

MESSAGE FROM EMPA PRESIDENT DINO OBERTO

Greetings all!

Well we're approaching that final lap of the 2019 racing season and in doing so that means it's crunch time for the convention. With that said, we're looking forward to another great gathering with all of our members, honorees, presenters and invited guests ***the weekend of January 10-12 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in King of Prussia, Pa.***

As always I, along with Board of Directors, Earl Krause, Carol Houssock, Jeff Gromis and Karl Fredrickson, greatly appreciate everyone's support and dedication to our professional organization. All those involved with the convention, from the Board and committee members, have done a great deal of work in preparing for the 2020 event. This convention is a big part of what EMPA is all about and we encourage everyone to attend and enjoy three great days of informative socializing amongst our peers.

In this newsletter we are asking that ***EVERYONE*** please return their **Award and Hall of Fame** ballots and **weekend attendance choices** no later than **Monday, December 16.**

As mentioned in a previous email, this year you will need to print out the ballot, convention attendance sheet, and membership application. If you haven't renewed your membership you have the option of doing so online by going to speedwayillustrated.com, clicking on the Press tab and then EMPA Membership. Or use this link

https://store.speedwayillustrated.com/products/spring-2019-cc-racer?_pos=1&_sid=0e8271cfd&_ss=r

Return to me by mail to **Dino Oberto, 211 Columbus Avenue, Hazle Township, PA 18202;**

OR scan them and return to me via email to **dlmo@ptd.net.**

The goal here is to make this process less of a financial burden on the organization, and to make it easier on all of you. And remember, your EMPA membership card is your ticket to the convention.

There are two guest programs available. A \$100 guest fee will cover their entire weekend. However, if your guest(s) wish to come with you but only attend Saturday's Cocktail Party and Hall of Fame dinner the cost is just \$65 per person. Your guest is always welcome in our two hospitality rooms. ***We need to know which events you'll be attending and your choice of dinner on Saturday night. Tickets are required for all meals.*** If you don't fill out your form, you won't be able to be added at the last minute. We must give a proper count to the hotel.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

The awards mean a great deal to those who were nominated so please give your choices appropriate consideration, then get your votes in before the deadline so they can be counted in a timely manner and we can contact the winners to make proper arrangements. Voting can become very close so please know that your vote carries a great deal of weight. ***You must be a paid up member to vote for awards, receive awards and enter our writing, video or photography contests.***

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

Don't forget to identify yourself as an EMPA member when reserving your room, as the Crowne Plaza credits identified rooms to our total. The rooms will then count towards our getting free use of the facilities for the various EMPA events.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel is located at 260 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

Please reserve your room by December 15. \$92.00 is the room rate if you mention "Eastern Motorsport Press Association". Hotel front desk number is 610-265-7500.

As always, we ask members *not* to show up at the convention without advance notice or without renewing your membership. Bad weather sometimes leads to some last minute cancellations and we have managed in the past to fit everyone in, but it is unfair to ask the convention committee to do that when they have other duties to attend to. Don't count on the weather to make it work in your favor! Attendance for members is covered with your renewal.

We have a number of very gracious sponsors and without them it would not be possible to stage an event of this scope.

Please make sure to join us Saturday after lunch to for our keynote speaker, award winner motorsports author **Mark "Bones" Bourcier.**

Contest Deadlines:

Deadlines for the writing and video contests are running out so get those entries in ASAP! Photographers, please get involved in the peer-judged Howie and Mary Hodge Memorial photo competition early Saturday morning. All rules are on www.empaonline.org.

As always, I'm available at (570)-401-8168 if you have questions or last minute developments that need addressing.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the convention, Dino

Hall of Fame

SAM POSEY (lock-in, no vote needed)

Born May 5, 1944 in New York he has lived most of his life near Lime Rock Park where he remains a legend. Starting in Formula Vee, Sam became one of America's best Road Racers with impressive results in the CAN-AM and Trans-Am Series driving for Roger Penske and Carrol Shelby.

He was a winner in The 24 Hours of Daytona and The 12 Hours of Sebring. He finished among the top five at Lemans a total of five times. In his first Indianapolis 500 in 1972 Sam took a solid fifth place finish and earned Rookie of the Year honors. Later that year by a drove in Formula 1.

While schooled in art, his accomplished writing has earned him an Emmy while his voice has kept him in the public eye since retiring from driving. After a long stint with ABC as a race analyst he has also been a part of both Fox and NBC Formula 1 coverage.

In 2013, the front straight at Lime Rock Park was renamed the Sam Posey Straight.

JOHN AND MILDRED MARCUM HALL OF FAME (lock-in, no vote needed)

John and Mildred Marcum are the co-founders of ARCA. John is a former NASCAR official who worked closely alongside NASCAR founder Bill France Sr.

In 1953 the Marcum's created the "Midwest Association for Race Cars" (MARC) in their hometown Toledo, Ohio. It was a regional stock car racing series, a Northern counterpart to NASCAR. The series raced slightly modified street cars.

The series was renamed "Automobile Racing Club of America" (ARCA) in 1964 when it began to race on superspeedways. France had contacted Marcum wondering if ARCA would want a race at the Daytona Speedweeks. Marcum jumped at the chance for national exposure.

The ARCA/NASCAR relationship continues today. The series frequently schedule events at the same track on the same weekend. ARCA is normally the Saturday support race to the Sunday NASCAR Cup event. Present day ARCA has become a major springboard for drivers looking to move into NASCAR. They are one of the most versatile series in the country as they race on superspeedways, short ovals, road courses and dirt tracks.

Today ARCA's President is the late John Marcum's grandson Ron Drager. Mildred Marcum was an integral part of the organization and worked both in the ARCA office on a regular basis until her death at 98 in 2012.

