



## Message from EMPA President, Dino Oberto

EMPA is an organization of professional writers, broadcasters, announcers, videographers, and photographers working in the motorsports industry, along with Associate and Corporate members.

Greetings all,



We are finally getting caught up and ready to get out some post-convention news and I'd like to start by saying once again what a great and unified effort by so many in putting together this year's event was.

As previously mentioned in the most recent email blast how truly grateful I am to ALL those who played a role in making everything a huge success.

Coming out of our new venue at Genetti's we obviously will take a look over things to better build on what we have there.

I will say too, the hotel staff has already been in contact with us in those same regards on how to perk up our stay and that includes extending our hospitality room hours.

Keep in mind this was our first time with the Genetti gang and we needed to get accustomed to one another. They really enjoyed our company very much and look forward to serving us again.

### Board of Directors:

- Dino Oberto, President
- Earl Krause, Vice President
- Carol Houssock, Secretary
- Jeff Gromis, Treasurer
- Karl Fredrickson

The coverage of the convention was fantastic. *Area Auto Racing News* gave a huge spread on several pages.

There were a number of prominent internet websites as well that ran the weekend happenings along with a few of the region's daily newspapers.

Debbie Gastelu notified us that the *Snyder County Times* and *Union County Times*, which gets mailed for free to over 26,000 residents of those two counties, included a front page story on awards won by her and Todd Dziadosz.



Likewise, Joe Kaminski got a nice front page photo of him receiving his EMPA Ernie and Marilyn Saxton Service Appreciation Award in the *Shamokin News Item*.

Of course we took notice to all those who posted on social media with some great pics from the whole weekend.

And, we even did a segment on the convention with local TV station SSPTV-13 out of Hazleton and as soon as the piece airs we will share it with you all.



[www.empaonline.org](http://www.empaonline.org)

We'd like to pass along to all our members that Jason McCahan, who was with us Saturday morning for the press conferences and representing Clinton County Fair Speedway, noted how much he enjoyed being able to speak and said anyone who is a card-carrying EMPA member is welcome to come to his track. Thanks, Jason, for the kind gesture.



On Sunday morning during our organizational meeting there were some key topics that were discussed about the current status of EMPA. I have since received some additional input and also spoke afterwards with others. During an upcoming newsletter we'll pass along that information.

One person noticeably absent from last week's convention was Sandie Herensperger, who has attended regularly since the 1980's. Sandie learned following a routine colonoscopy that polyps removed during the procedure were cancerous. She underwent a surgical procedure just days before the convention and was unable to travel. Sandie reports "thankfully they got it all, but I want people to learn from John Andretti how important it is to have this procedure. It can, literally, save your life." We're glad she's on the mend!



I would please ask that any contest winners take a moment to send along words of thanks to the folks who made them all possible. You can find the info on our website [www.empaonline.org](http://www.empaonline.org).

I have included the contest winners below.

### Pocono Raceway/EMPA 2021 Writer's Contest

#### Feature

##### 1st place Jim Donnelly

"Left Turn to Destiny"

Crankshaft, spring 2021

Judge's comment: *LOVED the descriptive words used by writer...Historical references showed writer's passion and knowledge of matter subject. A++*

##### 2nd place Jason Beck

"Surviving The Unsurvivable"

Speedway Illustrated, April 2021

Judge's comment: *Innate knowledge of subject matters and well-placed quotes equals strong story.*

##### 3rd place Thomas Pope

"Grudge Racing, A Million-Dollar Steering Wheel And The Stott Boys

Speedway Illustrated, January 2021.

Judge's comment: *Writer pulled you into story right away and kept you riveted.*

#### Column

##### 1st place John Snyder

"Patience Is A Virtue: Advice Not Followed At Daytona"

Area Auto Racing News, February 16, 2021

Judge's comment: *Very persuasive. Doesn't mince words...Only a quote is in right place. Solid transitions.*

##### 2nd place Dan Anderson

"Strange Music"

Speedway Illustrated, September 2021

Judge's comment: *Like how writer talked with readers, not at or to them.*

##### 3rd place Len Sammons

"Have The Outlaws Taken A Step Forward, Or The PA Posse Teams A Step Back"

Area Auto Racing News, May 25, 2021.

