobody had balls enough to come out and ask him point blank. He was fair with me and that's all you can ask from anybody. Back to racing. This was the year that JACK MC LAUGHLIN started racing. He was running a '34 Ford coupe at ATCO.

I don't know if he was running any place else at the time or not. He died in 1964 due to injuries he received in a crash at NAZARETH SPEEDWAY in the number "83" which was owned by his brother in law "BUD OLSEN" who was also a race driver.

I didn't set the world on fire that year, but I was gaining experience, which I needed if I was going to get any further in this business. I drove several other cars when mine was broken down and didn't do too bad. I was finishing a lot more races, and crashing less. It wasn't a great year, but it could have been a lot worse.

#### YEAR NO.3 - 1952

During the winter I started looking for another ride. I talked to several car owners and I finally hooked up with MIKE FANNELLI from BLACKWOOD, N.J. The car was pretty much strictly stock except for a ground cam. We started running at PLEASANTVILLE SPEEDWAY, which was just before you get into ATLANTIC CITY. We started off slow at first, but we were finishing most of the races. One night we were in the third heat. Every body was out on the track except us. They started the parade lap and we were trying desperately to get the car started. We got it going just as they took the green flag. Out of the pits I came, pedal too the metal. The pit steward hollered "your too late", but I kept going. I was a straightaway behind. I kept the hammer down and gradually caught car after car. Starting the

tenth lap of a ten-lap race I only had one car to pass. I passed him going into the third turn and took the lead and the checkered flag. I went on to win the feature that night and the announcer gave me the nickname of "CINDERELLA BOY" which stuck with me throughout the rest of the year. The announcer's name was BILL GREGORY. He was a newscaster for KYW in PHILADELPHIA. I won three more features in the NO.50, but it wasn't enough. I wanted more. I wanted to run with the big boys at ALCYON SPEEDWAY. We took the NO.50 to ALCYON, but it just wasn't enough car to compete with the cars and drivers there. Our car developed a problem in the warm ups that could not be repaired at the track. I started walking around the pits hoping I could pick up another ride. There was a new car in the pits - NO.11 owned by FRANK GILMORE from MT. EPHRIAM. I talked to him and he said he would give me a try. The car was what they call sportsman. That was anything you could hide with one carburetor. I qualified in the heat race I finished third. In the feature race there were quite a lot of restarts caused by accidents, which I got accused of starting. I have to confess I started one of them. I went into the corner a little too fast underneath the NO.2 owned by LUCKY JORDAN and pushed him into the boards. I think I finished seventh which was good for my first time in a strange car. I didn't mean to hit the other car. The problem was I did not realize how fast I was going. The car I was driving had exhaust pipes that went the length of the car and came out at the rear. Most others had the exhaust coming out the side. It was a lot quieter that way and it gave me the feeling that I wasn't going that fast. I would come down in the corner and wonder why everybody was slowing down. I made a few enemies that night. When they took the car home, its color was black with a white NO. 11 on it. When they brought it back the following week, it was yellow and was numbered 111. We started off with a fresh slate.

The sanctioning body at ALCYON was "EASTERN STOCK CAR RACING ASSOCIATION". They also had PLEASANTVILLE SPEEDWAY. They had point championships at each track, plus the overall club championship. That was a combination of points from both tracks. We would race at ALCYON on Friday night and race at PLEASANTVILLE on Saturday night. On Friday nights, we were running real well - winning heats finishing in the top ten in the features races. One night we really had it going. I got out in to the lead in the early laps and was going away. I had a straightaway lead on the pack except for one car, the NO.1 driven by "JOHNNY CARP" and built by the "BEACH BROTHERS" from WOODBURY. He was winning most of the features at the time. He was steadily gaining on me as I took the crossed flags, which meant I was half way home. I

checked the mirror coming down the strait. I didn't see the NO. 1. As I moved up to the wall to go down into the first turn, I heard a scraping sound. I looked to the right and I saw the hood of the NO. 1. We touched and I was cocked a little sideways. I hit the corner of the steps that go through the wall up to the stands. He hit my right front wheel and both of us went end over end down the straightway. When the cars finally came to a stop, they said you could hear a pin drop. Everybody thought we were both dead. Lucky for us we were both very much alive. We had aches and pains and I had a cut on my left eyebrow that required eight stitches which also included a trip to the hospital.

Meanwhile at PLEASANTVILLE SPEEDWAY I was doing great. One night I didn't have a ride and DAVE WATSON asked me if I would drive the car he normally drove, the No. 56 belonging to a guy named ELMER from GRENLOCH, N.J. DAVE was having problems handling in the corners and he wanted to stay down in the corner and watch me go around. I got around the corners just fine. In fact, I won the feature race. Two weeks after that we brought the 111 down and won the next six feature races. The promoter at P'VILLE was ROCKY DENATALE. At the LABOR DAY night race, ROCKY came down in the pits and told us that he needed every buck he could get his hands on to keep his lease at the track and he asked us if we would run for just trophies. I turned to the car owner and said it was up to him. He said O.K. While I was out in the warm-ups, I broke a center bolt in the rear spring. They worked on the car all through the three heats and the consolation race, so we didn't get a chance to qualify. The handicapper said we could start last in the feature. I worked my way up through the pack and won the feature. When they had the trophy presentation, a bunch of car owners and drivers stated screaming. They were saying that I didn't qualify and should not have been in the feature. The owner got the trophy so I don't know what they were crying about. The only thing I got was my name in the paper saying that I had won the feature under protest. I used to get booed every week. The fans didn't like to see the same guy win every week. I had a fine year. I won the track championship and I also won the Eastern club championship for having the most total points for both tracks - Alcyon and Pleasantville. At the end of the year banquet, along with my championship trophy, I received the most improved driver of the year trophy for Alcyon.

