

# R Rotary Express



Service Above Self

Rotary Club of Harrisonville - Rotary District 6080 - Club 2368

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Alaska Ear

Mower race won by runner

ALL IN GOOD FUN: Loose rules make for eccentric fair event.

By RINDI WHITE

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## FUNDraising!

PALMER -- They didn't know what they were doing, but they knew how to cheat and win.

The field of contenders in the first-ever lawn mower race at the Alaska State Fair last week was small. They were: driver Zack Kondas, 16, and pit men Dwight Seale, 15, and Jobe Fredericksen, 17, who arrived piled on a Murray riding mower and outfitted in orange and army-green jumpsuits; Randy Boles from Lake of the Ozarks, Mo., riding a borrowed mower; Kendal Hamilton of Wasilla on a possibly stolen mower; Adam Johnson, 14, whose race strategy was to run behind a push mower; and Chris Walker, whose John Deere was still hot from cutting grass on lawns across the street from the fairgrounds.

They were even shorter on racing experience. Boles was the only contender who had even seen lawn mower racing before.

"We thought it would be really badass to just come out here and race. Then we found out there was money involved, and we were way more into it," Seale said.

"We're in it for the bragging rights," Fredericksen added.

Kondas raced the 13-horsepower mower with the mowing deck removed. In competitive lawn mower races Outside, that kind of stripping down could get a driver sidelined, but the rules were loose at this event. So loose, in fact, that Johnson got away with cheating. Or at least that's what the other competitors called it when he and his push mower easily outran the rest of the field.

"Dude, that seriously should be disqualified. That is so lame," Fredericksen said, shouting from the pit when Johnson breezed by the others puttering around a snaking course in the grandstand racing arena during the three-lap main event.

Spitting and cursing ensued when Johnson passed Kondas a second time, putting him a full lap ahead just before the finish line.

Boles came the closest to catching Johnson, but some might say he cheated, too. Midway through the race, his 17-horsepower Craftsman shot ahead of the other racers to take second place.

Asked later about his trick, he said he was able to override the governor and open the throttle wide, a trick he learned racing go-carts. But a lap and a half with a wide-open throttle overheated the engine on his borrowed mower and sapped the battery so much that Boles spent the rest of the races on the sideline. Hamilton, on board his stolen mower, came in third. After the race, he said he didn't steal the mower so much as borrow it from his neighbors. Only they weren't home. And they didn't know he was taking it.

But what else is a guy with a push mower to do on race day?

With a crowd of more than 50 in the grandstands cheering them on, racers completed three more exhibition-style heats after the main event.

At the end, when the racers gathered under the pit tent for their prize money, they agreed to split the purse, giving each \$180 plus gift certificates.

Lawn mower racing is a serious competitive sport Outside. Twelve Mile, Ind., has held a yearly July 4 lawn mower race since 1963. The sport has gained popularity throughout the Midwest and beyond. There are two racing associations in the United States and others in England, Canada and Australia. There's also a video game, "Lawnmower Racing Mania 2007," and many Web sites about the sport.

Events specialist Wanda Geist-Dittman told racers the fair would feature the event again next year, although she planned to specify that the mowers must be of the riding variety.

## Officers and Board Members 2008 - 2009

President: ..... Nancy Shelton  
President-elect ..... Jim Clayton  
Vice-President ..... Richard Lloyd  
Secretary ..... Jill Filer  
Treasurer:..... Gabe Sweitzer  
Sgt-at-Arms:..... Tate Wood  
Director:..... Chuck Weedman  
Director:..... Daryl Veatch  
Director ..... Tracy Goff  
Past-President ..... Phil Klinkhardt

### MEETINGS

Wednesdays at noon  
The Branding Iron  
in Landmark Plaza

### THIS MONTH'S BIRTHDAYS

Scott Ricker	9/3
Sonya McLelland	9/5
Ann Britt	9/22
Mark Lockard	9/28
Carol Looney	9/30

### THIS MONTH'S ANNIVERSARIES

Wendell Yeager	9/8
Teresa Hensley	9/15
Jim Corless	9/25



### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Sept 3	Class: Chris Benjamin
Sept 10	Carol Looney
Sept 17	Chad Patterson
Sept 24	Wendell Yeager
Oct 1	Bob Huston
Oct 8	CASCO PICNIC

### Newsletter Contact Information

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New Generations Month

Proposed new member: R.J. Knox of Hawthorn Bank

**Harrisonville Rotary Club  
Minutes of Board Meeting  
September 2, 2008 - 4 p.m. – Hawthorn Bank**

Present: Nancy Shelton, Chuck Weedman, Jim Clayton, Richard Lloyd, Daryl Veatch, Tracy Goff, Phil Klinkhardt and Gabe Sweitzer.

The minutes of the August 5 and 13 board meetings were approved.

The treasurer's report was approved. Gabe reported on the status of Flag Day collections: Jim Murphy and Shannon Hutson to review and determine which sites to be dropped.

**Old Business**

The status of member in arrears on dues and meals has been resolved.

**New Business**

Scott Ricker and Dave Defeo have been granted leaves of absence. Scott's leave will run from July 23 to October 1; Dave's will run for six months from August 1.

Gabe Sweitzer submitted to the board for membership consideration - R.J. Knox of Hawthorn Bank. R.J.'s name will be printed in the newsletter for consideration by the full membership.

Nancy will submit a Survey from Rotary International on D&O coverage. Nancy identified that we have \$1 million liability coverage for incidents relating to Rotary sponsored activities through Rotary International.

Phil is to encourage the Bel-Ray Rotary Club to co-sponsor the Gas Raffle. Targeted date for the raffle is 8 weeks starting in September.

Future Board Meetings are scheduled for the BC National Banks' board room, 401 E. Mechanic, Harrisonville

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Board on \_\_\_\_\_, 2008