



Vintage Views

The official publication of the
Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club

Dedicated to the Preservation of Stock Car Racing History
October, November, December 2019

FAREWELL TO A CHAMPION: Ken Brenn, Jr.

by Earl Krause, as published in Area Auto Racing News
on May 7, 2019

NORTH BRUNSWICK, NJ – Ken Brenn, Jr., who had a Hall of Fame career as a Northeast dirt Modified driver, passed away on May 2, 2019 at his North Brunswick home. He was 67. A native of Warren, NJ, he resided in Middlesex, NJ for many years.



Ken Brenn, Jr. at New Egypt Speedway's Legends Night in 2006 Photo by Ace Lane, Jr.

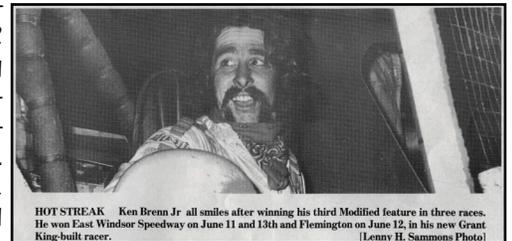
He was the son of respected Midget, Sprint Car, Indy Car and Modified owner Ken Brenn, Sr. Many of Ken Jr.'s wins came in the yellow #24 fielded by his proud father. Ken Jr. also drove other top Modifieds to victory. They included the Trenton Mack #74 of Mike O'Shea, Jim Romeo's #44 Jr. and Jim Stashluk's #71 on dirt; later in his career during the pavement era at Flemington Speedway, in Benny Scheer's #1a.

Ken Brenn, Jr. attended Moravian College and served in the National Guard. Since 1989, he was employed as a plumber with Stashluk Mechanical Contractors. Along with his passion for racing, Ken enjoyed bass and freshwater fishing. Ken was a member of the Brunswick Moose Lodge #263 and served as its Governor for five years. He was also a member of the Flemington Speedway Historical Society. He was predeceased by his mother, Dorothy Brenn. He is survived by his wife, Peg Brenn; his children Jeremy Brenn and his wife Beth; Cody Brenn and his wife Eva; Spenser Brenn and Kendra Brenn; George Potts and his partner Melissa Friend; Jeffrey Potts and his wife, Vanessa; his siblings Chris, Elaine, Bill, Jim and Kathleen; his father, Ken Brenn Sr.; and his grandchildren Ryan, Kevin, Sean, Luke, Cole, Michael, Sierra and Pepper.



Flemington 1972
Photo by George McCormick

BORN TO RACE: Ken Jr. displayed a natural "I was born to do this" ability and smooth style from the beginning of his career. He was Flemington (NJ) Speedway's first Rookie Sportsman champion in 1972 while wheeling dad Ken Sr.'s yellow and red-trimmed coupe. At the same time, Ken Sr. fielded the Modified #24 driven by Stan Ploski. There was no doubt that young Ken had the talent.



HOT STREAK Ken Brenn Jr. all smiles after winning his third Modified feature in three races. He won East Windsor Speedway on June 11 and 13th and Flemington on June 12, in his new Grant King-built racer. (Lenny H. Sammons Photo)

After multiple Rookie Sportsman wins and a brief time in the regular Sportsman division, Ken Jr. moved into the big-block Modifieds full time in 1974. He competed regularly at the tough weekly circuit of East Windsor Speedway (NJ) on Fridays (where he had 24 wins) and Saturdays at Flemington.

Ken brought in two Modified victories at NJ's Bridgeport Speedway and had memorable runs at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse, NY. On July 3, 1983, Ken Brenn, Jr. added his name to the list of winners on the Syracuse "Moody Mile" when he triumphed in the Modified feature. He also won there on Labor Day 1985.



Syracuse, 1975 Photo by Mel Stettler

But it was at Flemington where Ken Brenn Jr. excelled. He won 59 big-block Modified features there in its fabled dirt era of the 1970s and 80s, and was the 1982 and 1983 Modified champion.

