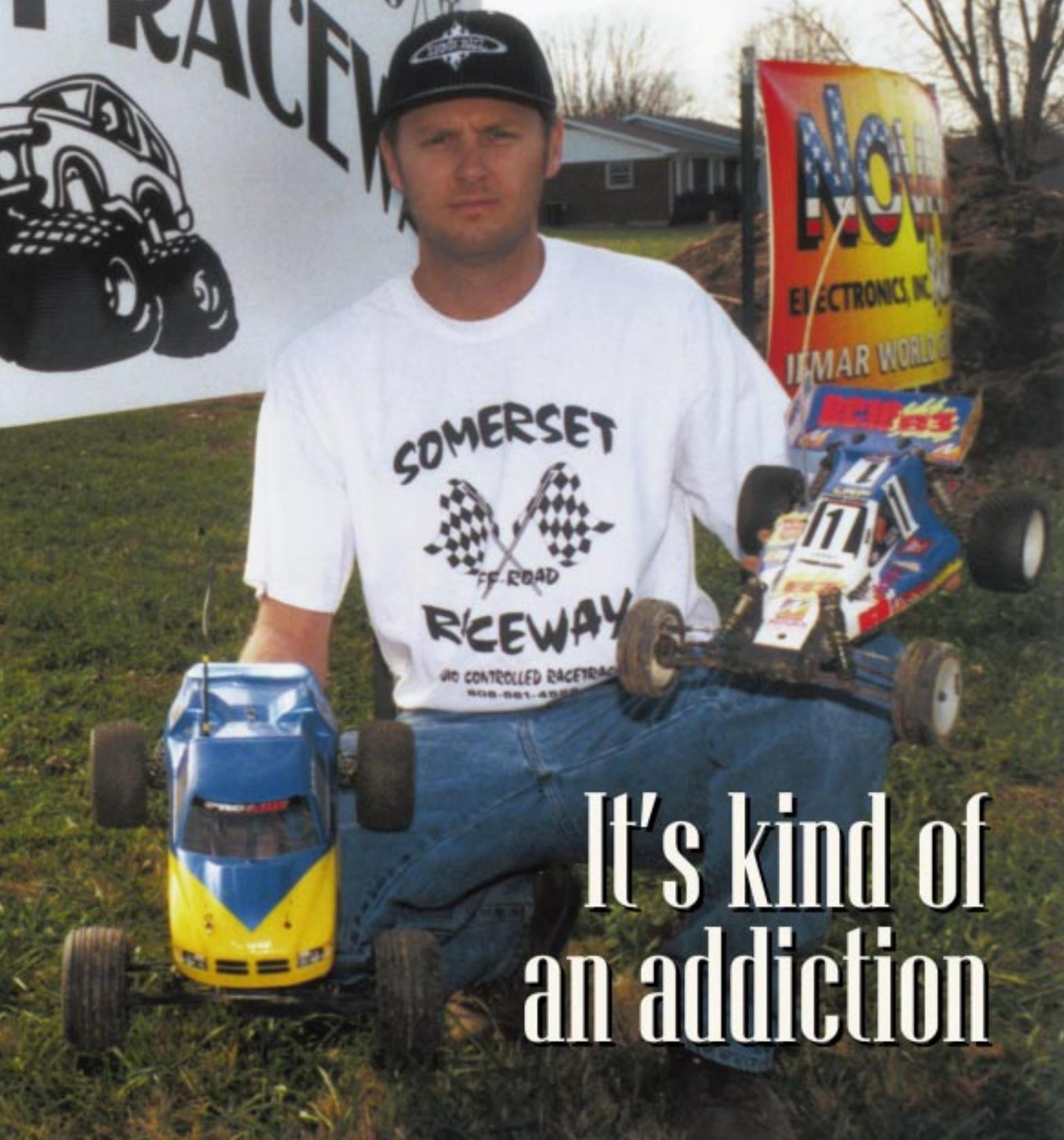


Discovering

SOUTHERN KENTUCKY



It's kind of
an addiction

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About the cover:

Denny Halcomb, owner of Somerset Raceway, with remote-controlled truck and buggy. Photo by Dale G. Morton

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DISCOVERING SOUTHERN KENTUCKY is a supplement to *Kentucky Living* magazine and is published by the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, Louisville, KY, and by South Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation, P.O. Box 910, Somerset, KY 42502, (606) 678-4121 with offices in: Albany (606) 387-6476; Monticello (606) 348-6771; Russell Springs (270) 866-3439; Whitley City (606) 376-5997.