HALL OF FAME (vote for 4)

BOB ROSSELL

A pioneer race driver and builder of stock cars. Bob Rossell began his successful career in 1958 with just a Chevy stock car and an old engine. A few years later, he found himself at the top of the list with the biggest names in the Northeast dirt and pavement Modifieds!

Indeed, Bob was talented on both dirt and asphalt; and traveled to many tracks as a member of the All Star League from 1967-71. In his overall career he tallied nearly 50 wins between dirt and pavement; including two Garden State Classic 300-lap victories on the high-banked pavement of New Jersey's Wall Stadium. He also won on pavement in New Jersey at Old Bridge and the original quarter-mile New Egypt Speedway; and on dirt at New Jersey's East Windsor and Flemington; at Pa.'s Nazareth (half-mile and 1-1/8-mile) and N.Y.'s Orange County Fair Speedway.

His chassis building skills were considered by many to be one of the best, with driving greats such as Will Cagle, Ken Brenn and Leon Manchester having much success in Rossell-built Modifieds.

DAVE BLANEY

A native of Hartford, OH, Dave started driving for his dad in 1981. He would, over the years, become a major open wheel racer that saw him earn some impressive accomplishments.

World of Outlaws title in 1995, USCA Silver Crown title in 1984, a Knoxville National win in 1997 and induction to National Sprint Car Hall of Fame in 2014.

Another segment of his career came in NASCAR where he competed on the Cup, Busch, (Xfinity) and Truck levels with his best effort coming with a victory in the 2006 Busch Series Dollar General 300 at Charlotte.

The Blaney Family has contributed more to the sport, with his father, the late HoF racer Lou Blaney, brother Dale and now Dave's son Ryan has emerged as a rising star in the NASCAR Cup Series. The Blaney family owns and promotes the 3/8 mile Sharon Speedway in Ohio.

DAN LUGINBUHL

A member of the Penske Racing/Team Penske family since 1969, Dan Luginbuhl has been credited with practically inventing Auto Racing Public Relations in the United States and he is recognized throughout the world of motorsports for how he handled his responsibilities and for the manner in which he dealt with people.

Luginbuhl's face-to-face, behind-the-scenes, on-site work in Indy Car Racing, NASCAR, the Sports Car Club of America's Can-Am and Trans-Am Road Racing Series and Formula 1 brought him to the attention of countless drivers, crewmembers, team owners and media. And his efforts also included such singular projects as the creation of the old Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) which sanctioned the PPG Indy Car World Series from 1979-2003.

Now involved with Penske Corporation and Team Penske in special areas, Luginbuhl's Penske Racing Press Kits were the first of their kind; easy-to-use packages with information about the drivers, team and sponsors as well as black-and-white glossy photographs. And under his guiding hand, Penske Racing became the industry leader in American motorsports media relations, sponsorship and hospitality – a standard that continues today with Team Penske.

BOBBY MARSHMAN

Pottstown, PA born Bobby Marshman is the son of EMPA Hall of Fame promoter George Marshman.

In 1955 at age 19 Bobby bought his first Sprint Car and debuted with the United Racing Club (URC) at the Reading Fairgrounds. His steady performances earned him that season's Rookie of the Year. Two years later Bobby would finish second in points. At that same time he began running with the American Racing Drivers Club (ARDC). One of his highlights came in 1960 at Trenton Speedway where he collected top honors in the longest and richest Midget car race in the country, a 300-miler.

While honing his skills in open cockpit racing, Bobby had his sights set on someday strapping into an Indy Car with his main focus to race in the Indianapolis 500 and in 1961 he made his first start in the world famous race, starting 33rd and last and reeling in a very respectable 7th, completing all 200 circuits and sharing Rookie of the Race honors with Parnelli Jones. Twice he qualified on the front row. In the '64 race he was leading early on until a broken oil line dashed any hopes of victory.

Bobby would compete in Indy Cars through 1964, winning his lone race at Phoenix in 1962 driving for Lindsey Hopkins.

On November 27, 1964, while conducting tire tests at the Phoenix, his Lotus-Ford crashed into the west retaining wall and ruptured the fuel tank. First able to leave the wreck unassisted, he succumbed to his second and third degree burns six days later. Bobby was 28 years old.

The first Bobby Marshman Memorial race, which featured ARDC Midget cars, was promoted by George Marshman and held at Hatfield Speedway in June 1966.

He made one start with NASCAR, driving a Holman-Moody Ford in the 1964 Daytona 500 to a 16th place tally.

BOB MILLER

The involvement of Bob Miller in auto racing speaks volumes to his dedication to the sport, as an official, media director, race director and promoter.

He began working in 1974 at the Reading Fairgrounds Speedway as Race Official, Scorer and Assistant Program Editor. In 1978 he was hired by George Wingate at Bridgeport Speedway as an Official-Scorer, Race Director and Media & Public Relations director.

In 1983 and 1984 he became the Promoter of Bridgeport under the ownership of the Shivers Family. He also worked at the Glenn Donnelly promoted Super DIRT Week event in Syracuse as Media Relations, Scorer and Payoff.

He did Media Relations at Pocono Raceway for the Race of Champions under Joe Gerber. Was the Media Director/ Race Director for MODCAR, a traveling modified stock car series and for nearly 20 years was Media Director, Race Director & Club Officer of the United Racing Club (URC) Sprint Car Series, the country's oldest traveling Sprint Car club.

When URC celebrated their 50th season of Sprint Car racing Miller organized an event at the Knoxville (Iowa) Raceway, the first race of a continuing series now known as The Tournament of Champions, a nationally 360 Sprint Car racing event.

From 1986 to 2009 Miller held the successful Reading Racing Reunion & Car Show presented at the Fairgrounds Square Mall in Reading.