(continued)

GSVSCC meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday from January through November, 7:30 p.m. at the West Long Branch Firehouse, Rt. 71 (Monmouth Road) and Cedar Ave. West Long Branch, NJ. For directions call 732-330-8349 or go to www.gsvscc.org.

Ken Jr. was one of the veteran Flemington dirt racers who made the transition to its paved surface (1991-2000) with success. Driving Benny Scheer's #1a, Ken won a 358 Modified feature at Flemington in 1995 and three more in 1996. . He was the 1996 small-block Modified co-champion (with Dean Gulick) in Scheer's #1a. In 1999, in the TAR CAR (small-block Modified) division, Ken had five wins.



Early 1990s on the pavement at Flemington in the Stashluk #71. Photo by Gary Bauer

FAST ON ANY SURFACE: "I always just loved to go fast in a race car!" Ken told me back in 2003, when his active driving career had wound down following Flemington's closure in 2000. During his time on Flemington's pavement, he set a speed record of 16.9 seconds for one lap in the Dirt/Asphalt Modified division. He later lowered it to 16.4 seconds. "Those (dirt/asphalt division) cars were great to drive!" he emphasized. "You could run 'em almost flat-out at Flemington...a place that I loved when it was dirt, and when it was paved." Previously, in 1979, Ken (in the family #24) was fastest of 212 entrants for that edition of Super DIRT Week, earning him the Modified pole position. He then finished third in that Sunday's feature. He took fifth in the SDW Modified headliner in 1980.



1984 Another Grant King-built Modified from the Trenton Mack Team. Not only did Ken Brenn wheel this machine, but also Stan Ploski and Frank Cozze. Photo by Ace Lane, Jr.

Along the dirt speedpaths, Ken wheeled other top cars to victory. He drove Jim Romeo's #44 Jr., the Trenton Mack #74, and Jim Stashluk's #71 on dirt. Later, in Flemington Speedway's 1990s pavement era, he turned the wheel of Benny Scheer's #1a.

Ken was a "hands-on" driver; one who took pride in the setup and cleanliness of the Modifieds he drove, whether they were from the family shop or those of others.

Truly, Ken Jr. was a "natural," on the track - always in contention, always in control and rarely involved in crashes. He always looked ahead and judged his moves with calculated precision that would smoothly get him to the front, and then often to Victory Lane. And his relaxed style was like his personality!

Ken Jr. would always tell you that he looked at Modified racing as an enjoyable hobby for the weekend...and there was never a doubt that he had plenty of fun at the track, especially post-race. Despite this, he was always flat-out serious when he buckled into his family Modified or another that a car owner had trusted him with. He was there to win. And those owners knew that he would not only give his all, but also take care of their mount.

THE FAMILY LEGACY: In the late-1970s and into the 80s, Ken Jr.'s brother, young Jimmy Brenn, became an established and popular racer at Flemington and on the circuit as well. Jimmy was Flemington Speedway's 1978 Rookie Sportsman Champion and a nine-time winner in that division. Although he didn't race as long as Ken Jr., there was never any doubt that Jimmy had that same talent and commitment to excellence. On a memorable night in 1982, Ken Jr. and Jimmy split the Twin-20s Modified features at Flemington. Their racing family, led by dad Ken Sr., celebrated in Victory Lane to the cheers of the crowd.



Proud Dad Ken Sr. congratulates Ken Jr. on a win in 1979. Photo by Jack Kromer



The Brenn brothers at Flemington, 1981. Jimmy is in the #20, Ken is in the #24 (outside). Photo by Ace Lane, Jr.

