

HOPES and DREAMS



As a singer/songwriter, James Patrick Fouts; aka PJ North; is not unlike other aspiring artists. Although his inspiration comes from the sport of drag racing when he sings “All About The Wally,” we do it for the “Glory,” it’s a “Way Of Life,” and his newest single “She Was;” singing it all in his own style of country music permeated with a bit of pop and rap. And as a drag racer driving several different types of cars, that inspiration comes from his own experiences.

“When I was a kid,” says Fouts, “I was ate up with professional wrestling. I wanted to be one so I needed a wrestling name and I came up with PJ North. My parents weren’t crazy about calling me JP; sounded like some kind of an attorney or something; so they called me PJ and I just came up with the name North.”

And then came the music. “My mom was my music teacher and as I grew up I just really got into the rap scene as I got older,” he says. “I couldn’t sing that

Singer PJ North Finds Inspiration On The Quarter-Mile

WORDS JOHN DiBARTOLOMEO
PHOTOS ALEX OWENS



well, but I could rap. When I was in college, I needed to separate my school from the music because I wasn't sure how many schools or even work would want to hire a rapper, so I used my stage name."

With a mother as his music teacher and a father in a band besides being somewhat of a car guy, music just seemed to be in his blood. "I just always wanted to be a performer, the center of attention," Fouts says. "I took dance lessons and learned how to sing on my own. For as long as I can remember of my

youth, besides wrestling, I just always wanted to be a singer." But then came drag racing.

"Before I was born, my family had moved to Ohio from Iowa and my father had a concrete construction business," Fouts says. "He raced back in the '70s with his brother but started his own business and continued to tinker around with cars. He eventually got a call from National Trails Raceway in Columbus to fabricate the concrete walls to replace the guard rails. I think he's done the walls at over 40

tracks around the country himself, not all drag strips though. My dad builds a lot of the concrete molds and my mom owns the company which does the actual concrete pouring.”

When ‘Trails called on Michael Fouts for the walls, it reignited the passion of racing for him and his family; sons Nick and PJ, and daughter Michelle. Michael built a Chevelle for himself and a car

for PJ’s brother Nick. He also built a Jr. Dragster for PJ which jump started PJ’s racing career.

“I loved playing sports,” says PJ, “but I just flat love being at the track around the race cars. I like team sports as much as the next guy but when you’re out there on the track, it’s pretty much a singular effort. I don’t think I even won a round of racing for the first two years, but I’m so ate up with it now.”

With a Chevelle bracket car, a dragster and Stocker, it’s pretty safe to say he’s “ate up with it.” This past April he married his wife Amanda who comes from her own racing family, the daughter of Ronnie and Tammy Maggart, a Hoosier Tire representative in the southeast, a family deeply ingrained in the sport with their own fleet of race cars. “She is so supportive of everything I do and I am so thankful for that,” PJ said. “We both love racing and when I’m not playing music, I’m racing somewhere. We met at the track so she gets that.”

And the music goes on and on. With several hits which naturally revolve around racing, PJ moved to the country music capital, Nashville, Tennessee. “If you’re in the music business, this is the town to be in,” he says. “It’s like anything else, it’s all about making contacts and for music, this place has it all.

“When I was in my senior year of college, I did a mix tape, which is a self-produced album, but part of the project was to do all of the business end of it from accounting, business plan, marketing, pricing, whatever,” he says. “I had no idea there was a whole lot more to this than I ever understood. I was just writing songs and doing the shows. Once I got out of school, I got a regular job working 40-hours a week. On the weekends I was racing but at night all I was doing was writing songs, practicing for shows or figuring ways to get more followers; it was all music. In that way it became a second job for me.”

Playing several shows with his band, PJ North and the South, Fouts has also played at a number of drag races; Spring Flings, PDRA events, NHRA Division 2 banquets and the like. And it’s not uncommon to catch his voice over the P.A. system at a number of big events. “We’ll play a lot of what I call ‘out of the box’ venues,” he says. “We’ve played races, weddings, charity events, wherever the



He might carry a guitar, but when he’s not singing, weekends for PJ Fouts are for drag racing, and it’s *“All About The Wally.”*



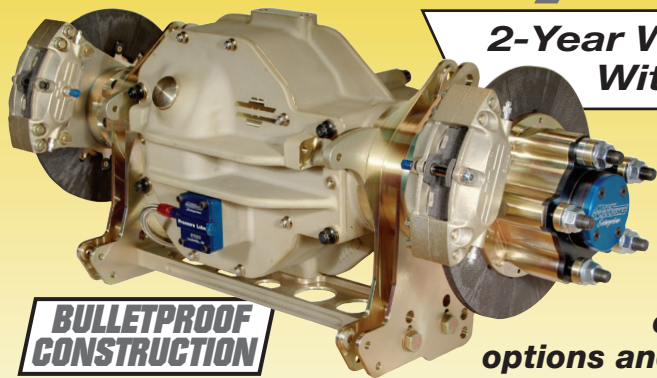
PJ took home a Wally with a Best Appearing Crew award at a recent Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series divisional event, enjoying it with (left to right) Tammy and Ronnie Maggart and their daughter, PJ’s wife Amanda and NHRA D3 Director Jeff Conley.



Behind the wheel of his dragster, PJ might be thinking of his next greatest hit song, but in reality, it's all about the "Glory" of the ride.

Reliability Guaranteed!