Judge's comment: *Sense writer's keen knowledge and familiarity of material, like he didn't need to do any research. Threw out names like he's known them all his life. Makes for top-notch column.*



## Personality Profile

### 1st place Bruce A. Bennett

"Paradise Lost"

Speedway Illustrated, May 2021

Judge's comment: *From beginning to end writer kept my attention. Very solid read. A+ effort!*

### 2nd place Dan Anderson

"A Force Of Nature"

Speedway Illustrated, October 2021

Judge's comment: *Storytelling was fabulous. Quotes were dynamic, well-placed.*

### 3rd place Carol Houssock

"The Overcomer: Garrett Zacharias conquered obstacles to become one of the best stock car racers in New York"

Speedway Illustrated, October 2021.

Judge's comment: *Writer introduces conflict early in story and does fine job of addressing subject's determination to deal with said conflict and adversity. Was hooked by story throughout.*

## Race Report

### 1st place Ron Hedger

"An Angry \$25,000 Winner"

Speedsport.com, September 5, 2021.

Judge's comment: *Loved how writer described varying emotions of subject matter. Great storytelling.*

### 2nd place Nick Graziano

"Shine of a King: Tyler 'Sunshine' Courtney Claims 38th Kings Royal In First Appearance

Worldofoutlaws.com, July 17, 2021

Judge's comment: *Unique lead...pulled me into the story. Vivid description of race.*

### 3rd place Len Sammons

"Michael Barnes Is No Longer The Ultimate Classic Bridesmaid"

Area Auto Racing News, June 1, 2021

Judge's comment: *Liked the descriptive build-up of subject's struggles to finally getting a win...Kept focus on subject throughout story.*

## News

### 1st place Steve Barrick

"Fall Brawl Lived Up To Billing: DeFebo Helmet Tossed By Beers Team"

Area Auto Racing News, November 9, 2021

Judge's comment: *Action-packed, enjoyable read. Covers all angles.*

### 2nd place Mike Adaskaveg

"602 Crate Engine: Production Paused Due To Issues"

Outsidegroove.com, October 27, 2021

Judge's comment: *Very "newsy." Informative. Detailed. Writer shows knowledge of subject matter.*

### 3rd place Dino Oberto

"BACK IN BLOOM" Racing set to Bloomsburg Fairgrounds"

Standard-Speaker, Hazleton, PA., January 17, 2021

Judge's comment: *Could sense writer's enthusiasm in subject matter. Well-written.*

## 2021 EMPA DirtTRackDigest.TV Video and Broadcast Contest

**BROADCAST:** Motorsports Programs, Series or Segments produced for TV content.

**Class 1** – News Segments – Motorsports Related

**1st Place** – **Brian Unangst** for BRC 13 Sports

*Race Report – Mahoning Valley Speedway*

**2nd Place** – **Brian Unangst** for BRC 13 Sports

*Race Report – Pocono Raceway*

**3rd Place** – **Brian Unangst** for BRC 13 Sports *Race Report – Mahoning Valley Speedway*



**INDEPENDENT/NON-BROADCAST**: Motorsports Related, may be edited or unedited

**Class 1** – Single Camera coverage of an entire race event, weekly or special

**1<sup>st</sup> Place** - DTDTV, **Mel Thomas**  
*Ferris Mowers Night – Fulton Speedway*

**ONLINE MEDIA/RADIO** – Motorsports programs or segments produced for the Internet or Radio Broadcast.

**Class 1** – Video Events/ Webcasts – Race events, highlight shows or short news segments, YouTube or results programs covering a variety of tracks or events. (Not broadcast on TV.)