Perhaps his most noteworthy undertaking has been the hugely popular Thunder on the Hill at Grandview Speedway which he began in 1990 to the present.

This series features special events showcasing the World of Outlaws, DIRT Modifieds, 410 Sprints, Midgets and a wide variety of specials. In 2019 the series celebrated its 30th year and to date 137 events paying out over \$4.8 million dollars to competitors.

In 1999 Miller received the Best Specialty Promotion Event Award at Racing Promoter's Monthly (RPM) Workshops in Daytona, FL. He was a nominee for the 410 Sprint Promoter of the Year in Knoxville, Iowa. In 2001 he received the Checkered Flag Fan Club Bob Pouleson Award. He also received the Harry Johnson Founders Award from URC, was named 360 Sprint Promoter of the Year in 2003 and the National Race Organizer of the Year, presented by USAC in 2011.

FRANK RIO

For seven decades, and counting, car owner Frank Rio has been the patriarch of a PA-based family dirt Modified team. Indeed, his signature No. R-10 (as a salute to the "Rio" name) has been a mainstay in Eastern PA and New Jersey racing. In the mid-1980s, before embarking on a Hall of Fame Sprint Car career, Frank's son-in-law Fred Rahmer drove the R-10 Modified to many victories at PA's Grandview Speedway.

Frank and his late brother Pete originally had the No. 39 Modified, driven by greats like George Sleight, Dick Havens, Stan Ploski, Leon Manchester, Budd Olsen, Ed Pratt, Dizzy Dean and Jackie Evans.

In the 1970s, the Rio Modified became the now-familiar No. R-10 that Frank fielded with Terry Ebersole, Jerry Verona and Jack McCabe at NJ's East Windsor and Flemington; with its new driver Glen Fitzcharles winning features and titles.

In the years that have followed, Frank Rio and proud son Frank Jr. have fielded the No. R-10 for drivers Howie Cronce, Frank Cozze, Dave Blaney (at Syracuse), Meme DeSantis, Ricky Elliott, Darren McCaughey and Wade Hendrickson. By the way, Frank Rio is now 94-years YOUNG!

KEN SCHRADER

Ken Schrader began racing in 1971 as a 17-year-old at Lake Hill Speedway in Missouri and won the sportsman championship there in his first season. In the time since, he has become America's definition of a 'Real Racer' a term as coveted as it is attainable by anyone in the sport.

By 1980, Schrader was running USAC stock cars and was the rookie-of-the-year. In 1982 he won the USAC Silver Crown championship and was rookie of the year in sprint cars, taking that title in '83 when he also attempted to qualify for the Indianapolis 500. Only a deflated tire and destroyed race car stood in his way of joining the elite field of 33 on Memorial Day weekend.

Schrader spent three decades running at the highest levels of NASCAR competition running 763 races in the Cup series and winning four.

This past summer, he became the oldest, at 64, to earn the pole for an ARCA race.

Schrader has competed and won at nearly every track of significance in open wheel and stock car classes, such as Ascot, Eldora, Thunder Road, Syracuse, Salem, Winchester, Belleville, and Daytona. Schrader made it to the A-main at Knoxville (IA) the last year they ran without wings.

Along with decades of success, he's wrecked more than a few times, but has gone without public feuds. Despite countless car owners, from the most modest to the ultra-wealthy, Schrader has come and gone from rides, sponsorships, and sanctioning bodies without a trace of anyone left angry.

SAMMY BEAVERS

One of true fan favorites of the Northeast dirt big-block Modifieds from the 1960s through the mid-1990s.

At his "home" track, NJ's Flemington Speedway, he won 49 features between 1963 and 1982 (including two Flemington 200s and the 'Mike Grbac Memorial') and was 1971 Modified champion to go along with two Sportsman titles.

In Flemington's pavement era, he won a Late Model feature in 1992 and was division titlist. Also in NJ, he had 39 Modified wins at East Windsor and was its 1974 and 75 champion; took two features at Bridgeport; and won the first main event ever at Harmony Speedway.

Beavers was a 14-time Modified winner at PA's Nazareth Speedway and also had a win at NY's Orange County.

He drove for premier Modified owners such as the Grbac family (No. 7), Jim Fodor (No. 13), Jim Horton Sr. (No. 43), the Michael Brothers (No. 51m), Paul Popadiuk (No. 77) and John Norcia (No. 81).

While having a Hall of Fame race driving career, Beavers is also highly regarded for his dedication to NJ's Matheny School for Cerebral Palsied Children. In the early-1970s, he co-founded the annual winter auto racing benefit show that raised thousands of dollars for that school through the 1990s.

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR – ASPHALT (vote for 1)

MATT HIRSCHMAN

Matt Hirschman is again a candidate for the Richie Evans Northeast Driver of the Year.

As of this writing Hirschman has won 14 times at nine different tracks from Maine to Florida.

In typical style, as he has done in previous years when selected to the ballot, the asphalt Modified standout has produced an outstanding season, winning nearly half of the races he has entered. He is the overall top Northeast asphalt short track winner for 2019, an honor he has upheld the past several seasons.

His 2019 highlights include a record seventh Sunoco Race of Champions victory and fifth consecutive in the Nation's oldest Modified stock car race.

Hirschman also took top honors as Evergreen Raceway Modified champ for a track record fourth consecutive season. He also won Mahoning Valley Speedway's Octoberfest 150 for a record fourth time. He earned wins on the Tri-Track Series, PASS, SMRS, RoC Tour and ran very strong in select NASCAR Whelen Tour events.

In 34 starts he has 14 win, 24 top-3s, 28 top-5s and 29 top-10s. He will finish out his season at Wall Stadium's Turkey Derby.