The Flemington Speedway Historical Society (FSHS) presents awards in memory of Modified driver Al Tasnady, one of Flemington's legendary drivers. In 2015 Tas Awards were presented to drivers Ken Brenn, Jr., Glenn Fitzcharles and the late Jackie McLaughlin; and car owner Jim Horton, Sr. Ken Brenn, Jr. was very honored to receive the Tas Award that evening, reflecting on how much he always enjoyed not just being a race driver but also his legion of fans. Making it even more special was that his dad, Ken Sr., was there to congratulate him. Ken Brenn, Sr., himself a 2014 "Tas" award recipient, in turn was at that 2015 ceremony as a proud father as Ken Jr. was recognized for his accomplishments at Flemington.

Ken Brenn, Sr.'s success in the Modifieds alone gained him Hall of Fame status. He is also considered to be one of the most foremost figures in American Midget Car racing, as a champion car owner and industry leader in the 1950s and 60s with ARDC, NEMA, the NASCAR Midget Series and USAC. Ken Sr. was a five-time ARDC car owner champion, and its President in 1969 and '70. In the 1960s, he also owned Sprint Cars. Brenn, Sr. fielded the rear-engine #57 Gerhardt Chassis Ford DOHC-powered mount at Indianapolis in 1967 for driver Bob Harkey. They also competed on the USAC Championship Car Trail of that time. The Brenn Indy Car team represented New Jersey with the professionalism and style that has always been Ken's signature. Ken Jr. was extremely proud of his family's racing heritage.



Ken Brenn, Sr. 1966 Indy Car driven by Bobby Gerhart

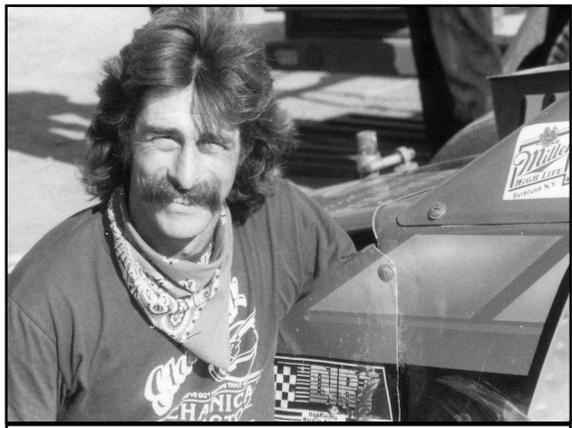
FAREWELL TO A CHAMPION: Ken Brenn, Jr. will always be remembered as one of the finest drivers in New Jersey and Northeast dirt Modified racing. Even more than his Hall of Fame stats, he was a special person who put his family and countless friends first. In his racing days, Ken Jr. was always a fan favorite. He had a ready smile and welcomed fans and media members who stopped in his pit area, no matter how the night's racing had gone.

Later in life, long after he had taken off his helmet and stepped away from racing, he was the same way. One of the things he often enjoyed over the last 15 years or so was attending local racing reunions. There, as the decades would seemingly roll back, he enjoyed signing autographs and meeting fans who had cheered him on during so many long-ago summer nights wherever and whenever he raced. Ken Brenn, Jr. remained a true champion until the sad day last week when his final checkered flag waved. Rest in peace, Ken.

Donations in memory of Ken Brenn Jr. may be made to the Flemington Speedway Historical Society, PO Box 1003 Flemington NJ 08822. Checks may be made payable to either the Flemington Speedway Historical Society or FSHS.