#### Year No. 4 - 1953

I felt pretty good starting this year. I had won my first championship and I was going to be driving a modified - the 011 for GRAHAME DENHAM. FRANK had sold the 111 at the end of the

season. During the winter GRAHAME had decided to build a car. He had a crop dusting service that he ran out of WOODBURY AIRPORT. We had used one of the hangers the year before when working on the 111, that's how GRAHAME got interested. The car would be ready for the first race at ALCYON. PLEASANTVILLE was due to open two weeks earlier. I went down to the opening race without a car and thought I might be able to pick up a ride. ROMEO GELSI had his No. 44 there - it was a sportsman. This car, in later years, became famous but we'll get to that later on. ROMEO said I could drive his car. I think I won the heat or ran second. That was 50 years ago and sometimes it's hard to remember the minor things that happened. Not to put down his car, but greater things were to happen to me that day. The second heat was over and two guys came up to me and asked me if I would try their car out in the third heat. The car was NO.160. Things went my way and I won the heat race going away. Before the feature, they came over again and said that if I would drive the car in the feature WALTON STOWMAN would give me \$20 no matter where I finished. In those days, \$20 was a lot of money. WALTON was their sponsor and he had a few bucks. He was the owner of STOWMAN'S SHIPYARD in HIESLERVILLE, N.J. That's where the car was built. He was a nice guy, not because he had money, but by the way he talked to you, not down to you. I asked ROMEO if he would mind if I drove the 160. He said no. He would drive the car himself, which he had planned to do before I had asked him to drive it. I started the race near the rear of the pack and started passing cars on every lap. When this car went down the chute, you could hear it above all other cars on the track. I was in the lead in less than 10 laps and I rolled on to win the feature. I had won the last six features in 1952 and the first one in 1953 - that gave me seven in a row which gave me the record tied by only one other driver over the years, the great "AL TASNADY". I agreed to drive the car the following week.

All week I was looking forward to driving the 160 again. I got to the track early so I could get a warm up. The car ran great in the warm-ups. I won my heat and started near the rear for the feature, but I had company back there. AL TASNADY was there with LUCKY JORDAN'S duce. Both of us worked are way up through the pack. I took the lead and TAS caught me and passed me. Then I passed him and we swapped the lead back and forth through out the remainder of the race. I was leading on the last lap. I was coming out of the forth turn with TAS right on my bumper. A lap car was ahead of me. I decided to go under him and TAS went to the outside. The lap car came down to the inside and blocked me off and TAS won the feature. I was disappointed, but I

really enjoyed the race. The crowd went wild. It was a good clean race. Neither one of us banged each other around and we both laughed about the race afterwards. The following week, ALCYON opened and I was in a sweat. I didn't know what to do. The 011 and the 160 were at the track. I wanted to drive both cars but that was impossible and I was committed to the 011. I didn't want to go back on my word, so I told the owners of the 160 I wouldn't be able to drive their car. The 011 was running three carburetors, which was normal for the times. Some had the two carb set up but most had three. I won my heat, so that put me near the back of the pack for the feature. And there along with me was AL TASNADY. It was a great race with AL winning and I finished second. AL dominated through the first half of the season. I wasn't doing bad, finishing in the top five every week. AL was leading in points, but I wasn't too far back in second place.

AL was still driving for LUCKY JORDAN when they decided to go and run the NASCAR tracks. By them leaving ALCYON, I was left with the lead in points, which didn't bother me a bit. I finally won my first feature. It made my lead in points even greater. One thing I forgot to mention: a cat's head was painted on the hood of my car. BILL GREGORY was the announcer and he gave me another nickname - "SYLVESTER THE CAT" - which has stuck with me throughout the years. Even today, some of the old timers will see me and say "hi" SYLVESTER. In the meantime, I was running at PLEASANTVILLE on Saturday nights and ATCO on Sunday afternoons. I didn't run every race or even have a regular car. One particular Sunday afternoon I was looking for a ride and JIMMY DE'NATALE asked me to drive his car, the old mud duck NO.69. The car didn't even have roll bars, but in those days I had big ones. I won the heat race on old half worn out tires. I guess JIMMY felt bad because he sent somebody out to buy two new tires for the feature. In those days we used to run street tires. Well I don't know if the new tires did it or what, but I won the feature. Meanwhile at PLEASANTVILLE I was running any car I could get my hands on. I won a feature with the 779 normally driven by BOB ALCORN. He had to work that night, so the owners had asked me to drive. Another night I won the feature with the 111 under the new ownership of BUBBY ANGEROTH. Back at ALCYON, the 111 was being driven by BILL DANKEL. I used to qualify the car in the heat race whenever BILL had to work late. I was still holding my own in the points chase. We had a LABOR DAY race coming up. It was a daytime affair with the STONEY MC'LINN trophy at stake. STONEY had been a WIP sportswriter before he passed away. Things were going pretty good in the heat race till BERNIE HART spun in the fourth corner. I put

on my brakes trying to miss him and I was hit in the rear by the 111 and he ended up on top of my roof. It was a weird looking sight. The right side door on my car was smashed in. They took the 111 off the roof of my car and lucky for me there was no damage to the running gear. I was able to restart the heat and when the race was over I had qualified for the feature. JACK MC LAUGHLIN had taken an early lead in the feature and I was still fighting my way up through the pack. The announcer was saying, "here comes "SYLVESTER" in his air conditioned 011" due to the side of the car being all smashed in. I had finally gotten in to second place, but JACK still had a pretty good lead. A red flag came out stopping the race because of a wreck. JACK had the pole on the restart and went into the lead in the first turn. There were five laps to go. I caught him with two to go and passed him going down the backstretch and went into the lead for keeps. I won the feature and the trophy and I also increased my point lead. The last two races of the season I finished up near the front and captured the modified point championship of 1953 at ALCYON. At the awards banquet we received trophies and I was talking to GEORGE HERITAGE the owner of the 160. He asked me if I wanted to drive their new car next year and I said "yes". The new car was going to be 061; CHUBBY HOWER was going to drive the 160.

#### 1954

This was the year the INTERSTATE STOCK CAR RACING ASSOCIATION was born. It was formed to give owners and drivers a fair share of the front gate and more say in how the organization was run. We elected our officers rather than have them self-appointed as they were in the past. HARRY REEVES was President, JOHN GAUNT was Vice President, GRAHAME DENHAM was Treasurer and MARTY GEORTLER was Secretary.

