

Impressive Racing Career for Gary Elliott

By Linda Harrington

What do you expect to be doing at age 77? Gary Elliott of Murray's Siding, Truro thinks soaring around some speedways at over 200 km/hr is just a normal day in his life.

Gary was born in Truro, moved to Ontario with his parents at the age of three and then moved back to Truro in 2019. Like his well-known Economy uncles Carl and Gerald Elliott, who entertained Nova Scotia with their amazing fiddle playing, Gary was also playing music at the age of 19 and was a member of the "The Lords of London" with his cousin Greg Fitzpatrick. The band had a #1 record in Canada. Gary wasn't with them when their record sored to #1.

Twenty years later he shared his musical talents in his Church and went on to produce two cd's courtesy of his cousin David Fitzpatrick, a studio recorder and musician, who was a member of the famous Fables. Gary's cousin's Bill, Bruce and Mike Elliott played on his CD's. Bill Elliott, who recently passed away, along with his other cousins was very encouraging for Gary to continue his music.

For the last 55 years, Gary's life's journey has gravitated more towards the roar of engines then making music.

This year will be Gary's

51st year sponsored by Quaker State, the longest driver/corporate sponsor in all racing history. He started racing in 1969, at the age of 22 and has raced 1333 Nights, 1251 Nights with Quacker State as a sponsor. He hasn't missed a race since June 5th, 1987, for a total of 890 consecutive nights.

Racing became very much a part of the family with Gary's son David Elliott winning 14 Championships over his 30 years of racing, his Daughter Shirley Tiemersma raced for a year and her husband Derrick raced Super Late Models and even the grandchildren Gehrig and Lauren Halliday, raced in Mini-Stock and Go-Carts.

There have been several accidents in Gary's race career, including 7 roll overs. He has also had the throttle stick open twice, something rather terrifying heading towards a curve at full speed. He recalls his worst wreck in Ontario, 2012, "A young driver, in his first race hit my front end and sent me bouncing off the walls. There was so much damage to my car it took two tow trucks to get it off the track." After \$11,000 in repairs, the car was ready for the next race. McColl Enterprises made sure Gary didn't miss a race and let him pay off the bill in installments.

Motorsports are not a

cheap hobby to get into and having sponsorships is of the utmost importance. Car # 36, driven by Gary Elliott currently has 16 sponsors to offset some of the costs. "Some of the top cars can spend \$75-80,000 a year," says Gary, "I try to keep my costs down. My crew Shannon Riley, Chris White, Jack Lynds, Bob Landry, Bobby and Emily Sandford do our own repairs but can still expect to pay around \$2000 a race. Just replacing tires each race will run \$1200."

After 2974 races, it is not surprising Gary has received many bumps and bruises but one significant back injury plagued him for years afterward. In 1999, at Sauble Speedway in Ontario, both Gary and his son David, who were 1st and 2nd in points, were in the same race. Gary's car was hit from behind and sent up in the air over the car in front. The seats are bolted to the frame and when the car smashed back down on the track it hit hard. "It literally took my breath away," Gary says. "When I climbed out of the car, I fell to the ground in terrible back pain, and they put up the red flag sending paramedics and fire fighters over to me. I grabbed the nerf bars on the side of the car to get myself up and kept trying to move through the pain." The paramedics advised him to go

to the hospital but as soon as he saw the only damage to his car was a flat tire, adrenaline kicked in and he was getting back in the race. His son continued on, the last 20 laps to a 1st place finish, not knowing his father was back in the race. Gary finished 6th, and when the adrenaline wore off, he was in excruciating pain and took the advice to go to the hospital.

There is an amazing museum located in Gary's shop at his home in Murray's Siding. Besides all the collectibles on display, the walls are covered in plaques and trophies he has won over the year. "Canada's Iron Man" has won 2 Championships, been top 5 in points for 25 Seasons, top 10 in points for 47 Seasons. He has raced in Demolition Derby's, Mini Stocks, Canadian Vintage, Modifieds, Limited Late Models, Pro Late Models and OS-



Gary has kept detailed records, with individual binders dedicated to each year. Here he is looking up pictures of a serious crash back in 2012.

CARR Modified on 47 different tracks in Canada and the US. His 260 wins include 40 Feature Wins, and 19 of these are

since he turned 50. He has received Best Appearing Car- 21 times, Most Sportsman Driver- continued on page 13



Gary and his sidekick Buttons pose with his Pro Late Model race car #36. Look for him this summer at Riverside International Speedway, Antigonish and Scotia Speedworld, outside Halifax and other events on the East Coast International Pro Stock Tour. So Gary, what's under the hood? A 350 Chev Crate Engine, 430 HP @ 6400RPM, burning 92 octane fuel.



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