

Volume XI, Number 11 - November 2009

DRAG RACING

MAGAZINE *Online*



**FAREWELL TO THE KING:
BERNSTEINS AND BUDWEISER
PART WAYS AFTER 30 YEARS**



NITRO HARLEYS AT DIVISION 7 FINAL

TOM "MONGOOSE" MCEWEN INTERVIEW, PART 2

JOE'S RACING JOURNAL: ON TOUR IN FLORIDA

DEMITO CLINCHES MIROCK SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP



Rodney Williford won the battle Sunday, Nov. 8, at Rockingham Dragway but Vince Demito won the war.

Although he lost to Williford in the final round of Sunday's Lee's Performance Fall Bike Nationals, Demito (above) held on to win his third straight Mickey Thompson Performance Tires Mirock Superbike Series championship, but his first in the featured Orient Express Pro Street class.

See the [complete race results](#). (Tim Hailey photo) [11/11/09]

AutoWeek Racing News

- Maserati and Nissan are likely to return to the...
- NASCAR Notebook: Ford FR9 engines get thumbs-up,...
- Johnson loses points, Kurt Busch wins Texas

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THANK A VET TODAY

We take a moment on this Veterans Day to remember all veterans and their families who are currently in or have given service to this country and especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We are remembering with heavy hearts editor Jeff Burk's nephew, double Bronze Star winner, Army medic Taylor Burk, who died in Iraq in January 2005 at the age of 21. [11/11/09]

NHRA WILL PRINT SOME RULE BOOKS FOR 2010

Evidently someone at the NHRA decided that a printed rule book is still a good thing -- at least for one more year! The Agent got it on good authority that NHRA will indeed print a few rule books. They will be distributed in-house first and the remainder of the small press run will be for sale. [11/11/09]

NEW FULTON ENGINE FOR HOUSLEY



In the mayo jar this morning was this photo of a new Gene Fulton-built engine in ADRL Pro Nitrous young gun Blake Housley's car.

We hear a new paint job is in the works for the '41 Willys, too, just in time for the 2010 National Guard ADRL season, when Housley seeks to re-establish an on-track presence after spending much of this past year as a crewman on Travis Swearingen's Pro Extreme team. [11/11/09]

WISH THE GREEK A HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



The Agent couldn't let the day go by without wishing his hero, Chris Karamesines, a Happy Birthday. And a Happy Birthday one day early to Jim Oddy. (Jeff Burk photo) [11/11/09]

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AA/FD NEWS AND RUMORS

The Agent hears that former nitro and alky Funny Car driver Tony Bartone is going to try his hand at nitro, nostalgia, front-motored Top Fuel racing. The Agent hears that Dave Uyehara is building the car and that Bartone has already had his first couple of fittings. One of the Agent's operatives called with a rumor that, because of so much carnage and the dwindling number of teams, rule changes are being considered that would require NHRA Top Fuel cars to return to a points-style magneto.

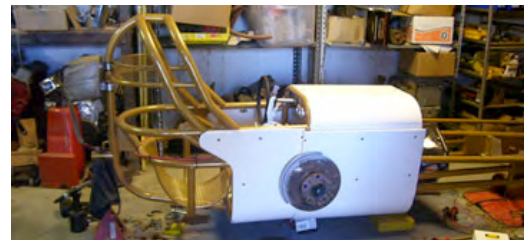
The Agent also understands that the AA/FD organization from the West Coast recently had a meeting to discuss cutting the number of qualified cars at races they attend from sixteen to eight! There is no doubt that AA/FD racing is having some issues relating to expense, reliability, and oiling the tracks. [11/11/09]

MUSI BRINGING BIG (903 CI) POWER TO STREETCAR NATIONALS

Agent 1320 ran into old pal, engine builder and street car racer Pat Musi at the SEMA Show. Musi made the haul to Vegas to run the Nov. 19-22 PSCA Streetcar Nationals and he will be running a monster 903 cubic inch engine built in his own engine shop. Musi would have to be considered a favorite to win Mel Roth's annual Big Street-Legal Go West. (James Drew photo) [11/11/09]



DEGRANDIS MASTER FINK



Who says a pencil pushin' cartoonist can't race? Our very own "Finkster" Jeffrey DeGrandis sent in some photos of his latest project, an original '60s Dragmaster chassis. He's just about finished with his project and making plans for a 2010 March Meet debut for the restoration, now with the chassis NHRA certified down to 7.50 elapsed time. The Agent hopes that DeGrandis is also getting his brain certified if he's planning to drive this cool Chevy small block-powered digger. A tip of the Agent's fedora to our cartoon Drag Fink pal! [11/11/09]

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DART DECLARES WAR!

There has been much talk in the performance community lately concerning the arrival of "bargain" performance blocks and heads from various sources. These parts generally claim to be high quality performance pieces at extremely low prices. Sometimes the sellers don't mention much about the materials used, the quality control or where they're made. Sometimes they are misleading about it, and sometimes they outright lie about these facts.

At Dart, our focus is creating great engine parts, right here in the U.S.A. We usually just shake our heads and move on when we see this sort of thing happening. But once in a while we get fed up with the bottom feeders and we decide to do something about it.

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The Dart logo features the word "DART" in a bold, italicized, red font. The letters are outlined in black, and a red arrow points to the right from the bottom of the letter 'T'. The logo is set against a background of a blurred engine and a racing track.

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NITRO HARLEYS AT DIV. 7

Nitro Harleys, one of the Agent's favorites, were just one of the attractions at the Division 7 race. Here is class winner Steve Dorn. See our [Sportsman Report](#) for complete results. (James Drew photo) [11/10/09]



NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

If you're not superstitious, Friday, Nov. 13, is the night to head over to the Wally Parks NHRA Motorsports Museum for a drag racing celebrity book signing at 5 p.m. featuring drag racing legend Tom "The Mongoose" McEwen and authors Tom Madigan, Lou Hart and Randy Fish. Then at 6 p.m., NHRA Announcer Bob Frey opens up conversations with Team Force – Robert Hight, Mike Neff, and others – for the annual Night of Champions, a question and answer format discussion between audience and racers.

There will be free Museum admission and extended weekend hours during Auto Club NHRA Finals, Nov. 12-15. Free tram service will be provided from Pomona Raceway (Gate J) to the museum.

The Wally Parks NHRA Motorsports Museum is located at 1101 W. McKinley Ave, Building 3A (Fairplex), Pomona, CA 91768. For more information go to www.museum.nhra.com. [11/10/09]

JANIS WINS 1/8-MILE CHALLENGE



Buffalo New York Pro Mod racer Mike Janis won the Barwa 1/8-Mile Challenge at the Shakedown at E'Town last weekend.

The Janis team started off grabbing the pole position with a 3.926-second, 192.85-mph pass. In round one the team set low elapsed time and top speed of the meet with a 3.733 at 203.34.

"This was a take it any way you can get it kind of win for us," said Car Chief Steve Hermann. "We made some changes to the car for eliminations and it paid off in the first round but the track kept throwing us little curves.

"Any way you look at it," Hermann concluded, "a win is a win."

See all the action from the Shakedown -- including fires and crashes -- tomorrow in our Race Coverage. (Todd Dziadosz photo) [11/10/09]

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NITRO JAM SCHEDULE RELEASED

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The IHRA Nitro Jam series welcomes one brand new facility and one former track back to the fold as part of the 2010 schedule.

Palm Beach International Raceway, which signed with the IHRA earlier this year, will open the 2010 season while the series also welcomes Virginia Motorsports Park back to its family of tracks with the final spot on the 2010 calendar. IHRA will also add Rocky Mountain Raceways in Salt Lake City to the Nitro Jam schedule after hosting one of the new format style events in 2009.

One of the biggest changes to the 2010 schedule will be the trimming of all Nitro Jam events except for two from three days down to two and the implementation of the "race only" format for professional classes. While sportsman racing will remain exactly the same with the exception of one less day of racing, the professional categories will have invitation-only fields with a new race and winner being named at the conclusion of each day of racing.

Professional categories primarily consisting of Top Fuel, Pro Fuel, Prostagia Nitro Funny Car and Pro Stock will still be awarded points and will crown a champion at the end of the year. The rest of the professional categories will be an exciting mixture of classes unique to each individual track and event.

Sportsman competitors will continue to crown champions at the completion of each event with the winners earning a spot in the Tournament of Champions to be run at the season finale at Virginia Motorsports Park.

The use of the word "nationals" will also be dropped as the series will restructure to help stand out in a crowded drag racing marketplace. The series will be known simply as Nitro Jam and concentrate primarily on nitro burning machines as the core of the show.

Jan. 29-30 (Fri-Sat) Palm Beach International Raceway, West Palm Beach, FL

March 6-7 (Sat-Sun) State Capital Raceway, Baton Rouge, LA

May 1-2 (Sat-Sun) Rockingham Dragway, Rockingham, NC

June 18-19 (Fri-Sat) Rocky Mountain Raceways, Salt Lake City, UT

June 25-27 (Fri-Sat-Sun) Castrol Raceway, Edmonton, ALB

July 16-18 (Fri-Sat-Sun) Grand Bend Motorplex, Grand Bend, ONT

TBD - U.S. 131 Motorsports Park, Martin, MI

Aug. 28-29 (Sat-Sun) Maryland International Raceway, Budds Creek, MD

Sep. 11-12 (Sat-Sun) New England Dragway, Epping, NH

Oct. 15-16 (Fri-Sat) Virginia Motorsports Park, Richmond, VA [\[11/10/09\]](#)

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The NMRA Keystone Automotive Ford Nationals, the #1 all-Ford motorsport show, will be in Texas with the 1st Annual Nitto Tire Lone Star Shootout presented by Quantum Performance at Houston Raceway Park on Nov. 13-15. Texas is the leading Ford Mustang purchasing state.

This post-season NMRA event will feature special Pro Outlaw 10.5 and Super Street Outlaw match racing as well as special NMRA classes that allow for participation from all levels of cars. There will also be a special Lone Star Shootout class similar to the Spring Break Shootout.

(photo courtesy NMRA) [\[11/10/09\]](#)

DARRYL JACKMAN MEMORIAL TOMORROW AT MUSEUM

FastNews Network is sponsoring a special evening at the Wally Parks NHRA Motorsports Museum in Pomona, Calif., on Wednesday evening, Nov. 11, 7 p.m. PST to honor reporter and enthusiast Darryl Jackman, who passed away in early October. Darryl made a significant impact on a lot of lives in the racing community and this is an opportunity for all of his friends and racing family to say good-bye.

Since high school, drag racing was an important part of Darryl's life and the Fairplex-based Museum is an appropriate place to hold this send-off. There is no agenda for the evening, but his friends are encouraged to share their memories of Darryl Jackman.



(Darr Hawthorne photo) [11/10/09]

WAVE OF NOSTALGIA HITS POMONA

As an added treat during the Auto Club World Finals at Pomona Raceway, most of the nostalgia cars that were broomed by persistent rains at the Winternationals will return to make exhibition runs over the coming weekend.