After the first four races at ALCYON we had been running pretty good - one second and three thirds. We were leading in points without winning a race. Then everything seemed to go down hill. We blew eight front tires not all of them in the feature race, but enough of them to hurt. On one night I was leading the pack going through the dogleg. I blew the right front tire and hit the boards. BILL SMITH was behind me. He turned to the left to miss me and he hit the inside fence and rolled over on the straight. Twelve more cars got into the wreck, one of them running into BILL'S roof as his car laid on it's side. He suffered severe injuries, which he died from within two weeks. When something like that happens, it gets you to thinking, but you can't dwell on it. You know that things like this are going to

happen from time to time and you just say to yourself "it's not going to happen to me" and go on driving. Another night I was working my way up through the pack when I blew a right front tire. I hit the fence on the backstretch. The top board broke off and I straddled the bottom board. The one that broke off hit the left front fender came through the firewall wiping out the fuel lines and breaking the steering column loose. It was across my right leg pinning me in the seat. The board had continued on right up between my legs. I looked down at it and it looked like it had gone through me - there was blood all over the place. I took my safety belts off and tried to get out of the seat, but no luck - the wheel had me trapped in the seat and I couldn't move it. Lucky for me there were kids up in the trees watching the races. One of them was a big kid named BUNKIE HIGGBIE. He got in the car with me and together we pulled the steering column off my leg. I was able to get out of the car. I got up on the roof because they hadn't stopped the race yet. Somebody got to the flagman and he red flagged the race. My right leg was covered with blood - I had a hole in my leg up near my crotch. The ambulance arrived and took me to the hospital where I had 19 stitches in my leg to close the hole and they released me. Right then I had serious doubts on continuing my racing career, but the next morning I was hot to trot again.

On Saturday nights I had been running EDDIE ROBINSONS 202 at the PLEASANTVILLE SPEEDWAY. I had been doing pretty well - I had won two features in a row. The night after the accident at ALCYON, I told EDDIE that my leg hurt like hell and not to expect too much. I had trouble getting into the car, but once I got going it wasn't too bad. I started near the rear of the pack, because I was leading in points. Well I never had it so easy. Every place I moved there was a hole to go through and I ended up leading and went on to win the feature. When I got back into the pits, EDDIE told me to tell him I was feeling bad every time I drove the car. The following week was my last ride in the 202, because the owners of the 061 had decided to take the car down to PLEASANTVILLE. EDDIE wasn't too happy about that. I had told him early in the season that if the 061 came to P'VILLE I would drive it. I went on to win two or three more features and won the drivers point championship.

LIBERTY STOCK CAR RACING ASSOCIATION had been the sanctioning body at P'VILLE and at two other tracks - NAZERETH on Sunday afternoon and HATFIELD on Sunday night. For a while, we were running Saturday nights, go to NAZARETH on Sunday afternoons and hit HATFIELD on the way home. It was kind of hard to keep the car

in shape for all three tracks. To take care of my spare time I was running ATCO on Tuesday and Thursday nights. I was running any car that I could pick up for that evening. One night I drove the 01 modified out of CAMDEN and won the feature. Another night I didn't have a ride so I had a couple beers. STEVE BRITTINO, owner of the 77 (formerly driven by CHIC DENATALE) arrived at the track during the first heat. Steve asked me if I wanted to drive his car. I went out in the second heat and I couldn't do anything. Just because of those two beers my reflexes were off. After the heat I started running out to the main road and back trying to wear off those two beers. I ate about two dozen clams at the clam bar they had by the pit gate. I had to run in the consolation race because I hadn't qualified in the heat race. Everything was fine. I won the consolation and started in the back of the feature and won that too. I learned one lesson that night - I couldn't drink and drive and expect to have quick reflexes. Another night at Atco Pete Ambrosia had brought the 026 sedan to the track without a driver so I asked t drive the car and he said yes, also at the track was Will Cagle with a 32 bug one of his first races in the north after coming up from Florida. I won my heat race and Will and I started in the rear for the feature. We put on a great show going to the front. There was an accident and on the restart Will was on the pole and I was second. Going down into the first turn I lost a right front wheel and they did not stop the race till I was a lap down, I don't think they liked me. I had to start in the rear and coming thru the pack like gangbusters. Coming off the fourth turn the driver in front of me went high and I ducked under him and he came back down but I was there and that sent him up again into the boards and the Flag Man came running down the track waving a black flag at me saying I was disqualified. At least I felt good about something. Pete said the was the best traffic driving he had seen in a long time. I ran a lot of other races at ATCO but it's a little hard to remember all of them after so many years. I had to be satisfied when the season ended I had won the championship at "PLEASANTVILLE" and received a nice trophy at the LIBERTY banquet.

#### 1955

I was looking forward to the new season. I had cabin fever waiting for the first race. A new racetrack was going to open this year, VINELAND SPEEDWAY, a half-mile dirt. I received a phone call from the owners of the 061; they wanted me to meet them down at the track. There were going to be some newspaper people and they wanted to get some pictures to give the track some publicity before opening day. I got down at the track and AL TASNADY was there with DUTCH MAUK'S no.52. The 061 was off the

trailer and ready to go. This was in March and it was really cold. We went out on the track and ran a few laps staying together so they could get some pictures and make it look like a race was going on. I don't know how they could see to take pictures. The dust was really flying. There wasn't any calcium on the track to keep the dust down, but every thing turned out fine and so did the pictures.

We started out at the new track hoping to have a good year, but that didn't happen. We were running pretty good not winning any races, but finishing up near the front. We were running with 20% nitro-methane added to our fuel that would give us an extra boost going down the chute. Once in a while they would add a little too much and the car would run good for about six laps then heat up and slow down. This happened on several occasions, I would have to slow down let the car cool off and start running again, but it was too late to get up near the front. I used to get all bent out of shape, and I told them to stop using it all together if it was going to cause us all those problems. One night we developed a problem in the heat race, and were done for the night. It was almost time for the third heat and JOHNNY FOSTER who owned the 1/2 asked me if I wanted to drive his car, I said yes and took it out in the third heat. I started near the back and I could not do much as the back end kept coming around in the turns, we did not qualify. Now we had to get ready for the consolation race. I told them to just change the left front tire and put a smaller one on. I hoped that would transfer some weight to the left side of the car and make the back end stick. Well it worked, we won the "conci". We had to get out on the track for the feature race. We were starting near the back because we qualified in the consolation race. The flag dropped and away we went. The car was going through the corners like it was on rails. I was working my way up through the pack passing cars on every lap. I was in second place when there was a wreck in the back of the pack. They cleared the cars that could not restart and we lined up in Indian file for a flying start. They dropped the flag coming off the fourth turn; you had to be ready. I held back just a little and tried to anticipate the green. Well the green came out and I had got my foot in it a shade before HERM FISHER who was leading at the time. I got under him going into the first corner and took the lead coming off the second and went on to win the feature. I also had broken TAS'S string of wins, he had four in a row up to that night.

During the year we were running some other tracks, NAZERETH on Sunday afternoons and the half-mile asphalt track at HATFIELD,

which at the time was the fastest half mile in the east, on Sunday evenings. It was kind of hard to have the car handle on the asphalt after you had been bouncing around on the dirt in the afternoon. We did take another excursion one Saturday; we took the car up to DOVER, N.J. They had a half-mile high bank dirt track that was pretty quick; it really had us messed up on which gear to run. We did not qualify in our heat we had to run the consolation, we had the right gear and finished second and were ready for the feature. While the race was running part of the main grandstand collapsed. They stopped the race and removed the people from the rubble. My father was in the stands and lucky for him two of my buddies were there with him, one on each side and they held him up when the stands went down. After removing everybody they resumed racing. We did pretty well; we did not win the feature, but we ended up third. NELSON APPLGATE won and AL TASNADY was second. That was the last race ever run there due in part to a bunch of law suits. This wasn't one of my better years, but at least I was in one piece.

#### 1956

A new year was starting and I decided to make a change. I was going to drive the 1/2 owned by JOHNNY FOSTER. He was building a new modified coupe and we were going to run the car at VINELAND and ATCO SPEEDWAYS. We started out real fine winning at ATCO several times and doing pretty good at VINELAND.

We were running a SATURDAY night race at ATCO. We were leading the heat race and I was coming off the fourth turn. I saw CARL, who was the crew chief on the car, waving frantically. Well I figured I would look a little closer on the next time around, but that didn't work out too well. Just as I was between the third and fourth turn, the left front wheel came off and I proceeded to go end over end. When I finally stopped I was on my roof. I waited till all the cars stopped before trying to get out of the car. I was hanging by my safety belts and I had to put one hand down to catch myself when I pulled the release for my belts. I crawled out through the window and stood up and proceeded to check for any thing that was broken. I was pretty lucky, no broken bones just a little stiff. The car was totaled, that means that it's not repairable. The engine rear and transmission were saved but the rest was just junk. Well a new car had to be built and that takes time and CARL who was going to be building the car was going to do it in his spare time. I hung around a few weeks trying to help, but things did not seem to be progressing too well. It

seemed to me that CARL had lost interest, so I started looking for another ride.

I heard through the grapevine that KENNY VAN-BUREN did not have a driver for his car. It was a different looking car, compared to the rest of the cars that were running at the time. ANDY BEACH and his brother, who had a garage in WOODBURY, built the car. They started out with a '37 Ford five passenger coupe, they cut about two feet out of the middle of the body and moved the windshield back and then welded the body back together. The next thing they did was move the engine back in the frame about a foot. That meant they had to make a longer hood. The theory behind the whole thing was to have all the weight between the front and rear axles and that should make the car easier to handle on the racetrack. This car was a few years ahead of its time. Getting back to the story, I asked KENNY if he wanted to run the car at a race they were having down at DELMAR, which was located on the DEL. MARYLAND line, he said yes and I said I would meet him down at the track on race day. I arrived pretty early and KENNY was not too far behind me with the 37. They got the car unloaded off the trailer and we fired it up. That car really sounded fierce, with the V/8 LINCOLN and the four carburetors. I got in the car and adjusted the safety belts and took the car out for a warm-up. The track was a little rough - it was oiled dirt, which is kind of like soft asphalt. I took a couple slow laps then I put the pedal down and preceded to take a few hot laps, this car really had some power. They had a set of firestone sprint car tires on the rear, and they were hard rubber. I would come off the turn and put my foot in it and I would spin wheels all the way down the straightaway.

AL TASNADY and FRANKIE SCHNEIDER were there for the race; they were the two hottest drivers in the east at that time. Trying to remember exactly what happened after all these years is a little hard to remember. The heat was won by TAS, but I finished second, and I was satisfied considering I had never driven this car before. In between the heat and the feature they decided to run a match race. The match race was to be run by FRANKIE, AL, HENRY DOER and me. It was a ten lap affair and coming out of the forth turn it was AL and FRANKIE side by side, but they made one mistake - they left the inside open and I took advantage of it and I moved to the inside and took the lead right at the checkered flag and almost ran over HARRY REEVES, the flag man, in the process. The feature started with AL, FRANKIE and myself going to the front. As the laps wore down FRANKIE started getting slower and I got by him but I couldn't do anything with AL. The 37 was

hard to steer and my arms were getting sore but I hung on for a second place and I was happy with that, being in the car for the first time.

I'm a little fuzzy on exact dates and times because all this happened 50 years ago, and then again some of it seems like it happened yesterday. I especially remember KENNY saying he would like to take the car to MANASSASS, VA. It was a special race they were having and a lot of the cars from the area were going down there. The track was a third of a mile asphalt with about a fifteen-degree bank. FRANKIE, AL, and myself were there, and I don't quite remember who else. The "HOT DOG" in that part of the country was RAY HENDRICHS. We started in the rear of the pack, RAY, TAS, FRANKIE and myself. Before too long we were up front, we were running nose to tail with nobody able to get by. RAY was leading FRANKIE, TAS third and I was fourth. I was really surprised at the way my car was handling, the 37 had never been on asphalt before, it was doing great. We kept running in the same order with nobody able to pass the laps wore on and it was getting near the end of the race and I caught a break good for me bad for AL. Somebody had dropped some oil on the track and AL hit it making him slide a little, just enough for me to slip by into third and that's the way we were when we took the checker. It was a good night except for one thing, during the sportsman race there was a bad wreck and one of the drivers was killed. I didn't know who he was, he was from that area. After we packed up and got the payoff we headed for home, about a three and a half hour drive.

