



RACERS STOPOVER—Jim Wemett (left) and Ron Gilbert clown around Gilbert's "Funny Car" racer while on a stopover in Myrtle Beach. The two Rochester, N. Y., residents

are currently competing at east coast racing events with their 1500 horsepower machines, which can reach speeds of 220 mph in six seconds.

1,500 Horsepower Dragsters . . .

'Funny Cars' No Laughing Matter

By TOM ELEAZER
SUN-NEWS Writer

They're called "Funny Cars," but there's nothing humorous about Jim Wemett's and Ron Gilbert's 1500 horsepower dragsters when they get down to the business of racing.

Gilbert and Wemett are currently touring an east coast racing circuit with their 3900 lb. lightning fast machines. Stopping in Myrtle Beach for a visit with Wemett's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Wemett, owners of Myrtle Beach Stereo Tape Center, the racers took time out to explain that each of their cars is an unique

mechanism and an expensive one at that.

Gilbert said that the automobiles are put together piece by piece, with at least two months being needed to assemble each machine. He estimated the cost of building one of the dragsters at \$30,000, with the motor and frame each costing \$8,000 and the rear tires \$400 per set.

The two men, working out of Rochester, N.Y. belong to the National Hot Rod Racing Association (NHRA) and the International Hot Rod Racing Association (IHRA). They race their dragsters at tracks controlled by the two organizations in cities throughout the country.

Wemett said that the cars require at least a full work week of preparation to run for five minutes in warm-ups and race events.

The dragsters compete exclusively in one-eighth or one-quarter mile events and can reach speeds of 220 mph in six seconds.

Gilbert explained that the machines burn a special nitro-type fuel in order to develop the tremendous horsepower required for fast acceleration. The cars consume two to three gallons of the eight dollars a gallon liquid in a quarter-mile event.

Gilbert said he started racing about 10 years ago, while Jim Wemett's father said his son "has had his hands in grease since he was 15." The two racers are sponsored by several automotive equipment companies, among them AmLate Oil, Bowers Blowers, Crauler Injectors, Masley Internal Parts, Arias Pistons and McEvey Dodge of Rochester.

Gilbert was quick to emphasize the safety of the drag racing sport. "There's been only one death in 14 years of NHRA racing," he said and noted that drivers are required to wear clothing to withstand

8000 degree temperatures and carry two Freon fire extinguishers in each car.

Gilbert also said that drag racing is "growing tremendously" in popularity. He said that attendance averages 30,000-40,000 at national meets and some tracks such as the one in Bristol, Tenn. attract around 100,000 people to racing events.

The drivers made it clear that they don't consider drag racing simply a physical sport, emphasizing that their work involves creativity as well. "There is ingenuity and imagination at work in what he (the racer) creates," Gilbert said.

1974 DIVISIONAL POINTS

Northeast

1

Division

	TOP FUEL	FUNNY CAR	PRO STOCK	PRO COMP	COMPETITION
Gary Beck 51 TF 2300	Pee Wee Wallace 119 FC 2395	Richie Zul 188 PRO 3780	Dale Hall 1011 B/FD 1600	Jim Oddy 111 BB/A 1200	
Grant Stoms 117 TF 1497	Bob Lagana 140 FC 1606	Scott Shafiroff 192 PRO 2071	Glenn Lazzar 11 BB/FC 1100	Terry Sinke 1250 B/A 1200	
Roger Toth 122 TF 1416	Tom Prock 11 FC 1269	Ken Dondero 1005 PRO 1240	Bill Warburton 151 A/FD 800	Gene Terenzio 129 BB/A 900	
Larry Bucher 100 TF 1321	Al Segrini 106 FC 1259	Paul Blevins 11 PRO 1016	Mark Becker 1142 A/FD 750	Lloyd DeCell 11 E/A 900	
Dale Thierer 102 TF 1206	James Byrd 144 FC 817	Bob Ingles 1050 PRO 811	Gary Russell 175 A/FD 700	Ed Cooper 132 B/A 500	
Sarge Arciero 108 TF 1013	Jimmy King 114 FC 602	John Rines 168 PRO 802	Bruce Horner 1072 A/FD 400	Chas. Garrett, Jr. 1269 D/A 400	
Charles Greer 132 TF 1008	Joe Jacono 116 FC 410	Bruce Larson 123 PRO 633	John Morey 1244 A/FD 300	Bob Rossi 130 C/D 300	
Hank Endres 179 TF 809	Jim Wemett 131 FC 409	Frank Russo 1047 PRO 409	John Samolyk 1112 B/FD 300	Dick Tibbetts 1035 C/D 300	
			Walt Woney 144 A/FD 300	Wayne Jessel 1400 D/A 300	