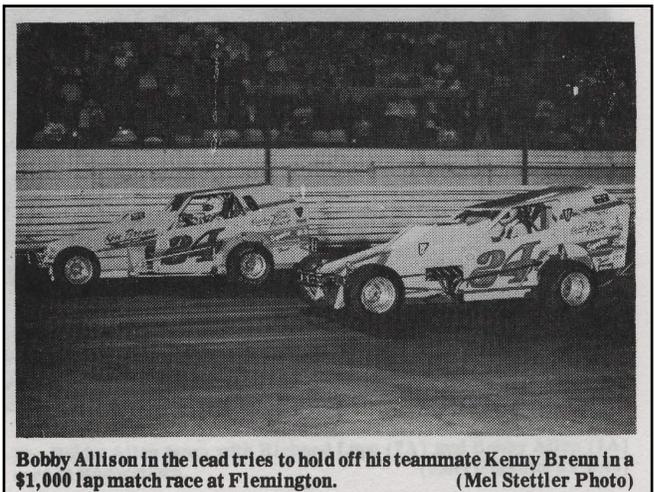
Flemington Speedway Historical Society 2015 "Tas" Awards recipients: L-R: Ken Brenn Jr., Glenn Fitzcharles, Jim Horton, Sr., and Charlie McLaughlin, accepting for his late brother Jackie McLaughlin. Photo courtesy FSHS



Ken Jr. with the #71 in 1989 Photo by Fred Voorhees



Bob Snyder Photo



Bobby Allison in the lead tries to hold off his teammate Kenny Brenn in a \$1,000 lap match race at Flemington. (Mel Stettler Photo)

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

The September meeting of the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club was called to order by President Ray Shea at 7:35 p.m. Twenty-five members were in attendance.

A moment of silence was observed for the passing of NASCAR driver Mike Stefanik. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.

Get well wishes go out to Doug French, who is once again dealing with health issues.

Congratulations are offered to Troy Estelle. Troy is this year's recipient of the GSVSCC Scholarship Award.

Thanks to Linda Cooper for the great job she does with maintaining the club's website. Note: she is always looking for news and information to add to the site, and for someone with good computer skills to take over the job.

Upcoming Events: Bridgeport Speedway is scheduled for October 5; New Egypt Speedway Legends Night; Patterson Greenhouses' Fall Fun Day on October 13; Fleming's Pumpkin Run will be held on November 2. A change has been made to the schedule: Wall Stadium's Turkey Derby will be on November 29, but no club cars will be appearing. As of now, there will be no on-track displays for club cars; all displays will be static.

It was noted that the Warren County Car Show was a great event. Many cars were on display. Thanks to club members who participated in this event.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

John Malsbury, Secretary

OCTOBER 16 2019

The October meeting of the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club was called to order by President Ray Shea at 7:50 p.m. Thirteen members were in attendance.

Earl Krause informed the group that club member and racing photographer Jim Smith has had recent back problems. Get well wishes go out to Jim.

Earl also announced the following individuals who have recently passed away: Three-Quarter Midget driver Lou Ciccone, Jr.; Ken Golden, Sr., NASCAR official and also a well-known flagger at Pennsylvania tracks (particularly Nazareth Speedway). A moment of silence was observed for Lou and Ken.

Those in attendance offered congratulations to club members Marty Van Druten and Harry Reed for their Car Owner Championships at Wall Stadium this season. Marty owns the #17 Factory Stock car driven by Elliott Wohl; Harry owns the #55 Modified driven by his son Steven.

Ray informed the group that rumors have been circulating after an incident at Wall Stadium involving the #301 club car. No lawsuits against the club have resulted.

At a recent meeting, Club Officers unanimously voted to discontinue on-track activities for the foreseeable future. Ray reminded those in attendance that the club's mission in displaying cars is not about showing off speed. It's about showing the cars to fans so they can get up close and interact. There were many reasons for this decision. The club Officers are responsible for protecting the club and its members, among other duties. Static displays will still be held. A discussion followed about this issue.

In a related matter, we have not had any further contact from the NJ State Police concerning their restrictions on our cars.

Bob Pickell, Jr. (son of racer Bob Pickell, Sr.) recently met with Ray Shea and Jim Hall. They reviewed 8mm films taken during the 1960s of various dirt tracks. A public showing is planned for coming months.

Ray Liss gave an update on the winter display usually held at the Vintage Automobile Museum of NJ in January. There is some question as to whether or not a show will be arranged.

