

*Do it in the Dirt*



**WELLAND COUNTY  
SPEEDWAY**

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**M.C.  
CANADA**

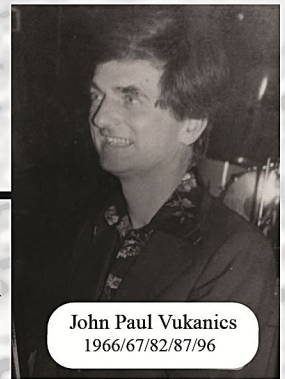
# **RACE DAY**



# A little Bit of Track History

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**A little over 50 years ago Welland County Motorcycle Club put on Scrambles & Hillclimbs on the Leslie Farm in Fonthill. Circa 1957**



We would load the food booth, the (Johnny on the Spots) in John Vukanics & Ron Putman's trucks at the Club House and head off to Fonthill to set up for Race Day.

It was always John's dream we build a race track on our own property to avoid all this moving of equipment for the two scrambles and two hill climbs we put on each year.

The holes had to be dug for the (Johnny on the Spots), then they were assembled with hook and eye fasteners, seats put in place and tissue mounted on dispensers.

While the course was being marked out a second group were assembling and setting up the Food Booth.

Next it was time to place a couple Club members at the road allowance to collect admissions and direct vehicles to the parking area. These events were an important source of income for the Club; it allowed us to buy more property. Again from our neighbour, member, Chester Osten's mother.

The registration table was the next on the order. All of our competition events were Canadian Motorcycle Association (CMA) sanctioned which meant CMA memberships had to be checked and new memberships sold as required to register. The insurance provided by the CMA sanction was important due to the potential danger of motorcycle sport, so that riders, the property owner (Mrs. Leslie) and WCMC were covered in the event of any unhappy endings.

With St. John's Ambulance, the CMA referee and WCMC member corner marshals in place let the good times roll.

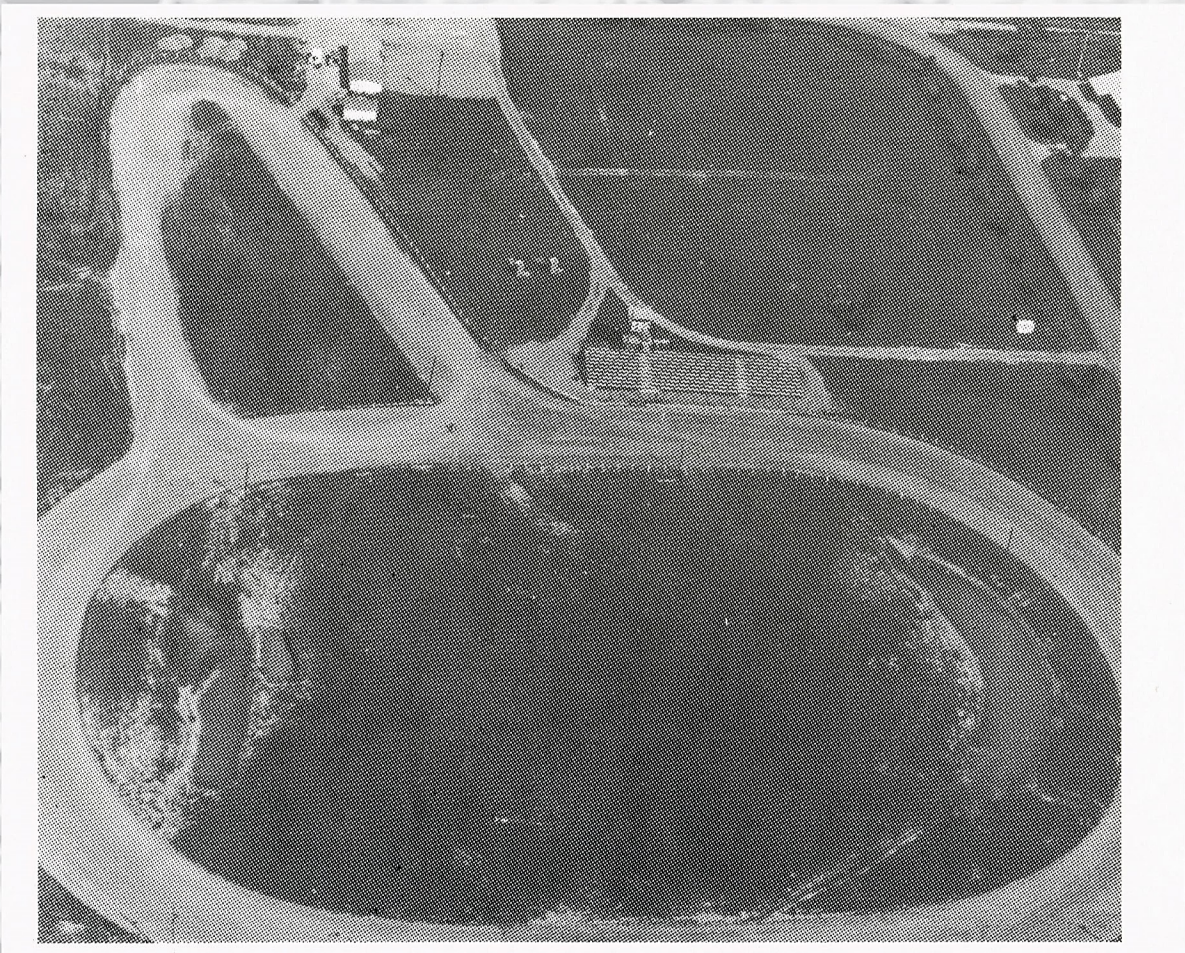
The Races took all afternoon and a great time was had by all.

The Food Booth and other equipment would have to be taken down loaded back in the trucks and taken back to the Club.

In the later part of the 60's and our race track roughed out the Saint Lawrence Seaway approached us. They were realigning the Welland Shipping Canal and needed our land for realignment of Netherby Road and new rail line.

It was a stressful time for the Club. At one point we thought we might be completely expropriated and have to relocate. In the end the Seaway settled for xx feet off the back straight. In return our five acres went to 23 (?) acres giving us the motocross track area, the campground and overflow parking.

We were so happy that night, as was the intoxicated Seaway man who delivered the news, he backed out of our driveway into the ditch across the road.



**The “TT Track” as built in 1970**

This was the turning point and the start of ***Dirt Track Racing in Welland on our property***. We built a ¼ mile oval with a TT (“Tourist Trophy”) track in 1970 with a right turn off the front straight going back towards the Clubhouse with a left hairpin and a jump back onto the track in turn one.

Doug Browes, a CN railway surveyor - Todd Fournier’s grandfather – was transferred to Welland for the major railway relocation caused by the canal project, promptly joined the Club. Doug laid out the track using his engineering skills. John Vukanics brought numerous loads of stone. The track was graded by Ghislain Loubier, a Seaway heavy equipment operator, for almost 48 hours continuously so he could have the borrowed equipment back to our benefactor by Monday morning start of work day. Ghislain also joined the Club.

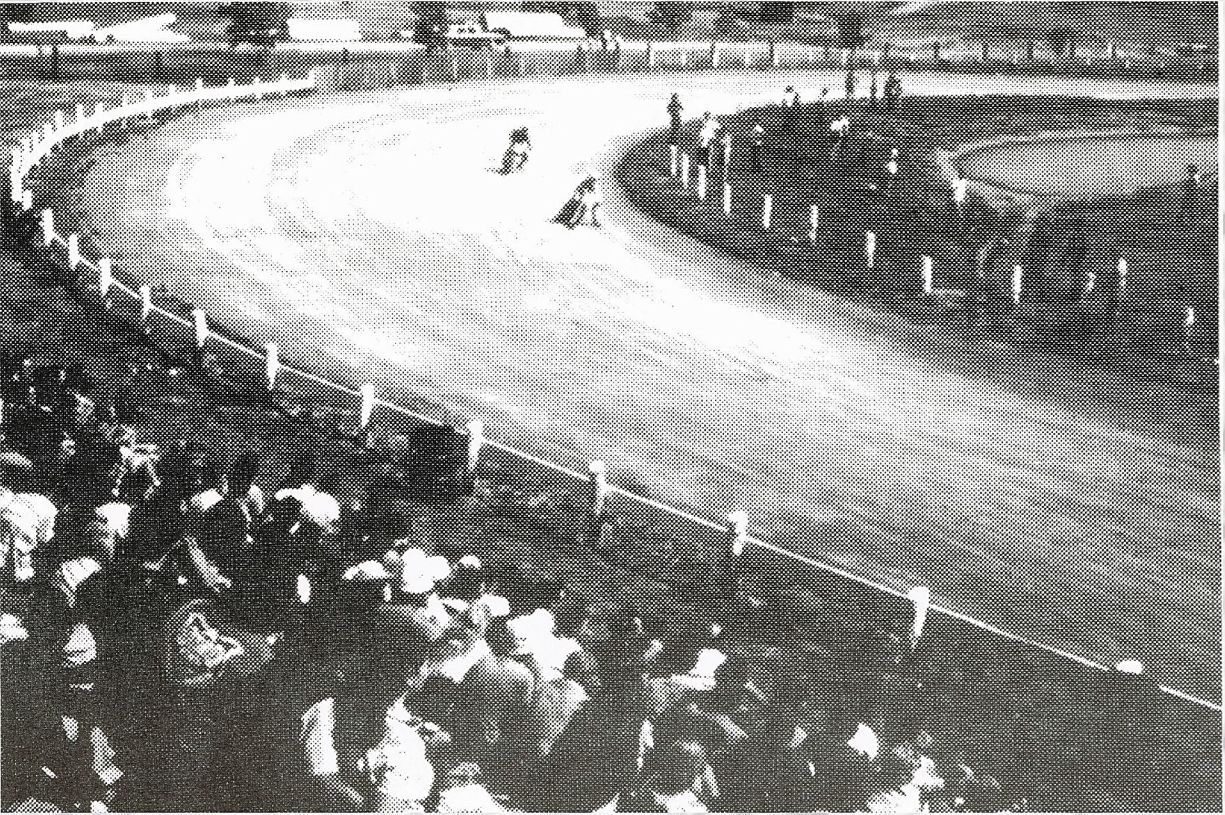
During the fall and spring lights were put in thanks to ***Bill O’Sullivan, Jean Chabot, Fred Hunt and Chester Osten***. All Club members but these were special, all were electricians. Better still they came with their own borrowed-from-the-boss heavy equipment.

The first Grandstand and Scoring Tower were built with many club members participating in the projects.

Three races were run that summer, but the financial picture was not good. It was not looking good for the continuation of Racing at the track.

***Wes Pierce*** ran the track for a full year with good crowds and built a second Grandstands financed by his wife ***Iris Pierce***. The Club built washrooms and then expanded them as crowds made the weekly racing program successful.

The first race was held in the fall of 1970, on a Sunday afternoon with borrowed Grandstands from the City of Port Colborne.



## 1971 Turn Four as seen from the Grandstands

Since the beginning things have not gone as smoothly as all had hoped. Financial set backs, bad weather, lack of spectators, the loss of some of the most popular classes due to riders finding it too hard financially to compete.

It was somewhere around 1973 with the help of Stan Bradbury that Wes Pierce was able to have the first Speedway races and many came from New York State, Ohio, Ontario and Quebec. It became so popular that it became a CMA class and Welland held the annual Canadian National Speedway Championship for many years.

On the plus side we were blessed by the skills of *Wes Pierce*, the most popular race announcer east of the Mississippi. Though sometimes embarrassed by his risqué non-stop humour which tended to become more risqué towards the end of the evening as the thirst quenching beers went down.

*Wes* developed characters for the most popular racers: *Hotdog Freddy Legaultgo, Lightening Len Dillon, Jumpin' Jeff Orosz, Stylin' Kyle Legault, The Polish Prince, Dirt Bike Brown, The Baconator, Showtime Hunter Bauer* to name a few. Many fans came just to hear *Wes*' announcing.

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We do it because we love the sport.

We do it because the Racers love to Race.

We do it because the Fans love to watch.

But this is  
RACING at WELLAND COUNTY SPEEDWAY  
for  
50 YEARS

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