Fine tuning, driving important in racing

building his cars.

Detrick does all of his own work Detrick does all of his own work— often from scratch. In fact, he bought the beat-up, rusted body and chassis of the Dodge Challenger for \$40. He pumped about \$1,000 and hundreds of man hours into making the car a thing of mechanical and aesthtic beauty.

of mechanical and aesthtic beauty.
And he set a record, too.
"What I do is take engines apart and
put them together right," said Detrick.
"Balancing and blueprinting (individual
precision work) makes cars so much
faster than what they are on the showroom floor."

room itoor."

Tolerances are never really perfect on a car put together on an assembly line, Detrick said.

He should know. He is the owner of li cars — some of them racers, some collector's show-cars. Among Detrick's stable are two Mustang convertibles and a 1955 Lincoln. He rents garage space for storage.

and a 1955 Lincoln. He rents garage space for storage.

There are only a few major differences between bracket cars used in drag racing and cars in everyday use.

There is no air filter on a drag car, because it would restrict air flow in a finely-tuned carburetor. Wider tires on a drag car provide better traction.

a drag car provide better traction.

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That also provides for better traction.

Detrick said he uses premium gasoline with additives in his drag car, not really knowing exactly what the additives are.

ves are. Detrick does not really feel guilty

Detrick does not reany teet gunty that gas mileage is so poor in drag rac-ing. (He said he uses approximately one-quarter of a gallon of gasoline per quarter-mile race.)

"Five gallons might last me two weekends," he said. "Five gallons might last you going to the store and back."

In Detrick's opinion, the sport has come a long way since those loud radio advertisements for Sunday racing at Detroit Dragway a decade ago.

The difference is the development of

The difference is the development of bracket car racing.
To oversimplify, this racing handicap method is based on how fast a driver says his car can go. If actual race speed with handicap is faster than a driver said prior to the competition, he loses. That prevents excessive sand-bagging.

Detrick speculated that the development of bracket car racing gave the sport a shot in the arm. He speculates that 90 percent of drag racers today compete with bracket cars.

The rest compete in stock classes, which are based on the ratio that is ob-

tained when a car's weight is divided by its horsepower.

"Drag racing was going down in the mid-70s," said Detrick. "I think that (bracket racing) was what brought the younger generation back into it. It's more affordable and anyone can win.

Detrick also differentiates between his variety of drag racing and that in-volving "pro dragsters or pro-funny cars" — those, long, narrow wire-and-pipe-like contraptions with small wheels in front and large wheels in hack

"Also, they can look in their drive-ray and see where their money is. It's back.

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While he and his crew chief Rick Osborne could replace an entire transmission by themselves in 45 minutes in an emergency. Detrick said that he prefers to have his car prepared before they get to the track. Because farg races are decided by tenths and even hundredths of a second, both mechanical and driver performs ance are important, Detrick said.

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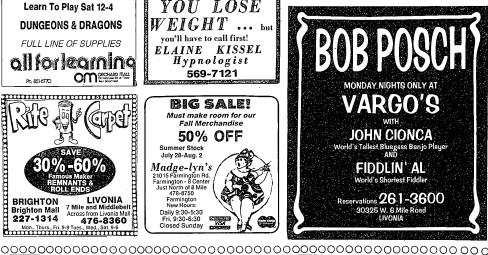
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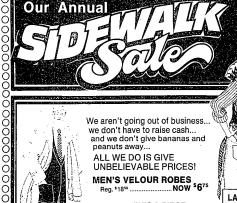
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