GOP Club meets Sept. 9

The Men's Republican Club of Gates will hold their regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 9 at 8:15 at Gates Bowl, 645 Spencerport Road.

A short business meeting will begin at 8:15 followed by a program of Auto Racing and Drag Racing. This is the annual Father and Son Night and will be highlighted by the films of

the 1974 Indianapolis 500 and the appearance of Jim Wemmett and his Funny Car racing team. His Funny Car and traveling workshop will be on display for inspection. A display of different types of racing tires will be available and a representative of a national tire manufacturer will be on hand to discuss different varieties of tires.

Merchant Of The Week



JIM WEMETT

Jim Wemett has been owner of the Macedon Tire Center for the past three years. He recently opened another shop, the Macedon CB Center on Main Street, across from the Macedon Fire Hall.

Jim and his wife, Kristine, live in Macedon Center. They have a daughter, Nicole.

Jim's hobbies include basketball, ping-pong, antique cars and all kinds of racing. He is a professional race car driver, and owns and drives his nitroburning, 200 horsepower AA-FC Funny Car. He travels at speeds up to 220 MPH plus, in 6 second range in a quarter mile.

Jim belongs to the National Hot Rod Association and the International Hot Rod Association.

"Funny car" à Alvan

SAINT-TITE (R.S.A.) — La piste d'accélération Alvan de Saint-Tite présentera son deuxième programme de la saison, dimanche après-midi, à compter de 2 h 30. Dans les cadres de cette journée Grand Prix, les amateurs d'accélération pourront assister à un spectacle de "funny car".

Ce genre de bolides est l'un des plus spectaculaires sur une piste d'accélération. Le "funny car" possède plus de 2000

chevaux-vapeur et parcourt le huitième de mille en 4,52 secondes, ce qui correspond à une vitesse de 175 milles à l'heure. A une telle vitesse, le conducteur doit se servir d'un parachute pour immobiliser son véhicule.

On ne se demandera pas si ce sont les pilotes ou les automobiles qui sont les vedettes du "show". Quoi qu'il en soit, les spectateurs verront donc en vedette Jim Wemett de New York à bord d'une

Mustang et Fred Bicksort du New Hampshire à bord de son Quarter Duster.

Le programme de dimanche présentera également un spécial modifié auquel participeront plusieurs compétiteurs de Québec et de l'Ontario. Entre autres, il y aura la Camaro d'Alain Tanguay de Québec, la Chevrolet d'Henri-Paul Savoie, la Camaro de François Chailoux et la Plymouth de Réjean Massé. Une centaine de voitures prendront le départ.

Funny Car Pro Ranks 10th In Nation

MADISON — Jim Wendell, 35, a professional funny car owner and driver, is both positive in the series for next year drag race competition. Usually, the college graduate is optimistic a 10-race season along Route 11 near WestWay Plaza.

Wendell, himself, has crew chief George Johnson and two other drive 2,000 miles to run his funny car a quarter mile in seven seconds or less, at speeds exceeding 100 miles-per-hour.

"I like funny cars. It's in my blood," he says. "From the time as they can identify with the models. Mine is a Mustang."

