

I watched a lot of the Tokyo Olympics and saw the unbelievable finish in freestyle wrestling for the University of Minnesota wrestler Gable Steveson to win the gold medal. The Apple Valley, Minnesota native scored 4 points in the last 12 seconds to win the match over Georgia's Geno Petriashvili by a score of 9-8. It took me back to the 2000 games in Sydney when American Rulon Gardner became a gold medalist in Greco-Roman wrestling. Gardner defeated Russian Aleksandr Kerelin who prior to the gold medal match with Gardner was undefeated in 13 years of international competition.

If you scroll all the way down on this page, you'll see the autographed picture I got from Rulon with his milk mustache. I met him at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin in 2001. You can find this picture of him online but you won't find it with the gold colored autograph which he signed for me at the Expo after we did a radio interview. Gardner was the perfect spokesperson for the dairy industry as he was an Olympic champion and he credited his work ethic and strength to growing up and working on a dairy farm in Wyoming.

You may have seen him in more recent years on the TV show 'The Biggest Loser.' Gardner's weight class for the Olympics was 265 pounds. He also wrestled in the 2004 summer games in Athens, Greece where he earned a bronze medal. His life story since that time has had several twists and turns including nearly dying in a snowmobile accident in Wyoming and being in a plane crash. He survived and is a motivational speaker among other things today. He also ballooned to 474 pounds and that's why he got a spot on TV's 'Loser' show. He lost over 170 pounds while on the show but left before the season was complete because of personal reasons.

I did not get to interview many sports celebrities during my radio career as I was not the sports guy but the farm guy. At KDHL, when the radio station became an affiliate to carry Minnesota North Stars hockey games, Bill Goldsworthy came to the studios to promote the upcoming season so I got to do the half hour interview with him on AM Minnesota. I just found that cassette tape the other day of that interview. And of course I got his autograph that day as well. Both his autograph and the Rulon Gardner autograph are framed and saved for posterity. If you scroll down past the Gardner picture you'll see the framed autograph I received from Goldy in October, 1988.

2006 was the first year that the Indianapolis 500 race used ethanol in the fuel for the cars. I was invited to Indy by the Rahal-Letterman racing team as a farm broadcaster to cover the event. I did get to meet Bobby Rahal, Buddy Rice and Danica Patrick at a news conference that they held at the race track. David Letterman I did not meet as he only showed up on race day and basically was unavailable to the media. I did get to do a one on one interview with Jeff Simmons who drove the #17 car for the Rahal-Letterman team.

I almost saw an Andretti win the 90th running of the Indy 500. The only time an Andretti has won at Indy was 1969 when Mario won it. His grandson Marco, who was only 19 years old at the