Ray Shea announced that the Flemington Speedway Historical Society car show will be held on Saturday, October 19 in Ringoes.

Fleming's Pumpkin Run will be held on Saturday, November 2 in Egg Harbor Township. This will be a club event. We look forward to a good turnout of club cars as well as interested spectators. The Pumpkin Run show will be the last event towards 2019 car owner attendance points.

On a disappointing note, the club show at New Egypt Speedway on October 5 saw only one club car on display. Thanks to Bob and Rich Caramella for towing to the show.

Patterson Greenhouses' Fall Fun Day on October 13 was another successful event. Thanks to our members who brought their cars. The weather was beautiful. There was a great turnout of all kinds of cars – 91 in total. Over \$2,800 was raised for the Disabled Veterans of Freehold. Donations to the DAV were also made from the club and Jim Hall's club T-shirt sales.

Nomination ballots for Officer elections have been mailed. The deadline for returning ballots will be November 20 – either by mail or at the meeting on that date.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Linda Cooper, Acting Secretary

NOVEMBER 20, 2019

The November meeting of the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club was called to order by President Ray Shea at 7:40 p.m. Twenty-two members were in attendance.

In the first order of business, club members Jim and Linda Bennett were welcomed to the meeting. Jim has missed most of the club meetings this year due to illness. It was good to see them both.

Bob Menschner gave the invocation.

Earl announced the following individuals who have recently passed away: Jim Cogill, a long-time race team crew member; Tommy Hoffman, driver and longtime racing mechanic; and Jim Grbac, former owner and promoter of New Egypt Speedway. A moment of silence was observed for them.

Get well wishes were offered to Kathy Morsch, who recently suffered a stroke, and Tim Driscoll's wife Kate.

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Officer nomination forms were received. Seven individuals were nominated for the position of Trustee. Two of those are unknown to the Officers and those in attendance. Four of those nominated declined, leaving Al Voorhees as the remaining candidate. Al accepted the nomination. At this time, a round of applause was held for outgoing Trustee Ray Liss, in thanks for his many efforts on behalf of the club. Club Secretary John Malsbury notified the Officers that he will be unable to continue in his duties due to changes in his job that prevent him from attending club meetings. Linda Cooper will fill in for the remainder of John's tenure. Thanks to John for his service to the club.

Ray Shea announced that 2020 Hall of Fame ballots have been mailed. Nominations for Hall of Fame nominees are due by December 1.

Ray said a survey was sent to club car owners to gauge interest in participating in club events for the 2020 season. Car owners are encouraged to respond.

Ray reminded the group that club cars will not be on display this year at Wall Stadium's Turkey Derby.

The annual January show at the Vintage Automobile Museum of NJ is uncertain. Ray Liss and Larry Housman are trying to organize this event, but logistical issues and lack of response from the Museum's representatives are making things difficult.

Ray Shea wished good luck to the club members who will be participating in Wall Stadium's Turkey Derby this month.

Recently it was decided to purchase a portable public address system for the club. Ray Shea put it to use for the first time tonight. This will come in handy at many events. Thanks go out to Pam and Earl Krause for handling the purchase and bringing it to the meeting.

Speaking of new equipment, the club recently purchased a laptop computer for use in preparing the newsletter and performing website maintenance. The computer will be used by Linda Cooper, who is performing these tasks for the club at this time.

Fleming's Pumpkin Run was held on Saturday, November 2 in Egg Harbor Township. A good turnout of club cars as well as interested spectators were in attendance. Club member Doug Megill said that while at the Pumpkin Run, he met up with Charlie Santilli, owner of the Tom Skinner 659 coupe. Charlie said the car was for sale; Doug bought it. Doug plans to preserve the history of Tom Skinner's racing with this car.

Ray announced that a swap meet will be held at New Egypt Speedway on December 7. Make sure you go and check out the many vendors. If you want something, they'll be sure to have it.

