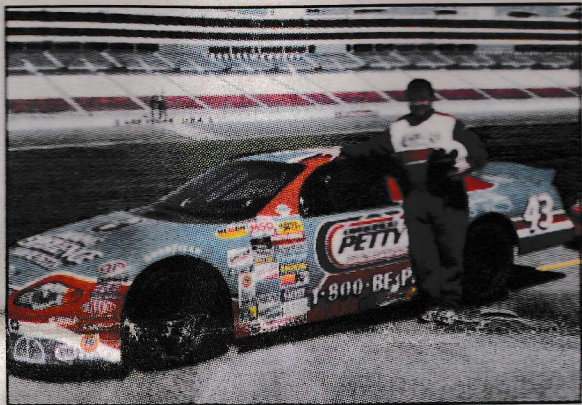


Go, speed racer, GO!

by RACHEL KIELTY
Associate Editor

Sometimes people talk about things happening in a hypothetical sense, but oftentimes that is all it ends up being – hypothetical. Fortunately for Kent Franks, one such conversation he had with Alice Anderson last year ended up surpassing hypothetical and becoming reality. In the first part of last year, Gordy's was having a scratch ticket promotion. The grand prizes included a Richard Petty Ride Along experience and also a Driving Experience.

One day, Gordy's employees Kent Franks and Alice Anderson were talking about the scratch off game and its prizes. Franks said that Anderson told him, "If I win it, I'll just sell it to you." They both



Franks poses with the Richard Petty car, and he even gets to take one of his very own home. Of course, his will be a much smaller collectible replica of the car.

thought this was a good idea, but an idea is really all they thought it was. As it turned out, Anderson did indeed end up winning the prize last April, and just as she said she would, she sold it to Franks. Since purchasing the prize, Franks has been waiting to find the time to go.

With the conclusion of his girlfriend Sandy's son Connor's hockey season came a break in Franks' hectic schedule, so on March 17, Franks, along with Sandy and Connor, went out to Las Vegas to experience being a racecar driver for a day. Franks said that there were three classes offered on Sunday the 18th of March, and he opted to take the second one.

He said that people came from far and wide to be part of this experience. Consequently, one of the two awards that would be given out throughout the day was for the person or persons who traveled the farthest to take part. One fellow flew back from Japan to take part, but since he was originally a native of Las Vegas, he didn't win the travelers prize. Franks thought that maybe he would win the award, but was beat out by a gentleman that came all the way to Vegas from Georgia.

The first thing that the participants had to do was get their measurements taken and get fire suits.



Kent Franks is all suited up and rarin' to go for a drive.

FRANKS —

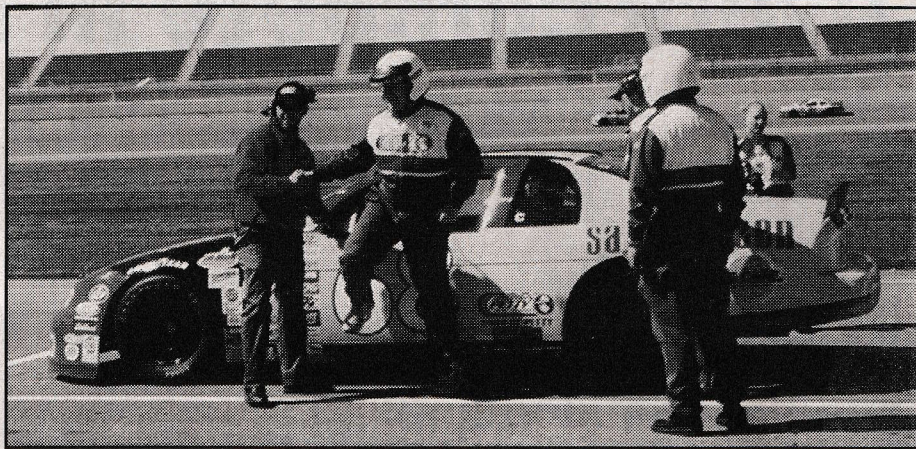
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Next, Franks and the rest of his group watched two videos, and following that, the group was broken into teams. After the teams were formed, half of the teams went on a van ride around the track, while Franks' half went to the cars for a safety demonstration. When it came time for Franks' team to take the van ride, Franks found himself to be quite impressed. He said, "The van ride was kind of fun, because the instructor put the cruise control on 85 mph and cruised the track."

After cars were distributed according to people's heights, the actual racing began. There were three instructors leading for every three cars on the track while they were racing. Franks said that this was done because, believe it or not, if the instructors weren't out there setting the pace the team members would actually end up driving too slowly. He likened it to the greyhounds chasing the jack-



Here Franks is climbing out of his car after the race. He said, "Everybody's face when they got of the car was like, 'YEAH!'"

rabbit at the dog track. It may sound like there ended up being a lot of cars on the track at one time, but Franks said that he never saw any of the other cars on the 1½ long track because everyone was spaced out pretty evenly.

Even though the three-lap experience went pretty quick, Franks said, "It was great! You go

through the corners so fast. My average lap was 136.85 mph." Franks was pleased to find out after the race was over that even though he didn't get the award for the farthest distance traveled to get there, he wouldn't be going home empty handed. His team won the award for having the fastest times. Franks and the other eight people on his

team all received a Richard Petty collectible car.

The whole experience turned out to be one Franks was glad he got to be a part of. "It was well worth it. It's hard to describe." Franks mentioned that this would make a great gift for Christmas, graduation, whatever. He added, "anybody that has the chance to do it should."