

Volume XII, Number 5 - May 2010



DRAG RACING

MAGAZINE *Online*

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Thanks for the **Mercury Memories**

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Getting Nostalgic: **now with Brian Losness**

Burk's Blast

By Jeff Burk

It's not the speed that kills, it's the sudden stop

I knew Neal Parker. He was a bear of a man who loved life, drag racing, going fast and his family – the one at home and the one at the track. He was a fearless driver who got every ounce of performance out of the supercharged altered he had when I first met him. I go to know him at the time he bought engines from Jim Oddy, for whom I used to do PR. He had Oddy engines in his alky-burning supercharged altered in IHRA Top Sportsman and Quick Eight competition.



RO MCGONEGAL PHOTO

It is my opinion that Neal Parker would be saddened if he thought his death while racing might have an adverse effect on the sport he loved. I don't think, however, that he would be upset if his death forced those in charge of the sport to make it safer for the competitors.

The problem that the NHRA and other sanctioning bodies face is that some of the national event tracks simply aren't long enough for the speeds many of the sportsman and all of the professional classes are now running. The issue really is just that simple.

Here is the problem the sport faces as I see it. There is simply no doubt that no one who designed and built some of the NHRA's current national-event tracks anticipated the speeds we are seeing now.

When tracks like Englishtown, Columbus, and Pomona were built no one could have envisioned that sportsman cars would be recording speeds well over 250 mph and Top Fuel and Funny Cars would be turning speeds well over 335 mph. Now racers are regularly turning those numbers and trying to stop on tracks that were built when 200 mph was science fiction. Part of the problem the tracks face is that many of them are land-locked and cannot buy more land to expand the shut-down area.

Over the years the NHRA has steadily increased the minimum weight of its professional cars, mostly in the name of improved safety. You cannot fault the NHRA for this; they are just trying to make the cars as safe as humanly possible.

But in trying to increase the inherent safety of the cars they may have done just the opposite. Cars competing in the premier sportsman classes and all of their professional classes are not only quicker and faster than they have ever been, but they are heavier than ever before. The drivers are now trying to stop their heavier and faster cars in the same distance that they had to stop the cars with when the 200-mph barrier wasn't broken in any division.

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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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So, despite shortening the distance for the nitro cars on short tracks, we're still putting cars into the sand and into steel and mesh barriers at the end of the track, and still killing racers. And there are more fatalities than the ones at national-event tracks that get all of the national press.

The problem is obvious, at least to me. At some tracks the shut-off area is just so short that the driver can only stop safely if they and the car are absolutely perfect. When a car goes through the traps at 200 mph or higher and the chutes or brakes fail or the throttle malfunctions, the chances are nearly 100 percent that car will end up in the sand trap or worse in the steel mesh barrier, and it will have gone from 200+ mph to zero in a hundred feet or so. The human body won't tolerate those kind of negative G-forces. Think Dale Earnhardt.

Most recently, to address the safety issues NHRA has come up with a system for the nitro cars that automatically deploys the chutes if the driver doesn't. This safety equipment adds more weight to the car but if it saves one life it is a great idea. I think there is a 100 percent chance that alcohol dragsters and funny cars will be required to have these devices installed in view of Neal Parker's tragic accident at E-town where reportedly the chutes never deployed.

And let's not forget the Alexis De Joria incident at E-town last year where chutes deployed but then ripped off of the car, taking the brakes out too. The sport and Alexis are very, very lucky she wasn't seriously injured.

So the safety issue the sport of drag racing is currently facing is three-fold:

1. The cars are getting faster and heavier, and the faster and heavier they become the harder it becomes to safely stop them. That is a basic law of physics and can't be fixed.
2. The professional drivers at some tracks are faced with less and less time and distance to bring the cars to a safe stop much less deal with a possible malfunction.
3. We have some national event tracks such as Pomona, Englishtown and Columbus that are just too short and for a variety of good, valid reasons cannot be lengthened.