JUSTIN BONSIGNORE

It was close again this year for the defending NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion, but Justin Bonsignore came up 8 points short of winning back-to-back titles.

Title aside, he produced yet another powerful season in the Ken Massa-owned #51 Chevrolet. The 31-year-old from Holtsville, NY led all competitors with 6 wins in the 16-race schedule.

His 2019 wins came at three different venues: Thompson Speedway (3), Riverhead Raceway (2) and Oswego Speedway (1). Justin tied series champ Doug Coby with 10 top-5 finishes and was second to him with 13 top-10's plus earned 2 poles.

DOUG COBY

The Milford, CT native is now a six-time National Champion of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour.

Since landing his first full-time ride in 2011, he's not gone winless nor finished outside the top-five in points (5th in 2011, 2nd 2013, and 3rd in 2018), has four titles in a row (2014-2017), and won more than 10% of the races he's entered (28 wins in 236 starts).

In 2019, Coby won 25% of the Whelen Modified Tour starts and completed 2616 of the 2617 laps run by the series.

JON McKENNEDY

From Chelmsford, MA, Jon McKennedy juggled his time and talent between the Tommy Baldwin-owned tour modified, his own modified, and the Vinal supermodified on the ISMA tour where he won two of his four starts (Lee in August and Thompson in October).

The win at Thompson was his first-ever at the speedway - despite winning at 19 others along the East coast over the years and came in his final start for the team with much difficulty as his father unexpectedly passed away only a few weeks before.

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR – DIRT (vote for 1)

MATT SHEPPARD

In 2019 Matt has put together another dominant dirt modified season in the Northeast. His 35 overall wins is second to none.

He finished second to Mat Williamson in the Super DIRTcar Series, coming up just 28 points behind. On the tour he won 8 times, had 15 top-5s and 18 top-10s in 22 starts and collected over \$91,000.

He scored 17 overall wins with DIRTcar in 2019. He has won seven of the last nine Mr. Dirt titles.

And, this year he has added another title to his amazing resume, claiming both the Short Track Super Series North and South Regions and repeated as American Racer Cup champion.

Sheppard won 5 times on the STSS Tour and earned over \$50,000.

MAT WILLIAMSON

The 29 year old St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada Dirt Modified talent proved to be the hottest driver of the last third of the 2019 racing campaign and collected his first Super DIRT Series Championship. He is the first Canadian to win the Super DIRTcar Series crown.

While competing in both, the Small Block (358) Modifieds and the Big Block Modifieds, Williamson accumulated 22 combined victories this season. Along with 7 wins at Merrittville Speedway and 3 wins at Ransomville, he also scored 4 Super DIRT Series victories (Lernerville, Brewerton, Mohawk and Oswego).

Although not competing for home track points in the 358 Mods, he scored a Series high 5 victories and finished three points out of second in the Series final point tally despite missing three races.

Williamson scored the Centennial 160 at Orange County Fair Speedway, collecting the largest winner's check (\$100,000) in Modified history.

As the 2019 campaign wound down, Williamson continued to be the picture of consistency with a spectacular Super DIRT Week run, winning at Utica-Rome on Tuesday, a 3rd-place finish at Weedsport on Wednesday and another win at Brewerton on Thursday night, leading into Super DIRT Weekend.

Williamson had a very successful 48th Annual Super DIRT Week at Oswego Speedway scoring the biggest win of his career in the Billy Whittaker Used Cars 200, taking the check worth \$50,000. He continued his most successful season of by collecting his milestone 100th career victory in winning the \$15,000 Eastern States 100 at Orange County Fair Speedway.

Heading to the World Finals at the Dirt Track at Charlotte, he set fast time in time trials, finished fourth on Friday night and locked up his career first Super DIRTcar Series title with a second place finish in Saturday night's season finale.

His final stats were 22 wins, 62 top five's and 74 top ten's in 83 starts.

MAX BLAIR

Max Blair of Centerville, Pa., continued to roll up Dirt Late Model victories in 2019 with his family-owned team, tallying 45 feature wins split between Super Late Model (28) and Crate Late Model (17) competition.

The 29-year-old dominated his weekly circuit of Stateline Speedway in Busti, N.Y., and Eriez Speedway in Hammett, Pa. — winning the Super and Crate points titles at both tracks and recording a combined 28 checkered flags between the two ovals —but he also won at 10 other tracks as well across both Late Model classes.

His richest scores were a \$10,000 World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model triumph (the second of his career) on Sept. 19 at Stateline and another 10-grand victory in the RUSH-sanctioned Bill Emig Memorial for Crates on June 22 at Lernerville Speedway in Sarver, Pa.

He also earned his second straight Zimmer's United Late Model Series championship (worth \$10,000) and the RUSH National Weekly and Summer Chase titles (worth \$8,000) and was the Northeast's winningest Super Late Model driver.

STEWART FRIESEN

From the high-banks of Daytona to victory lane in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series for his breakthrough triumph at Eldora, Stewart Friesen found national success while maintaining his competitive omnipresence in modified racing throughout the greater New York area.

Winning both the Hard Clay Open on Thursday, finishing 6th in the truck at Martinsville on Saturday, and then winning the Eastern States 200 after starting last is a weekend unlike any other racer in the entire sport.

Friesen won all spring and summer, too. Among his victories were thrilling last-lap passes of rivals Matt Sheppard and Brett Hearn.

His recent win in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series race at Phoenix punched his ticket in the championship finale at Homestead Miami Speedway.

AL HOLBERT MEMORIAL NATIONAL DRIVER OF THE YEAR (vote for 1)

KYLE BUSCH

In winning the season finale at Homestead Miami Speedway, Kyle Busch captured his second career NASCAR Monster Energy championship.