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WATT'S COOKING

Chicken Done Right

It's the year 2000, and you have made your annual New Year's Resolution to lose weight. Chicken is one of the leanest meats you can eat, but you are getting tired of it already. Here are some recipes to add pizzazz to your poultry. They were contributed by the Cumberland County Extension Homemakers. For more information on joining the homemakers, contact your local extension office.

Chicken Rice Waldorf Salad

1 cup instant brown rice
1 cup mayonnaise (fat-free or lowfat)
1 large red apple, diced
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 cups cooked chicken, diced
1 cup celery, diced
1 cup seedless green grapes

Prepare rice as directed on box. Mix in mayonnaise. Mix apple with lemon juice and stir into the rice mixture with remaining ingredients. Chill and serve.

Poppy Seed Chicken

6 chicken breast halves
dash of salt, pepper, and garlic powder
1 can cream of chicken soup
1-1/2 cups sour cream
2 tablespoons chicken broth
40 round buttery crackers (lowfat)
1 tablespoon poppy seeds
3 tablespoons melted lowfat margarine
2 cups cooked rice

Place chicken in a pot and add water to cover. Add salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Cook until chicken is done.

When chicken has cooled, chop into bite-sized pieces.

Mix sour cream, chicken soup, and chicken broth.

Crush crackers with melted margarine and poppy seeds.

Place rice on the bottom of a spray-treated casserole dish. Top with chicken and spread sour cream mixture over chicken. Top with poppy seed mixture.

Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 30 minutes.

10-Minute Szechuan Chicken

4 skinless chicken breasts
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon canola oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
5 tablespoons soy sauce (low salt)
1-1/2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar

1/4 cup water

6 green onions, cut into 1-inch pieces

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Cut chicken into 1-1/2-inch cubes. Lightly toss with cornstarch in bag to coat.

Heat oil in skillet or wok. Stir-fry chicken and garlic until lightly browned. Add soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and water. Cover and cook about 3 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

Add green onions and cayenne pepper and cook, uncovered, about 2 minutes.

Cheaters Chicken Pot Pie

1 jar fat-free chicken gravy
1 package frozen mixed vegetables
2-3 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
2 frozen pie shells

Allow one pie shell to completely thaw and preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Allow other pie shell to slightly thaw and use a fork to pierce the shell to prevent bubbling. Place second pie shell in oven to slightly brown.

Cook chicken gravy and chicken on medium heat until hot. Fully cook vegetables according to package, and combine them with chicken mixture.

Pour ingredients into the browned pie shell.

Use first pie shell for the top crust. Place on top and pinch sides to close the pie. Be sure to cut at least two slits in the top pie crust to vent.

Bake 30 minutes or until brown.

Tips for Chicken

- Always remove the skin from the chicken. The skin contains most of the fat.
- To fry, use a non-stick skillet and cooking spray, or put oil in a spritz bottle so you'll use less.
- When marinating, always use low-fat or fat-free dressings, soups, etc.

DSK



It's kind of

Story and photos by Dale G. Morton



Think of off-road auto racing and Baja leaps immediately to mind. A smaller, but no less exciting form of this competition style has sprung to the forefront of the Lake Cumberland area sports scene.

Somerset Raceway, owned and operated by Denny Halcomb of Burnside, opened last May and immediately filled a void in the remote-controlled (RC) auto racing hobby.

"It is the only outdoor RC off-road track that runs on an organized schedule" in Kentucky, said the 36-year-old Halcomb. "The main reason I got into it is because I saw there was really nowhere

The seven-tenths scale mile circuit, which contains two whoop sections, a tabletop jump, five single and two double jumps, and a supercross double section, was designed based upon Halcomb's knowledge and experience as a champion motocross racer.

