June 30th

By Mike Weber

St. Helens drivers Bob Berg, Jim Potter and Joel Beehler each won stock car racing main events in the sixth round of the Columbia County Racing Association (CCRA) series June 30 at River City Speedway in St. Helens.

Berg, 54, had both of his identical looking Cozy Lawn Maintenance sponsored 1997 Dodge Neons in victory lane in two CCRA mains. Berg, 54, drove his Eaton's Tire & Service Center Neon to victory in the Tuner Division main, trophy dash and heat race. Potter drove Berg's Green Lion sponsored Neon to victory in the Four Cylinder Division main.

Berg led from start-to-finish in the four car, 25-lap Tuner main and won by a straightaway length over Kelso's Joel Davis, who took second in his Economy Auto Wrecking 1996 Nissan. Sande Simmet of Vancouver was third and Brian Hector of Portland was fourth.

"It would've been better if we had a few more cars to race with, but I still had lots of fun," said Berg, who leads the point standings over runnerup Joel Davis in the new Tuner Division class. "Joel's car was running good and he's been doing lots of work on his car to get it working a little better for him. Joel did a pretty good job in trying to stay close to me throughout the race. I have to give lots of credit to CCRA President Darrin Rye for helping us get both cars running so well and he's really just done a great job."

Davis, 57, won the 2017 Four Cylinder Division title while Berg was runnerup in the standings. Both drivers liked the challenge of racing faster cars and decided to compete in this year's new CCRA motorsport division.

"It's been kind of new experience for me in the Tuner class, but I like it a lot and I think Bob and I had our cars running pretty good in Saturday's race," said Davis, who is getting married this weekend to Mary Simonson. "Bob is always tough to beat and he's a really good driver. I've had a pretty bad case of hay fever recently and I had some trouble breathing, so I wasn't feeling to well late in the race, but I did OK in trying to overcome that problem."

Potter had a phenomenal performance in the Mad Money Four Cylinder main as he came from last place to first to get the thrilling win. Potter started fifth in the 15-car field and moved into second place by lap 17. Potter had some bad luck though as he had a left front flat tire and exited to the pits to make a quick tire change.

Potter returned to the quarter-quarter mile clay oval track but he was behind all 15 competitors at the rear of the field. Potter gradually chipped away and passed all the cars and maneuvered up front. Potter then passed Max Sanford on the outside of the front straightaway on the final circuit of the 40-lap race to get the win, including a lucrative $300 first place prize. Sanford was second, followed by Derek Vorseth, Don Briggs and Jason Scheibel to round out the top-five.

"It was pretty exciting and it ended up being a little bit more work than what I expected," said Potter. "I was glad to get the win, because it was actually the first time that I've ever won a Four Cylinder Division main. I've been helping Bob work on his cars recently and we built a new engine and it was the first time we drove it after doing the rebuilding job on the car."

Potter, Cody Scouller and Scheibel won heat races. Vancouver's Sam Simmet was a two-time winner as he won heat 4 and the trophy dash.

Potter's son Ryan, 14, drove his NWIS Zingshot 1998 Neon to victory in the Tracer Division heat race. Kelso's Trenton Brogan, 14, won his fourth straight Tracer Division main event in his Ram Light Truck Salvage 1996 Nissan Altima. Longview's Wendy Vough, who won the trophy dash, took second in the main, followed by Dekota Vorseth, Potter and Paige Gump.

Driving the CLT Trucking/Hoyt Construction 1985 Chevrolet Monte Carlo owned by Greg Brumbaugh of St. Helens, Beehler led all the way and won the 25-lap Street Stock main. Beehler won by a straightaway margin over runnerup Herb Thomas of St. Helens. Trevor Lively took third, followed by Natasha Rye of Warren and Tom Zywicki of Portland.

It marked the first ever Street Stock main event win for Beehler, 25, the 2011 Four Cylinder Division champion. The victory followed his win in the last event June 16, in which Beehler won his first ever Sportsman Division main. As a matter of fact, Beehler's win was one for the record books.

"It was pretty exciting to win the Street Stock main for the first time ever," said Beehler, who was a two-time winner since he also won the trophy dash. "I had a good time and I sure like driving Greg's car. I'm a co-driver with Greg, so I drive his car quite often and this was actually just my second time that I've ever competed in a Street Stock Division race."

Beehler is only the third driver in the speedway's 34-year history to win main events in three separate CCRA motorsport classifications. St. Helens drivers Scott Dorie and Gannin Thomas (Modified, Street Stock, Sportsman) have also won main events in three different CCRA divisions. Dorie, 60, is actually the only driver to win mains in four classifications (Modified, Dwarf Cars, Street Stock, Sportsman).

The CCRA's seventh race on at the Columbia County Fairgrounds facility is July 7.