Busch emerged from the shadow cast by doubters who discounted the chances of the driver of the No. 18 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, who hadn't won a race in NASCAR's top series since the June event at Pocono Raceway.

Other than seven-time champion Jimmie Johnson, Busch is now the only active driver with more than one title. He is the first driver to win multiple titles under NASCAR's elimination Playoff format.

Busch was a five-time winner in 2019 and posted 17 top-5s, 27 top-10s and one pole. He gave car owner Joe Gibbs his fifth Cup championship.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN

In his eighth season with the NTT IndyCar Series Josef won his second Series' championship, giving legendary car owner Roger Penske an unprecedented 16th national IndyCar title.

The Henderson, TN native, who was also the 2017 champion, won four times, (St. Petersburg, Belle Isle 1, Texas and Iowa). He also earned two poles.

In his IndyCar career Newgarden has captured 14 wins, 11 coming with Team Penske. He was the 2011 Indy Light champion.

BRAD SWEET

Nicknamed the "Big Cat" Brad Sweet secured his first World of Outlaws championship – in the closest points battle in the Series' history by beating Donny Schatz by four points.

The Grass Valley, Calif. driver was on the championship stage with team owner Kasey Kahne, accepting his trophy and a \$150,000 check.

Sweet brought Kasey Kahne Racing its second WoO championship. The team won its first in 2013 with Daryn Pittman – now the second closest points battle in the Series history with Pittman edging Schatz for the title by 14 points. It's an accomplishment Kahne cherishes.

Sweet won a Series best 16 A-mains in 72 starts– including the Jackson Nationals and his second Kings Royal victory. It's the first time in seven years that someone other than Donny Schatz won the most races in a year. His final victory in 2019, at Lernerville Speedway, was his 50th career win. He also led the most laps of any driver – 425. He accumulated 47 top-five finishes – 31 of them podium finishes – and 65 top-10 finishes.

JOHN FORCE

While others in his age bracket have been lounging in their respective rocking chairs for years, John Force, at age 70, continues to terrorize the competition winning drag races.

Force, a 16-time NHRA Funny Car Champion and record holder of nearly every honor in drag racing history, continues to kick butt and take names driving his PEAK brands Chevy Camaro F/C while also running John Force Racing Team which includes the Funny Car of Robert Hight and Top Fuel teams of daughter Brittany Force and Austin Prock.

Now in his 43rd season of Funny Car racing, Force turned 70 years old in May and continues to reach new milestones, collecting his record 150th (Seattle) and 151st (Indianapolis) victories in 2019 along with five number one qualifier awards (Houston, Richmond, Bristol, St. Louis and Dallas).

Over the years following his first National event win in 1987 in Montreal, Force continued to rewrite the record books accumulating wins and Championships as a driver as well as a car owner.

Heading into the World Finals at Pomona, Force sat fourth position in the points chase as he tried to secure an unprecedented 17th NHRA Funny Car Championship. He ended the year in 4th place. He is the ONLY grandfather driving a 10,000 horsepower at nearly 340 MPH and not sitting on the porch in a rocking chair.

BRANDON SHEPPARD

At the age of 26, Brandon Sheppard authored arguably the best season in Dirt Late Model history in 2019. Driving the Rocket Chassis house car, the driver from New Berlin, Ill., clinched his second World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series championship in three years in a runaway, winning 18 times (tying the tour's single-season win record he already shared) and registering 37 top-five finishes in 39 starts (with two World Finals races at Charlotte still remaining on the schedule).

His WoO accolades include an unprecedented sweep of all four WoO A-mains run at Florida's Volusia Speedway Park during Speedweeks, the \$30,000 Prairie Dirt Classic in Fairbury, Ill., and two five-race win streaks. In 68 overall starts (through the end of October) with the No. 1 house car he had 56 top-five and 63 top-10 finishes (with just one DNF), plus he became the first driver in Dirt Late Model history to win three six-figure races in a single season (\$125,000 Dream at Eldora, \$101,626 Dirt Million at Mansfield, Ohio, and \$100,000 Dirt Track World Championship at Portsmouth, Ohio) and collected a fourth six-figure check for his \$100,000 WoO points title.

He won 27 times overall in '19 (including four Lucas Oil Late Model Dirt Series wins and two in Illinois with his family-owned car) and earned over \$900,000 while becoming the first driver to lead both national tours (WoO and Lucas Oil) in feature earnings.

CHRISTOPHER BELL

In 2019, this driver defined "Versatile!"

In his primary role, going into November he had won seven NASCAR Xfinity Series races in the No. 20 Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing and was leading in points. In September, Bell and race driver Chad Boat formed CB Industries. Under that banner, they fielded the No. 21 Mobil 1 Sprint Car for Bell to drive in World of Outlaws and national 410 events. In the team's first ever race last September 21, they won the Jim Ford Classic at Ohio's Fremont Speedway. The night before, Bell had won the Xfinity Series race at Richmond.

And, he began this year with his third victory in the Chili Bowl Midget Classic.

Next year, Bell will move to the NASCAR Cup level while driving the Leavine Family Racing No. 95 Toyota.

BRETT MOFFITT

Iowa native Brett Moffitt has been all-in on his racing career since he began as a teenager on the dirt tracks of his home state.

Now, a seasoned veteran of NASCAR competition at its highest levels, Moffitt experienced the thrill of triumph as the 2018 NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series champion in 2018 only to suffer the shock of losing his ride.

He reacted by finding a new team and manufacturer to drive for and by 2019's season twilight, he'd earned the most wins of any truck regular and topped the standings headed into the championship-determining rounds.

No matter what is going on in his nationally-acclaimed racing efforts, Moffitt returns to his dirt-track racing roots to be just another racer on the track whenever possible.