"It's a lot like a miniature motocross track. It's the same concept," said Halcomb, who in 1997 captured the 30-plus and 125 class championships on a Kawasaki at Daniel Boone Motocross in neighboring Laurel County. No longer willing to trade trophies for the potential of injury, he turned his full attention to one of a varied portfolio of hobbies, including bow hunting and playing in a rock band.

Somerset Raceway is distinguished by the lack of a long, flat straight—a pur-

You can't unbox a \$49.95 special and be competitive. RC cars capable of competing at this level are highly technical, one-tenth scale models requiring constant fine-tuning and attention.

There are two main types of stock RC cars—a truck, defined by a heavier suspension and flatter tires, "which absorb the jumps better," and a buggy, which is lighter and harder to drive "because they're a lot less forgiving," Halcomb said. "They're more touchy to control; your driving has to be much more precise."

And it helps to have a general knowledge of automotive skills to properly "set up," or prepare, a car for a race. Caster, shock oil weights for the independent front and rear suspensions, transmission gear ratios, proper toe-in, and selection of tires with the right rubber compound and tread design are all valuable skills.

an

addiction

in the state of Kentucky to run off-road remote control."

"There are other backyard tracks, but this is more organized," agreed racer Bruce Coffman of Danville. "The others are nothing like what Denny's put together here. It's a lot of time and effort."

Halcomb began construction of Somerset Raceway in April 1999 on a portion of his family's property in Indian Hills subdivision off Parkers Mill Road just south of Somerset.

With assistance from Kevin Bishop, Brad Herrman, and Jim Walkuski, Halcomb transformed a weedy piece of ground that used to be his dad's potato patch into a 365-foot long, 8-foot wide track. They marked off the layout with spray paint; repeatedly tilled, raked, and rolled the dirt to remove rock; then fashioned the layout using four or five loads of topsoil mixed with some clay to promote compaction.

poseful design element that ensures parity. "We run stock motors only. By making the track as technical as it is ... there's no place for somebody with the best equipment to come in and just dominate," Halcomb said. "It makes everybody drive the same track."

During the off season, Halcomb plans to double the size of the raised wooden driver's stand, add a shed for the computer system, and create an area in the driveway of a large black and red feed barn to accommodate pit tables.

Participating in RC racing requires more than just a rudimentary interest.

"Anything you would do to set up a real car is what you do to these," said Jason Moore of Stanford.

"Everything's more advanced," added Coffman.

"These (cars) are expensive," noted Moore, who has been active in the hobby for about 11 years. "To be competitive, it's \$500 at least just to have the basics. And that's assuming you own your own tools."

A well-stocked pit box—often a supersized compartmented tool box—will include at least four rechargeable batteries, miscellaneous electrical connectors, soldering iron, a wide assortment of replacement parts, and



several sets of tires at \$18 a pair. A majority of contestants will enter a car in each class.

Because of the cost, Halcomb recommended that anyone considering entering this hobby should contact him to learn what type of equipment to purchase.

Although preparing to begin only its second season, Somerset Raceway hosted the Kentucky State Off-Road RC Championships this past fall.

Capturing top honors in both the truck and buggy classes was Roger Maynard of Campbellsville, who has been an avid hobbyist for the past eight years.

"I'd always wanted to race them when I was younger, but it wasn't until eight years ago that I went to see a race and became immediately hooked. I bought (a car) before I left the track," Maynard said. "It's kind of an addiction. It's not, 'Are you going racing?' It's 'Where are you going racing?'"

Races, normally held on Sunday afternoons, are structured much like their full-sized counterparts. Each car competes in two "heats" to determine average qualifying times, with the fastest cars moving up for the main event. Up to 10 cars can be entered in each race, which last four action-packed minutes.

A special RC Racetrack Management computer program is used to track lap speeds, lap leaders, and to sort racers by position. Track records in the various categories are also kept.

