



John J. "Irish Jack" Murphy, 85, of Central Square, passed away on Thursday May 2, 2013 at St. Joseph's Hospital. Jack was a Navy Veteran. He retired from Local 545 as a heavy equipment operator and master mechanic, and was a member of Pathfinder Rod and Gun Club, past president and official of I S M A, an avid hunter and trap shooter, a race car driver winning the first Oswego International Classic and winning the New York State Labor Day race at the fairgrounds three times, and setting the world's record for fastest time in Trenton, NJ. He was an outstanding father, husband, friend and Papa. Surviving are his wife Delores; sons, Edward (Joe-Anna) of Baldwinsville, John (Sharon) Murphy of Cleveland, NY; daughter, Lauri Murphy of Hastings; brothers, Robert (Chris) Murphy of Liverpool and Patrick (Betty) Murphy of Phoenix, NY; eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren.



Six Laps for Jack - Whether he was steering modifieds or supermodifieds, Jack's cars were easy to spot. They were painted green and white and decorated with a shamrock on both sides. He always ran the number 6. I remember him endlessly tuning up his

iconic Shamrock 6 at his two-bay garage there on Salina Street. He must've turned that wrench the right way because he won the inaugural International Classic at Oswego Speedway in 1957. At the time, Jack was already a star in the Port City where he had excelled ever since it opened as a dirt track in 1951. As a tribute to Murphy's life and legacy, Oswego Speedway added "6-Laps for Jack" to its May 4 'Steel Palace' SuperSeries opener, increasing the distance from 50 to 56-laps.

Murphy's racing career actually began in 1949 when he returned from the service and teamed up with Fred Sass to build a sportsman stock car to compete at Brewerton and Lafayette tracks. During the 1951 and '52 racing seasons Jack dominated on the dirt in Oswego, and in 1952 he captured the track points' title. Throughout the 1950s Shamrock 6 was a fixture at Brewerton, Canandaigua, Dryden, Oswego and the Monroe County Fairgrounds racetracks. Jack was proud of setting a world's record for fastest time in Trenton, New Jersey. He took the checkered flag first in the annual New York State Fairgrounds Labor Day Championship in 1959 and then again as a last hurrah in 1970.

After finally retiring from racing, Jack and his wife, Delores, took over the old Steve's restaurant and turned it into Murphy's Trakside. Of course, Jack had a special affinity for "tracks," and the bustling beer joint was located adjacent to the railroad tracks which still run through the village. In the late-1970s, my dad, Russ Tarby, worked in the kitchen at Murphy's Trakside. Not only did I enjoy visiting my dad when he flipped burgers there, I also dug the live music that Delores booked, including such aptly named bands as Freewheelin,' The Mercurys and Reckless Drivin.' While the bar and grill did well for all concerned, Jack remained an important cog in the area auto-racing community. He served as a pit steward for and later president of the International Supermodified Association even while holding down a day job as a heavy equipment operator. He also provided methanol for the race cars at Oswego Speedway and wherever ISMA cars were running. In 2000, Jack was inducted into the DIRT Motorsports Hall of Fame. Internationally known motorsports writer Norris McDonald summed up Irish Jack Murphy's life this way: "He was a hard-charger to the core and a wonderful contributor to the sport of supermodified auto racing." Jack Murphy's career in auto racing actually began when the Liverpool, N.Y. native returned from the service. He teamed up with Fred Sass and built a sportsman stock car to compete at nearby Brewerton and Lafayette N.Y. race tracks in 1949. Jack was at home in a Modified or Supermodified, on Dirt or Asphalt. Throughout his racing career Jack's car was easy to distinguish while in competition as it was green and white, boasting a shamrock and

number six on both sides. This unique combination made the "Wild Irishman" one of Central New York's premier drivers of the day and a racing legend to be remembered. In August of 1951 a new racetrack opened in Oswego, New York. Murphy ventured there with his 'Shamrock 6' and quickly made Oswego Speedway his home. During the 1951 and '52 racing seasons Jack was the dominant force on the dirt in Oswego and in 1952 he captured the track points title. During the mid-1950s Murphy aboard his popular 'Shamrock 6' was a fixture at Brewerton, Canandaigua, Dryden, Oswego and the Monroe County Fairgrounds. His adaptability to racing on both dirt and asphalt made him one of the finest chauffeurs on the Northeastern Coast. Jack took the checkered flag first in the annual New York State Fairgrounds' Labor Day Championship in Syracuse in 1959 and '70. Oswego staged the inaugural International Classic in September '57, offering an unheard of sportsman purse of \$5,000 in the 100-lap feature event. Jack outdistanced Nolan Swift to claim the memorable victory. Jack finished second to Bobby Malzahn in the big 100-mile NASCAR Sportsman/Modified Championship held at the Trenton International Speedway in New Jersey. Murphy and his famous 'Shamrock 6' came out of semi-retirement in 1970 for a 'last hurrah' effort. Entering the same car he flipped on the front chute the previous year at Syracuse, he steered his 427 Chevy coupe to a convincing victory in the 30-mile NYS Labor Day Championship; leading all 30 laps to win convincingly ahead of Merv Treichler, Guy Chartrand and Jim Shampine. He also ran the same car on asphalt, placing eighth in the '70 Langhorne Race Of Champions Finale.