Among those are Mendy Fry (left) who'll be back in the seat of Gary Messenger's "Future Flash" Dodge Charger tuned by Donnie Couch, Josh Crawford's Mustang – the California Hot Rod Reunion runner-up funny car, Danny Pisano's "Pisano & Matusbara" Nitro Vega and the "Lil' Nate" Barracuda owned by Howard Bugg.



On the Top Fuel side, the High Speed Motorsports Dragster driven by Troy Green will square off against 2009 Boise Nightfire Nationals winner Rick White in the Neal & White dragster out of San Diego. All cars are scheduled to run on Saturday and Sunday down the legendary Pomona quarter mile.

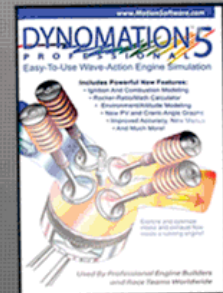
(Darr Hawthorne photos) [11/10/09]

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Burk's Blast

By Jeff Burk

WONDERINGS FROM THE AISLES OF THE SEMA SHOW

Just Wondering... What's a sanctioning body president got to do to make some people happy? It's been just over a week since NHRA President Tom Compton stood in front of a crowd of Pro Mod racers at the SEMA Show and announced in no uncertain terms that Pro Mod would be granted "professional" status in the NHRA for next year. Already I've heard from racers and fans questioning whether Pro Mods are really going to be a part of the NHRA professional race series. What if the class isn't covered on the ESPN2 "big broadcast" with the other pro classes? Will they share the stage with the other pro classes for those interminable pre-race introductions and other "perks" the current pro class racers enjoy?



Listen, if the President of the NHRA says they are a pro class then they are a professional class! Pro Mod race winners are going to get the NHRA professional version Wally when they win a race. There is an NHRA-sanctioned points program, so it stands to reason they will be treated as a professional class by the folks that work for the NHRA president. If that doesn't happen, Tom Compton will look pretty foolish and, more importantly, not in charge -- and I don't think that will happen.

Now NHRA Pro Mod teams will be able to go to potential sponsors and tell them they are part of the NHRA professional racing program along with the Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock and Pro Stock Motorcycle classes and, by the way, they will have their own stand-alone 30-minute TV show produced by the ESPN crew and run on that network! I'm not sure that a stand-alone show dedicated to the Pro Mod class isn't better than being a small part of the NHRA race broadcast that already has a hard time covering three and sometimes four classes of pro cars.

Aside from the 30-minute TV show, Pro Mods are going to have their own T-shirt trailer on the midway and they will be allowed their own hospitality area. To be fair, a lot of these perks were in place when now ADRL president Kenny Nowling was working for Dave Wood, who spent millions of dollars sponsoring the NHRA Pro Mod series early on, but getting a Wally for winning and public acknowledgement of the class as "professional" by Tom Compton was something the class never had before. Trust me, those benefits alone are going to help Pro Mod teams new and old get sponsorships.

And while I'm on this little rant, I want to address the drag racing myth that NHRA pro teams don't have to pay to run at NHRA national events so the Pro Mod racers are getting screwed because they will have to pay a \$500 entry fee.

Even though many an old nitro racer will tell you they have never had to pay to race at the NHRA, that simply isn't the truth today and hasn't been for a long time. All racers have to pay a "registration" fee, including the fuel cars, to cover insurance and other items. Now it may not be much money relatively speaking but nevertheless they have to pay. So if the NHRA has to charge the Pro Mod teams \$500 entry fee, what's the big deal?

DRAG RACING Online will be published on the 8th of each month and will be updated throughout the month.

DRAG RACING Online owes allegiance to no sanctioning body and will call 'em as we see 'em. We strive for truth, integrity, irreverence and the betterment of drag racing. We have no agenda other than providing the drag racing public with unbiased information and view points they can't get in any other drag racing publication.

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One way or the other every racer or team pays the NHRA to race and that's a fact. Insurance, extra pit passes, extra pit spaces, insurance charge or an extra car pass, from John Force down, everyone pays to race.

Just Wondering... Is there a more exciting series in drag racing today that the IHRA? Love 'em or hate 'em, Aaron Polburn and his crew have got the professional drag racing world buzzing. The "new IHRA" pro show to support their Sportsman Series (or is it the other way around?) is going to be a variety of booked-in shows relying heavily on invitation-only eight-car shows made up of either Nostalgia Funny Cars or Injected Fuel Dragsters. The IHRA has come up with a unique "race" program where every car/driver races someone four times in two days.

The IHRA also came up with a unique way to determine the overall winner and how the racers are paid. I'll get to explaining that later.

The Nostalgia flops will be allowed 14-71 superchargers and 40-gallon pumps and few, if any, other engine restrictions. The A/FD racers will be allowed fuel and clutch management systems and 100 percent nitro in the tank. Those rules represent uncharted waters for most of the racers that will compete in those two classes. New rules and new teams for nitro classes usually mean explosions and oil downs.

There is some precedent in drag racing history for what Polburn and Feld Entertainment are trying to do to save that venerable sanctioning body.

The late AHRA's late president, Jim Tice, booked in many of the stars of the day for his eight-car pro shows. That's the difference between what Jim Tice did and what Aaron Polburn wants to do. Tice booked in racers like Garlits, Muldowney, Bradley, LaHaie, Prudhomme, McEwen, Force, Pulde, and others. These were seasoned pros who knew their cars and how to run them without a lot of carnage. Also, those drivers sold tickets on their name alone.

The racers that make up Polburn's booked-in acts are nowhere close to those that Tice booked in either fan recognition or ability. We are soon going to find out whether or not drag racing fans are really just going for the nitro and don't give a damn what the cars are or who is driving them as long as they are burning nitro. In times like this I am reminded of what my dad always told me, "You get what you pay for in this world."

One thing is sure going forward, the "I" in IHRA which now stands for "International" could in the future stand for "Innovative, Interesting, Important or Impotent." Fire the first pair!

Just Wondering... Who thought up the new IHRA "racing" format and payout? It is, at best, a little confusing.

Okay, here is how I understand the program. First round on Friday all eight cars are paired and run. The loser of each round gets \$1,000 and the winner \$1,500. The two slowest cars and the two fastest cars from the first round meet in the second round. Same deal: the losers of each round get \$1,000 and the winners \$1,500. In addition, the winner of the race between the two quickest cars is awarded a \$1,000 bonus and points. Each winner of the two laps will get \$3,000, the losers \$2,000.

The winner of the race between the two winning cars in the second round will get a \$1,000 bonus, which makes their payday \$4,000 for the two laps. The next day re-rack and start all over again.

As I understand it, theoretically one driver could win \$8,000 for four laps over two days.

Just Wondering... Has the sport of drag racing ever gone through so much change so quickly as this year? The Million Dollar bracket race is sold and is likely to split into 10 races; Roger Gustin sells the Super Chevy Series to a group of racetracks and it too is going to downsize from 24 to around 10 races; the IHRA won't offer a professional series for Pro Mod but the NHRA and the ADRL both will; John Force is no longer a dominant racer; Don Garlits races a doorslammer at the U.S. Nationals; *National Dragster* is now the same size and shape as most general interest monthly magazines; and, for the first time in at least three decades, the Ford, Chevy, and Mopar factories are actually building real "factory hot rods."

Next year is really going to be interesting.

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DEAD-ON

by Jok Nicholson

Winter Series, part 1: Off to an ominous start



The Winter Series is a series of bracket races that encompass three race tracks over three weeks. Each track has five quarter-mile races and three eighth-mile races. Simple math puts the number of events you can enter at a staggering 24 events in 18 days!

Along with the 24 events comes a high price tag for entry fees. If you enter the ten \$15,000-to-win races, the five \$10,000-to-win races and the nine \$7500- or \$5,000-to-win eighth-mile races you will spend \$4,325 for regular entry fees.

Then you have to consider whether you want to buy back or not if you get busted first round. Buy-backs are \$125 for the big races and I think they will be \$50 for the eighth-mile races. Let's say, for example, you decide the \$15,000-to-win is a good enough lure that you will buy back if you lose first round. You lose first round a third of the time, in this example, so you spend another \$650 on buy-backs in the big races and \$150 to buy back in three of the eighth-mile races. Current tab for the Winter Series is now \$5,125!

This has become a very expensive three weeks of racing, without a doubt. It is becoming evident that there are only about 100 racers in the country who are willing to participate in this expensive race series. A lot of these racers bring two, three or even four cars with them. Find some good drivers, give them good equipment and you've got a chance.

HAS THE WEAK ECONOMY CHANGED THIS SERIES?

In my opinion it has changed the number of racers who can afford to race this series. (Note: I have raced at a lot of these events but this year I am racing only the nine eighth-mile races with \$100 entry fees.) The racer attendance has fallen off to about half what it was a few years ago and probably one-third of what it was 10 years ago for five \$15,000-to-win races.

I think I heard them announce 120 cars in one of the \$15,000-to-win races at the first Winter Series event in SGMP. The eighth-mile races had about 150 cars entered. This should indicate something, right?

The quality of the events has remained a constant with great track prep, friendly track personnel and some of the best bracket racing on the planet. The cost of entry fees, as most of my readers know is just part of the overall costs. Staying in Florida for three weeks and the cost of fuel, meals and groceries, race car fuel, race engine oil changes, trans fluid changes (if not the complete transmission!) all add up to a complete race season worth of expenses in three weeks.

WILL THE WINTER SERIES SURVIVE?

Since my crystal ball is a little foggy this morning I will give you my opinion. I think it WILL SURVIVE. I also think it will require some planning by track operators to better fit the bracket racers who are willing to run the Winter Series.

I know we are only one race into the Winter Series but here are some ideas and conclusions I have made so far. (I will update this column over the next two weeks to keep you posted on what is happening.)

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- ▶ More bracket races are run on the eighth mile, so there are more potential entries.
- ▶ It's easier on parts; this means more cars running the entire Winter Series.
- ▶ Keep door cars and dragsters separated until they have to be paired, probably the final two or three rounds.

Add Footbrake racers to the Winter Series

- ▶ Let the Footbrake race winner run the delay box winner for the Champion's money. These "Combo Races" would add some very interesting final rounds to the Winter Series.

Lower the entry fees and Winner's money

- ▶ Lower entry fees will bring in more entries. Always has, always will.
- ▶ Lower entry fees mean lower purses but I feel they could clip the \$15,000-to-win down to \$7500 and leave the rest of the purse the same. (90% of the time the racers are splitting the money at the final four or at least in the Finals due to the big difference between winner and runner-up money.)

Add a three-race points series instead of three single-race point series

- ▶ It should increase attendance at all of the Winter Series events. Right now each track is putting together \$7,500 to \$10,000 point funds. Imagine spreading that out to a \$30,000.00 points fund that pays back 20 places.

Get manufacturers involved

- ▶ Manufacturers are selling these serious bracket races a lot of parts. If approached with these races as a three-race series I cannot imagine they would not want to get involved in contingency payouts. If these manufacturers participate, it adds appeal to the Winter Series and different awards from manufacturers will add to the events.