This is his fourth funny car in four years. The first two were gas operated. Now he has a powerful nitro burning funny car. Wendell's funny car has a single piece fiberglass Mustang body, custom made in California. It weighs 650 pounds and the body is raised at 12.000.

Under the hood, there's a lot more weight. The 100-horsepower Chrysler motor puts power in the wheels at takeoff. The motor block is a 600 lb. The power is transferred through a three disc clutch and two-speed Lewis transmission.

Wendell values his funny car and rig at \$60,000. Usually, it's less down. A check is made of the motor, bearings, pistons, valves, tires and safety

systems.

It runs on slick tires, cooling into a set and heating about ten minutes.

Finally a straw-thrust fuel at a cost of \$4 a gallon, the funny car averages six gallons to a quarter-mile run.

Inside the racing machine is a five-way safety harness, which Wendell says "works. Especially in wheel standing. This is when the power goes into the rear wheels at takeoff. Sometimes the front end goes up — sometimes over."

He carries 20 pounds of reserve fuel in case of fire. "Fire is every driver's worry," he explains. "Fuel ignites and intense heat just envelopes the car in an instant."

Standing six-foot, two-inches, Wendell found he needed a custom admission pad for racing. This is a 1800 two-piece suit, with extra protection built into the jacket. "A few years ago, flames went under my two shirt jackets." He has been able to remember it by

The car also has a parachute system, slowing it down on the asphalt track. "You need more than brakes at 200 mph up," he says.

Funny cars are called that because they look funny, Wendell explains.

"Drag racing on asphalt is a real noisy, loud, well-oiled and filthy the sport. A recent survey shows 83 per cent of



JIM WENDELL

fans and contestants at major drag-and-rocket events. The bulk, 75 per cent are between 17 and 20. About 50 per cent are college graduates and almost 40 per cent have over \$1,000 a year."

Wendell has his own booster club. He sends out and is given signs, autographs, and corresponds with funny car drivers around the globe.

interviews and new ideas coming along."

Wendell and his wife, Kristine, live on Granddodge Road, Madison Corner. They have a daughter, Nicole, 4. They came here from Herkbeck two years ago. A graduate of Bryant College, Providence, R.I., Wendell took a BS degree in business management. He operates a Financial firm and Amalec of business in Madison.

He never stood in George Johnson, of Danville. They travel in a special four-door truck, hauling the funny car in a special rig, with Mike, Wendell's cocker spaniel-leaple dog who has appeared every week for years but.

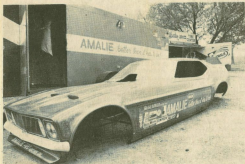
Wendell's pit crew also includes Bert Greenleaf, Larry Marston, his brother Tom Wendell, Dan Marston, and the Rivers family, his in-laws.

Two weeks ago, Wendell drove 2,000 miles round trip to compete at Columbia, S.C. and last weekend in St. John, Canada, north of Montreal, for a track race. This is when the funny cars are the slow factors.

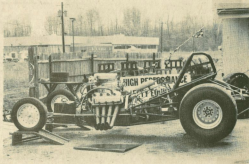
"Besides the crew, sponsors are important to funny car racing," Wendell adds. "We're always looking for more, as it's an expensive sport."

His sponsors currently include Amalec Oil, Dallas, Texas; NH Speed, Kato, Pa. a machine shop for his rig; V.I.E.T., W.D.-40, Frantz, Auto-Motive, Rocket gasolene; Malloy, Center Line Wheel-Shop; Safety Equipment; Myke Beach-Beano and Kaye Center, operated in South Carolina by his parents.