NEW ENGLAND RACE FUELS JOHN BLEWETT III MEMORIAL YOUNG GUN AWARD (*vote for 1*)

CHRISTIAN ECKES

At age 18, Christian Eckes became the youngest champion in ARCA series history. His slam-dunk, with a win in the Kansas finale and the championship, came in a hot battle with his teammate, Michael Self. Despite the close points battle, Eckes had actually run one less race than Self in 2019.

His first ARCA win came at age 18 while running a limited schedule, but in 2019 he earned a full-time with Venturini Motorsports. His 19 ARCA starts in their 20 races in 2019 resulted in 4 wins, 13 top-5's, 17 top-10's and the championship.

In 2019 he also ran a limited schedule for Kyle Busch Motorsports (KBM) in the NASCAR Gander Outdoor Truck Series, where he had 2 poles and 2 top-five finishes in 7 races. His 3rd place finish in the Homestead finale locked up the owner's title for KBM and he was named the full-time driver in the KBM #18 truck for 2020.

From Middletown, NY, Christian started racing an INEX Bandolero at Bethel (NY) Motor Speedway at age 10. At 13 he moved up to an INEX Legends car where he finished 2nd in the nation in the Young Lions division. He then moved up to Late Models at age 15 and in 2016 ended the year by winning the prestigious Snowball Derby, the Myrtle Beach Classic and the Thanksgiving Classic.

TYLER THOMPSON

If motorsports enthusiasts didn't know Tyler Thompson in June, when he graduated from High School, they surely do now.

In August the 17 year-old became the youngest Supermodified winner Oswego Speedway history. He went on to set the track record during the annual Classic weekend and rocked the Supermodified world when he dominated and won the 63rd Budweiser International Classic. That win rewarded him the \$15,000 top prize along with numerous contingencies.

His performance on the fast 5/8-mile was stunning as he led 189 of the 200 laps. The Oswego Classic is the richest and widely regarded as the most prestigious Supermodified race in the US.

AUSTIN BEERS

16-year old Austin Beers of Northampton, PA, son of pavement Modified standout Eric Beers, is continuing a family legacy in Northeast short track racing and in the process is making quite a name for himself as a formidable driver who has thus far shown plenty of talent along the way, much of which was handed down by his dad.

In 2019 Austin notched his third consecutive championship, taking top honors in the Sportsman Modified division at Evergreen Raceway. The previous two seasons he was the titlist at Mahoning Valley Speedway in the Hobby Stocks and Sportsman Modifieds respectively. Impressive to say the least for a young kid who at the time wasn't even old enough to own a driver's license.

During 2018 Austin had made a handful of starts in the full Modified division, basically with the intent to gain experience and get laps but like all his previous endeavors he proved to be a quick study. At the season ending Octoberfest at Mahoning he nearly pulled off one of the biggest upsets in track history when he came oh-so-close to winning the 150-lap race before yielding to eventual winner Matt Hirschman with six laps to go.

In 2019 the emphasis was to concentrate on the full Modifieds while also taking in Sportsman Modified shows at Evergreen.

At Evergreen, the results on July 19 made people stop and take notice. In the first of twin-25 lap features, Austin scored his career first Modified win and did so against a stellar field of seasoned veterans.

On the Sunoco Race of Champions Tour he did a fine job each time out although it would be at the Race of Champions 250 that his stock rose yet again with an impressive top five finish. By season's end he was the highest ranked rookie on the tour.

CHRIS ECONOMAKI MEMORIAL NEWS MAKER OF THE YEAR (*no vote needed*)

ROGER PENSKE/TEAM PENSKE

Last year Roger Penske's Team Penske won its 500th major automobile race since it was formed in 1966 and this year it added to the record books three national titles, its 18th victory in the Indianapolis 500 and it is in the hunt for the NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series title.

Penske has won an unmatched 16 Indy Car Racing National Championships (1977-1979, 1981-1983, 1985, 1988, 1994, 2000-2001, 2006, 2014, 2016-2017 and 2019) with Josef Newgarden claiming the 2019 NTT IndyCar Series Championship in the black, white and red No. 2 Hitachi/Team Penske Chevrolet. And this triumph was actually a 1-2 finish as second place went to Simon Pagenaud in the yellow and red No. 22 Menards/Team Penske Chevrolet.

Another team highpoint took place at Indianapolis on May 26 as Pagenaud won a record-extending 18th Indianapolis 500 (1972, 1979, 1981, 1984-1985, 1987-1988, 1991, 1993-1994, 2001-2003, 2006, 2009, 2015 and 2018-2019) for car owner Penske as Penske Racing/Team Penske celebrated 50 years (1969-2019) of competing in "The Greatest Spectacle In Racing."

In a change of pace, Team Penske returned to Endurance Racing in the 2018 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Juan Pablo Montoya and Dane Cameron won the 2019 IMSA title with their red and white No. 6. Acura ARX-05 Daytona Prototype International entry.

While in the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship 2018 winner Scott McLaughlin defended his driving crown with his red, white and yellow No. 17 Shell V-Power Ford Mustang to give Team Penske/Dick Johnson Racing three-straight (2017-2019) team championships.

At this writing, the 2019 NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series Championship is yet to be determined. But the Team Penske Ford Mustangs of 2018 Champion Joey Logano (No. 22 Shell-Pennzoil), Ryan Blaney (No. 12 Dickies/Menards) and 2012 Champion Brad Keselowski (No. 2 Discount Tire/Miller Lite) are making a strong bid for Team Penske's third NMECS title.

Penske also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom – the nation's highest civilian award – from President Donald Trump on October 24 in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, D.C.; an honor bestowed upon him in recognition of his career-long efforts in international motorsports, global business operations and his community-service efforts on behalf of the City of Detroit.