**2-Year Warranty Against Gear Breakage
With M-W's 11" Modular Rear End!**



Tired of "feeding" ring & pinion gears to your high-powered race car? Get an M-W 11" rear end and say "goodbye" to expensive parts attrition. Compare the purchase price and annual operating expenses of M-W's 11" rears versus other options and you'll be amazed at the overall savings.

- Engineered for extreme HP (power-adders, alcohol, nitro, etc.)
- Available with 2.91, 3.20, 3.89, 4.10, 4.29, 4.57, 4.71 & 5.83:1 gears
- Custom ratios available (minimum order of two sets)
- Modular design facilitates use in many applications
- Solid mount or Pro 4-link with centers as narrow as 17"
- 9" Ford and 12-Bolt GM modular housings also available



Authorized Dealer Network
See Complete list on our website

765 S. Pierce Ave.
Louisville, CO 80027

www.markwilliams.com 866-549-5451

Engineered, Manufactured and Tested In-House in the USA

RACE-READY M-W THIRDMEMBERS

M-W has everything from economical nodular iron units for E.T. Bracket racers to highly sophisticated Low Friction models with ceramic bearings and every other trick in the book for Pros. All come with a FREE carrying case and special MW/Torco gear lube.



money will take us. We're just happy to play for the people who want to hear our music.

"I was doing shows and trying to make whatever money I could," says Fouts, "and then I found online distribution. I also met Brian Whitworth of BW Promotions, another racer, and we did 'Be .00, Take .00' together and that was a huge turning point in my music career. Drag racing is still a niche-type sport but I gained so many followers after that. For me, it was a huge deal to hear people putting that song into their own videos. It gave me a fan base that I could share the rest of my music to and turn it into

more fans."

In as much as it is a problem for a racer to take his craft to the next level, maybe into the pros; so it is the same with musicians. "I talk with a good friend of mine Cameron Ferre of Racepak all the time," Fouts says. "He and I are on the same level when it comes to moving ahead. Cam has his Top Fuel license but he struggles the same way I do when it comes to making it to the next level. How do we get a full-time ride? How do I get on the radio? Just like racing, it comes down to the right connections but I truly believe that talent will still always win.

"In this town I live in; which was one of



He's played at a number of races and events; Spring Fling, PDRA, NHRA banquets and such; and part of the allure is he's one of us with music relating to the sport.



PJ has also been known pick up the PA mic at several events and his knowledge of the sport and style of announcing could very well lead to another career.

Below: Married this past April to his wife Amanda, "She is so supportive of everything I do," he says. Coming from a racing family of her own, "We both love racing and when I'm not playing music, I'm racing somewhere. We met at the track so she gets that."



the best moves I ever made; if you have money it will get you into places, but you still have to have the talent. And with all the places we've played and the songs I've written about racing, my music career would not be anywhere had it not been for my racing.

"Likewise, my racing wouldn't be anywhere near what I have had it not been for the music," he adds. "I wouldn't have the support of companies like VP Racing Fuels, Team Racepak, JEGS, Biondo Race Products, Moser Engineering, Accelerated Graphics and Hoosier. They say 'You're a young guy who does something completely different. How can we work together?' When I wanted to do a video at the race track, they were all on top of it. Mike Coughlin, Justin Moser, Ray Connolly, they were all wanting to be a part of it. It's been crazy and it's worked out way better than I ever could have imagined.

Dreams. They're a part of everyone's life and at times what keeps us going.

"I hope at some point my music career takes off," the 30-year old Fouts says. "People will always pay to see guys like

a George Strait even when he's 80. But for me, I'd be tickled to just know people are singing the songs I wrote. But then there's drag racing. I hope someday to be a national event winner so people can say 'Oh yeah, we remember when you won Seattle in 2025.'

"If I ever win a national event, they're

going to have to carry me away from there. I'm going to be standing on the roof of the car with my helmet on and they might not be able to interview me, I'm going to be so... I don't know what I'm going to do.

"Growing up, my dad took me to the national events they used to have in Co-

lumbus and I really didn't understand the whole Super Stock/Stock thing. I didn't know a lot about the NHRA thing. I didn't understand it. But when I got into it and went to divisional events and the like, it means so much to me now that I think I put too much pressure on myself. I love the big money bracket racing which is awesome, but the NHRA still means something to me. It's like the Spring Fling races and the Million... It's not just the money, it's the atmosphere. And that national event thing, I still get excited on Sunday with all the people in the stands. That's a big deal for me. I hope someday to even just get the chance to race on a Sunday at a national event.

"This may sound cliché, but I hope that one day I have a lasting impact on both music and drag racing. There are kids who message me on Instagram and such and that means so much to me. That's a cool thing."

In the meantime, you can check out PJ on YouTube.com and for him they'll always be more singing, more racing, more *G-Body Shuffle*, more *When I Grow Up* and definitely more *Spray... Slide... Get Behind*. ¶

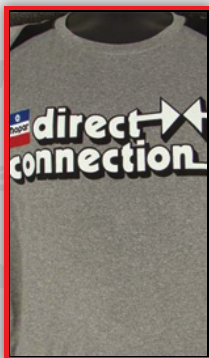


Besides a dragster and the Stocker, this Chevelle is also part of the PJ North fleet, along with two other race cars in the Maggart family stable which Amanda occasionally drives.

EXTREME[®]

MOPAR APPAREL

T-SHIRTS JACKETS HATS ACCESSORIES



extrememoparapparel.com
937.689.1501