I started running the "37" at VINELAND and did pretty good, finishing up near the front in most of the races. The hard FIRESTONE tires were still a problem, I was having trouble getting a bite coming off the turns. One night MARVIN from RACEMASTER TIRE'S was at the track with a set of tires he wanted to try on somebody's car and of course I volunteered. Before this race TAS had won six features in a row and I had finished fourth, second and four thirds behind him. I went out in the heat and the tires worked great and I won. The feature started and I got out in the lead pretty quick and had built up a good lead, but TAS caught up with me with four laps to go. He got under me and we ran side by side the remainder of the race. Coming out of the fourth turn for the checker I had him by a half a car length. He pulled almost even, but he couldn't quite make it and I beat him by about two feet. We learned one thing that night - tires could make a difference. KENNY was hard headed and he still would not go to a softer tire.

Kenny took the car to Atco Speedway and put Sal Machella in it because I wasn't allowed to run there - I did not belong to the club. Sal got into the fence and did not finish the race. The following week Kenny asked me to drive the car at Atco and I went, I had to pay a \$50 fee to run. We won the heat race, the match race and the feature and I was given the trophy. It was a pretty big trophy and Kenny said he would like to have it. I said if he would pay my membership fee he could have the trophy, he paid me the \$50 and I gave it to him. Back to Vineland the next three races we finished two fourths and a fifth. In the next race we developed a miss in the engine not to bad, just a little that cut our power down slightly. That turned out to be a blessing in disguise, I started getting a bite coming off the turns and I finished second to TAS in the feature. The next week it was good again and I was leading coming off the fourth turn about to take the checker, well the engine blew and I coasted across the line in third place, a rod had broken and went through the side of the block. ANDY BEACH worked on the engine all week, he welded a patch on the side of the block and got the engine back together in time for the next race, which was going to be the last race of the year. Race day came and we were ready. I won the heat, started in the back for the feature and won. All in all it was a pretty good year and I finished third in points for the season, but I always wonder what might have been if I could of had those RACEMASTER TIRES all year.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, I received a call from some fellows in Wilmington asking if I would drive their car at Georgetown the next day. They had a 38 Desoto with a Chrysler engine and up to that time I had never driven a car with that type engine, but I was game.

We arrived at the track and I ran the warm ups. The car ran real well. Ed Lindsay was driving a Plymouth with a Chrysler engine and came over and borrowed a gear. As it turned out, that was the gear we needed in the feature. We were running pretty well in the heat and got in a tangle with Ray Kabel and we both ended up in the consi. He won it and I ran second and we both started in the rear for the feature. The two of us worked our way through the pack trying to catch Ed Lindsay who was leading. Ed won with Kabel second and me third. Pee Wee Pobletts, Vince Conrad, Horace Williams, Johnny Roberts, Bobby Tester and Carl Henderson finished behind us. All in all it was a good day, but could have been better with the gear we loaned out.

1957

Over the winter Kenny had put a sedan body on the car so we could run at Alcyon. We were running at Vineland and Alcyon in the same week and still had those hard tires. Every week I would bitch about the tires. One night I showed up at Alcyon and Kenny wasn't there but the car was and the Mechanic said he had orders to put anybody in it except me. That was fine with me I was tired of fighting with Kenny.

I picked a ride in the #14 from Oxford, PA and ran that the rest of the year. It wasn't the fastest car on the track but we finished the top ten most of the time.

1958

Over the winter I did not have a ride lined up for next year. In the early spring I was down in Vineland and stopped by Neil Williams' shop and they were working on the new 44 coupe for Ralph Smith a beautiful car with an engine built by John Bohlander who used to have Frankie Schneider driving his cars in the early 50's with great success. In another part of the yard sat a sedan driven in the past year by Ken Marriot. The car was old rags - all beat up, no wheels and a 292 ford engine stock except for an ambler cam. As I looked at it, Hanny (Hanford Nixholm) a friend of Neil's asked me if he put it on the track would I drive it. Not having a ride I said sure.

I helped get the car back together, welding license plates from the running boards to the fenders to hold the car together. We were not ready for the first week at Vineland and Elton Hildreth won the feature and set a new track record, of course that was the first race on the new asphalt track.

The following week we were ready running the 44A with the 292 one carburetor on gas. We won the heat setting a new track record and also won the feature taking 2 seconds off Elton's time for another record.

The following week we were back at Vineland set another track record in the heat won the feature and took 7 seconds off the track record from the week before. This was done with a car running on gas and one carburetor against the modifieds running on alcohol.

I have to say that the new track was hard on tires, it was so smooth it built up heat in the tires and they blistered. I was running Mellini recaps and the after one race half the right

tire was gone.

We took the car to Hatfield Speedway, a half-mile asphalt track and the fastest track in the country for its size. We won the feature again running against the Modifieds. We then took the car to Wilmington, Delaware, a quarter mile asphalt track and won the opening day feature. We were running three tracks a week Vineland on Friday, Hatfield on Saturday and Wilmington on Sunday.

The racing at Vineland started to change for us. Racemaster came out with a new tire that would not blister and we still ran the Mellini recaps. Don't get me wrong; we still ran well but couldn't keep up with the cars with the newer tires.

A little later in the year John Regineck from Millville offered to put a modified Chevy in the car at no cost to Neil and we started running that engine. Very fast but still the problem with the tires. Neil had no interest in the 44a everything was for the 44 that Ralph drove.

I didn't complain; Hanny and I just did our thing. One night at Hatfield with John's motor we set a new track record in the heat. We put another set of Mellini recaps on for the feature and I couldn't keep the car on the track. John Regineck was disgusted and took his engine out of the car and we went back to the 292 Ford.

We tried our best and were leading in Modified points till one day we were at the shop and they needed a tire for the 44 which Ralph drove. I went over to the Speed shop in Pennsi to pick it up when I returned they had taken the fuel tank out of my car and put it in the 44 and I could not run that night. That was the last straw and I quit the car. We still won the Sportsman Championship for the year at Vineland and Wilmington. Another year where tires were a factor.

1959

The year did not start out too well. I drove a few different cars and finally hooked up with guy that had bought a late model from Romeo Gelsi. It was a 1957 Plymouth that Romeo had gotten from Detroit to run at Daytona with Al Tasnady as the driver. It was set up for racing with the Grand National circuit that preceded the Winston Cup.