Give the Winter Series a better atmosphere than a national event

- ▶ How about racer barbeques and special awards each round so even a first-round loser might win something? Several big bracket races are doing this right now and they are a popular addition at their events.

WILL THE WINTER SERIES, AS I HAVE KNOWN IT FOR OVER 25 YEARS, SURVIVE?

Time will tell. I will let you know what we see as far as number of entries at the next two events at Bradenton Motorsports Park and Palm Beach Int'l Raceway. I will be asking a lot of racers a lot of questions in the next few weeks and I will be talking to track managers as well. Do you have some ideas that can improve the Winter Series? If so, send them to me and I will write an article with some of those great ideas.

Watch for my InnerView with Randy Folk, new owner of "The Million Dollar Race" event coming later this month. It could create a "sweeping change" in bracket racing. **DRD**

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ALL BUSINESS

DSR rescued Antron Brown; how about Angelle Sampey?

One would understand if Antron Brown got dizzy from the G forces of a sub-four second, 300-plus MPH 1,000-foot run in his Matco Tools dragster.

But it's the Business of Racing that has sent his head spinning.

For the fourth time in about a year, Brown had a new team owner as the NHRA Full Throttle tour came to a close. In a transaction accomplished with speed any Top Fuel driver would appreciate, Don Schumacher Racing purchased the assets of Mike Ashley's team in the days leading up to the Las Vegas Nationals. Just weeks before this season began, Ashley had bought Brown's team from Tim Buckley, who had taken over from David Powers.



!!!!

"It feels great to be wanted," Brown said with a smile October 31 at The Strip. "Now we're with DSR and I don't think you're going to see any team ownership changes in the near future. Don brought the stability to our team."

Ashley, in the news for legal issues regarding his Lend America mortgage company, telephoned Schumacher the weekend of October 24-25. Brown found out October 26. Schumacher wire-transferred the money October 27.

"It happened very quickly," Schumacher explained in Vegas. "It was boom-boom-boom."

"Mike called me to see if I was interested because of my long-term relationship with Matco Tools. We were able to meld all of that together. The team will stay together in its entirety. 2010 is secure and we're working on 2011."

Good news for Antron, to be sure. But, I wondered, what about his former DSR Pro Stock Motorcycle teammate (and his wife's cousin), Angelle Sampey?

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Jok Nicholson

On my October 21 *The Race Reporters* radio show (PowerUpChannel.com), Brown had hinted that he and Ashley were working to bring three-time champion Sampey in as Antron's TF teammate.

"We're helping her here at MAR (Mike Ashley Racing) and I'm helping her, as a family member," Brown revealed on that show. "It could do nothing but positive things for our sport, because when she rode a Pro Stock Bike, I think she was one of the top three out of the whole NHRA community. She's one of the top three drivers.

"To have her in one of the premier classes could only help our sport grow. I think there's some pretty serious stuff on the table right now. If everything goes well, it could be a really good addition to MAR . . . we've been working hard and she's been working hard. If this deal happens, it's going to be something that will be awesome for our whole sport."

I asked Schumacher if Sampey was part of the deal.

"I haven't talked to Angelle," Schumacher replied. "I'm always working to the future. We'll see what happens, sponsor-wise. I haven't gotten any answer or knowledge there at all. Angelle's name certainly came up. Some other sponsorship opportunity names came up that I'm currently working on.

"I have to talk to her and see if her interests are consistent with mine."

Brown: "She's working on a few different things. Whatever we can do, personally, we'll do. This sport needs her."

The addition of the 41-time winner to nitro absolutely would help energize fans and media as 2010 starts with the 50th Winternationals at Pomona.

I asked Schumacher if his latest venture should be seen as a vote of confidence in the business of drag racing.

"I would certainly hope so," he responded. "NHRA is going to grow again as soon as the economy gets better, which it is starting to get better. I have confidence in my ability to attract sponsors to the sport."

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LETTING IN THE AIR!

Words and photos by Jay Roeder

Hi everyone and welcome back! Things have been busy as usual and I have gotten work done on Muscrate.

But first, I want to take a minute to discuss something non car related. I would bet that nearly everyone reading this has been in some form impacted by cancer. My own family has been twice. Recently, I found out that a friend of mine and fellow engine builder, Jeff Stealy, had suffered some complications apparently due to the medications he was taking to fight off the cancer in his body that he has been valiantly and so far successfully fighting for a number of years. Jeff and I are about the same age and I have always had the utmost respect for him and his abilities. Jeff has been and continues to be an "engine builder for the stars" of Sportsman racing and he and his father Jerry have been mainstays in the Stock and Super Stock wars for literally decades.

Jeff is known for going the extra mile for his customers and, in a perhaps odd twist of fate, even built a car with the support of many of the racing community for a young man in his city that was also fighting cancer a few years ago. The plan was to get the car done so that the young man could drive it but, unfortunately, he passed away shortly before completion. Jeff finished the Mustang and sold raffle tickets to sell the car and the proceeds went to the family. I thought that was just awesome.

Selfless acts like that are what we are missing in society today and it is also the true measure of a man. Be strong, my friend, and know that you have a lot of people pulling for you. Cards may be sent to Jerry and Judy Stealy, 4530 9th St. Ct., East Moline IL 61244.

In another unfortunately related story I received an email from 12-year-old Jeff Gilley of Smyrna, Georgia, the other day. At first I thought it was a bad prank from someone I know but after a little research I think it is real and I don't know what I have ever done to deserve the honor of having a fan such as Jeff. The letter reads as follows in its unedited form.

"DEAR JAY ROEDER, i am 12yrs old and i think youre great. about a month ago i had a tumor removed from my brain and now im going threv radiation treatments. i told my parents that if jay roeder wouldnt ever give up, i wont give up either. thank you for all your inspiration! i was just wondering if i could get an autographed picture from you? if not, i will totally understand you are very busy. thanks again and take care of yourself. good bye. JEFF GILLEY"

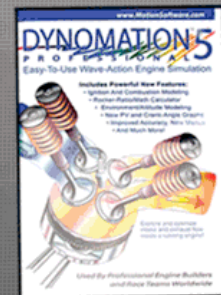
Every time I think I have it rough I get slapped back into reality and realize how bad it could be. Thank you Jeff, and may God be with you. Now, on to the 'taters...

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I have been working on a lot of smaller projects and finish welding and it occurred to me I hadn't covered the hood and scoop yet. Sounds like a good place to start. According to NHRA rules for Super Stock / Modified Stock I can use a fiberglass hood of either pin-on or bolt-on type. I decided to stay with the bolt-on style because at a lot of races I will have my fuel checked and on a windy day at the end of the track it could be a pain to remove the hood for access. I could also use a cowl-type hood such as I had on the car before but I am allowed to use a forward-facing scoop and they are far superior to the cowl when it comes to ingesting air and will give a "ram air" effect when installed correctly.

As for the scoop I am allowed to have the top of the scoop opening be no more than 5 inches up from the surface of the hood. When I went looking for a stock-type fiberglass hood the thought had not occurred to me that I was looking for a rare item! Duh. Who in their right mind would buy a flat hood when the market is literally flooded with cowl hoods of some shape or another. Welcome to my world.

I did a little searching on the web and then I asked a few questions on a couple of Mustang chat boards and the overwhelming consensus was that if I wanted a nice, no-wavy hood that actually fits I should go to HO Fibertrends and talk to Jim Wickline. I did a quick web search at www.hofibertrends.com and bingo! They had just what I needed! Part # 87930 is an exact replacement for a stock hood and weighs in at only 22 lbs!

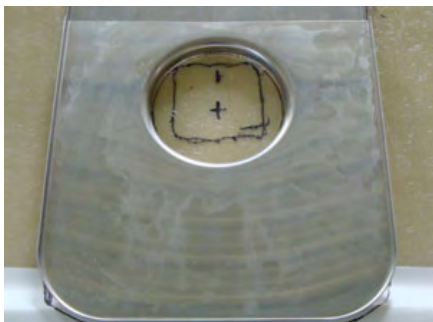


Here you can see the excellent fit of the HO Fibertrends hood right out of the box. Nice.

Even with the strong recommendations of the chat boards I have had some bad experiences with fiberglass replacement parts in the past, such as not coming even close to fitting without a LOT of work, so I wanted to talk to the man that makes them. I called and got hold of Jim and after only a few moments it was apparent I was talking to a true craftsman that takes pride in his work. I expressed my concerns to Jim and he knew exactly what I was talking about and thoroughly explained to me the differences between his products and the competition.

For starters, all of his hoods are made with a high quality hand-laid fiberglass. The hoods are made with a tough white colored gel coat that resists fiber strand print through and is superior to the general purpose gel coats used by most other companies.

This particular hood does not have a fully finished smooth underside to save weight but the outer rim is built exactly like the factory hood including the hinge and latch areas. Speaking of that, Jim does not use nut inserts simply pushed into the hood for the hinge and latch areas but instead goes to the effort of laminating blocks of aircraft quality aluminum into the fiberglass understructure. The hinge area comes pre-drilled and threaded and the latch area is metal reinforced. These hoods are made to last.



I used the Moroso air pan as the template after I located the center of the carb on the hood.

How does it fit? Perfect! I was amazed at how well the fit and finish was out of the box. The lines along the fenders and cowl are perfect. The area above the headlights is perfect. The hinges and latch assembly bolted on, you guessed it, perfectly! I guess you can tell I am very impressed with the quality of HO Fibertrends.

The only thing I will do before painting is lightly round over the edges of the hood to knock down the sharp edge. I almost felt bad having to do what I did next but I got over it. I cut a big ole' hole in the hood! My engine is purposely positioned slightly to the passenger side so the opening I cut is not exactly in the middle of the hood. Once the scoop is positioned in the middle it will never be noticed.

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Here I have drilled the four corners with a hole saw that was the same diameter as the air pan. Worked pretty well.

The finished opening will allow me to run a dual carb setup some day.

What I did was take a number of measurements in the engine bay from the center of my carburetor to the edges of the openings and then transferred those measurements to the hood. Once I found the center of the opening I used my Moroso air pan (#65960) as a template for the shape of the opening. After all my measurements and markings were checked for the 100th time I used a hole saw to cut out the corners of the opening. I then used a skill saw to remove the remaining piece. The hole saw did a very nice job and along the back of the hood I actually cut into the reinforcement a little so I will have to firm that up eventually. I installed the hood back on the car and amazingly it fit great! The opening in the hood matches up with the Moroso tray just great and opens without issue! How did I manage that?!