So, where does the sport go from here? In the name of entertainment and history do we do nothing and take the chance of losing another life?

Some argue that danger is inherent and accepted by the drivers and we should do nothing. Tell that to the friends and family of the drivers that have been killed crashing into the barriers at the end of a dragstrip, and see their reaction.

Others, myself included, say to shorten the racing distance at tracks we know are dangerously short even further and make all of the classes -- not just the nitro classes -- run the shorter track. Those of you adamantly opposed to this solution have to ask yourself if you go to see racing or crashes and perhaps a death. Is drag racing truly a sport to you or just an on-the-edge thrill show?

Maybe the solution is to remove the minimum weight rule and instead have a maximum weight rule. Maybe not, but fuel and alky cars that are 2600 lbs or more when they are staged are going to hard to bring to a halt after a 320+ pass.

It seems obvious to me that drag racing as a sport needs to come to grips with the fact that some tracks may need the race distance cut off at 1,000 feet or even an eighth mile to make them just reasonably safe. It also seems obvious that we need more efficient, less dangerous arresting devices. I say this knowing that the NHRA has spent a lot of time and money designing and improving the current sand pits, but the fact is they need to be softer. As they say, it isn't the speed that kills you, it is the sudden stop.

If, as a fan of the sport or a driver, you can't stand to watch runs on the shorter distance then do not attend or compete at the shorter tracks. After all, virtually every other motorsport except drag racing has a different distance race at almost every stop on their tours. There currently are about as many eighth-mile drag strips in the U.S. as quarter-mile ones. A little variety is a good thing, especially if it will save lives.

Here is one fact we all have to live with. In the last five years three star drivers and competitors have lost their life on track and the NHRA, who in the end is the rulesmaker for the sport of drag racing, has yet to come up with a viable solution, although not from lack of trying.

I say it again, in the end we as drag racers and fans have to decide if drag racing is a spectator sport and a competitive sport or some sort of motorized Gladiator fighting. Most drivers that I personally know, including Larry Dixon and Paul Romine, say that when they are buckled up in a drag car with a cage around them and a helmet on they feel like there is no way they will get hurt. I'm sure Neal Parker felt the same way when he strapped into his car last Friday. But we know that is a false feeling. They can be hurt or even killed.

It is the responsibility of the sanctioning bodies to make sure we give every competitor every chance to survive and if that means eighth-mile racing and longer sand traps at some tracks, so be it. I would much rather attend an eighth-mile NHRA national event than another funeral for a racer who ran out of track and out of luck at the same time. **DRO** » [Click here to read more Burk's Blast](#)



Jim Baker's

Then & Now

Hall of Fame

I have been quiet too long! During 2010, the debate and comments have raged. 1,000 feet vs. ¼ mile...Two wide vs. Four wide... Electronics vs. 'heads up'...Nostalgia vs. 'State of the Art'. It goes on and on. Here, in four parts, is my perspective:

PART ONE: THINK DEEP ABOUT 1,000 FEET!

Several months ago, DRO published an [interview](#) with Don Schumacher and Lee Beard. If you have not read this interview by Jeff Burk, please go to the archived issues for June & July 2009 and carefully read it.

When Don Garlits and Chris Karamesines were in their prime, top speeds for the ¼ mile averaged around 230 MPH. E.T.s for their runs were in the 7.00 to 8.00 second range.

Development, especially track preparation, has drastically improved performance during the last 15 years. It is not the same today as during the time of the Drag News Standard 1320. And as much as a ¼ mile purist may not want to believe it, back in the early times, there were tracks of all sorts of lengths in operation every week. I am talking ½ mile drags, 1/8 mile drags, 3/16th mile drags (actually 1,000' minus 10'), and all for a wide variety of reasons, but not because of 'killer' 300+MPH speeds.

The comment Lee Beard makes about allowing the driver to begin the stopping procedure 320' quicker is huge, given today's level of performance. Read the article and really think about it.

So far, I have not read one post made by a licensed driver, asking about running the full ¼ mile again! They know what is best.

