

AUTOMOBILE RACING ADVENTURES

By Dale P. Danielski

Big Oil and Congress. Big Oil blames Congress for the inability to explore and add refining capabilities, while Congress complains of price gouging and insane profits. It's the battle that has gone on for 25 years now and as usual it is Joe Average consumer that pays the price.

What's this got to do with racing? A lot, in that many teams are cutting back substantially at when and where they race due to high fuel prices. Those that follow the sport, as in you and me, are also becoming choosier as the cost to get to these events has doubled since last season. A number of drivers that I have spoken with are cutting back their schedules from two or three nights a week of racing to just one. And that one is the closest to home. With fuel prices over \$4.00/gallon for both gas and diesel it's nothing to spend well over \$150 just to get to the race venue of choice. And weekly show travel is certainly much less than those racing a Series or Tour as hundreds of miles can be traveled to compete in those events. Americans are used to gas being cheaper by at least half than anywhere else in the World. It has for the most part been that way as long as anyone can remember. The consensus is that we should be able to regulate better to keep energy costs down, even though, if you look through the years, with inflation figured in as it is with other commodities, the cost of fuel would be closer to \$7.00/gallon. So what is the solution? Get the value of the dollar back where it needs to be and much improvement will occur. The money we earn from the companies we work for will go that much further for all of us. We aren't experts here, but hopefully something positive happens here and soon before we find ourselves handling daily duties on scooters or even bicycles.

Speaking of close to home it was off to the 18 mile round trip La Crosse Fairgrounds Speedway of West Salem, WI for an evening of NASCAR Late Model, Sportsman and Thunderstox racing. Just short of 90 cars participated during the night with Brent Kirchner blowing away the competition in the 25 lap Late Model Feature. Kirchner led every lap of the main and was never threatened the entire way. Following Kirchner at the stripe was fast qualifier Steve Carlson, Tim Nelson, Mike Carlson, Jeff Baker, Shawn Pfaff, Tom Thill, Emily Sue Steck, Todd Oliver and Tyler Reedy. Sportsman action found Jes Tenner in victory lane after 15 laps of main event action. Tenner bided his time and made the winning move with 6 laps left in the race. Tenner is notorious for setting quick time but has struggled to find victory lane. His struggle ended tonight. Charles Vian rounded out the feature winners as he took the Thunderstox 15 lapper.

Notes and quotes.....Kirchner drove a 10 year old car to the Late Model win Saturday and admitted he was watching the scoreboard to see who might be catching him. He didn't have to look in his mirror he was so far ahead of everybody...Good to see nice guy and veteran driver Tim Nelson with a third place finish in the Late Model main. Nelson hung with the big dogs and got a good finish as a result.....In four events at the track in Late Model competition this year there have been four different winners.....Tyler Reedy