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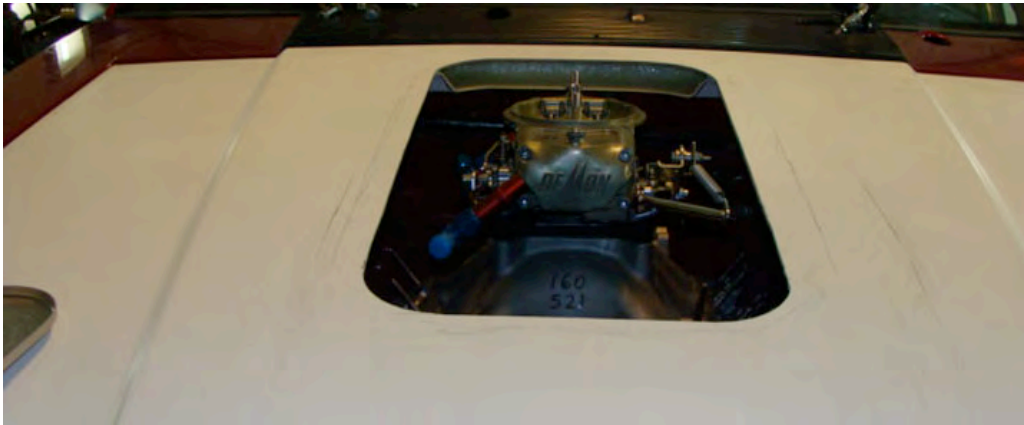
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Now that the hood was properly molested, I went to work on the scoop. The scoop I found is specifically made for classes such as mine and meets the 5-inch opening height I spoke of earlier. Don't let the 5 -nch dimension fool you, though, this scoop is big!

Measuring in at about 48 inches over all length and 17 1/2" wide it is humped in the middle (above the carb.) to 8 1/2" above the hood. It's so ugly it's kind of cool! Dimensionally it works out well because it positions the scoop opening right at the front of the hood to (hopefully) take advantage of the highest possible "ram air" effect and the back of the scoop just clears the cowl vent when opened... although I may do a little more massaging to the scoop before I'm done to get a smidge more opening angle for the hood.



This shows about how far the carb sticks out of the hood with only a 1-inch spacer. No way the Roush Yates mill fits under a stock hood!

Installing the scoop is basically a matter of trial and error. The scoop is centered on the hood left and right and I used masking tape and a pen to mark where it needs to be. The scoop came with a flange around the bottom for shipping purposes so I cut that off first with a die grinder and a cutoff wheel. By the way, fiberglass work is a very dirty, dusty job that needs to be done in a well ventilated area or outside as I did. The fine dust from cutting goes everywhere.



The flange around the bottom of the scoop is what they call a shipping reinforcement and it gets removed. As you can see, the scoop is rather humped in the middle.

Once I removed the shipping flange, the bottom of the scoop was flat on edge and the hood wasn't. The hood has a slight arch to it from front to rear. What I did was apply some 2-inch wide masking tape around the scoop where it sits on the hood. Then I used a compass with a point on one end and a pencil on the other and ran the metal end along the hood while tracing the shape along the scoop on the tape. This actually worked pretty well and got me my basic shape reference to begin cutting.

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The final fit of the scoop to the hood after contouring.



As you can see, the scoop is centered on the hood and will provide quite a bit of room for the carb. The opening is right at the leading edge of the hood.

Using the cutoff wheel I removed the material along the pencil line and then started hand fitting it with a sanding block and 80-grit paper. As of right now I have it fitting pretty good and I need to start laying in the fiberglass matting and do the finish work. I will show how to do that in a later article. I will see you next month!

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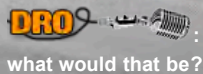
Remember, there is always HOPE (real hope). And, when in doubt... DO A WHEELIE! **DRO**

INTERNATIONAL InnerView



Tom McEwen, part 2

If you missed it, make sure to check out Part One of our Innerview with the legendary Tom 'The Mongoose' McEwen right [here](#).



DRO: If you were president of the National Hot Rod Association and could change just one thing about how the sport is run, what would that be?

Tom McEwen: I don't know. I love Tom Compton, I think he's very underrated. A lot of people like him, but a lot of people don't like him because he doesn't talk a lot, but I know him and he's really smart and he tries to do the right thing. He and Wally (Parks) were very, very close, and I think he gets a bum rap on a lot of things he shouldn't, because that's a really tough job to try to please everybody out there in all those different classes; it's a tough game.

I don't know what I would do if I was in charge of that thing because it would be like Obama stepping into the presidency when you've got a big problem that someone else already did. It's black and white until you get inside, and then you find out that's it's not how it's supposed to be and it's a tough job. I don't think I'd want to be president of NHRA and have that kind of pressure on me. I think I'd rather watch.



DRO: Do you think NHRA should invest more of their profits into the infrastructure of their tracks and payouts to their racers?

TM: Lots of people don't know that NHRA has spent a fortune on concrete guardrails. It's like we said earlier: a lot of people sit in the bleachers and think there's 50,000 people there and there's really 2,000. They (NHRA and the track operators) don't always make money. Their ass is hung out pretty good on the money. I remember years ago when they went to the steel guardrails, they (NHRA) loaned a lot of money to the tracks to put the guardrails in so the insurance people would let them race. A lot of people don't know that. They're constantly paying bills on real estate that they own. They get a rainout and they lose. It's not all cash. People think they have a lot of money and I don't think they do have a lot of money. I think they just get by, and I think they do the best they can, and hopefully this sponsorship from Coca-Cola and all these people they get in there will help them,

I know because of the press, a lot of people like to knock them. Once again, it's like I said: if it wasn't for IHRA and NHRA, what would all these guys do? They'd make planters out of these cars. I ran for AHRA, Jim Tice, for years and years, and he used to pay us -- Prudhomme and the rest of the guys -- to come to the races, and we'd race for a little bit of money. And then eventually when we got the major sponsors, they wanted you to go on NHRA because of the television and do the best you can on that. So it's a tough game out there and I've watched it since 1953, and I think it's well and fine and doing okay, economy-wise, and I think it'll be strong for a long time.

I think people shouldn't complain as much as they do all the time because if you were in their shoes, it would look different to you, and just be glad you've got a place to go race your car.



DRO : A while back, NHRA was going to be sold to HD Partners, and Bruton Smith has supposedly made offers over the years to buy NHRA. Do you think that'd be good for the sport?

TM: I don't know. I remember when Compton announced that deal with the DirecTV owner people, and things were just starting to get bad then. They took a look at it and decided not to spend the money, 'cause things were starting to turn around on the economy then, and NHRA was going to keep the small classes and those guys were going to take the pros and run with it and everything. So I don't really know how that would have worked.

I know that the guy that's been trying to buy them, that has all these dragstrips and NASCAR tracks (Smith), he's a very, very aggressive guy. He builds really nice stuff and everything. I don't really know what he would change if he were to take the sport over. You know it's easy to sit and back and talk to the guys that are crying and say, "Yeah, I'm going to do this and that," but once you get there and all of a sudden you've got millions and millions of dollars every year that you've got to pay for and don't know how the weather's going to be and don't know how the economy's going to be, you might see things a little bit differently than how it looks on paper.



(Tom West photo)



DRO : What do you love about this sport?

TM: I love the power of it. When I was a little kid, I had horses, and I used to compete in junior rodeos and gymkhanas and stuff. I always liked powerful things and speed. When I was sixteen and I got a car, I started racing cars. I wanted to go faster and faster, and soon I started racing a 70-mph car at the drags. I've driven cars up close to 300 mph. I like the feel of it and I like the competition of racing other people. I like the power, the noise, I like people improving every year, the guys learning to make more power with their engine. Guys like Gene Adams, Dale Armstrong, and now Alan Johnson and these guys.

Garlits in his day, before they had computers, was as good as anybody. Computers took a lot of people out of the sport because it's a whole different ballgame than it was in the old days with one magneto. But I like the concept of guys learning and trying different things and everything. It's a shame sometimes that big boys with money can do things that the little guy can't, and the little guy's just as smart; he just doesn't have as many parts and pieces out there.

I like the speed and the power. My father was a Navy test pilot, and he was killed when I was two years old, in Panama, and he probably liked the same thing and it killed him. So my mother never liked me driving a racecar. She'd never go to the races and watch me drive, but she would watch it on television and brag to her friends about me ... but she would never let me know that. So I guess it's the power and the speed of the whole thing. I always liked that.



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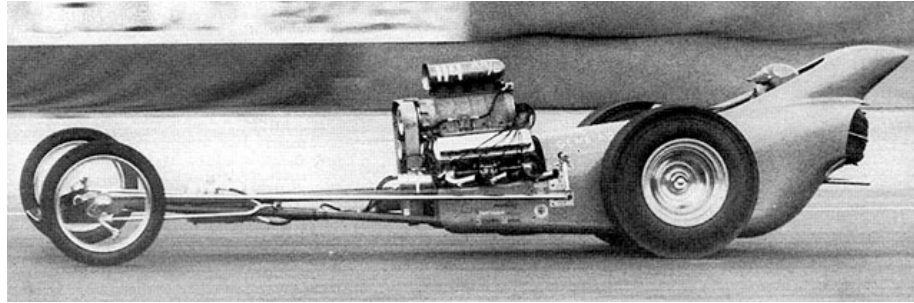
DRO  : How do you want to be remembered?

TM: Oh man, I don't know. I suppose as someone who always did their best with what they had to offer with the sport and tried to promote it, with publicity and money and helped to make it better, and all the little stuff I got involved with: the safety stuff and the tires, and the aerodynamics and all that kind of stuff. I could hold my own, driving-wise, and I ran a few good races, got some good publicity. The main thing, though, is making a living doing something I liked to do.

DRO  : Were you a better businessman or a better driver?

TM: I was a better driver than businessman. If I was a better businessman, I wouldn't be working today.

DRO  : I've got some photographs here. I'd like you to go through them and just give me your impressions of them.



One of the swoopiest early fuelers was the Adams/McEwen "Shark" car

TM: Okay, this is a picture of the Shark car. This was a Fuller car with Gene Adams and myself. I started driving for Gene Adams in the Albertson Olds car when Leonard Harris got killed at Lions. I started driving that car for Gene Adams as an Oldsmobile gasser. He and I did real well. Ran a bunch of cars. Shark was one of the first body cars with kind of a neat looking tail on the back. That's the car that I talked him into taking to Bakersfield, put 25% gas in it and we beat Garlits.



Okay, I think car here is the McEwen and Bivens trick-front-end Woody car. Striped car with the front end that they claimed would never do a wheelstand. It did. But it was something new that we were trying with Jerry Bivens of the Bivens and Fisher car, after they sold that car, I think that his motor was in this car. I think we ended up selling this car to Bernstein or somebody years later. I'm not sure though.

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This is the Hemi 'Cuda, 1965 Hemi 'Cuda. Looks like probably one of its first runs at Pomona, Winternationals, when it was still high off the ground. We learned the hard way with this car. When it ran 160 mph, it took off like an airplane because in those days we didn't know about keeping them low and putting spoilers on them. That Plymouth had a roof like an airplane wing, and at certain speeds with air rushing under it and over the top, it took off like an airplane. It crashed at Lions and fortunately I wasn't hurt. We rebuilt it and it ran pretty good and I wound up selling it to Goeske. We fixed it by lowering the car real low and putting spoilers on so the air couldn't get underneath the car. No louvers on this car. It had open windows.