My first seven years as a track operator were at an 1/8 mile drag strip! It was a good track for its day, and because of our success, twelve more 1/8 mile tracks sprang up in the mid-west during the 1960s. No one died at Tri State Dragway, or was seriously injured there. When O.C.I.R. opened in 1967, during the first five years at America's ¼ mile SUPERTRACK, four racers lost their lives

NHRA and other sanctioning bodies should 'get off the fence!' Stop trying to do it both ways. Make Pomona in November the final ¼ mile record runs and start 2011 with 1,000 ft. for EVERYBODY! From Top Fuel to T/Stock, 1,000ft. is the new distance, period! Allow new records for ALL classes. Move the score boards up to the 1,000 ft. finish line,. Spectators can see better, drivers will feel safer, and the cost of racing will drop. It is WIN, WIN, for everybody! Next month: Part Two.

HALL OF FAME

Drag Racers who raced at Tri State Dragway

During the seven seasons of operation, the small 1/8th mile Tri State Dragway at Kahoka, Missouri, hosted appearances by several racers who were later honored by various Halls of Fame. They include:

DON GARLITS: Don came to Kahoka in 1963 to compete in our annual 'Fall Festival of Drag Racing'. He faced the 'Guzler' in the final and prevailed with a new 1/8th mile record of 5.07e.t. at 158.76 m.p.h. Don went on to win more Top Fuel events than anyone in his time. He presently operates the [International Drag Racing Hall of Fame](#) in Ocala, Florida, plus the Don Garlits Museum, a must see exhibit of drag racing history!



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Kahoka, Mo. 1963 "Fall Festival of Drag Racing" Don Garlits captured the annual Tri State Dragway event with a win over John Kranenberg driving the "Bud, Don, & John" machine from Chicago.

He was inducted in the [Motorsports Hall of Fame of America](#) in 1989 as the sole representative of drag racing.

In 1987 Garlits' record-breaking 270 m.p.h. car, "Swamp Rat XXX" was inducted into, and enshrined at [The Smithsonian Institution](#) in Washington, D.C.

In 1997 he was inducted into the [International Motorsports Hall of Fame](#).

In 2004 he was inducted into the [Automotive Hall of Fame](#).

In 2008 he was inducted into the inaugural hall of fame class at [Gateway International Raceway](#).

LEO PAYNE: Tri State featured a Cycle Eliminator comprised of outstanding riders! . Without question, Leo Payne riding his Harleys from Cedar Rapids, Iowa goes to the head of the class.



(Photo by Tenny Nelson)

From the AMA Hall of Fame: "Payne was a leading drag racer and top-speed record holder from the 1950s through the 1970s. He was a drag racing champion and set numerous records on his highly modified Harley-Davidson Sportsters. His custom-built machine, dubbed 'Turnip Eater,' was also the first non-streamliner to go over 200 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1969. Payne was a master at building special carburetors to run a nitromethane and gas combination. Payne's designs helped S&S Cycle launch a successful line of racing carburetors." Sadly Leo left us back in 1991; ten years later he was inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

[Leo Payne](#), a motorcycle racer before his time. His mastery of Harley bikes was beyond comprehension.

www.motorcyclmuseum.org/halloffame/hofbiopage.asp?id=248



Popular television personality and fellow Hall of Famer, Dave Despain (host of 'Wind Tunnel' on the Speed Channel), was an early fan of Payne's. "Some of my earliest racing memories are of Leo," Despain recalled. "When I was in high school, we went every Saturday night to the drag strip in Kahoka, Missouri, which always ran a bike class. Leo was the big gun, riding his famous 'Turnip Eater.' When Leo went 200 at Bonneville, Harley made a poster of the accomplishment."