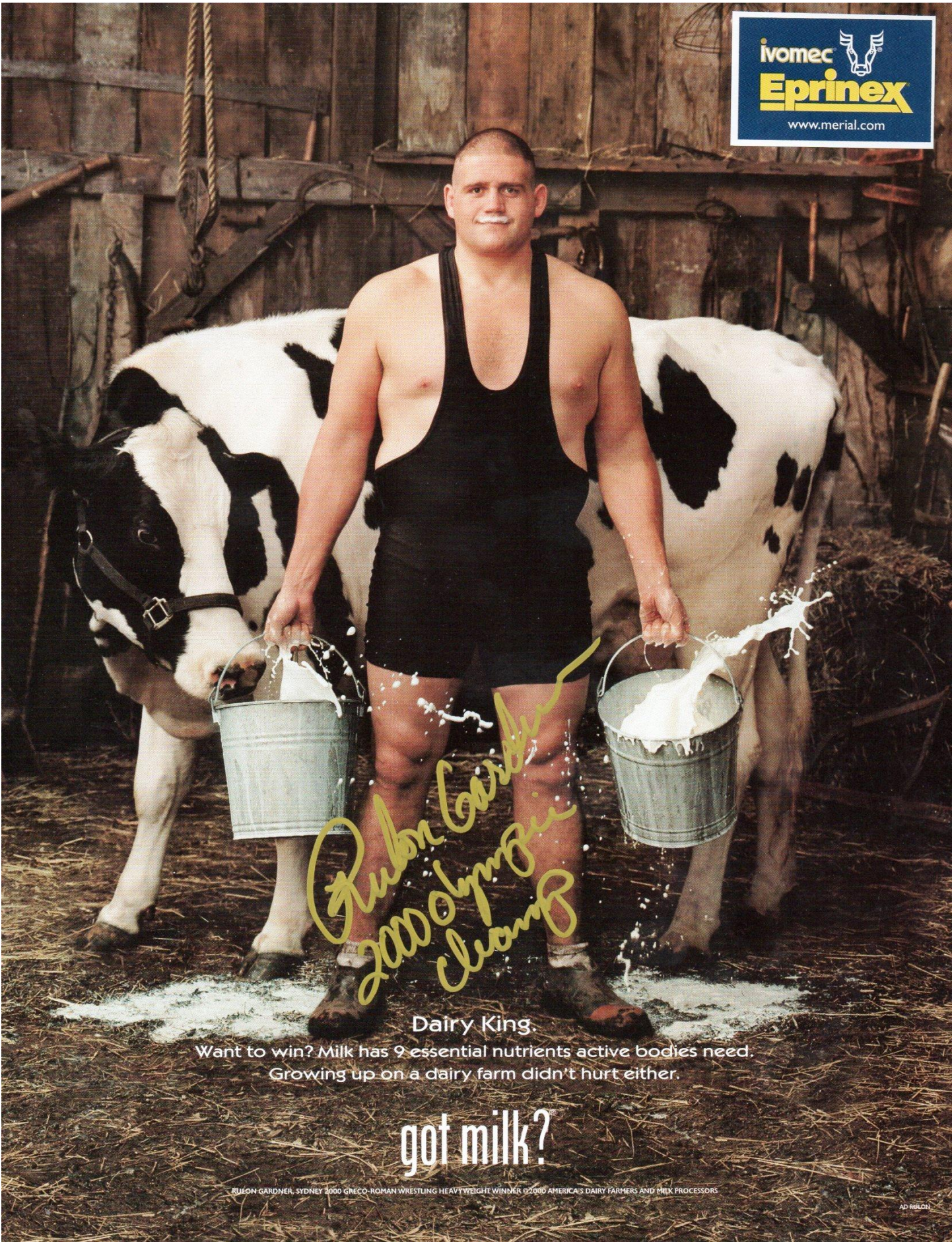
time, was leading the 2006 race coming out of the fourth turn and heading to the finish line. I was right in front of the bricks that make up the finish line up above in the press box. Sam Hornish Jr. somehow got by Andretti and won by about a car length. I have the picture I took of that finish. If you scroll down, you will see two pictures of the great finish to this Indy 500.

On the Friday before the race, I did get to ride the track in a pickup courtesy of the National Corn Growers Association. We got up to about 115 mph which was fast for the pickup but would have been really slow for an Indy car. I tried to imagine what another 100 miles per hour would be like going around that track. To this day, I still can't imagine what that has to be like let alone doing it when you have 32 other cars going just as fast out there with you. When I was in the pickup, we were the only vehicle on the track.

I've only been to two other big races. In my pre-radio days I saw Cale Yarborough win the Daytona 500 in 1977. And in 2004 while I was in Las Vegas to cover the Commodity Classic, which is the combined annual convention of the National Corn Growers and the American Soybean Association, the NASCAR race was that same weekend and I saw Matt Kenseth win.

One other race I remember well that was not quite NASCAR or the Indy 500. It was the Sunday night stock car races at the Dodge County fairgrounds in Kasson. The date was July 20th, 1969. My classmate Steve Johnson and I went to the races that night. I don't remember who won like I do those other races I mentioned but I remember the date and where I was when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon. The track PA announcer told us over the loud speaker so it seemed the entire crowd looked up at the moon like we were going to see them wave back at us. Who knows, maybe they did. I'll stick with that story.

KEEP SCROLLING DOWN FOR PICTURES



*Rulon Gardner
2000 Olympic
Champion*

Dairy King.

Want to win? Milk has 9 essential nutrients active bodies need.
Growing up on a dairy farm didn't hurt either.

got milk?