This was the first Corvette I had in '74, I think. It's the English Leather yellow and blue Corvette. Linda Hurst's Hurst girls around the car, and I don't know where we were with this car. This was a nice car, very streamlined. But we had trouble when the Corvettes first came out; we didn't know about the short deck on the back and they all crashed but me. That's where we learned about the rear spoiler, having that outside wing on them that everyone runs today, to trap the air on the back of the car. We learned on that too.



This is the Duster, about 1973, '74. After we changed to Dusters, you know we went from Hot Wheels to Carefree to English Leather. This is one that had the louvers just for looks. They were heavy, but we didn't think about weight in those days, just thought they looked good. I don't remember which car we won Riverside with, if it was this car or the Carefree car. Riverside Nationals. First race they ever put \$20,000 up to win. I don't remember if that was it or the other car.



This here is the Hot Wheels truck that we bought from Sox and Martin in 1969. Chrysler made six of these big trucks. Prudhomme's just completely redone his yellow one and it'll be at Bakersfield (for the California Hot Rod Reunion). This is the first original Ronnie's Screamer chassis Hot Wheels car on the back of the thing, and this was the very beginning of the Hot Wheels team.



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The infamous injected 'Cammer Super Mustang (Bob Wagner photo)

This is the Super Mustang that we did in about 1966, when we got out of the Yeakel car and went to Ford, and we went to cammers. This was one of the first cars. Ford hired that Asian guy, I forget his name, out of Detroit that had done all the trick concept cars for Ford, he built his car for Ford with a cammer in it, and they hired Kalitta to tune it. It's an injected cammer. Chuck Forcher and Dicky Brannon were the engineers on it that worked for Ford Motor Company. This is the car that they sold at that auction a month ago in 'Frisco for \$144,000.

DRO : Was it stable?

TM: Ehh, it was okay. It was just too small and your head was jammed in the car. It had an automatic transmission and a Ford cammer and a Jaguar rear end in it. The best thing about it was that it was pretty. It looked nice. Other than that, it was a little wild.

DRO : How long did you drive it? One or two events?

TM: I think we ran this car off and on for four or five or six months. Something like that.

DRO : There's a couple of new books coming out, one about you and the Snake, and one about just you. What's the timeframe on that? Is it your entire career?

TM: The one book is coming out of a big production in Minnesota, and it's done now. It's a hardcover \$40 book, it's "Snake vs. Mongoose: How a Rivalry Changed Drag Racing Forever" and it's the whole Hot Wheels thing, about us racing and Tom Madigan's the one that wrote the book, did a great job. Lot of pictures and a great story.

The other book is a Mongoose journal book. It's called "The Life and Times of Tom 'Mongoose' McEwen." We'd been doing a journal in Drag Racer magazine for ten years starting when I first started driving in '53, and the people at Beckett wanted to make it into book form. So it's done now and it's also in bookstores. It's pretty good, got a lot of good stuff in it, great pictures in it. I think both books will be popular. **DRO**

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Bikes rock Rockingham finals

Words by Tim Hailey and Kay Burk

Photos by Tim Hailey

Fabulous weather, large fields, a huge crowd, and tight points battles made for a perfect finish to the Mickey Thompson MiRock Superbike Series Nov. 7-8 at Steve Earwood's Rockingham Dragway in the sand hills of North Carolina.



Jeremy Teasley, Orient, Ohio, ran 8.169/179.02 to defeat Coby Adams, Mooresville, NC, who ran a close 8.272/177.11.

Jeremy Teasley beat Adams Performance team boss Coby Adams in an all-Kawasaki ZX14 HTP Performance Real Street final. Running a comparatively mild motor this time around, Teasley used superb, consistent riding to make his way through the competitive field. On board Roger Starrette's blue '14, builder/tuner Adams was getting reacquainted quickly to riding a big bore bike with a big shot of nitrous. By the end of the weekend Adams was smooth as silk, but not strong enough to get past Teasley.

Former Pro Sportbike champ (in 2007 and 2008) Vinnie Demito and rival Rodney Williford both moved up this year to the 68-inch Orient Express Pro Street class. Williford won the first race of the year, Demito, the second, and so began a season long points battle that neither seemed to want to win. Demito struggled with the MTC Gen2 clutch and Williford lost the tune-up when he changed fuel systems.

In stepped perennial champion of everything Mike Slowe, who threatened to steal yet another Pro Street crown. But Williford and Demito rose up to the challenge at The Rock, meeting in the final and vanquishing Slowe's hopes despite Mikey's number 1 qualifying 7.17. Slowe spun and lost to Williford in the semi.



HTP's own Keith Thompson took his second straight Real Street championship on his Suzuki GSXR1000 despite spinning off the starting line and losing to Adams in round 2. Thompson was once again without HTP builder/tuner Cecil Towner III, who rushed back to Richmond, Virginia on Friday for the birth of his first child.

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Rodney Willford of Rougemont, NC.



Vincent Demito of Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

Then in a virtual replay of the April final, Demito spun wildly off the line and Willford powered to the win with a 7.315/197.45 to Demito's 7.902/183.19.



Pro Sportbike rider Sean "Skinny" Walsh of Patchogue, NY.



Anthony Navarro, Royersford, Pa., won the Pro Sportbike race, his seventh this season, with a 7.698/182.80 over Donnie Taylor, Bena, Va., who turned in a 7.710/186.02. Navarro reclaimed the class title that he "loaned" to Demito the last couple of years.

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The new Crazy 8s index class made another popular showing, and this time Brandon Tyree beat Ernest Lassiter in the final round of the 35-bike field. Tyree's 8.967 at 119.02 took the win over Lassiter's 8.976 at 123.15 mph.

Eatonton, Georgia's Baybay Yarbrough beat Richmond, Virginia's Lavar Lewis in FBR Shop Quick 32. Yarbrough ran 9.535 at 125.49 mph on a 9.130 dial, while Lewis ran 9.662/138.13 on a dial of 8.860.



The Honda-Suzuki of Sanford 5.60 final went to Jason Herron, Lexington, SC, over Curtis Griggs, Charlotte, NC. Herron's 5.701/123.63 edged out the 5.745/116.61 for Griggs. Herron also claimed the season title.

Jay Windsor, Felton, Del., beat Shayne Proctor, Indian Head, Md., in Saturday's Nitrous Express Pro ET final, 8.354 on an 8.350 dial to Proctor's 8.948 on an 8.920. Crazy 8s runner-up Lassiter beat Fun For All's Ron Arnold on Sunday, 8.696 on an 8.650 to Arnold's breakout 9.232 on a 9.250.

Barry Purnell, from Henderson, NC, beat Travis Boudreaux, Harrisburg, NC, in Saturday's Schnitz Racing Street ET final 11.307 on an 11.150 dial to Boudreaux's 9.126 breakout on a 9.350. Sunday's final went to Randolph "Boo" Brown Jr. from Potomac Falls, Va., with a 9.459 on a 9.270 over the 9.388 on a 9.060 for Sherrell Blake from Delmar, Md.

Andy Smallwood took Real Street B over Darion "Nanu" Payne.

Grudge racing was hot and heavy at The Rock, with local favorite Johnny "Airtime" Locklear cleaning up whenever he had the chance. Real Street winner Teasley split two aboard Greg Wallace's "Now and Later" 1000 against Caleb McDougald.

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Jim Whiteley's Y-Not dragster won the race with Bill Reichert, but lost the semifinal to Hillary Will, making Reichert the TAD champ. (Tim Marshall photo)

NHRA Division 7 championship at Las Vegas

REICHERT GOES 4 FOR 4

Words compiled from press releases by Kay Burk

Photos by Tim Marshall, James Drew and courtesy JEG'S

Bill Reichert needed some help from Hillary Will and Tom Conway in doing so, but he clinched his fourth straight NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series Top Alcohol Dragster National Championship Nov. 8 at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Reichert, Owosso, Mich., had the point's lead coming into this race with only Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo., and Duane Shields, Boulder City, Nev., within striking distance. Whiteley took out Reichert in round one to keep his hopes alive but Shields lost to Will ending his, and setting up a semifinal match up between Will and Whiteley.

Will, Ypsilanti, Mich., driving for veteran racer and car owner/tuner Tom Conway ran down Whiteley at the finish line ending his chance at the title and securing the championship for Reichert. Jimmy DeFrank advanced to the semifinals in Super Stock, which should assure him of the National Championship as well. DeFrank lost to event winner and former national champion Michael Iacono, Wading River, N.Y., who beat Bo Butner in the final for the win.



In the Top Alcohol Dragster final round Will (near lane) matched up against No. 3 qualifier Michael Manners with Manners, Willis, Texas, setting the low elapsed time and top speed of the event at 5.332 seconds and 265.33 mph for the win. Will, who drove a Top Fuel dragster in the NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series last year, left first but lost traction almost immediately, ending her day. (James Drew photo)

Hillary Will, driver of the Get Screened America A/Fuel Dragster, blasted her way into the final round of Top Alcohol Dragster at what has been called the most difficult Divisional race of the season, the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series, Pacific Division, Short Line Express Gambler Showdown. En route to her runner-up finish, Will crushed the World Championship dreams of not one but two stalwarts in the Alcohol ranks behind the wheel of her Tom Conway-owned and tuned dragster.

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Will qualified number one in a field 21 drivers vying for one of the top eight spots, delivering a 5.359-second pass at 263.56 mph. In the first round of eliminations, she sent local Vegas driver and event title sponsor Duane Shields to his trailer early and ended his title bid with a 5.463 at 259.01 to Shields' 5.671 at 231.56. In round two, she ended the title hopes of Jim Whiteley, sending him packing with a 5.339 /263.98 to a 5.391 at 264.49. That win assured TAD driver Bill Reichert a repeat as World Champion.

The final was an all-Conway affair, pitting father against son in a battle of the crew chiefs: Will's crew chief and car-owner Tom Conway against his son Shane Conway, the crew chief for Michael Manners. Will took a large starting-line advantage over Manners but had to watch him drive away as her car overpowered the track and smoked the tires, giving him the win.

"It felt so good to see the win-light come on this weekend, I'd forgotten how good that feels," Will said. "Tom gave me a great car all weekend long, and except for that final, we had great laps down the track every shot. I'm not sure why we smoked the tires on that last run, but I've got confidence that Tom will take a look at all of the data and keep our momentum going heading into Pomona next weekend."