THE CHUCKLE: One summer evening after the races at Tri State Dragway, several of us headed to Peoria, Ill., for drag races on Sunday. Reaching Ft. Madison, Iowa, we stopped at a roadhouse to 'coffee up' before crossing the mighty Mississippi into Illinois. Eight teams made the trip, including a little 1957 T-bird with a small motorcycle behind it-- Leo Payne's 'Turnip Eater'. Into the diner came a NASCAR fan. "My 406 Ford can beat any of you straight line wuzzies in a road race for \$100." We tried to ignore him but couldn't. Finally Leo had enough, walked over to the guy and asked, "Any of those drag machines outside?" YES was the heckler's answer. The money was quickly posted.

Leo went out and unloaded the air cooled Harley. The Ford screamed off and Leo, with no headlight, just followed. When the finish line neared, Leo passed the Ford doing a wheel stand at around 100MPH. SLAM DUNK!

JOHN KLUG: In 1960 John drove his 1959 Pontiac Convertible to several first place trophies at Tri State Dragway. He was still racing Pontiacs and winning through 1964, however he then switched to tractor pulling and was inducted into the Tractor Pullers Hall of Fame. John really helped the Kahoka Drag Races get started.

To quote IOWAMarv in Red Power Magazine, "I was just a kid when John aka Bobo was in his prime. His home address was Farmington, Iowa. His drag racing days and tractor pulling feats are still discussed today by the locals. John died several years ago."

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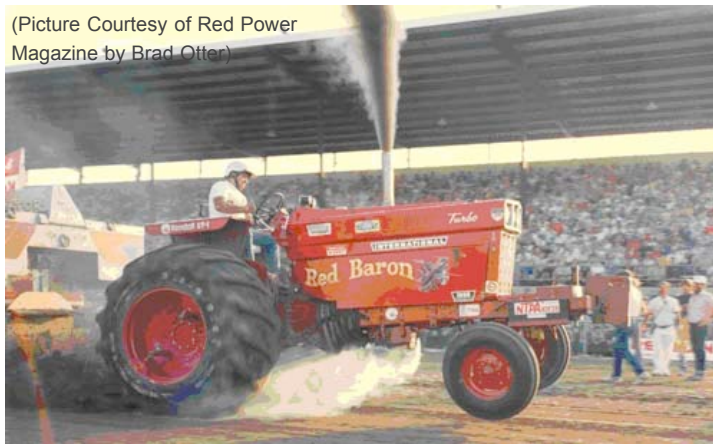
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Elkhorn, Wisc. 1980: John Klug (right) atop his 'Red Baron' 1066 Farmall Diesel at the Badger Grand National Tractor Pull! John is attempting what Bob Frey now refers to in drag racing as A FULL PULL!

(Picture Courtesy of Red Power Magazine by Brad Otter)



ARNIE BESWICK: An original '50s drag racer, Arnie drove winners from a 1954 Oldsmobile, through every imaginable form of Pontiac, to a Mercury Comet and a few Mopars thrown in for good measure. After a stellar career during the '50s, '60s, and '70s with Stocks through FX and Funny Cars, he returned in the late '80s with a Nostalgia Pontiac Tempest. As depicted on the original DRO May 2010 cover, Arnie is still racing the 'Tameless Tiger' in Nostalgia events! Kahoka fans will remember the times Arnie raced there with an assortment of Pontiacs, which he popularized in the mid 1960s.

In 1995, Arnie was one of the original inductees to the Super Stock & Drag Illustrated 'Hall of Fame' plus he has won many outstanding driver awards during his 50 year career. His crowning achievement was the 2006 induction into the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame! www.summitmotorsportspark.com/main-news1/arnie-beswick-at-the-pontiac-nationals



World Series of Drag Racing, Cordova, Ill. 1965: The Ramchargers vs. Arnie Beswick, the Friday night feature at the 'Series'--The 'Farmer' won the match just as the Turbo 400 trans let go in the traps. I had a small part by providing the 65% Nitro mix Arnie used.



Cordova, Ill. 1960: Arnie Beswick of Morrison, Ill., with his hand on the windshield, was a busy man last week at the 'World Series of Drag Racing'. He won Stock Eliminator honors on Friday night, driving a 1960 Pontiac Ventura, then came back Sunday to win C/Gas class with his original '58 Pontiac.