Last year, he wasn't even in the standings on national paid ratings for the major events. This season, he has risen to both place and rank the prize-money plan (optional) shows are keeping him afloat. He hasn't tried to date in 40 months for the quarter-mile. He's thinking about his next funny car. "There's always



THIS RACING MACHINE, shown at Wemett's tire shop, Route 31, Macedon, reaches speeds of more than 200 miles-per-hour in eight to ten seconds, at funny



car events on the East Coast circuit. It has a fiberglass Mustang body and a 2,000 horsepower motor. (Photo by Daryl DeCann)

FLORIDA

DESOTO MEMORIAL SPEEDWAY, INC.

Bradenton, Florida

Every Saturday Night

FUNNY CAR

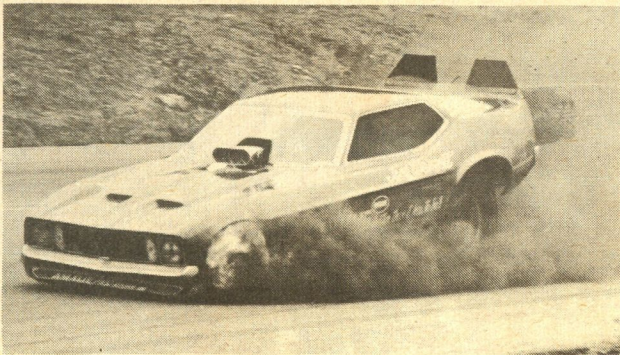
The Funny Cars produced some really superb action with many observers calling it the best ever seen at DeSoto. The first competitor up to do battle was the Florida State Funny Car Champ, Ira Hollensbe up against Venice, Florida's Clark Balsinger. Hollensbe charged to a 6.73 win, while Balsinger got crossed up and coasted through the lights. Larry Fullerton's "Trojan Horse" advanced a round when his 6.90 disposed of tractionless 18-year old Tom Anderson and his sharp looking '75 Vega. The best race of the round came next as Paul Smith drove his "Entertainer" Monza to a 6.63 to 6.83 win over Al Hanna and the "Eastern Raider" Pinto, which had originally got the jump on Smith at the start of the race. The last race of the round went to Shirl Greer as his solid pass of 6.45, 213 erased George Johnson at the wheel of Jim Wemett's Mustang.

The semi-final round saw Hollensbe's "Super Star Vega" gain the finals as he carded a fine 6.59 in beating Fullerton's "Trojan Horse." The other half

of the semi's saw Low E.T. and Top Speed of the Meet set as Shirl Greer defeated Paul Smith with a very good 6.42. Smith had some consolation in the loss as he charged to a speed of 226.70 mph.

In the finals, it appeared Hollensbe dialed-in a little too much clutch as he went up-in-smoke almost as soon as he touched the throttle. Shirl Greer meanwhile sprinted

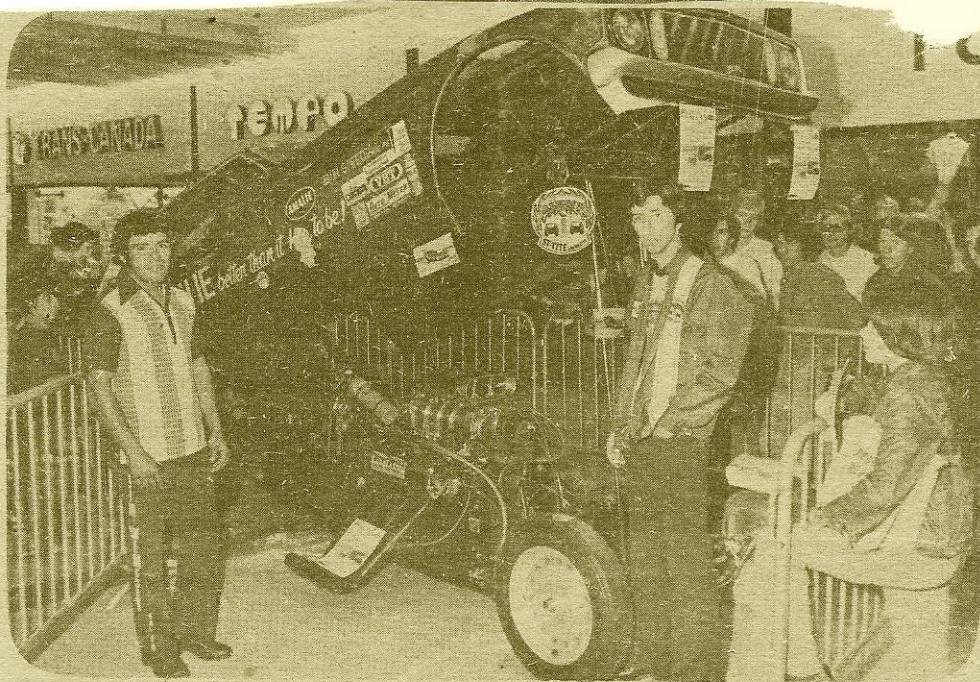
down the quarter unmolested to a winning time of 6.48, 217.39, while Hollensbe trailed at 7.06, 204.08.