TOP ALCOHOL DRAGSTER

Round 1

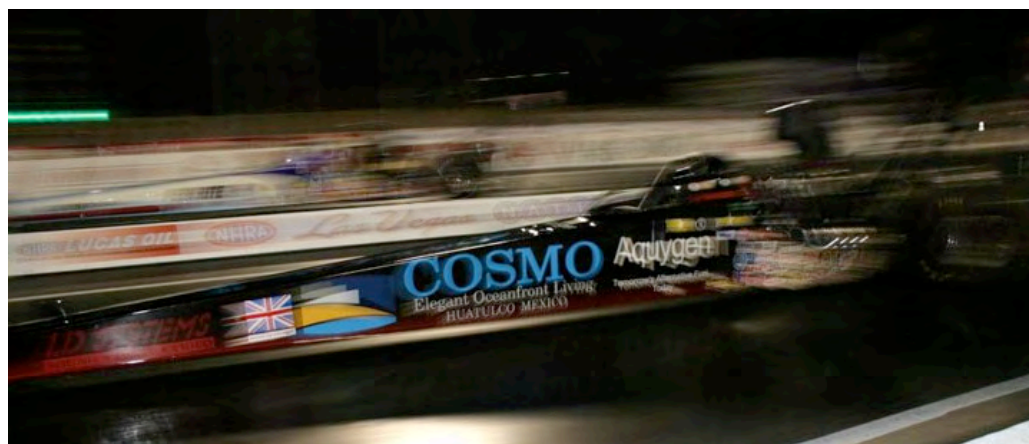
- 7) **Chris Demke**, Sunland, Calif., 5.395, 266.37 def. 2) **Brittany Force**, Yorba Linda, Calif., 5.378, 265.69
- 3) **Michael Manners**, Willis, Texas, 5.369, 263.36 def. 6) **Shawn Cowie**, Delta, B.C., 5.501, 263.51
- 5) **Jim Whiteley**, Grand Junction, Colo., 5.375, 266.37 def. 4) **Bill Reichert**, Owosso, Mich., 5.386, 262.08
- 1) **Hillary Will**, Ypsilanti, Mich., 5.463, 259.01 def. 8) **Duane Shields**, Boulder City, Nev., 5.671, 231.56

Semifinals

- Will**, 5.339, 263.98, def. **Whiteley**, 5.391, 264.49
- Manners**, 5.348, 266.21, def. **Demke**, 5.381, 264.29

Final

- Manners**, 5.332, 265.33, def. **Will**, 16.506, 65.42



Mike Manners (James Drew photo)



In Top Alcohol Funny Car it was Steve Gasparrelli taking the win over No. 1 qualifier Steve Harker, Gainesville, Ga., with a run of 5.825 seconds at 254.57 mph. Gasparrelli, West Covina, Calif., beat recent winner and last week's Las Vegas Nationals runner-up Alexis De Joria and former national champion Tony Bartone on his way to the finals and the win for Lou Gasparrelli Racing. (James Drew photo)

TOP ALCOHOL FUNNY CAR

Round 1

- 5) **Daniel Oliver**, Whittier, Calif., '06 Monte Carlo, 5.671, 252.99 def. 4) **John Lombardo Jr.**, Brea, Calif., '05 Camaro, 5.651, 254.95
 3) **Steve Gasparrelli**, W. Covina, Calif., '08 Mustang, 5.657, 255.87 def. 6) **Tony Bartone**, Long Island City, N.Y., '09 Mustang, 5.697, 251.67
 2) **Alexis De Joria**, Sacramento, Calif., '09 Mustang, 5.733, 252.71 def. 7) **Brian Thiel**, Pleasant Grove, Calif., '02 Camaro, 7.616, 124.01
 1) **Steve Harker**, Gainesville, Ga., '06 Monte Carlo, 5.640, 255.29 def. 8) **Paul Gill**, Brockton, Mass., '08 Mustang, 5.964, 229.31

Semifinals

- Gasparrelli**, 5.647, 256.50, def. **De Joria**, 12.795, 69.29
Harker, 5.632, 255.77 def. **Oliver**, 5.660, 253.47

Final

- Gasparrelli**, 5.825, 254.57, def. **Harker**, 9.533, 89.92

Jim Perry, Niota, Tenn., took the points lead over Thomas Bayer, and unofficially the championship with a runner-up finish in Super Comp where Greg Boutte, Stockton, Calif., took the event win and the trophy.

Max Tafoya, Albuquerque, N.M., took his second win in as many weeks in Las Vegas winning in Super Gas at this race and at last week's nationals while Jerry Emmons, Pasadena, Texas, held off Les Norton in Stock Eliminator after ousting his brother Gary in the semifinals.

SUPER COMP

- Greg Boutte**, Stockton, Calif., dragster, 9.064, 173.56, def. **Jim Perry**, Niota, Tenn., dragster, 9.069, 177.46.

SUPER GAS

- Max Tafoya**, Albuquerque, N.M., '03 S-10, 10.048, 159.31, def. **Mike Sawyer**, Acton, Mass., '03 Cavalier, 10.042, 162.04.

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Strange



(photo courtesy JEGS)

John Coughlin, Delaware, Ohio, needed a win to take the NHRA North Central Division Championship in Top Dragster. In what could easily be the best performance of his career, John Coughlin won the Top Dragster title and scored enough points in the process to clinch the Spitzer Race Cars Top Dragster season title for the second time in the last three years. Coughlin entered the Las Vegas event trailing leader Bob Cireddu in the standings and nothing less than a victory would allow him to make up the difference. Despite the pressure of a “must win” event, Coughlin never wavered as he drove his JEGS.com dragster through six tough elimination rounds culminating in a final round victory against Dave Morgan of Concord, Calif.

“I’m still a little shocked at what just happened,” said Coughlin. “I had to win this race and did it. This race was six rounds instead of the five that we usually run so that made it more difficult but the whole time I kept thinking about my brother Mike. He was in a similar situation in Top Sportsman and he won his last race and that showed me that is was possible. It’s still incredible to think that we were able to win a championship this way. My wife, Dianna and both of our kids, Cody and Kennedi were here and that helped make it even more special.”

In the critical final round, Coughlin got a slight lead at the start but was able to cruise down the quarter-mile for the victory after Morgan’s car slowed. Running off a dial-in time of 6.85 seconds, Coughlin ran a 6.97 for the win.

“I thought we had it [the championship] just about wrapped up a few weeks ago but Bob [Cireddu] went out and passed me. The only chance we had to get the lead back was to come out here and win but I didn’t have a lot of confidence in my car. These Top Dragster cars are so fast that it’s really critical to have everything just right. Thankfully I had a lot of help and we managed to get it working again. My brother, Jeg, took the car to Tucson and made some runs and, my dad {Jeg Sr.} along with our crew, Greg Cody, Tony Collier and Rick Rossiter all worked to make it right. We also had a lot of help from [fellow racer] Tommy Phillips. They got it right because the car was perfect all weekend long.”



TOP DRAGSTER

John Coughlin, Delaware, Ohio, dragster, 6.974, 183.69, def. **Dave Morgan**, Concord, Calif., dragster, 7.461, 185.97.

Winners in other classes this weekend were Ross Wilson, Upland, Calif., in Comp Eliminator over east coast hitter Sal Biondo; Gary Forkner, Temecula, Calif., won by less than two-feet against Ted Carli in Top Sportsman; former Northwest Division Champion Jeff Jackson, Wilsonville, Ore., beat Gary Thompson in Super Street; Minnesota racer Alex Barmettler was victorious in the Sportsman Motorcycle class presented by Harley Davidson; and Steve Dorn, Milwaukie, Ore., in the Screamin' Eagle Nitro Harley class clocking in at 6.362 seconds, 220.98 mph.

This was the final race on the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series divisional schedule. Lucas Oil racers have one last chance to earn points toward the national championships at Auto Club Dragway at Pomona for the Automobile Club of Southern California NHRA Finals.

COMP ELIMINATOR

Ross Wilson, Upland, Calif., '05 Sunfire, C/SMA, 8.306, 163.61, def. **Sal Biondo**, Maspeth, N.Y., '99 Dodge, C/AA, 7.494, 181.79.

SUPER STOCK

Michael Iacono, Wading River, N.Y., '87 Camaro, GT/DA, 10.103, 131.14, def. **Bo Butner**, Georgetown, Ind., '09 Cobalt, SS/CM, 9.004, 130.61.

STOCK ELIMINATOR

Jerry Emmons, Pasadena, Texas, '69 Camaro, B/SA, 10.760, 117.49, def. **Les Norton**, South Jordan, Utah, '65 Belvedere, A/SA, 10.421, 117.19.

SUPER STREET

Jeff Jackson, Wilsonville, Ore., '68 Mustang, 11.059, 149.31, def. **Gary Thompson**, Pahrump, Nev., '86 Corvette, 11.045, 132.18.

SPORTSMAN MOTORCYCLE

Alex Barmettler, Maplewood, Minn., '78 Kawasaki, 9.561, 130.44, def. **Tom Medlin**, La Mirada, Calif., '93 Suzuki, 8.634, 148.33.

TOP SPORTSMAN

NITRO HARLEY



Steve Dorn, Milwaukie, Ore., '06 Harley, 6.362, 220.98, def. Mike Romine, Sturgis, Mich., '07 Harley, 10.548, 81.95. (Tim Marshall photo)



Gary Forkner, Temecula, Calif., '06 GTO, 7.459, 182.26, def. **Ted Carli**, Temecula, Calif., '09 Cobalt, 7.108, 193.35. (James Drew photo)

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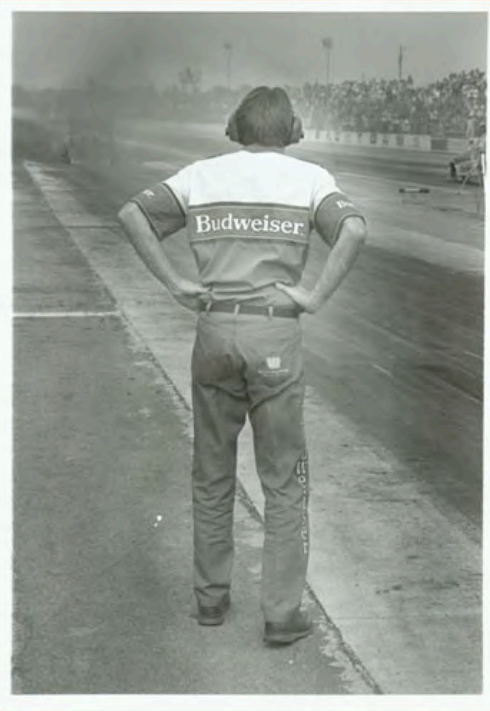
Words by Susie Arnold

Photos by Jeff Burk, Ron Lewis, James Drew, Todd Dziadosz, Jon Lemoine, Chris Haverly and from the DRO archives

After three decades, the familiar red Budweiser dragster owned and driven by six-time NHRA champion Kenny Bernstein and now piloted by son Brandon, will take its final bow at the season ending Automobile Club of Southern California Finals November 12-15.

The Bernstein family would like to end their 30-year Bud involvement with a trip to victory circle.

"This final race is going to be very emotional for our family," said Budweiser/Lucas Oil team owner Kenny Bernstein. "We owe a debt of gratitude to all the executives, brand management and sports marketing team members and wholesalers who have touched our lives during our tenure at Anheuser-Busch. All of these folks made it possible for a young man from Texas to follow his dream. We have enjoyed success that was way beyond our wildest imagination when we were a teenager reading hot rod magazines in high school. It's been a great ride."