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LAS VEGAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Brief Notes: Rock a Billy Re-union at Las Vegas. This Memorial Day Weekend, a wild Nostalgia event took place at LVMS. I made several observations during the event, which will help fill the pages of future DRO issues.

As an elder statesman myself, it was certainly great to watch Roland Leong with his famous walk back from the starting line after Tim Boychuck's runs.

I do have a suggestion for interested track

promoters who want to 'cash in' on the current AA/FC craze; Contract with Tim Boychuck, the Rock a Billy AA/FC winner at Las Vegas and Paul Romine, the St. Louis DRO AA/FC winner for a match race during the summer Nostalgia races, at a place like Eddyville, Iowa; Cedar Falls, Iowa; or Cordova, Ill. Nostalgia Racing (and probably all of drag racing) really needs the Mr. Eliminator type of Match Racing which Drag News popularized in the '60s. With the promotion done correctly, it would be HUGE!



(Photo by Brad Baker)

Rock a Billy Heritage Reunion @ Las Vegas



(Photo by Ron Ogilvie)

Motor Speedway, May 29, 2010: This stunning '37 Chevrolet Coupe was in the thick of qualifying for B/GAS at the Nostalgia event here Saturday. Owned and driven by Phil Doughty of Las Vegas, the beauty is powered by a 600 cu.in. Pro Stock style motor. The 'show & go' racer said he started racing at Mid-America Raceway in Wentzville, Mo.

Las Vegas Motor Speedway, May 29, 2010: The 'Rock a Billy Heritage Reunion! An outstanding 1953 Studebaker A/Gas Nostalgia car which ran 7.74 secs. @ 174.50 MHP during qualifying. The car, driven by Terry Newton of Camarillo, Ca., is owned by James & Samantha McClure of Tulare, Ca. Statistician for the group is

Jim Baker

Phyllis Harmon, a long time friend, whose deceased husband, Howard, was my partner during the original 1970 Pro Stock season (Harmon & Baker's Chevy West). She reports that the Studebaker is powered by an Alan Johnson (yes, the Al-Anabi Alan Johnson) 560 cu.in. hemi on pump gas, WOW!

Until next time, *Be on Time!* **DRO**

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Getting Nostalgic



New columnist Brian Losness joins our merry band

By Brian Losness

As the first in my series of columns about Nostalgia Drag Racing for DRO, I am nervous as a long tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. I was torn between a couple of different subjects that I wanted to write about, however, I thought I would talk about the duality in popularity of Nostalgia fuel car racing. I had a couple of thoughts on why especially the funny cars have become so popular right now. Secondly, why there might be a decline in the number of front motored top fuelers, and what might be a way to bring out more cars.

Funny cars are coming out of the woodwork. It is awesome, and the more the merrier. It seems as though almost every week another new funny car is making its debut. This is awesome. Why is this, what is the reason for this mass popularity? Is it the same reason that funny cars have always been popular, because they look (well sorta) like the cars people (used to) drive on the street? Yesteryear's funny cars were even more like the Plymouth Arrows, the Pontiac Firebirds, and the Chevrolet Camaros that populated the streets at that time, unlike the late model cars of today that look just like a NASCAR COT, only in the style of a wedge. If the NHRA wants to slow down the funny cars, make the bodies look like the street versions of the cars, like back in the day. No greenhouses, no wedges. But that is an argument for another day.

I can see two reasons for the popularity, and the escalated building rates of funny cars. First, there are more mature race fans out there, and those people who used to be involved in the professional side of the sport back in the day are getting their second wind and wanting one more chance at the excitement that is top fuel and nitro funny car racing. Nostalgia racing allows them to relive those days.