And if all of that isn't enough, on November 4 it was announced that the board of directors of the Hulman Company entered into an agreement to be acquired by Penske Corporation. And under the agreement, Penske Entertainment – a subsidiary of Penske Corporation – will acquire all the principal assets of Hulman & Company, including the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the NTT IndyCar Series, and the IMS Productions.

PROMOTION EFFORT OF THE YEAR (*vote for 1*)

Brett Deyo/Short Track Super Series

In 2019 Brett Deyo was one of if not the busiest promoter in motor sports. His hands were full in running the ever growing Short Track Super Series, Georgetown Speedway in Georgetown, DE and Fonda Speedway in Fonda, NY. Founded by Deyo in 2014 the Bob Hilbert Sportswear Short Track Super Series Fueled By Sunoco continues to break new ground in dirt Modified racing as a manageable program for big- and small-block Modifieds.

Under his leadership the STSS sustained amazing crowds and car counts at all those events.

And Deyo has been instrumental in the boost of weekly promotions at Georgetown and Fonda where the gates, both grandstands and pits, have seen spikes in attendancesince his taking the reins at both popular dirt tracks.

Orange County Fair Speedway Centennial

One hundred years of automobile racing was celebrated at Orange County Fair Speedway over August 15-17, culminating with the running of the Centennial Celebration 160 for big-block Modifieds, a race that paid \$100,000 to the winner.

An estimated \$400,000 was doled out to competitors over three days of racing, landmark figures so compelling that most every Dirt Modified track in the northeast either shut down or lessened their intended schedules.

As a bonus, the Centennial 160 was an intense, gripping contest laden with drama and late race intrigue.

Northeast Asphalt Collaboration

Only Bobby Webber Jr., who slid into a more prominent role at Star Speedway in New Hampshire after his father's passing and their family's selling of Hudson (NH) Speedway, had much experience in race promotion.

Youthful Ben Bosowski purchased Hudson while Norm Wrenn and his son Norm Wrenn III bought Lee and Monadnock from their respective owners after decades at the helm.

Meanwhile in Claremont, a relatively recent owner sold to a collaboration between Bosowski and Wrenn.

The three promotional teams have been working to homogenize the rules in a fiercely independent region. For the first time in decades, a race car here is a race car there. Teams are enjoying new found opportunities to race more while spending less and being competitive all while inter-track series and specials are available. Occasional rule confusion has led to some growing pains, but by season's end, pits were filling, grandstands looked healthy, and season-ending specials were hotly contested.

JUNIE DONLAVEY SPIRIT OF THE SPORT (*vote for 1*)

KENNY WALLACE

Youngest of the St. Louis area legendary racer Russ Wallace's three sons, Kenny has followed in the tracks of his brothers Rusty and Mike (oldest) since the day he was born.

From crewing Rusty's ASA cars to driving them himself before making over 900 starts in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, Xfinity, and Gander Outdoor Truck Series and nine victories (all in Xfinity), Kenny Wallace earned his way to the top of the racing world.

Never content to sit still, Wallace enjoyed a robust, decades-long career as a racing analyst and host of the most-popular racing television shows and live broadcasts.

A little over a decade ago, Wallace returned to his dirt-track racing roots and has been exceptionally humble about his own on-track success while bringing a national spotlight on the incredible talent racing at local tracks all across the country each week.

A win in the inaugural Prelude to the Dream, Tony Stewart's annual charity event at Eldora, remains a personal highlight as has the many triumphs he's enjoyed at tracks all across the United States.

This year, Kenny realized he had to give-up being one of the following: a good family man, television personality, or racer. He chose to end his television career.

BOB MARLOW

The “Voice of the TQ Midgets,” New Jersey native Bob Marlow has been devoted to our sport as an announcer, journalist and all-around “good will ambassador” since his teen years in the 1960s.

His father, Dick Marlow, was the founder of NJ’s legendary “Home of the TQs” Pine Brook Speedway and later its announcer for many years.

When Dick retired from that role due to illness, young son Bob took to the microphone there and for the touring ATQMRA TQ Midget Series in the 1970s. Bob also began writing results and a column for Area Auto Racing News; and expanded his announcing to include the original winter Indoor TQ Series at Atlantic City, NJ; and the ARDC and USAC Midgets.

When Len Sammons brought back winter Indoor Racing to Atlantic City and other arenas, Bob became the series announcer. Although by his choice no longer the “lead” on the mic for the Indoor Races, he provides in-depth historical perspective and race analysis on the event announcing staff; and is also on the mic for various outdoor TQ Midget events.

Most-importantly, Bob Marlow continues to offer a positive view and “spirit of our sport” and is a guiding influence to new members of the media and racing participants.

CHRISTOPHER ROY

Christopher Roy proudly served as a Marine until he suffered a stroke. While he can no longer live his dream job of defending the nation he loves, Roy turned his focus on the pursuit of his other great passion - auto racing photography.

Unlike other track and publication shooters, Roy is often forced to wait until lingering effects from his stroke subside, mainly his hands grow steady enough to take a photo.

Those who don’t know him have a confused look on their face while the photographer before them bobs and weaves which sometimes lead Roy to smile and offer a bit of explanation by calmly saying, “Brain injuries suck.”

The photos he takes bear no indication of the extraordinary effort he has to put in nor does he make excuse or apology, Christopher Roy simply goes to the track and produces images that are as beautiful and timeless as anyone else.

Drivers and teams who are accustomed to Roy and his work happily wait moment or two because they know his work is worth it.