While flying the Budweiser banner, the Bernstein duo has combined for a total of 86 national event wins: 68 Top Fuel and Funny Car victories for Kenny, 18 Top Fuel trophies for Brandon. Kenny won four consecutive Funny Car championships from 1985-1988, and then capped that achievement with two Top Fuel championships, 1996 and 2001. Kenny will forever be remembered as the first to surpass the 300 mile-per-hour barrier in Gainesville, Fla., on March 20, 1992.

They became the first father and son in NHRA history to win at the same national event in Las Vegas in April 2001 when Brandon won the Alcohol Dragster category, sharing victory circle with his father who won Top Fuel honors driving his Budweiser dragster.

Brandon was in the hunt for the 2007 championship, which came down to the deciding round between Bernstein and Schumacher in the semifinals at the season finale in Pomona. Bernstein finished third in NHRA point standings that year for the third time in his career.

Brandon's last event win was two races ago in Richmond, Va. He has also taken runner-up honors four times this season and has five semifinal showings.

"We started the season strong," explained Brandon, "and then bogged down a bit during the summer. We have had a resurgence these last several events and think we have a good chance to take Budweiser to victory circle one last time. It would be the icing on the cake if we could make that happen.

"After this event, we'll be trading paint. The team will hot foot it back to our race shop in Brownsburg, Ind. and by the end of that week, we'll be applying our first coat of Copart blue paint.

"We were fortunate enough to obtain Copart sponsorship for 2010 with the help of NHRA and our friend Vacaville, Calif., restaurateur Joe Murdaca. We are looking forward to a new chapter with Copart, an online vehicle auction company. This is their first experience with NHRA drag racing and they are energized! We are all excited about the coming season.

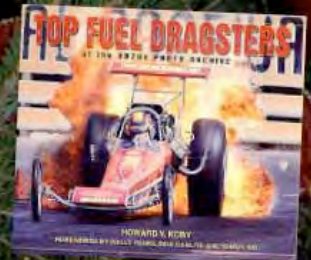
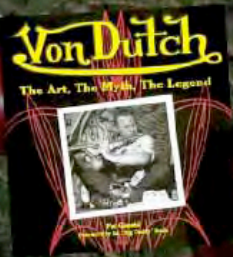
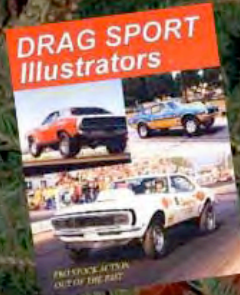
"We are also thrilled that Lucas Oil will remain with us and we're looking forward to the debut of the Copart/Lucas Oil dragster. Mac Tools will also be celebrating their 23rd year with us, and La Paz will commemorate their 32nd season."

Here's a look at Kenny, Brandon and some of the Budweiser racecars over the past 30 years. [DRO](#)



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PRESERVING MEMORIES IN CARDBOARD, PART 2

SOUVENIR PROGRAMS

Compiled by Darr Hawthorne

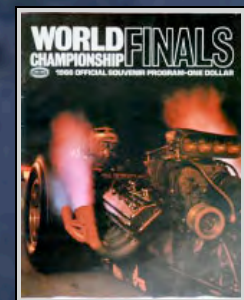
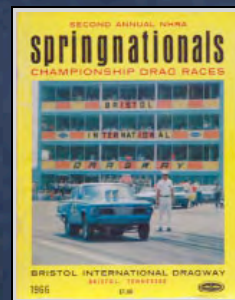
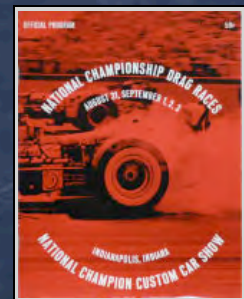
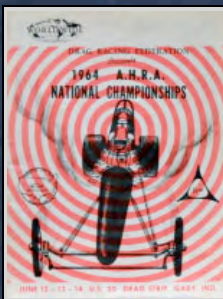
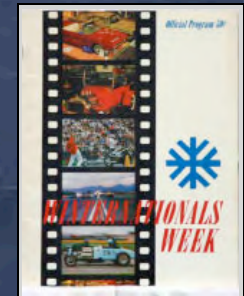
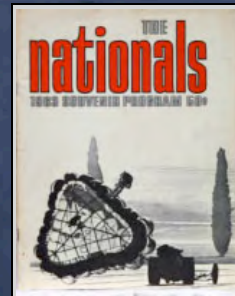
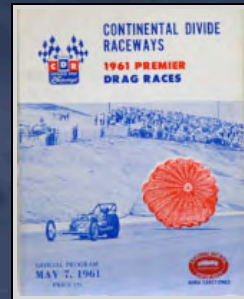
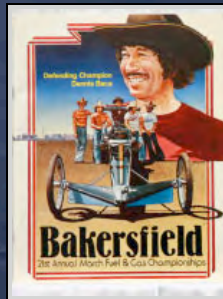
Click a poster to enlarge it!

From the earliest organized drag races of the 1950's, an additional source of revenue for promoters and track operators has been the souvenir program. While informative for fans and spectators to identify racers and their cars, programs quickly became a collector's item but many were tossed into the trash soon after the event was completed.

Before big corporate sponsors, auto parts chains, oil companies and Winston cigarettes, the tracks and promoters sold local advertising and garnered a few national ads to give the new fan a perspective on previous winners, rivalries and an autograph page.

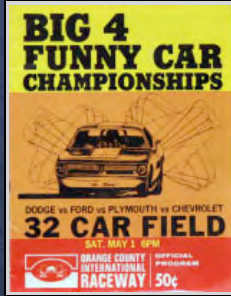
It's refreshing to see these early programs from a more innocent era of drag racing when the image on the cover was usually bold and heroic without sponsor's names above the words Winternationals, U.S. Nationals or SpringNationals.

Thanks to our friend, funny car driver and tuner Cory Lee for his contribution to this series and based upon the reaction to last month's event poster collection, these images of souvenir programs and a few vintage racing parts catalogs are sure to please.



PRESERVING MEMORIES IN CARDBOARD, PART 2 SOUVENIR PROGRAMS

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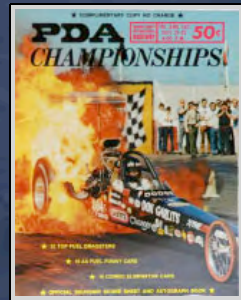
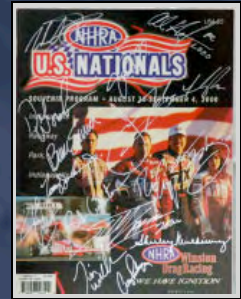
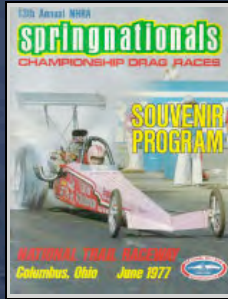
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DIAMOND'S TYPE 3 HARD-COAT ANODIZED PISTONS

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A street-driven nitrous-fed or supercharged engine needs the hard coat more than a competition engine because the combustion process expands from the few seconds of a quarter-mile run to hours of street use. Diamond hard-anodizes the entire piston and then moly-coats the skirt. The moly-coat wouldn't be necessary in a drag race application, but it is genuine insurance for a street engine.

Piston rings exposed to high temperatures can become micro-welded to their ring grooves. The Type 3 aluminum oxide anodizing (technically a ceramic) provides a heat barrier, which insulates the piston. The hard-coating is approximately .002-inch thick. It penetrates the surface of the piston .001-inch and builds out another .001-inch, therefore machining allowances must be made to accommodate the thickness of the application. This hard-anodizing possesses a surface finish approaching 70-Rockwell hardness and protects pistons against excessive combustion heat, detonation damage, and skirt wear—an absolute necessity in nitrous and supercharged applications.

The Rockwell scale is based on the [indentation hardness](#) of a material. The Rockwell hardness test method consists of indenting the test material with a diamond cone or hardened steel ball indenter. In the scheme of things, a hardness of 70 Rockwell is somewhere in the middle of the scale.

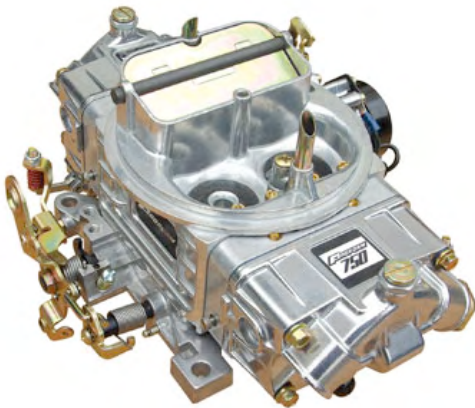
As hard-anodizing gives the piston a protective coat that reduces wear and insulates it from heat, it also provides an excellent surface to apply Diamond's moly skirt coating for even better performance.

The hard coat process adds a cost of approximately \$35 per piston and is applied on a custom basis only. Years ago, when a set of pistons cost \$240, adding a further \$35 for hard-coating was often considered too costly. Instead, racers would run them uncoated and purchase another set of pistons when needed. Now, the average price of pistons has risen to \$900 while the anodizing costs have remained fairly stable so it is a popular concept to spend the \$300 for anodizing and be able to run the pistons twice as long. Please call Diamond for details.

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MAKING PROGRESS, ONE MAG AT A TIME

I found the bit about Cruz testing the single mag engine very interesting. I have said all the time that the answer was very simple: one mag, one pump.

I think the hard parts will live much longer as long as you can police the output of the mag and pump. I think this will work much better than smaller displacements, and as Cruz said, they can keep on using the hard parts that they have. At this point, I think anything is a move in the right direction.

If things keep on the way they are, you could see a funny car show with three car owners, maybe four. I pray the Snake will find support; the sport can ill afford to lose a man like him at this time. I look for Schumacher to have four Top Fuel cars. I am pretty sure AJ and the Sheik will have another, and I think a lot of the indies that helped make for full fields will not be back next year as it appears they are not welcome, at least by the TV coverage they get. I hope for better from ESPN next year, and the NHRA also.

Robert Brown
Punta Gorda, Florida

A BLOW TO THE IHRA?

Jeff, I have often wondered why anyone would go out of their way to have Pro Mod in NHRA when it was obvious NHRA didn't want them! I cannot see that that move was anything less than helping hurt the IHRA. I realize Polborn is not Bill Bader, but this new IHRA owner is not much either from what I have seen. On the other hand, if IHRA blows away, then there is a place in NHRA, even though I still cannot see why. With IHRA you have TV; with NHRA you have nothing.

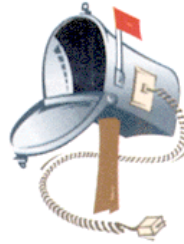
Richard Burbick
Sebring, Florida

LOOKING FORWARD TO PRO MOD

I'm kinda wondering why NHRA made Pro Mod an official class, especially after the Pro Stock Truck fiasco and saying they'd never run another pro class again. Wonder how much of it had to do with IHRA changing course and basically abandoning their Pro Mod class. Or maybe NHRA seeing the crowds that come to ADRL events?

Whatever, I'm glad Pro Mod will now be an official class, but I sure wish they'd run a few more races, like here in Arizona. Our national event gets nothing extra, not even the alky classes. Be nice to see Pro Mod run here for once.