The second is that we remember and love some of the great names and paint schemes associated with funny cars, and to see some of these famous cars come back to life is exciting. To see the Pizza Haven of Twig Ziegler, The Blue Max, Candies and Hughes, the Mongoose Coors Corvette, and the number of Jungle Jim cars around the country, just to name a few, is reliving our youth for a lot of us. It appears that for the most part the competitors and promoters are attempting to keep the cost in check by implementation of rules packages designed to do just that.

Conversely I feel there has been a decline in the number of nostalgia top fuel cars that are coming out and it alarms me. For example, there were only seven cars that showed up to run at the Heritage event in Boise. Those who did show up, I will have to admit, did have some minor issues with weather. However, those seven did get all the planned qualifying sessions in. The conditions on the track and atmospherically were excellent, and as always the new family treat the racers with a great deal of respect. Most importantly, those guys put on one helluva good show. 5.80 E.T.s and good side by side racing. A job well done by all.

So, is the problem the economy, or is the anomaly more centrally located, in the fact that the top fuel guys have positioned themselves as running nostalgia cars in late model fashion by having ten crew guys to service the car, putting on a fresh set of heads and a new set of rods and pistons in every lap? Going from the points-type mags to the state-of-the-art late model 44-amp mags escalates the cost, possibly making it cost-prohibitive to run long cars anymore. I feel comfortable in saying that I, along with a lot of Nostalgia drag racing fans, feel the need to have top fuel in its original format (front motored) and it's not a total event without having both top fuel and funny cars at it.

What I would like to see is the top fuel guys getting on the bandwagon with the funny car guys, possibly making more tribute type cars. For example, the Kansas John Wiebe car, Tony Nancy, The Bounty Hunter, Snake and Mongoose (in Mattel livery), just to name a couple off the top of my head.

Secondly, going back to an engine rules package similar to the funny cars should keep the cars in the 5.80 range according to some experts, and keep the cost down. Doing this would expand even more the fan base of the nostalgia series and bring out more cars.

I realize that I'm doing this on what the legendary Chris Economaki terms 'OPM' (Other People's Money), but nevertheless it might be exactly what it takes to bring out more top fuel cars to the major events. Can you imagine a

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DRO/Nitronic Research AA/FC Top Ten list

By Jeff Burk

Drag Racing Online and Cole Coonce's Nitronic Research AA/FC division have teamed up to create a Top Ten Funny Car list for AA/FC similar to the Top Ten list that Nitronic Research had for AA/FC in the late 1990's and early 2000's. That program disappeared when Mr. Coonce shuttered his very popular Nitronic Research program for a show biz career.

During a recent dinner with DRO Editor Jeff Burk, DRO West Coast Editor Darr Hawthorne and Cole Coonce, it was decided that it would be a good idea to start a Top Ten list for AA/FC following exactly the format that Mr. Coonce had created for the AA/FC racers.

Using the results from races that met the eight-car open qualifying criteria from 2009-2010, Coonce came up with a current Top Ten list.

Points are figured as follows:

Three points are available at any 8-car (or bigger) open-invitational race where the entries adhere to Heritage/DRO-style rules. At every event, one point each is earned by: a) setting Low ET of the Meet, b) turning Top Speed of the Meet or c) winning Top Eliminator.

In lieu of advancing up the list by gaining points, a racer can challenge a higher-positioned racer on the list for their coveted spot. A challenger can only move up three spots. i.e., #10 can challenge #7, but not #6; #4 can challenge for #1, but #5 cannot.

The first three alternates can "challenge" their way onto the List. Challenges are usually performed during qualifying, and no more than one challenge per qualifying sessions (first come, first served.) Because of the fickle nature of driver arrangements, points stay with the team and not the driver.