ERNIE AND MARILYN SAXTON EMPA SERVICE AWARD (vote for 1)

Karl Fredrickson
Joe Kaminski

JIM HUNTER MEMORIAL WRITER OF THE YEAR (vote for 1)

Ted Schmidt
Mike Adaskeveg
J.A. Ackle
Jeremy Elliott
Steven Ovens

ACE LANE SR., MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR (vote for 1)

Duane Canfield
Rich Corbett
Walt Smith
Harry Meeks
Rick Neff

BOARD SEAT (please vote for (1) one only if you CANNOT attend the convention)

Jeff Gromis	Dave Moulthrop	Mel Thomas	Robin Ervin
Pete MacDonald	Greg Gage	Dick Ayers	

REMEMBER -

2020 EMPA PRESS CONVENTION FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JANUARY 10-12 CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, KING OF PRUSSIA, PA 260 Mall Boulevard --- King of Prussia, PA 19406 Phone: 610-265-7500

RESERVE YOUR ROOM TODAY! Cost \$92 per night. Call there directly at 610-265-7500 or reserve through our web-link at www.empaonline.org. Check-in is at 3 PM. Check-out is at 11 AM.

Deadline For EMPA Special Price – December 15, 2019

NOTE: The above room rate is valid through December 15, 2019 or as long as the hotel has rooms available. After December 15, 2019 the rate will increase to the normal rate. Do not delay!

Reservation code: "EASTERN MOTORSPORTS PRESS ASSOCIATION"

Ballot is on the next page!

EMPA HALL OF FAME – **(VOTE FOR 4)**

- BOB ROSSELL
- DAVE BLANEY
- DAN LUGINBUHL
- BOBBY MARSHMAN
- BOB MILLER
- FRANK RIO
- KEN SCHRADER
- SAMMY BEAVERS

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR - *ASPHALT* **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- MATT HIRSCHMAN
- JUSTIN BONSIGNORE
- DOUG COBY
- JON MCKENNEDY

RICHIE EVANS MEMORIAL NORTHEAST DRIVER OF THE YEAR – *DIRT* **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- MATT SHEPPARD
- MAT WILLIAMSON
- MAX BLAIR
- BRAD SWEET
- STEWART FRIESEN

AL HOLBERT MEMORIAL NATIONAL DRIVER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- JOSEF NEWGARDEN
- JOHN FORCE
- BRANDON SHEPPARD
- CHRISTOPHER BELL
- BRETT MOFFETT

JOHN BLEWETT III YOUNG GUN AWARD PRESENTED BY NEW ENGLAND FUELS **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- CHRISTIAN ECKES
- TYLER THOMPSON
- AUSTIN BEERS

PROMOTION EFFORT OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- BRETT DEYO/SHORT TRACK SUPER SERIES
- ORANGE COUNTY FAIR SPEEDWAY CENTENNIAL
- NORTHEAST ASPHALT COLLABORATION

JUNIE DONLAVEY SPIRIT OF THE SPORT **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- KENNY WALLACE
- BOB MARLOW
- CHRISTOPHER ROY

ERNIE AND MARILYN SAXTON EMPA SERVICE **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- KARL FREDRICKSON
- JOE KAMINSKI

JIM HUNTER MEMORIAL WRITER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- TED SCHMIDT
- MIKE ADASKEVEG
- J.A. ACKLEY
- JEREMY ELLIOTT
- STEVE OVENS

ACE LANE, SR. MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR **(VOTE FOR 1)**

- DUANE CANFIELD
- RICH CORBETT
- WALT SMITH
- HARRY MEEKS
- RICK NEFF

CONVENTION ATTENDANCE SHEET

Please fill in the events you plan to attend and return this form to Dino
NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 16, 2019

ALL EVENTS WILL BE PLANNED USING ONLY THOSE
RESERVATIONS MADE VIA THIS FORM.
TICKETS WILL BE ISSUED FOR ALL MEALS!
MEAL TICKETS WILL BE ISSUED AT REGISTRATION
GUEST FEES:

_____ \$100.00 (Good for entire weekend - all meals)
_____ \$ 65.00 (Saturday NASCAR Hall of Fame Dinner ONLY)

PLEASE REMIT YOUR GUEST FEES WITH FORM.
ADDITIONS CAN NOT BE MADE AT CONVENTION.
NUMBER ATTENDING EVENT:

HOSPITALITY ROOM - Friday, January 10 _____

Dover Speedway Breakfast - Sat., January 11 _____

NASCAR Luncheon - Saturday, January 11 _____

NASCAR Hall of Fame Dinner
Please check one for each attendee)
() Prime Rib _____
() Chicken _____

Breakfast And Election Meeting
Sunday, January 12 _____

Name _____

Guest Name _____

Guest fee must be enclosed with this form.
Hospitality rooms will be open Friday and Saturday night.

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED
NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 16, 2019.

EMPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION
ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR JANUARY 2020
PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS ONLY

If you WILL NOT ATTEND THE CONVENTION, please cast your vote below and then sign your name at the bottom. Members attending the January convention will vote in person.

Please vote for ONE (1) of the candidates below for a one-year term on the Board.

- _____ Jeff Gromis
- _____ Dave Moulthrop
- _____ Mel Thomas
- _____ Robin Ervin
- _____ Pete MacDonald
- _____ Greg Gage
- _____ Dick Ayers

Signature: _____

EMPA Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip

Home Tel : _____ BusinessTel: _____

E-Mail Address _____ Cell Phone: _____

Media Affiliation & Their Address: _____

Tel. of Media Affiliation: _____

Length of Time with them _____

Position _____

Please Check One:

Daily ____ Weekly ____ Monthly ____ Radio ____ TV ____ Internet ____ Other ____

Please Check One:

Part Time _____ Full Time _____

Type of Membership:

Professional _____ Associate _____ Corporate _____

Renewal _____ New _____

Cost of Membership

Professional - \$50.00 Per Year

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Corporate - \$250.00 Per Year

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