Cliff Morgan
Phoenix, Arizona



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THE ONE AND ONLY CHAMPEEN!

Sorry Jeff, but you need to go back to hammering. Glad to see Pro Mod get a nod as a national event class, but so did Pro Stock Truck and look what happened to that.

I think it is too little, too damned late, and when you think about it it's actually funny because for the first time in a long while, NHRA does not have any competition for declaring National Champions. Feld will collect their entertainment dollars, but for the hardcore drag fan it's a miss. ADRL has no choice but to continue their current free ticket deal; if they stop now I am not sure people will pay to see it. They need nitro and now.

I am going to miss the thunder and surreal overload of my senses in the coming years, that is for sure.

Charles Rutherford
Montpelier, Vermont

ABOUT TIME!

This is a great step for NHRA to make. We just need to see how many teams will jump to it from ADRL. I would hope that NHRA will up the number of meets rather quickly. It could be what will save the NHRA. It might not hurt them to rethink the cost of tickets to see their show either.

John Pizza
Pennsylvania

RETURNING TO NHRA TO SEE PRO MODS

I agree with the Burkster. Pro Mod was long, long overdue to be come a full competition class. Kudos to NHRA. One of the things that made IHRA great in its heyday was having wide-open classes like Pro Mod, nitro Harley, low 6-second gasoline dragsters, and unlimited cubic inch Pro Stocks.

I have no doubt that Tom Compton had to take some crap from, most notably, Pro Stock racers who don't want any other doorslammer category on the property to outshine them. We've all listened in the past as WJ disparaged the "silly cars" and other classes that weren't 500-inch gasoline carbs.

I was on the fence about renewing my seats for 2010, but I'll do it now, in a large part thanks to Pro Mod coming to the show.

Jeffrey Wood
Port Clinton, Ohio

WOULD NEW GLASSES HELP?

This site is called Drag Racing Online. It should be called Anti-NHRA Online. What happened to the news about the 2010 Pro Mod series with NHRA? I think from now on with IHRA disappearing that if I need to see whets (sic) going on in the world of drag racing (you know, full blown fuel cars etc), I will have to go to nhra.com.

Come on guys, make it worthwhile to log in. You can only swallow so much nostalgia racing.

Dave Yamada
Canada

Gee, Dave, all the preceding letter writers must have read something on DRO about the NHRA Pro Mods or they wouldn't have written. Could you have missed something?

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KNIGHT PRACTICED WHAT HE PREACHES

I found Michael Knight's comment about lack of personal contact with journalists to be dead-on (sorry, Jok).

If this is the same Michael Knight who was with an Indy Car team back in the '80s, he was an outstanding practitioner of that aspect.

He even maintained a personal relationship with other PR folks, helping me out considerably in my first year at what was then Indianapolis Raceway Park. He made me realize how important that type of contact really was, and it has served me well over the ensuing 15 years.

John Potts
London, Kentucky

SAYING GOODBYE TO NHRA

Michael Knight's All Business column is right on with his observations. I would like to add one more reason, the main reason I won't support NHRA anymore. The Points Chase is what keeps me away. I hate it. Plain and simple, it keeps me away from the track and I won't even follow the races anymore. I just don't care who won when it all comes down to the last few races to decide a Championship.

As far as the 1,000 ft. racing, I used to go to two National Events a year, Las Vegas and Seattle. Too much time was wasted towing the Fuel Cars off the track because they didn't make it to a turnoff, because they are long shutdown areas. Long tracks pay the price for short tracks that are unsafe.

Goodbye NHRA, I've had fun since my first race, the 1975 Winters, but I'm done; my entertainment dollars go elsewhere.

Rick Bryant
Vancouver, British Columbia

KNIGHT STRUCK A RIGHTEOUS BLOW

Mr. Knight! Talk about hitting that nail on the head! I have watched every race for the last 20 years, unless I am at the track racing. The racing has been very exciting this year, with that being said ESPN2's commentators have not done a great job. One of the commentators thinks he is a higher power; with that being said, "Why is he not driving a fuel car anymore?" I think a big problem is whoever is in charge of where commentators go have no idea about drag racing, they are just looking for the high school drama.

Other than that, the racing has been fantastic this year and give the competitors a big thumbs up for racing so hard this year!

Mr. Knight, "you did a bad job of red-lighting" on this article. =)

Jeremiah Hall
Evansville, Indiana

IT'S JUST BUSINESS

How can you say that Rickie Jones had an unplanned engine change just before the finals? He (Rickie) clearly said on TV that was the deal before he accepted the second loaned motor of the weekend. You call Larry small time for this move, but I think I know who is small time for trying to make an issue out of something that wasn't between the two parties.

Rod Zolman
Mount Vernon, Ohio

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MORE ON THE JONES-MORGAN AGREEMENT

RE: Rickie Jones/Larry Morgan. Hey Burkster - before you go throwing Larry under the bus you might get all the facts. Larry LOANED TWO motors to Rickie Jones. All Larry asked for was the qualifying money, and if Rickie went further Rickie could keep the \$\$\$\$ and if they met in the final round Rickie would have to take out Larry's motor. Furthermore, the original gentleman's agreement was that the motor was only being loaned for QUALIFYING! Larry let Rickie have three more runs on the bullet than originally agreed to. Lastly, Rickie in the winners circle was genuinely happy for Larry and was a class act saying they both held up to their end of the agreement and there were NO hard feelings!

As Paul Harvey would say - and now you know the REST of the story!

David Anderson
Raleigh, North Carolina

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A WRITE-IN VOTE FOR BEST NHRA MOMENT OF THE YEAR

Are you kidding me? Hello McFly! NHRA 2009 Full Throttle Quest for the Moment finalists are posted, PICK ONE. Hey brass, you left off the John Force dive (err, hard right turn) at Indy which let Hight in the Countdown. What a father, sorry Ashley, maybe next year your dad will have your back instead of AAA's. How ironic, this DIVE changed the whole title, yet NHRA doesn't see?

NHRA, you guys are a joke the way you try to control everything. I don't watch ESPN2 crapcast any longer. Thank god for the NFL and NASCAR.

Rick Rzepka
Clinton Township, Michigan

THEY USED TO DO IT BETTER

What the hell has happened to drag racing? Team orders and lay downs now decide championships? Give me drag racing 1969 style any day! I was spoiled in the '60s when U.S. 30 Dragstrip in Gary, Indiana, put on better shows than NHRA three times a WEEK!

Larry Bova
Dyer, Indiana

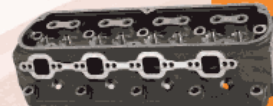
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IT'S NOT EASY MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL TRACK

Shout out to the Spokane community with hope for plenty of forethought by any new intended track operators. Bucky has worked hard in the local re-enactment industry-a post BAM world may motivate others in the Seattle area to step up and collaborate to fill the gap.

Memphis may have fallen victim to the same tax advantages many communities are taking advantage of where developers are strongly motivated to employ contractors and plant new housing developments with no real hope of filling 'em up. Just speculation; the pressure on existing drag strip locations continues, credit or no credit.

The Dutch Classic's success this year confirms salt-of-the-earth sportsman racing can continue to adapt and will survive all attempts by marketing floozies to gut our culture....

Philip Bradford
Midland, Washington

STATE WANTS TO HAVE ITS CAKE AND EAT IT TOO

The state of Maryland considers drag racing entertainment so they can tax it, however entry fees are not taxed. Would make a nice state-by-state study: Entertainment or sports.

Larry Clayton
Now in Las Vegas (my dive bar)

MOTORPLEX NEEDS A FACELIFT?

With the demise of the IHRA, what happens to the brand new track they built near Dallas? Maybe Billy Meyer should buy it and close down that antiquated place of his. Have you ever tried to drive out there in a nice car and park it in spectator parking?

From what I hear, the new IHRA track is 100% concrete, track, pits, parking, the whole nine yards. Also at Billy's place, the VIP parking and the handicap parking are full of ruts from rain. Try pushing a wheelchair or walker through that. Then they park all the bikes at the front door and you wade through mud to just get in there. The parking has no row markers and no lights, try to find your car at night after a race, you will walk and walk till you find it.

Take note Billy: either fix your place up or close it down and buy the brand new state of the art facility. 'Nuff said.

David Pierce
Little Rock, Arkansas

QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

What's the status on Matt Guidera? Why doesn't ESPN ever interview Steve Torrance, even when he wins first round?

Rhett McNair
Decatur, Texas

JUST ADD SOME DOLLARS AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

How about some press for the Randy Goodwin TA/FC team? Here's a rookie driver, Daniel Oliver, who hasn't been in the seat since Pomona and goes out and wins Vegas with little to no sponsorship. They are always a consistent 5.6-5.7 car, and that kid can drive!!! If you analyze his runs, Daniel won those races at Vegas on his driving talents. Wonder what these guys could do with a little Moola, huh? Watch out, Manzo, I hear there's a train a' coming!

Lawrence Lassiter
Pine Beach, New Jersey

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Check out the Top Fuel Rear Engine Dragster that may be the future of the nostalgia drag racing on www.utahcharger.com. There's a link to a shakedown run on the main page about four to five pictures down from the top. The video clip is from Salt Lake City's Rocky Mountain Raceways, from Sept. 26, 2009.

Dave Yonemura
Ogden, Utah

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Hello, thank you, thank you, thank you! Now I can fit the page in my screen all at once with this new feature! I had written to you when you first changed to this latest format and cursed you because I hated it. And I still thought it sucked until this morning when I first noticed the window size note at the top of the page. I was distraught but still checked in every day or so to see the latest news about drag racing.

Now I can come here with a smile on my face! I hope I was one of the factors that influenced your decision to change it? Thanks again!

Ron Sherry
Austin, Texas

Ron, the page size was always adjustable, but not everyone knows how to change their computer settings, so we added instructions. Thanks for bringing it to our attention.

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

Ron Lewis had a helluva weekend at Las Vegas behind the lens of his camera! Outstanding action shots AND super layout and presentation on your website.

Very, very well done, folks!!!

Stan Scott
Dallas, Texas

The photos were taken by Ron Lewis, the words and photos were chosen by Kay Burk and the page layout was done by Matt Schramel.

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"Just a second, John, I think Elvis is trying to contact me. And Graham, tell the guy in the black shirt and bald head to listen up!" - Dan, Indianapolis, Indiana

"Yes, NHRA is accepting a John Force helmet in lieu of the \$10,000 fine from the incident at Indy." - Tom Moore, South San Francisco Bay area, California

"Okay, one more time. This is how far you must stay from anyone named Pedregon." - Garth Allen, Edmonton, Alberta

"Okay, John, Krista taught you the words to *Drive It*, so if you flub them AGAIN, here comes Tasca and we'll use him for the TV spot." - Dave Peto, Tampa, Florida

"By the power invested in me by Coca-Cola and Full Throttle, I declare you joined at the hip, and Mr. Force, you will be able to continue to tell Mr. Light how to run our sport and what rules you and your teams can and can't abide by." - B. Lee, Meridian, Idaho