We feel the list will benefit the AA/FC races and racers. A challenge race adds to the entertainment of qualifying and track owners may be more interested in booking cars if a challenge they can advertise were part of the deal. It worked by in the '60s there is no reason it won't work today. Challenges can begin starting this weekend at Sacramento and the Goodguys meet at Indy. [DRO](#)



Top Ten AA/FC as of 06-11-10

1. Plueger & Gyger (10 pts.)
2. Man O' War (9)
3. Poverty Stricken (7)
4. Tim Boychuck's Troy Lee Designs (5)
5. LA Hooker (4) (5.67)
6. The Pedaler (4) (5.82)
7. Code Red II (3) (5.77)
8. Mr. Explosive (3) (5.88)
9. Fighting Irish (3) (5.89)
10. Josh Crawford's Blue Max (1) (5.83)

ALTERNATES:

- Cruz Pedregon/Joe Pisano (1)
- Steve Nichols (1)
- Josh Crawford (1)
- Code Red (1)
- Back In Black (1)
- Nitro Thunder (1)
- Jake Jacobsmeyer's All-Star (1)
- Telstar (1)
- The Heartbreaker (1)



POLOSON DOMINATES DENTON

WORDS BY CHRIS GRAVES
PHOTOS BY MAX CACKLE
PHOTOGRAPHY

The Outlaw Fuel Altered Association reached the mid-point of the 2010 racing season in their fourth event held at North Star Dragway on June 5 as a part of the Witko Nationals Summer Kick-Off, sharing the spotlight with the Texas Blown Fuel Association, Outlaw Top Gas Motorcycles and more.

This was the third event in six weeks for the OFAA series and with such frequent racing, parts attrition is a part of the game. Unfortunately, Mary Reep's "Grim Reaper" and the duo of Demets & Hale's "Bowtie Bandit" had to miss the fourth event with broken parts and pieces, but the OFAA did welcome Howard Farris and Todd Simpson, who were both making their series debut in Denton.

Bobby Marriott, the back to back-to-back OFAA Champion, took home the win at the last event at the Texas Motorplex over Jack Hodgson in a wild final round. This put Marriott and team "Shockwave" back in the points lead over Terry Anglin and Nick Poloson (shown above).

A total of fourteen cars came to battle the heat and put on a show for the capacity crowd at North Star Dragway. With missing names like Mary Reep, Brad Rigler, Tim Hay, Travis Bouchey, Mitch King, Demets & Hale, Rich Howell, Clint Cross, Howard Knowles, Anthony Whitfield, Mark Bowman, Steve Tryon and more not in competition it opened the door for a handful of other teams to duke it out in Denton, although many of those names were in the stands (because of damaged racecars) watching and supporting their fellow OFAA racers!



Farris was one of the original OFAA members fielding the heavy hitting "No Fear" alcohol burner, which last competed in 2001 before being sold to Eric Buchanan. Farris and company debuted their 1948 full bodied "War Wagon" nitro Fiat in Denton and what a mean and nasty looking ride it is!



The Simpson family debuted their blown alcohol fuel altered this weekend as well, with current NHRA/IHRA Top Fuel and Funny Car driver Todd Simpson behind the wheel. The Simpson family brings a wealth of knowledge to the table as Todd and company are many time Alcohol Funny Car Division 4 Champions. Be warned, this car will be a player in a field of cars that shows no mercy!

Poloson and team "Sundown" put down a stout 4.09 at 172 mph in the heat with Jack Hodgson pedaling his way to a 4.46 at 176 mph in the "Southern Outlaw". Donny McSwain wheeled the "Il N'Tense" Kenny Trumble tuned machine to low elapsed time and top speed of the round with a 4.02 at 183 mph with Keith Anglin's "Texas Gold Rush" along side at 4.47 at 151 mph. Terry Anglin rolled out next in the "Psychotic Express" and posted a 4.21 at 169 mph with DoDad Burton clicking off a 4.36 at 168 mph in the other lane. Howard Farris closed the session with his first pass on the "War Wagon" shutting off early with a 6.13.

Chris Trussell and John Broussard both had one more attempt to qualify as the second and final session got started. Donnie Massey put down another 4.13 with Broussard along side, shaking the tire and pedaling his way to a 4.39 at 138 that got him in the field on the bump. Unfortunately, Broussard's luck continues to be less that fortunate as the tire shake caused tremendous damage to the "Purple Haze" Louisiana based machine, breaking the body and snapping the rear wing strut.

