



Eric Pimm and Bob Finnerty race around their practice track in Sweet Valley.



Eric Pimm poses with his wrecked Pro X class racer.

To them, lawnmowers become racing machines

By MEGAN SCHNEIDER
mschneider@mydallaspost.com

MORE INFO

For more information on ARMA and lawnmower racing, visit creeksideracing.com or check out videos on YouTube under American Racing Mower Association.

The word racing usually conjures up thoughts of high speeds, adrenaline and wrecks. Two local men are thinking about things a little differently, though.

Bob Finnerty, of Sweet Valley, and Eric Pimm, of Dallas, are nationally ranked with the American Racing Mower Association. That's right, lawnmower racing.

"Bob came to me at work one night and said you'll never guess what I saw on YouTube," Pimm recalling how Finnerty introduced him to lawnmower racing. "I said, 'No one around here does that and if you can find someone to teach us to build them, then I'll do it with you.' Here I am, eating my words four years later."

Larry Lanning, of Dallas, got the men involved and helped them along until they were ready to race on their own. He even lent them one of his racers until they were able to complete the modifications to their own.

The duo's first-ever race was locally held at the Northeast Fair but Finnerty and Pimm have held their mowers all over the country, the largest being a race

with more than 3,000 spectators. "You name it, we go to 'em," Finnerty said of the events in which the pair has participated.

All racers start as a typical riding lawnmower, but after hours of work and custom fabricated and modified parts, they become racers. The mowers are stripped down to the chassis. The hoods, seat and other parts are modified and custom parts such as the axles are added. And, of course, tweaks are made to the engine.

"Anything you can do to a car engine, you can do to a lawnmower engine," said Pimm.

There are nine different classes of racers, based on the engine's horsepower. According to Pimm and Finnerty, a basic racer or Super Stock, starts with 14 HP but after modifications are complete, the racers have approximately 40 HP. It can take about three months to prepare a racer for action.

Racers start as young as age 10 so there are always children at events and Pimm said that some

events have even featured a Power Wheels race during intermission for little ones.

Three-year old Ashtun Pimm said, "My favorite part is when he (his father Eric) wins and then I get the trophy."

Ashtun said his mommy, Amy races also, and that "it's really cool."

"It really is a great family atmosphere," said Pimm, who admits he probably would not have stuck with the sport this long had it not been so family-oriented. His wife raced in her first event on Oct. 21.

Ashtun talked about his friends from the races and Pimm said his entire family has made friendships that carry far beyond the track. Finnerty said they know racers from New York and New Jersey whom they spend time with off the track.

"There's a very competitive spirit, but very friendly as well," he said.

Pimm explained there are usually several small accidents during the course of a race day, but

everyone is eager to help out a fellow racer in need of hands or parts whether they are a teammate or the competition. "No one wants to win by having no one to race against," he said.

Pimm suffered an accident during the last race of the season just a few short weeks ago. He was racing on a clay track and was on the inside of a turn. The track was slippery, the racer running on the outside of the turn spun out and Pimm broadsided him, ran up and over the other racer and flipped backwards. The mower he was riding was totaled, suffer-

ing irreparable damage to the frame. Luckily, no one was hurt. Finnerty and Pimm are currently rebuilding four new racers, including a super modified twin mower, for next season. It is the fastest class mower anyone can race and is capable of reaching speeds of up to 100 mph on a straight-away. The racer is costing Finnerty almost \$3,000 to modify and more time than money.

Both men said lawnmower racing can be an expensive hobby but provides an opportunity to meet people and make connections that make things cheaper

and easier. "Almost everyone is willing to help you out," Pimm said. The two are planning a Build Clinic for February or March, open to anyone who wants to learn more about the sport or anyone who wants to learn how to build their own racer. They are hoping more people from the area get interested in lawnmower racing so they can host more events locally.

The closest official track is currently in Tower City. Pimm and Finnerty are hoping to increase the size of the local racing chapter to get a track closer to home.



Ashtun Pimm practices driving his father's lawnmower racer for when he is big enough to race by himself.



Martha Baird is in control of the kitchen at the Trucksville United Methodist Church Election Day Café.



Debbie Shilanski helps at the Trucksville United Methodist Church where an Election Day Café feeds streams of citizens.

A cafe for the hungry

The Trucksville United Methodist Church was the place to be on Election Day if you were hungry. An Election Day Café fed voters and benefited Mother Teresa's Haven, previous known as Vision.



Craig and Karen Williams, of Trucksville, appreciate their lunch order from the Trucksville United Methodist Church Election Day Café.

PROPERTY TRANSFERS

The following transfers of Back Mountain properties were recorded in the Luzerne County Office of Recorder of Deeds for the week of Nov. 5-9, 2012:

- Wilkes-Barre City Industrial Development Authority to Bank of America, 2325 Memorial Highway, Dallas; \$350,000
- Bank of America to First Keystone Community Bank, 2325 Memorial Highway, Dallas Borough; \$311,309
- Silas Blain (administrator), William H. Blaine (estate) to Steven Rusell, Ross Township; \$11,000
- Deepak and Mahima Singh to Matthew S. and Sarah S. Bruno, Pinetree Estates, Jackson Township; \$470,000
- Emerino Marchetti (executor), Emerino John Marchetti (estate) to Susan Norris, Unit 104, Building A, Orchard East, Dallas Township; \$85,000
- Jason Morini to Douglas E. and Wendy A. Frantz, Laurel Rest Building, Harveys Lake Borough; \$112,000
- Robert W.F. and Carole Tabor to Kara M. Demarco and Bruce M. Ridilla, 1341 Mountain View Drive, Lehman Township; \$275,000
- Anna Buonsante to Deepak and Mahima Singh, Bulford Farms, Jackson Township; \$632,500
- Thomas Charles Cully (executor), Kathryn G. Cully (estate) to Kate L. Conmy, Lot 1 Mount V Greenwood Heights, Kingston Township; \$115,000
- Richard M. Hoyes (trustee), Robert M. and Gertrude M. Hoyes Revocable Living Trust to Rich Closs, Lot 34, Perrin Plot, Kingston Township; \$122,000
- Matthew A. Shedletsky to Derek Johnson, Kingston Township; \$118,000
- Anne G. Robinson to Matthew Thomas Blockus and Nicole Lynn Sudal, Lot 107, Meadowcrest Subdivision, Kingston Township; \$199,000
- Angela B. Bonomo to Mark Callahan and Angela B. Bonomo, 1145 Marchakitus Road, Lehman Township; \$1

PennDOT sets contest

Young Pennsylvania students are invited to learn about aviation and express their creativity through the PennDOT Bureau of Aviation's annual art contest.

This year's contest theme, "50 Years of American Space Flight," encourages students to learn more about aviation, from airplane to flights into space. Entries will be judged in

two divisions: first through third grades and fourth and fifth grades. Entries must be post-marked by Nov. 29.

There will be 22 statewide winners, with one winner from each division selected from each of PennDOT's 11 district offices. Winners will receive a certificate

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST