**DRIVER OF THE YEAR 2019**

Anyone remember what is was like, as a child, when you got sit in the front seat of the family car? Remember your first bicycle, what a thrill. How fast will it go? Then you said to your friend, I will race you!! Who won? We all have a bit of the racer in us, some carry the dream thru their entire life and get to live it. When this turns into a successful season as a driver, we honor that accomplishment.

But where does it begin – it starts with the first car. Our nominee probably got the go-fast bug in high school. I heard a rumor the first was a 71 Chevelle with stripes down the hood but just not fast enough. So a Z-28 was bought – a cool car but only a bit faster, not enough for Rocket Man, as he was nicknamed.

Years went by, and in 2011 our enthusiastic driver showed up at the track ready to race. The newcomer to our sport had a real sleek and aero race car but unfortunately the favorite motorcycle engine of the class was famous for burning up (is that called a car-b-que?) After a lot of frustrations, logic said to go get some help, and our driver arrived at a prep shop known throughout the Midwest. Now it so happened that the new motor of choice was chosen, but – it would not fit without a lot of extensive modifications to the car. But since racing in 2012 and 2013, seeing that dedication and the heartache of mechanical gremlins, go hand in hand, he was encouraged to move ahead with the new engine of choice. Our driver, now turned fabricator, under the tutelage of the friendly prep facility, got a Sawzall and other tools, all to cut much of his race car into loose parts.

You have to be strongminded as a driver to take your expensive race car and cut it in half with NO blueprints from the manufacturer. But our nominee is a person who must learn all the details of a project, and modifying a car to fit a motor is not a project for the faint of heart.

He persevered with great enthusiasm, the project was finished with help along the way, and he attacked the track once again. When 2014 rolled around our driver upgraded to a more competitive class. Thru 2015 into 2016 and 2017 our driver raced, gained experience, and the heartaches were less and less. All this dedication would lead up to this season past. At four tracks this summer – every race he entered, our nominee was first in class, (7) first place out of (7) races.

Outside of that, our driver is an enthusiastic competitor in the sports racing world and his knowledge has helped his career so much, we see that in 2019 successes. He is most willing to share his time and knowledge with others in racing, such an asset in our club.

In the P1 Class, he is 1st in points in the Northern Conference and 1st in points in the Division in a very hard fought class.

We are proud to award the 2019 Driver of the Year to Gary Peck