They took the car to Daytona for the last race on the beach, one straightaway was on the beach and the other was on a two-lane road connected at each end by high-banked turns. At the time I was working for Toots Armellini who was Romeo's brother in law. I hauled flowers out of Florida to New York and Boston. On the trip down to Florida, Toots let me take a layover at Daytona and I got into the race hiding in the trunk of the racecar. As we were going thru the check in Romeo was clowning around banging on the trunk lid saying what a great day they were going to have and almost breaking my eardrums.

Al did not have a great day, breaking a fan belt and having to pull out of the race. Al drove that car in a lot of races throughout the South for two years, running both hardtop and convertible races. They would cut the hard top off and bolt it back on whenever needed.

When I started driving the car we were with the Penn-Mar Racing Association that was affiliated with USAC. We ran a 150 250 at Langhorne with USAC. It was a thrill to run with the top dogs from USAC.

One of the races they had at Langhorne was a 100-mile Round Robin with three 33-mile qualifying heats for Late Models, Modifieds and Sports Cars. We had to run a two-lap qualifier to get our spot in the 33 miler. We had the third fastest time for a good starting spot. The qualifying race started with a Ford from Baltimore and Frankie Schnieder in a Chevy and me in the Plymouth pulling away from the field running nose to tail. We ran that way for 22 laps when I blew a piston ruining my day. The first five cars to finish in the 100 miler were all Late Models. I would have had a good day if I had not had my trouble. As the old saying goes, the dog would have caught the rabbit if he hadn't stop to take a crap.

We also ran Williams Grove, Vineland, Hatfield and Oxford,

Pa and also had a few pick up rides in Modifieds. Without having a lot of success I still enjoyed the year. In our last race at Hatfield we had blown a right front tire and hit the outside wall destroying the right front of the car. That was our last ride with the Plymouth.

## 1960

I picked up a ride in the 36 owned by Pappi Ippoliti out of Folcroft, Pa. It was a 37 Ford coupe with a small block Chevy. It ran pretty well considering I was running Mellini recaps. We had a little problem getting a good bite coming off the corners, but running in the top ten some top fives.

Later in the year Pappi bought a set of Race master tires and everybody thought we had put a new motor in the car. On a night that they were having two feature races we won our heat race putting us near the back but we came up through the pack and finished third in the first feature. To the back again to start the second feature and the race started and through the pack we came. On lap 17 we were going for the lead coming off the fourth turn getting under George Slight in the 119. He forced me down into the infield and I got all tangled up in a wire fence unable to continue. I was not a happy camper. At a later race we were involved with an accident coming off the fourth turn and the car caught fire, lucky for me the track crew put it out before I was burned. This year again proved me right that you have to have the proper tires to be competitive.

I went to Atco one night with out a ride and while walking around the pits I saw the White 026 sedan owned by Pete Ambosia and he asked me if I would like to drive it of course I said yes, Pete always had good running cars. Will Cagle was there with a 32 bug he had brought up from Florida. I won the heat race I was in and Cagle won his heat race. We were both in the rear as we started the feature and worked our way through the pack. Cagle got the lead and I was second. There was an accident and on the restart going into the first turn after the Green my right front wheel came off and the flag man let a lap go by before he stopped the race putting me a lap down. After getting the car fixed we started in the rear and on the green we started up through the pack and got into the lead but still a lap down. Another accident and restart putting me in the back again but I was on the same lap. I proceeded to come up through the pack and coming off the fourth turn the driver in front of me went wide and I got under

him and he came back down but I was there and he went back up into the outside fence. The race stopped and the flagman came running down the track waving a black flag at me and yelling that I was disqualified. No way I could have missed hitting that other driver but they did not see it that way, I wasn't too well liked there anyway, they considered me an outsider. Pete enjoyed the way I had up through the pack two times and he wasn't worried about the money we lost. It wasn't a very profitable night but I really enjoyed driving his car.

Pete had a new car he was building in his garage a 37 Ford coupe, getting it ready for Langhorne and asked if I would drive it and I said yes. I went over a few times to help him finish the car. He only made one mistake, he neglected to send in the entry form and we went to the track on practice day and they would not let us in because he had not sent the entry form in. I was really disappointed because it was a good car and I thought I could have done very well with it.

## 1961

The start of a New Year and racing wasn't at the top of my list. I had a full time job driving a truck over the road and wasn't home much. I had four children and supporting them was my number one objective but the bug got to me.

I went to Vineland without a ride and picked one up in the 54L. The following week on April 30th they had a NASCAR Grand National Race at Vineland. The owner of the 59 Plymouth that I drove in 1959 pulled it out of the barn and brought it to the track. It still had straw in it when they got it there.

The race started and we weren't running too badly that is until the drive shaft fell off. That ended our day. Bud Olsen was driving the duce owned by Lucky Jordan (Rebel) and was going to make a change and drive his own car that he had built over the winter - I think the number was 83. I had done some of the welding for Bud. Bud was to later switch to Piscapo's 39 and Bud's brother in law Jack McLaughlin would drive the 83 in which he was killed in 1964 at Nazareth. I had a chance to run the duce for the Rebel and drove the car at Vineland. I drove it two times in June and two times in July. I also drove it at Flemington and Nazareth. I didn't do too bad at Flemington but had a little trouble with Nazareth. We parted ways in August and

I went back to Vineland and picked up a ride in Walt Tait's 07 for the last three races.

1962

I went back to running Vineland in the 07 owned by Walt Tait from National Park, N.J. same town I lived in. Walt's car was a Sportsman that meant one carburetor and limited to 305 cubic inches. You could run methanol, which produced more power and cooler engine temperatures. It was a pretty good running Sportsman and we won heats and most always in the top ten. At that time, they paid Sportsman money to the first three to finish and we collected first money many times and ended the year winning the Sportsman Championship.

At the same time I was running another car at Hatfield Speedway, the 444. This was the third track to be at Hatfield. The first one was a half mile dirt track and then a half mile asphalt and then they built a high bank third of a mile dirt track.

In all my years of driving I never had as many things happen as I did with this car. Wires would fall off linkage the same and all sorts of weird things. The one decent night we had the topside of the track was wet and you had to run the low side; it was like running a flat track. After the race started, there was a wreck and the race stopped. My linkage fell off the carburetor. They put it back on and lucky for us after the repair we were able to continue. Most of the drivers were used to the high banks and had trouble getting around, but I loved it. I was used to running flat tracks and made my way toward the front, I ended third for my best finish of the year. There were two features that night and I had to go to the rear of the pack for the second one. I came up through the pack and took the lead coming off the fourth turn and was going away when the jinx hit me again when the right rear spindle broke putting me out of the race. Little did I know the worst was yet to come. The following week we qualified for the feature and were running pretty well went down into the first turn and left off, only the accelerator stuck and we went in wide open hit the fence rolled over with the engine still running wide open oil going away from the bearings and blowing the motor. That finished the year for us. For the whole season I only finished four races with this car I was glad the season was over.

