

## Howell

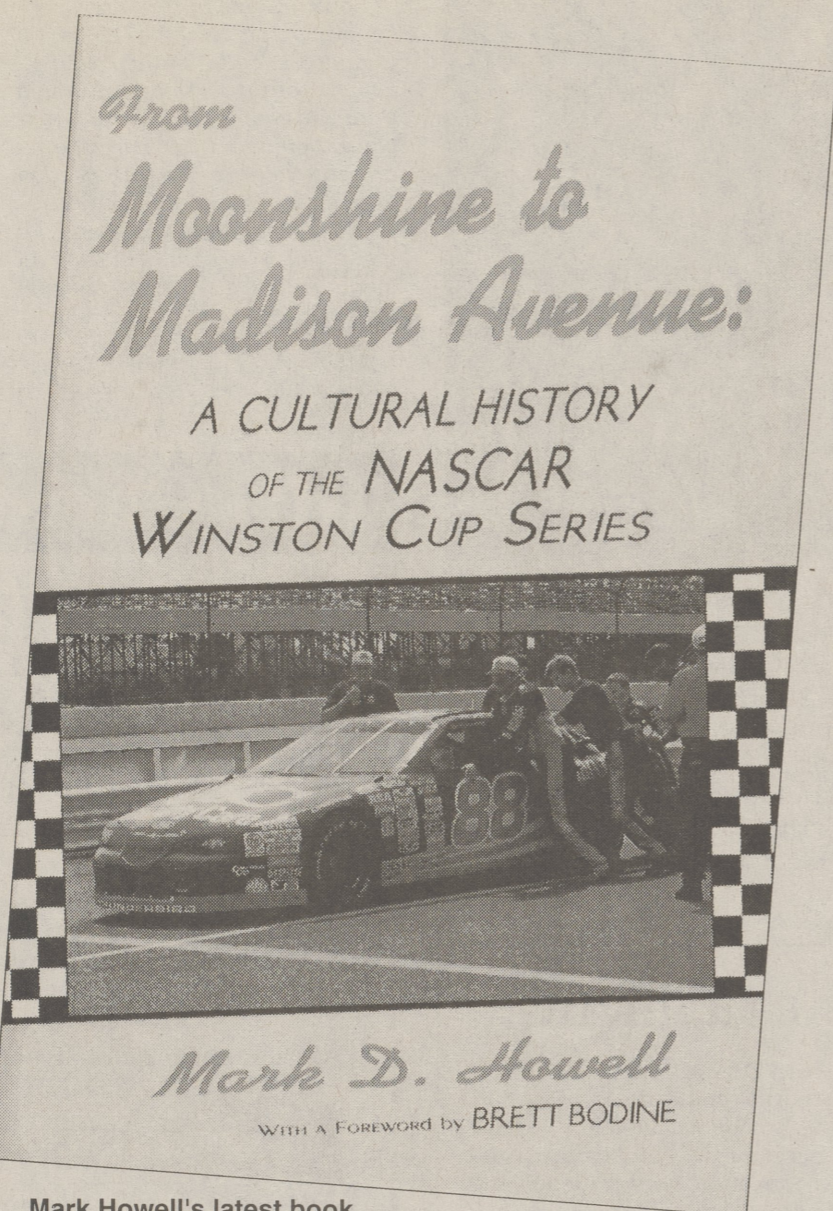
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 RacingOne.com. That work will take him to both Pocono events next season, which will allow him to spend some time with his family in Dallas.

Through his work, Howell has become friends with several drivers, including Ned Jarrett, Bobby Allison, Jimmy Spencer and Bodine, who in the early 1980's drove "modifieds" for Quality Metal Products in Franklin Twp. and lived for a time near the plant.

Howell says NASCAR is popular because the organization and the drivers have never forgotten their roots. "It (NASCAR) has maintained its ties with its fans," he said. "The drivers are approachable; they know where their bread is buttered."

He is a bit concerned about whether the circuit will be able to stay fan-focused now that it has reached the big time. NASCAR recently signed a multi-million dollar television contract, similar to the ones held by other major sports. "I hope the TV deal doesn't put an end to that (closeness with fans)," he said. Ticket prices are already higher than for other sports, a far cry from 20 years ago, when an infield ticket to Pocono was \$10.

