

# Vehicular mayhem delights thousands at Eve of Destruction

By R.J. Foster  
For The Current

BUCHANAN — If you wandered into Wisconsin International Raceway on Friday afternoon, you would have seen bleachers, covered with every sort of blanket, tarp, plastic sheet, and garbage bag.

Well in advance, some fans of the annual Eve of Destruction came to the raceway to mark their territory.

"Fifteen days ago," Kaukauna resident Dave Allen said of his group's "reservation" visit. From the top row, just about center, he and his party watched the demolition derby.

With 12,000 people again packing the place, the season-ending event was the biggest of the year at WIR. This year marked the 13th annual Eve of Destruction, where dozens of vehicles meet their ends, to the delight of the spectators.

"It's my first time here," said Allen. "I've always meant to come, but this year, he (his son Ryan) really wanted to see it." Said Ryan, 7: "The jumps are cool but I want to see the buses."



Photo for The Current by R.J. Foster

**DRIVERS SPECIALIZED** in wrecking dozens of vehicles Friday at the 13th annual Eve of Destruction at Wisconsin International Raceway. The season-ending event drew a packed house of 12,000 spectators.

The buses are a big attraction with almost all the youngsters and many of the grown-ups in the crowd. In this event, drivers

take ordinary school-type buses, decorate them, and then race them around the figure-eight.

Fans applauded for the deco-

rations: a technicolor hippie-bus, a camouflage bus, a fish, a skunk, a big bulldozer with Bob the Builder on top, even a big

pack of Lifesavers, to name a few.

The crowd went wild, though, as the race began. These former child-transport vehicles passed each other at the track's crossing with what seemed like inches to spare — most of the time. There were times, though, when the gap was not quite big enough, and a bus was sent spinning like a top, or rolling onto its side.

The evening isn't just about destruction for every attendee. Ron Daul and his buddies have been coming for five years. "I don't have any favorites, I just enjoy the action," Daul said.

For most watchers, though, the only thing better than things smashing together was fire. A combination of a dragster and a jet came onto the track, sounding like a plane preparing to take

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off. Flames spewing from the tail end of the car evoked cheers from the previously tame crowd.

The only way to top smashing and flame was, apparently, to combine the two. Mad Man Mike had the audience on the edge of its seats as he approached a ramp set in front of six cars. People jumped with surprise as the fire exploded from the sides of the ramp, producing a cloud of flame through which Mike's orange Lincoln sailed.

Demolition-bowling was another unforeseen combination of two crowd favorites. White cars with red stripes stood on end in front of a short ramp. At the foot of the ramp stood a small black bus.

Once again, fans held their breath as the motorized "ball" rolled up the ramp, through an explosion of fire, and into the "pins." The crowd roared.

Where there was no fire, there was humor. Demolition-football pitted a team of Hazzard County Police cars against the Dukes of Hazzard and family, in a contest to push Boss Hogg's white caddy into a designated end zone.

Boss Hogg lost his head and

the police lost the game. The big loser was Cooter's pickup, which looked more like a puzzle than a truck.

People rose to their feet cheering at the start of the trailer race. Cars pulling all sorts of things — flatbeds, pop-up campers, even boats — race around the figure-eight, attempting to relieve other drivers of their trailers. The last car with a rolling trailer wins.

Cheers mixed with laughter as boats flew into the air, flatbeds rolled over, and smashed campers littered the track with home furnishings.

The Eve has become a regular event for many local groups.

"It's our veterinary clinic's summer field trip," said Kaukauna resident Tracy Bartsch.

Tammy Birling, another Crossroads Veterinary Clinic field-tripper, was giddy as she watched the jet-car burn up two victims of the demolition. "I think this is my favorite part," she said.

In the end, the fans cheered for explosions above the track as fireworks and patriotic music filled the air over WIR.