Ray reminded the group that there will be no December meeting. He wished everyone a happy holiday. See you in 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Linda Cooper, Acting Secretary

FUN FUNDRAISER

It was a great day for a car show—the Patterson Greenhouses' Family Fun Day, to be precise. Thanks to our club members and car owners who supported this event. *Photos by Ray Shea*



PUMPKIN RUN

Our club once again participated in Fleming's Pumpkin Run in Egg Harbor Township. The Pumpkin Run is one of the biggest shows of everything on wheels (and then some!). Thanks to our members and car owners who helped to make a great display. *Photos by Linda Cooper*





Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club

2019 Schedule

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
October 5	New Egypt Speedway	Legends Night
October 13 (Rain Date 10/20)	Patterson Greenhouses, Freehold	Family Fun Day Car Show
November 2 (Rain Date 11/9)	Fleming's, Egg Harbor Twp.	Fleming's Pumpkin Run

Events listed are static display events

The Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club's on-track events are EXHIBITION ONLY.
We are a non-racing club.



MORE PUMPKIN RUN PHOTOS



PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER

from the Summer 2019 issue



Green flag next time by! Do you know what annual race is about to begin, and at what track? Can you name the drivers of the cars that are visible in the photo? Bonus points for the year.

This field of Modifieds is about to begin Turkey Derby X, held in 1983 at Wall Stadium in Wall (or Belmar), NJ. The visible lineup is as follows: Sal Moschella (58), Tom Baldwin (7), Eddie Bohn (54), John Blewett, Jr. (76), Glenn Cummins (47), Ed Lilly (23), Brian Ross, Reggie Ruggiero (44), Ed Brunnhoelzl, and Tony Ferrante, Jr. (x2).

The top finishers in Turkey Derby X were as follows: **MODIFIED:** 1) Eddie Bohn 2) Tom Baldwin 3) Corky Cookman 4) Brian Ross 5) Tony Sisco 6) Jerry Cranmer 7) Fred Harbach 8) Tony Ferrante, Jr. 9) Lenny Boyd 10) Ed Brunnhoelzl. **SPORTSMAN:** 1) Tom Dancer 2) Tony Ciccone 3) Ed Reed 4) Ted Alt 5) Tony Gentile. **MODERN STOCK:** 1) Lee Taylor 2) Steve Springsteel 3) Pat Bowen 4) Harold Dauncey 5) Jim Taylor. **STRICTLY STOCK:** 1) Seth Goldstein 2) Kevin Erhardt 3) Sam Riggelman.

For the uninitiated, Wall Stadium's Turkey Derby event has been held every Thanksgiving weekend since 1973. Formerly a 2-day event (Friday and Saturday), in recent years it has been expanded to a 3-day event including Sundays. In addition to Modifieds, all of the Wall support divisions also race, as well as non-Wall divisions. Over the years, that has included the Sportsman/Modified Affordable Division, Modern Division, Late Models, Street Stocks, 4-Cylinders, Three-Quarter Midgets, Legends, dirt Modified, and dirt Sportsman. It's not unusual for invaders from Pennsylvania, New York and New England to try their luck, but few have been successful on the tricky track that is Wall Stadium.

It's an understatement to say that good weather is important for an enjoyable weekend, but die-hard folks will attend no matter what. This year's Turkey Derby XLVI event will be held on November 29 – December 1. Many will be praying for sun and mild temperatures!

Thanks once again to Earl Krause for filling in the gaps on this topic.

PHOTO TRIVIA



Photo credit: Corey Seeman

Here we go...these two drivers are getting ready to race. Who are they? Where are they about to race? When was this photo taken?

Look for the answer in our next issue, or go to our website www.gsvscc.org if you can't wait that long. Sometimes the website answer contains more information than we have space for in print.

Have you ever wondered what's in storage? Folks are **STILL** needed to catalog the club's archived items. Contact Ray Shea if you can help out.



NEW MEMBER

Denton Johnson—Manheim, PA

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