Halcomb anticipates being able to add a transponder system in the near future, which will allow the computer to clock times to within one-tenth of a second using a special sensor at the finish line and an electronic signal in each car.

Crashes are as common as the spectacular jumps, where cars can be propelled more than 3 feet above the ground and distances up to 15 feet, depending upon the track layout. "It's nothing to see them wreck and see parts fly off," Maynard said. "I've seen wheels fly off."

The propensity for crashes means every race requires the services of nimble turn marshals—individuals who must right overturned cars or place an errant racer back on the track. "It's an important job," said Halcomb. "If they're slow to react, it can cost someone the race."

Between races, car owners return to

the pits to service their vehicles. "The main thing you do between races is to check all the screws to make sure everything stays tight," said Maynard, noting the jarring impacts can quickly take a toll on an ill-prepared vehicle.

Despite RC racing's technical aspects, the most expensive equipment means little if an operator has not developed critical throttle control skills. "It's touch and technique," Maynard said. "Most cars are at the same speed. Twenty-five percent is setting the car up correctly for the track and your abilities, the remaining 75 percent is the touch of the driver."

One of the most difficult elements to master is learning to turn the controls opposite the way you want the car to turn when it is coming toward you.

Lack of experience, however, should not deter pursuit of an interest in RC racing, Maynard stressed. "Most everywhere you go you'll find someone that's willing to try to help you out. We're out here to have fun, we're not out here to



"There ain't nothing close" to the excitement of RC racing.

make money."

With most race purses paying little more than double the \$10 entry fee for first place, it is easy to understand that drivers are motivated by the same convictions as a golfer, bridge player, or stamp collector. "Any sport or hobby you get into, it's mainly for the competition," Maynard said.

"There ain't nothing close" to the

excitement of RC racing, said Jeff Vanarsdale of Greensburg, who has been racing about one year. "It's a ball. We have a ton of fun and I like to work on (the cars) too. I'm likely to tear the whole thing apart and clean them every week."

A core group of about a dozen racers participated in the 10-race schedule during 1999. They were drawn to the track primarily through word-of-mouth advertising. As information about the facility spreads through brochures, news articles, and a brand-new presence on the Internet (the site was still under construction in December), many more enthusiasts are expected to participate.

"In the last month, we've picked up two or three people from here in Somerset, and several from Lexington," Halcomb said.

Mike Pellegrini, who operates Slick As A Minnow hobby store in Burnside, said he mainly focused on water sports until learning about Halcomb's track. "I didn't even know there was a track here. Then I met Denny and decided to work with him to see what (racers) might need. There are some things you can't get around here locally, so we thought we'd try to help these guys out."

Other assistance has come in the form of sponsorships from On View Video, South 27 Auto Parts, Car Quest, Somerset Automotive, Novak Electronics, Gold Star Chili, Grand Central Car Wash, Associated Electronics, and Hot Bodies.

Jared Kirkwood of Lexington made his first appearance at Somerset Raceway in late November, and indicated he had every intention of being a regular for the 2000 season, which will begin in April.

Kirkwood's fascination with racing dates back to when he was a kid. Like many youthful endeavors, however, the lure of other interests refocused his attention. "Then I graduated from college and dug (the car) out of the closet."

Off-road racing has advantages over other types of RC models, Coffman noted. "I looked at (remote controlled) planes and boats. If you wreck a plane, it breaks. If a boat runs out of gas in the middle of a lake, you lose it. If you wreck a car, you simply turn it over and continue."

For more information on Somerset Raceway, you can contact Halcomb at (606) 561-4522 or by e-mail at halcomb@hyperaction.net. **DSK**

The Lincoln Penny

By Roger Tate, Somerset Community College History Professor

In September of 1901, a deranged assassin shot and fatally wounded President McKinley. This act of insanity propelled Theodore Roosevelt into the nation's highest office.

A mere 43 years old, the impetuous, temperamental, pugnacious, and brilliant Roosevelt promised to be one of the most colorful personalities in American politics, and, within a short time, he had fulfilled that promise amply.