**1st Place** – **Matt Thomas** DTDTV for FloRacing.com  
*STSS Speed Showcase 200 – Port Royal Speedway*

**2nd Place** – **Art Rorick** Land of Legends TV  
*2021 Championship Night, Land of Legends Raceway*

### **Brice's NAPA Auto Parts EMPA 2021 Photo Contest Winners**

#### **BEST OF SHOW**

**Bob Yurko**

#### **PORTFOLIO**

**Brent Smith**

#### **JANICE BRICE MEMORIAL AWARD**

**Pete MacDonald**

#### **HOWIE AND MARY HODGE MEMORIAL AWARD**

**Duane Canfield**

#### **ACTION**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Dave Pratt**  
2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Brent Smith**  
3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Alexandria Bates**  
Honorable mention – **Pete MacDonald, Evan Canfield, Tommy Lane, Chris Bragdon**

#### **ACTION SEQUENCE**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Debbie Gastelu**  
2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Harry Meeks**  
3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Jim Smith**  
Honorable mention – **Dave Pratt, Mel Stettler, Harry Meeks**

#### **CRASH ACTION**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Brent Smith**  
2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Harry Meeks**  
3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Brent Smith**  
Honorable mention – **Harry Meeks, Debbie Gastelu, Pete MacDonald**

#### **FEATURE**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Todd Dziadosz**  
2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Tommy Lane**  
3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Jim Smith**  
Honorable mention – **Pete MacDonald, Harry Meeks, Evan Canfield, Bob Yurko**

#### **PICTURE STORY**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Robert Chalmers**  
2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Bob Yurko**  
3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Duane Canfield**  
Honorable mention – **Matt Butcosk**



**PORTRAIT & PERSONALITY**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Bob Yurko**

2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Bob Yurko**

3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Bob Yurko**

Honorable mention – **Harry Meeks, Pete MacDonald, Brent Smith, Evan Canfield**

**PURE ART**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Dave Moulthrop**

2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Todd Dziadosz**

3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Brent Smith**

Honorable mention – **Evan Canfield, Robert Chalmers, Duane Canfield**

**UNPUBLISHED COLOR**

1<sup>st</sup> place – **Todd Dziadosz**

2<sup>nd</sup> place – **Todd Dziadosz**

3<sup>rd</sup> place – **Brent Smith**

Honorable mention – **Evan Canfield, Dave Moulthrop**

**The Convention in Pictures**

**Friday night—salute to the drivers**



We waited weeks, well 2 years, for this moment. As Dino said, let the convention begin! Cheers!  
Jim Smith photo



Nick Ross Jim Smith photo



Danny Creedon  
Jim Smith photo



Bobby Jones Paul Stout photo



Thanks to all of the racers who joined us Friday night for a recap of their 2021 seasons and a sneak peek at their plans for 2022. Bob Yurko photo



## Saturday Morning Press Conferences



Nick Igdalsky  
Pocono Raceway Bob Yurko photo



Nick Graziano  
World of Outlaws Bob Yurko photo



Steve Inch  
Selinsgrove Jim Smith photo

## Keynote Speaker and Panel Discussion



Scott Walsh, Keynote Speaker  
Jim Smith photo



A Bob Frey Fist-bump  
Jim Smith photo



Media Panel Discussion  
Bob Yurko photo

## Saturday Night Awards



Herb Anastor, Jim Hunter  
Memorial Writer of the Year,  
and Hall of Fame inductee  
Bob Frey Jim Smith photo



Bob Frey with his family  
Jim Smith photo



Steve Post, winner of the  
Jerry Reigle Award, with  
Chris Dolack from World  
Racing Group WRG Photo



A pair of Bobs, Yurko (L) and  
Hall of Fame inductee Rossell  
Jim Smith photo



Jeremy Elliott (L) with Hall of  
Fame inductee Van May  
Jim Smith photo



Jeremy Elliott receiving his  
2020 Jerry Reigle Award from  
Nick Graziano Jim Smith photo



## More Saturday Night Awards



Pete MacDonald accepting the Janice Brice Memorial Award Jim Smith photo



Hall of Fame inductee Ken Brenn, Sr. with Earl Krause Jim Smith photo



Ace and Tommy Lane presenting the Ace Lane, Sr. Photographer of the Year award to Pete MacDonald Jim Smith photo



Richie Evans Northeast Asphalt Driver of the Year Matt Hirschman with his family Jim Smith photo



2021 Award winners with their hardware for jobs well done! Bob Yurko photo

### The 'Moment'

Ken Brenn asked everyone who won an award Saturday night to stand and join him in celebration. It was one of those special moments that go down in EMPA history. Thank you, sir, for that, and thank you to Jim Smith for capturing that 'moment'.



Until next time  
Peace, out  
**Dino**

### EMPA Board of Directors

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