So, what does the nation's foremost expert on the autosports culture drive now? Well, with a wife and two children to think of, nothing too racy. Howell says he and his wife Bonnie own a 1996 Ford Taurus and a 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokee. "We need at least one four-wheel-drive vehicle up here," he said.



Mark Howell's latest book, about NASCAR's Winston Cup Series, has won wide recognition.

## Seniors

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Volunteering at the kindergarten level is a bit different. "It's difficult for the teacher to get around to each student while they are working on a certain activity," said Grossman. "I'm just aiding the children who need it so they can get the work done and keep up with the others in the class."

Kindergarten has changed dramatically over the years, said Grossman. "It has become so much more advanced than it was when my children were in school," she said. "These children are learning to read and to do some arithmetic. It's not just coloring and learning the alphabet any more."

Each child brings a unique set of experiences to the kindergarten classroom. "Some are older and some are younger, some have been in pre-school and some have not, some are ready to learn and some need help getting organized," said Grossman. "One thing I have noticed is that children at this level are much more free. They yell right out, 'I need help' without the least little bit of embarrassment."

Older students may be less inclined to admit they are having difficulty. "Basically, what I try to do is get the students to calm down," said Dr. Ichter. "They get all worked up and I remind them to take their time."

Dr. Ichter recalls an education system that was dramatically unlike the one he is helping to support today. "When I was growing up, there were six classes and a teacher. That was it. If you were bright and you could do the work, then fine. If you were average and you got by without too much trouble, then fine. If you had any kind of a learning disability, that just meant you probably wouldn't get through school. There was no special help of any kind."

One of Dr. Ichter's classmates fell victim to the system and the teasing of his peers. "We had a kid in class who always scored poorly on tests, one time getting a mark of zero; from that point on everyone called him 'zero,'" he said. "I hope that the way things are done today is better. I guess I wonder what that boy would have been able to do if someone had helped him."

Helping occasionally requires teaching, but mostly the senior volunteers have found a reassuring presence is often what is required most. "The third grader I help was getting frustrated with a new set of vocabulary words," said Weidner. I told her, these are just new words so they seem harder but your going to get them just like you got the last batch."

Positive reinforcement and a little humor go along way. "The first day I met with my third grade student, she was a little bit shy and unsure of how this was going to work," said Weidner. "I just dropped something on the floor and made a big fuss to get her

*"When I was growing up, there were six classes and a teacher. That was it."*

Dr. Joseph Ichter  
 RSVP volunteer

laughing. That kind of broke the ice and so I told her, "You are probably going to teach me more than I am going to teach you honey," and it's true. This pro-

gram really boosts me up; I'm so glad it came my way."

Weidner is not alone in appreciating the rewards of volunteering. "Oh, I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't enjoy it," said Dr. Ichter. "Besides it gets me out of the house which makes my wife happy."

Anyone interested in learning more about RSVP can contact Anne Rappaport or John Gallagher at 822-1159. Volunteers must be at least 55 years old and must like working with children.

### Legion Post 672 will host Christmas party

American Legion Daddow-Isaacs Post 692, will conduct their annual Christmas party for children on Saturday, Dec. 18, at the post home from 1-3 p.m. Children, ages 3-11, will receive a present from Santa Claus. Santa Claus will arrive shortly after 1 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Please contact 675-0488 for further information.

### River of Life plans food distribution

River of Life Fellowship will host a food distribution for the needy Thursday, Dec. 16 from 6-7 p.m. at 194 N. Memorial Highway, Shavertown. Phone 674-5459, 2nd floor, Gordon Business Center.

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## Horse helper

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my heart when I have to put a horse down, but then there are these cases where the horses were so sick and they come back. That's what keeps you going."

The number of horses that pass through Lucky Star on their way to new homes with adoptive families outweighs the number who do not recover. "We have been fortunate to have many successes," said Piskorik. "Like Dugan, who is a five-year-old racer who could barely walk when he got here five months ago. He's trotting now, he is off the pain medication that he used to have to take three times a day, and I think he will eventually be strong enough for pleasure riding."