As a gesture of respect to the martyred McKinley, President Roosevelt insisted he would continue the Ohioan's policy of "standing pat." However, it soon became apparent that the new president had the most positive conception of the office since Andrew Jackson.

In his first message to Congress, Roosevelt proposed regulation of monopolies, railroads, and banks; the creation of a commerce department; new immigration policies; conservation, irrigation, and reclamation in the West; an improved merchant marine; an expanded army; a larger navy; a canal in Panama; a new building for the Smithsonian; and more money for the Library of Congress!

No American of this time was more national in his interests or universal in his friendships than Theodore Roosevelt. He constantly invited writers and artists to his legendary White House breakfasts where the guests stared in amazement as the president greedily ate a rasher of bacon, a dozen eggs, and washed it down with five or six scalding hot cups of coffee.

No issue was too small for the President's attention. He remodeled the White House, beautified Washington, D.C., and launched a crusade to improve the artistic quality of the nation's stamps, coins, and currency.

In 1909 the U.S. planned to celebrate the centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. A new coin issued in that year was a part of the commemorative effort. It was the Lincoln penny, the

first portrait ever issued in a regular coinage series.

Prejudice against portraits on coins had existed in the United States for many years. Because of this bias, previous efforts to place Washington on the two-cent piece and Lincoln on the nickel had been unsuccessful.

In another respect, the Lincoln penny of 1909 broke with tradition. It was the design of an independent artist, Victor David Brenner, rather than the work of a mint employee.

Because of its "radical departure" from the coinage tradition of the U.S., the Lincoln coin sparked a lively controversy.

While vacationing at Oyster Bay in July 1908, Roosevelt sat for a portrait to be used on the Panama Canal Medal. The sculptor chosen to execute this work was Brenner, a Russian-born Jewish immigrant already famous for his jewelry and medallions.

A friendship soon developed between the artist and the President. In many respects their interests and tastes were similar. Both were enthusiastic about an artistic coinage for the United States. On the subject of Lincoln, the two men were of one mind—the rail splitter was a hero.

The Lincoln penny, released in August 1909, bore on the obverse side a portrait of Lincoln, the word "Liberty," and the date. It also contained the phrase "In God We Trust."

On the reverse side of the coin, Brenner placed "two stalks of wheat to show that America was a land of abundance." Originally he had engraved his name BRENNER on the reverse side, but the die-cutter substituted the artist's initials "V.D.B."

A popular outcry soon forced the mint to drop the sculptor's initials, but otherwise, the coin gained immediate acceptance and universal acclaim.

In 1959, the U.S. Mint replaced Brenner's wheat sheaves with the Lincoln Memorial, and the coin continues to be used to the present.



Spring Safety Checkup

You wouldn't think of leaving a pile of dust under a guest-room bed or a greasy buildup on your range hood after your annual spring cleanup.

But too many of us ignore the potential messes that we create when we overload electrical outlets, store appliances within reach of children, or neglect to clean and service our appliances.

This year, add an electrical safety sweep to your to-do list of spring cleaning chores. Some things to look for include:

- Extension cords are not meant for long-term use. They're not as durable as the cords on your electric appliances and can overheat and cause fires if they're plugged in and forgotten.
- Electric air purifiers and humidifiers can make indoor air healthier to breathe by removing pollutants. But if you don't clean them regularly, mold, mildew, and bacteria can grow in the devices, mixing with the mist they spew into your home's air.
- Garage doors can pose a risk of serious injury to or even death of children aged 2 to 8. The button inside the garage that activates the door should be out of your child's reach and so should remote-control devices for the door.
- Every home should have a fire extinguisher, and make sure you know how to use it.
- Make sure your smoke detector is in good working order. If you haven't replaced the batteries this year, do it now. If you don't have a smoke detector, consider purchasing an electric one that doesn't need batteries.
- If you don't have a ground-fault circuit interrupter in your bathroom, drop everything and go buy one. Ground-fault circuit interrupters can help prevent electrocution by interrupting the flow of power when they sense there is a problem.

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