

# Rookie drag racer Siekierko finishes at the top of his class

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

Local drag racer Greg Siekierko left his competition in a cloud of burnt rubber in 2013 as he earned the overall points title in his full-time debut in a southwestern Ontario racing series.

Competing at St. Thomas Raceway Park in Sparta, Ont., the 48-year-old Siekierko was the Pro Class points winner in the Messenger Freight Super Series.

The series consisted of nine races in which drivers receive points for each round won, with Siekierko making the finals twice and semifinals on three occasions to finish with 225 points, 10 ahead of the runner-up.

This year was the first full season for Siekierko and his 1987 Ford Mustang, having only attended certain individual races in the past couple of years.

"I certainly didn't expect to be the class champion in the first year," said a pleasantly surprised Siekierko.

"The car took seven years to build and there's a lot of patience involved, learning how the car reacts and what combinations work. A lot of it has to do with how quickly the driver reacts to the starting light and being in the series full time helped me feel more comfortable at the start line."

Siekierko's racecar was purchased for



Photo by Mike Seguin/Photoguys.ca

\$300 and transformed from a four-cylinder "grocery getter" into a full-out drag race car over a five-year period.

A maintenance technician with the Ford Motor Company's parts distribution centre in Bramalea, did a lot of the work on the car himself. This included completely gutting the car, installing a full roll cage and strengthening the frame. The big change was to install a Ford 351 Cleveland eight-cylinder engine that was never offered in that year of Mustang.

The vehicle is now an all-out racecar with only one seat and many safety features required by the rules of the National Hot Rod Association.

Siekierko's interest in drag racing began as a youth and he recalled attending races at the Toronto International Dragway north of Acton. He has

been dabbling in the sport for the past 20 years at the track with street driven vehicles, but had the desire to go faster and be more competitive.

This necessitated the construction of the Mustang, which to date has run its best quarter-mile performance of 11.02 seconds at 123 mph.

Siekierko plans to run his Mustang full time again next year at the St. Thomas track.

Georgetown's Greg Siekierko (second from right) is presented with the Messenger Freight Super Series Pro Class Championship trophy at the recent awards night by St. Thomas Raceway Park owners Jay & Michelle Morse and their daughter Metzler.



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**Q:** Why do I have mixed emotions getting ready for Christmas?

**A:** Christmas can be a difficult time of the year. We are often apprehensive about celebrating Christmas due to the fact that our life circumstances may not allow for a traditional Christmas depicted in the media. As a result, it is very easy to feel down and lonely. When life changes, it is very important to change or alter traditions to fit the new situation. Hanging on to old traditions can make it more difficult to cope with this time of year. See this as an opportunity to create a new tradition for yourself. There are no set rules for what one must do on days like Christmas. The meaning you will give to your day and it's activities depend on you. Another option may be to plan a non-traditional Christmas celebration. Your non-traditional dinner may become a new tradition in itself or it may be a transition to setting new traditions with the years to come. Sharing responsibility for planning the event or cooking a meal is also a good way to decrease the stress which surrounds Christmas. It is alright to ask for help. Not asking for help an feeling resentful after the fact does not help anyone feel good about the celebrations. Having too rigid expectations of what the day should look like can contribute to major disappointments. Be open to surprises and recognize that even on Christmas the unpredictable can happen.



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Christoph Summer  
Owner/Administrator

**Q:** I am planning a move into a retirement home. How do I know what I can afford?

**A:** Affordability is a major concern for many. Keep in mind that the cost of retirement homes usually includes all meals, utilities and many services. You will no longer have to pay for hydro, heating costs, groceries, services such as meals on wheels, and help in the home and yard. Municipal taxes on your home will no longer be part of your budget and there will probably be a difference in your house insurance.

The first step, therefore, is to calculate all available resources. If you live in your own home, get the expert advice of a professional to appraise its value. (If you have lived in your home for any length of time you may be very pleasantly surprised.) The next step is to determine a monthly budget and if needed, enlist the help of family members or a professional such as your bank advisor.

There are many residences from which to choose with many options available. You may be pleasantly surprised at what you can afford.

**"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self." ~ Aldous Huxley**