While Dugan will be running on wooded trails as soon as the weather and his damaged legs allow, Betty Piskorik has been relegated to watching his progress through her kitchen window. "I had heart bypass surgery done four weeks ago and I'm not allowed to go near the horses yet," she said. "It's the hardest thing I've done because I can't be out there taking care of them."

The woman who has been taking care of horses and friends all her life now has to rely on her friends to provide for her horses. "I don't like this at all," said

*"We are all chipping in to do a little bit."*

Betty Piskorik  
 Lucky Star Horse Rescue

Piskorik. "My father raised me the old fashioned way that if you had a problem you took care of it by yourself the best you could. But I know I have to be patient with my own recovery the way I would be with one of my horses."

To facilitate Piskorik's recuperation and to provide her with peace of mind, Lynne Michaels and a few other friends have assumed the day-to-day tasks at Lucky Star. "We are all chipping in to do a little bit," said Michaels. "Diane (Traver) is a really big help, she is out here all the time and Bev (Zagata) is always ready to help any way she can. It's a team effort."

Having people to count on when you need them is a blessing for which Betty Piskorik is grateful. "I feel badly because Lynne and the others have jobs. They work eight hours a day and then come here to feed the horses which is hard work too," she said. "But that's what life's about, one hand washes the other."

## Horse rescue

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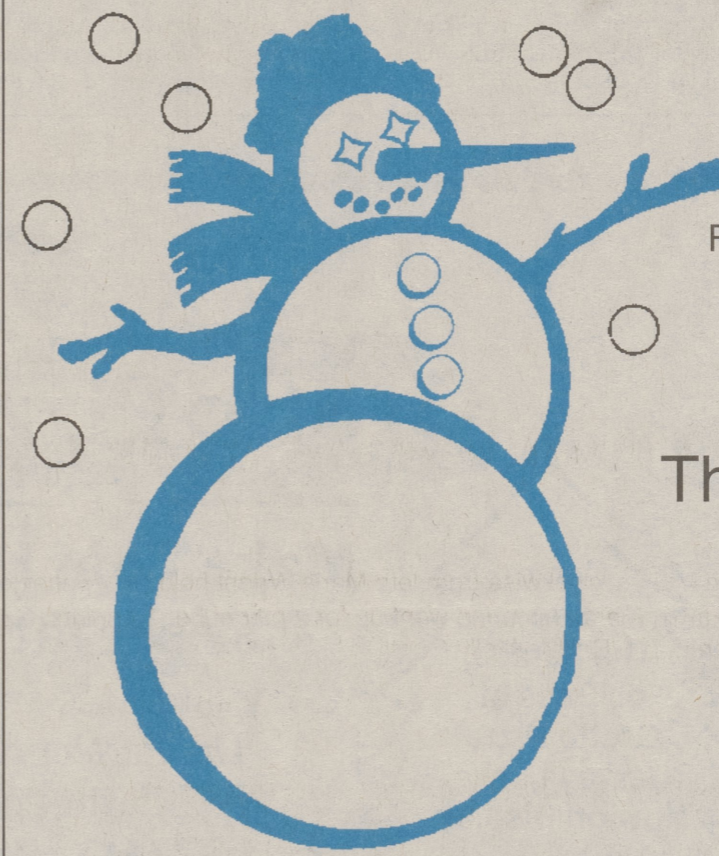
struggles to get around but has a healthy appetite and seems to be enjoying life as a senior citizen. "We keep a close eye on her," said Diane Traver. "If it starts to look like she is suffering we'll call the vet in to see what should be done, but as long as she is eating well and everything we are going to let her be."

Polka Dot is a middle-aged female with a mild mannered disposition, while Angel is a loner who prefers little contact with people and other horses. "Angel's name can be deceiving; sometimes she's a grouch," said Traver. "But we love her anyway."

These permanent residents rely on money collected from adoption fees for other horses, donations from individuals and community groups, in addition to Piskorik's own financial support for food, medicine and veterinary care. "It's getting hard now after my surgery," said Piskorik. "I just can't do the things I used to do, which is why I'm going to lease the main stable and the property on that side."

If you would like to make a financial contribution to help offset the cost of caring for the horses at Lucky Star, send a check to Lucky Star Horse Rescue, c/o Luzerne National Bank, Dallas.

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