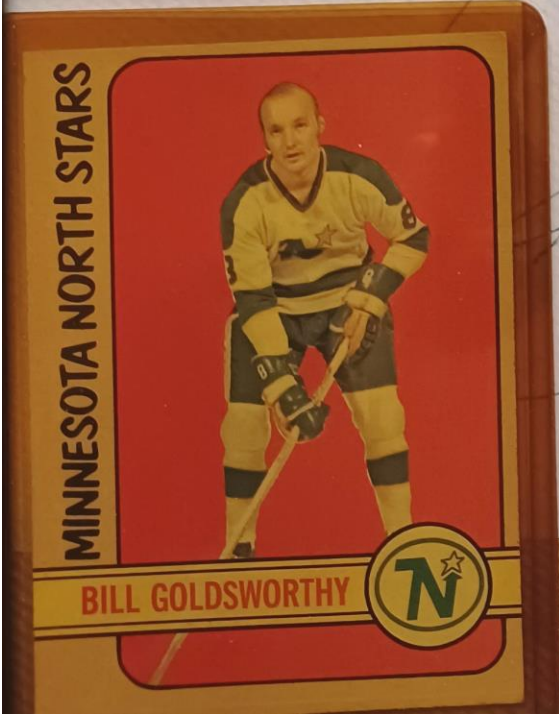
RULON GARDNER, SYDNEY 2000 GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT WINNER ©2000 AMERICA'S DAIRY FARMERS AND MILK PROCESSORS

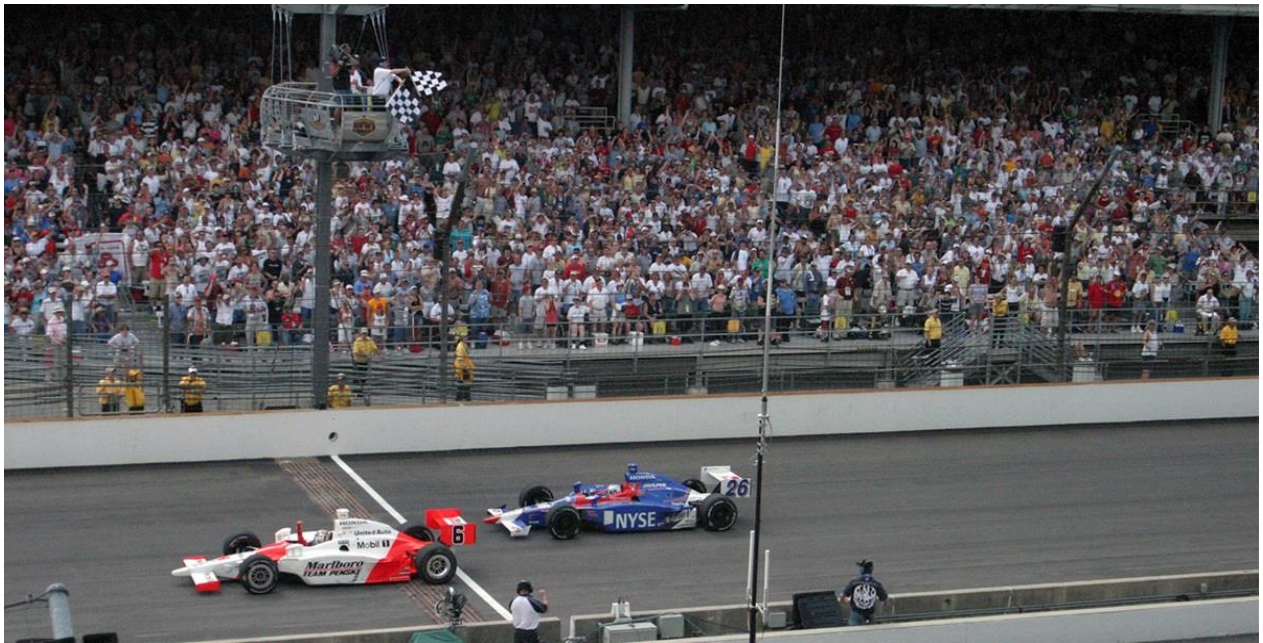
AD: B&L/CN

To
Emerald
I hope Luck &
Continued Success

Bill
Goldsworthy

10-11-88





Above is a professional picture taken of the finish of the 2006 Indianapolis 500 race won by Sam Hornish by a car length ahead of Marco Andretti. Andretti was leading coming out of the 4th turn. Below is the picture I took from my vantage point. My camera was not set up to catch a clear view of the cars as they crossed the finish line going 220mph. It was one of the great finishes in Indy history.