## 1963

Back to Vineland with the 07. We were running pretty well except for the carter carburetor we were using. When you went down into the corner and started to come off, it would sputter a little bit. Walt worked on it every week but couldn't get it out. Every Friday night we were at Vineland and started running Flemington on Saturday night. You could almost bet you would be in a wreck at least once every four weeks. Flemington was a narrow racetrack and our luck there wasn't the greatest. About midway through the year Walt bought a Holley carburetor that was already set up for methanol. He paid \$50 for it and we paid for it the first night by running fourth in the feature. What an improvement, we were jumping off the corners. Vineland was a lot better for us as we finished in the top five and top tens and winning quite a few heat races along the way. We ended the year winning the Sportsman title again. The one-mile track at Langhorne had a 100 lapper every year and Walt did not take his car there. Joe Table had the 1sr with a Chevy engine in a Studebaker body that he ran at Vineland with Bunkie Higbe as the driver. Joe had asked me if I would drive the car at Langhorne and I said yes. On the Saturday before the race you had to qualify and there would be well over a hundred cars trying to get in the race. We turned a lap in the 37-second range that put us in the race about 15<sup>th</sup> starting position. On the day of the race they had a non-qualifiers race and the top two cars could get into the 100 lapper. The main race started and we were running pretty good, nose to tail with Jack McLaughlin and Will Cagle. We ran that way for about 40 laps and we started to develop a heating problem. I pulled into the pits and to put water in you had to take the hood off wasting valuable time and we tried to run with the hood off and the tech man stopped us and we had lost two laps so we just parked the car and had a disappointing finish to the year.

## 1964

A new year was starting and Walt built a new Ford engine for the car. As I said before we were allowed 305 cubic inches in the Sportsman division and we ended up with 304.

To get this Walt had to buy a brand new 292 block that had not been honed out and put a 312ci crankshaft which had a longer

stroke and that gave us the 304. This car was a real runner and we were giving the Modifieds a fit. We could jump off the corners if we had the inside track. We started running Wall on Saturday nights and we ran well up there.

One night at Vineland we were running in the feature and we caught up with another sportsman driven by Bob Trout. He could run me down the chute and then lock his brakes up blocking the inside. This really upset me because I had a sneaking suspicion he was running a 327 Chevy, which was illegal in a sportsman and if he would put his foot in it he would not slow me down. After the race I protested and they put the tube on his car and found him illegal, then they check my car and said we had 308ci and we were illegal. We disputed that and offered to pull a head so they could measure the bore and stroke. We did and we were found to have 304ci, which made us legal.

We went to Wall the next night. We finished first Sportsman and somebody protested us and we pulled the head and were found legal again. We went on to have a fine year except for the last race at Vineland where we blew the engine. It was the only race that we did not finish all year but we still won the Sportsman Championship at Vineland. Joe Table asked me again to drive his car at Langhorne this year. He still had the Studebaker body with the Chevy power. We again qualified and started running well in the race. We were following Rags Carter in Harold Copes # 1 When he blew a right front tire and hit the outside rail braking part of and sending it across the track and I hit it taking the front end out of my car and that ended our day and year.

#### 1965

A new track was opening up, East Windsor Speedway, a half mile dirt track. We took the 07 up there and found it to our liking. I was in the first heat race and started fifth. In two laps I was leading and going away I won with straight away lead. When it came time for the feature, they had me in the seventh starting spot and Elton went up and raised cain saying I would win from there so they started me 13<sup>th</sup> behind a lot of modifieds. I had a little bit of trouble getting through but I still managed to end up fourth and first Sportsman. I beat Elton and that made me feel a little better.

We were still running Vineland and going to Flemington on

Saturday nights. The cars on the asphalt were getting quicker because of advancements in suspension and car design. They were being made a lot lower with less wind resistance, while we still ran a full size humpback 37 ford sedan. Some of the cars even had offset engines that made for better handling. Wally Dallenbach had a car with full torsion bar suspension almost set up like a sprint car. While walking through the pits one day I passed Herb Vails car. Herb was the son of Bill Vail who had promoted Alcyon Speedway. He had a good-looking car, a 37 ford flat back sedan that was lowered. I noticed that he was square in the back, meaning he had two tires the same size on the rear. That will cause you to push the front end going through the corners. With a smaller left rear tire it helps the car turn. He thanked me and I went over to Walt's car to get ready for our heat race. Herb came over and asked me if I would try his car in a heat race. He was in a different heat than us. I took his car out and ran second in the heat and he was happy. I went out in our heat with the 07 and the engine was missing and I did not qualify. Walt could not cure the problem in time for the conci so we decided not to run. Herb came over a little while later and asked me if I would drive his car in the feature and I said "yes". I did not run that great because the car wanted to come around, meaning there wasn't enough weight on the left rear. The handling can be changed with jacking bolts but not while you're running. Herb had a guy that did the set ups on the car and I didn't think he was doing a good job but it wasn't my car.

About two weeks later we were running Vineland and the exhaust headers cracked. I went over to Walt's house on Saturday morning to weld them back together so we could run Flemington that night. I worked on them for about four hours and finally finished when Walt said he wasn't going to run Flemington that night. I was a little upset and I decided to make a change. I called Herb during the following week and asked to drive his car and he said "yes". There wasn't too much of the season left and we fished fairly well, but handling was still a problem.

1966

Over the winter the fellow that was in charge of setting the car up made a demand for more percentage of what the car made. I told Herb to let him go and we would set the car up by ourselves. Best move we ever made - come to find out the other guy was doing

every thing backwards. With a little experimenting on our part we had the car handling better than it ever had before. I am not going to mention his name because he might still be alive and I will embarrass him.