EPPING, N.H. -- NEW ENGLAND DRAGWAY -- Jim Wemett was another of the unfortunates who had his parts let go during eliminations at the Ninth Annual Funny Car Nationals. He was not injured. Witham pic



6. A staunch supporter of NED Winston Series events was Jim Wrensch of Macedon, New York in '75. George Johnson completed the driving chores on the Atco event while Jim gave way to wield the wrench. A stronger '76 campaign is expected.



Même si le programme qui devait avoir lieu à St-Tite a été contremandé à cause de la pluie, la population Shawiniganaise a pu, grâce à la Plaza, visionner un des Funny Cars inscrit à la piste Alvan. On voit ici le pilote Jim Wymett et le publiciste René Matton entourant le bolide.

(Photo l'Hebdo Pierre Bellemare)

SUFFOLK RACEWAY

Suffolk, Virginia

Every Sunday

Routes 13 & 32 south of Suffolk

FUNNY CAR

Division II Funny Car champ Paul Smith, at the wheel of the Wilson, Franklin & Greer Monza, set the pace in qualifying as his 6.47 topped the list. Number two man was a surprising Larry Fullerton who wheeled his '73 Mustang to a good 6.56, while third place on the qualifying list went to Dodger Glenn and the "Frantic Ford," last year's winners, at

a 6.63. The "Black Magic" Vega of Al Segrini went a 6.66 for fourth, while Ron Jackson's "High Explosive" Vega charged to a 6.67 for the right to race Paul Smith in the first round.

Former World Champion, Shirl Greer pushed his Mustang II to a 6.67 for sixth place, while Bill Leavitt's "Quickie" Too" Mustang II (6.71) and Jim Wemett (6.79) made up the rest of the field. Wemett's 6.79 pass, which was close to if not his best pass ever, cost him the motor bringing Pat Walsh and the "U.S. Male" in as an alternate.

WARNER ROBINS DRAGWAY

Warner Robins, Georgia

1st, 3rd & 4th Sundays

Highway 96 - 5 miles off I-75

FUNNY CAR

Leading the Funny Car qualifying was the "Entertainer" Monza of the Wilson Bros., Franklin & Greer with Paul Smith at the controls. An on and off the throttle run of 7.67, 178.21 put Smith in the number one spot. Behind the Monza were the entries of Larry Fullerton, Tom Anderson and Jim Wemett's Mustang with George Johnson at the wheel.

The scheduled four car Funny Car program was expanded to six cars due to the drivers agreeing to race for the same overall money. The action got started with Tom Anderson taking an easy bye run when Shirl Greer developed problems after a very good burnout. Fullerton's "Trojan Horse" outran Jim Wemett's Mustang and Paul Smith broke

a fuel line on a single run.

The semi's were rather disappointing as Anderson got a bye run when Paul Smith could not return and Fullerton did the same by virtue of his being the odd man. In the final, Fullerton overcame a slight starting line advantage by Anderson to post the win.