Vineland was closed, so we ran East Windsor on Friday nights and Flemington on Saturday nights, Herb as the owner and my son Steve as pit crew and we were a great team. They had upped the cubic inches for sportsman to 330ci that let us run a 327 Chevy, which gave us a little better chance running against the Modifieds. Some of the Modifieds were now running the 427 Chevys and the big block Fords.

It is a little hard to remember every race but every once in a while something will trip my memory and bring some race to mind that I had forgotten.

We heard they were going to have a race during the Harrington Fair located in Harrington Delaware It was mostly a horse track but they would run one race a year during the fair. When we arrived I was surprised how many cars had showed up. There were cars from Jersey, Pennsi, Maryland and Delaware. In the warm ups we found that the track was a little sandy making it hard to get a bite. I like that because it gave the sportsman cars an advantage. With less power and the right gear we could get a better bite coming off the corners. We qualified in the heat race and had a decent starting position. As the race progressed Jackie Hamilton got the lead in the #6 sportsman and I was in fourth. With ten laps to go I got into second and chased after Jackie. At five laps to go I caught him coming off the fourth turn, I got under him and pulled a head going down the straightaway. Going down the backstretch I was still leading, going into the third turn Jack was by my right rear wheel and he turned left hitting my left rear and took both of us into the fence, of coerce I was a little upset. I had passed him clean and he could not return the favor, They had a restart but we could not make it, the tie rod was bent and we did not have the time to straighten it. To say the least it was a frustrating ride home. Lucky for us all our races that year did not end up that bad, we had quite a few top finishes.

#### 1967

Over the winter, Herb made a change to the engine. I think he put a new roller cam in but he wouldn't tell me. He said just drive it and I did. This thing was really potent and we were leading a lot of features and finishing real well. One night we jumped out into the lead and held on for five restarts and

finally the Modifieds caught us and we ended up third. Another night the track was wet and we were back in the pack. The Modifieds couldn't get a bite but I did and I came up through the pack like gangbusters. I was going around Gil Hearne on the outside. Billy Osmun dove under Gil, slid in the mud that was on the bottom of the track and drove Gil up into me and put me into the fence. The car hit the fence so hard that it bent right at the firewall. Of course that put us out of the race. The way we were running we would have won that race except by a stupid move by another driver.

With the car back in the garage we put it on jack stands from the firewall back and I used a rose bud torch to heat up the frame and drop it back in place. It worked and I then welded braces from the front of the frame back to the roll bars which would stop the same thing from happening again. It was late and I had to get to bed - we were racing the next night at Flemington. I came back the next day and Herb and my son Steve had worked on the car all night but to no avail. The carburetor was flooding and we could not fix it. They were dead tired and I said the hell with it we would just miss the race that night.

A couple of weeks later we were at East Windsor and had won our heat race. The feature was going well: after about fifteen laps Al Tasnady was leading, I was second and Pee Wee Griffith was coming up thru the pack, got by me and was on Al's bumper. He then hit Al in the rear and spun him out. Pee Wee stopped his car, jumped up on Al's hood and started beating his chest he was a real idiot. Al had touched him earlier in the race and he wanted to get even. Tex Enright was the flagman and he put both of them to the back of the pack with four laps to go. On the restart I was on the pole with Bill Brown in a Modified starting behind me. Coming down for the green flag I did a little brake check on the fourth turn that gave me jump-start. I pulled out to a five-car length lead and held it to the finish and won the race. I know I caught a break when Al and Pee Wee went to the back, but that's the way the cookie crumbles I still enjoyed it and so did Herb and Steve Jr. We were running well at Flemington. They had widened the track so you had more room to get around. The first night after it had been widened, we were leading the heat and they had a restart. I stuck to it and promptly broke an axle. They waited for us to replace the axle, but we couldn't get one piece out so they started without us. That meant we had to run the Conci. I started thirteenth and noticed nobody was running the outside, so to the outside I went and ended up winning the race and that gave us the

privilege of starting sixteenth in the feature. We worked our way through the pack and ended up fourth a great finish after a bad start.

They had a 100 lapper at Flemington and we had checked with the pit steward the week before about using a second tank and he said it would be ok. We qualified in our heat and were going around for the start in the feature and they stopped it and pulled us out for running two tanks. I went to the NASCAR official and vented my frustration to no avail. He said if I wanted to protest it would cost me \$100 and I told him where he could stick it. We were at East Windsor the following week running second in the feature right on the leader's tail. I stated sliding on one of the corners and the car slowed down. I checked the oil and temperature and everything seemed ok. I then pulled in the infield and found that the lower hose to the radiator had come off and the engine was cooking. From that day on we started bending push rods and it ruined the rest of the year. Near the end of the year, Herb had bought the 444 that had driven at Hatfield and he parked it in his garage.

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Over the winter, Herb was building a new car - a 36 Chevy sedan with two springs on the rear. We had been used to single spring front and back, it was a beautiful car with a Modified engine by Sonny Dornberger. It wasn't ready for the beginning of the season and he had sold the 444 to somebody in Pitman, NJ. That person wanted me to drive the car till Herb's was ready, but I said no and went fishing down the Chesapeake instead. When the car was finished we took it to East Windsor and had trouble getting a bite coming off the corners. At Flemington it wasn't too bad. We had run second in the heat and running good in the feature but got involved in a wreck and bent the tie rod putting us out. Back at East Windsor, I couldn't get a bite again and while I was on the track Herb had said something about my driving and my son told me on the way home. I called Herb at home. It was two in the morning. I told him to get another driver. I put my 12ft boat on the roof of the car and went fishing.

P.S. I found out thru the grapevine that Herb had the wrong springs on the car that is why we could not get a bite on the track.

#### THE END!

As my career in racing ended I started fishing down at the Chesapeake Bay and I am still at it in 2006. I had a good time racing. I didn't get rich but I ended up winning 6 Track Championships, 42 features in 16 different cars and over 150 heat races. Cars that I drove and won features with the first time I put them on the track were the ½ at Vineland, the 01 at Atco, 160 At Pleasantville, 77 at Atco, 69 at Atco, 56 at Pleasantville, 779 at Pleasantville, 44 at Vineland, 44 at Wilmington, and the 44 at Hatfield.

I was inducted into The National Old Timers Hall Of Fame in 1999 and inducted into The Garden State Vintage Hall Of Fame in 2002.

There is a slide show of most of the cars I drove thru the years on a CD.