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Aaron Leyda (shown) and John Broussard got the action started in first qualifying session. Broussard ran into big-time tire shake on the burnout that damaged the body so badly the run had to be aborted, while Leyda laid down a strong 4.20 at 173 mph in the Dale "Lurch" Wilkens tuned "Hemi Hunter" machine, their best pass of the season. Donnie Massey's "Showtime" and Bobby Marriott's "Shockwave" lined up next in an all nitro pairing, with Massey's 4.13 leading Marriott's 4.15 as the air temperature reached 100+ degrees. David Purifoy and the "Thrill Factor" laid down a 4.18 at 170 mph with Todd Simpson along side at 4.43, only the third full pass on the Simpson car.



David Purifoy



DoDad Burton

Poloson came out and drove away from Marriott with a 4.05 at 180 mph which qualified team "Sundown" second while Marriott went right down Broadway to a 4.16 at 186 mph. Leyda clicked off another career best pass in the "Hemi Hunter" with a strong 4.15 at 174 to qualify fourth, his best ever.

Trussell made his last shot count, posting a 4.30 at 167 mph to claim the number eight qualifying spot in the "Assassin". McSwain posted a duplicate 4.02 and looked like the car to beat heading into first round, while Purifoy stepped up to a 4.15 at 171 mph to qualify fifth in the "Thrill Factor". Although Burton and Terry Anglin didn't improve, their first round time slips kept them in the top ten and moved into first round.

Unfortunately, Jack Hodgson's back-to-back 4.46's weren't enough for the quick ten bump spot of 4.39 and he missed the cut after posting a runner-up finish two weeks before at the Texas Motorplex. Farris shaved a second off his elapsed time in his second pass on the "War Wagon" posting a 5.12 and clearing out the mosquitoes on the starting line with a heavy load of nitro cackling from the pipes.

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For the second time this year, Donny McSwain (shown) led the quickest ten cars into eliminations, as predicted by North Star Dragway announcer Nic Duty. With the unfortunate damage to Broussard, Todd Simpson was inserted from the first alternate position and would move on to first round to face the red hot Donny McSwain.



Keith Anglin

Back in the pits, team "Shockwave" was thrashing to repair a barrel valve issue but simply ran out of time and had to throw in the towel, which opened the door for Keith Anglin to jump into first round as the second alternate.



ELIMINATIONS

Trussell and team "Assassin" rolled out along side Donnie Massey's "Showtime" to begin first round eliminations. Trussell left first and took the win with a 4.30 at 170 mph while Massey ran into issues and lifted to an 8.50.

Leyda came into eliminations qualified in the top half after running back to back career best passes and paired up with DoDad Burton in the "Free Spirit". Leyda

cut a .005 light and immediately was out of the groove, pedaling it three times to a 4.34 winning pass against Burton's quicker but losing 4.22 at 168 mph.

McSwain and Simpson rolled out next and McSwain put down his third "four-O" in a row with a 4.03 at 182 mph to take out Simpson's 4.59 at 160. Purifoy and Keith Anglin were up next with Anglin posting his best numbers of the night with a 4.40 at 161 mph but Purifoy had the power and got the nod with a 4.15 at 171 mph. Purifoy's 4.15 and McSwain's 4.03 were the quickest winners with one pair left in the waterbox. Poloson and Terry Anglin laid down side-by-side burnouts and crept into the beams in the final pair of the round. They were almost dead even on the tree but Poloson pulled away, blasting to a career best 3.96 at 184 mph to knock out Anglin's 4.18 at 170 mph.

Poloson and McSwain advanced to the final with Leyda taking his second "Good Vibrations Quick Reaction Time Bonus" in a row with his .005 light in first round.

This was Poloson & Wood's second final round appearance and second three second pass of the season while McSwain was advancing to his first final of 2010. On paper, a winner was unpredictable and the two strongest cars of the evening survived to line up one last time to decide an event champion.

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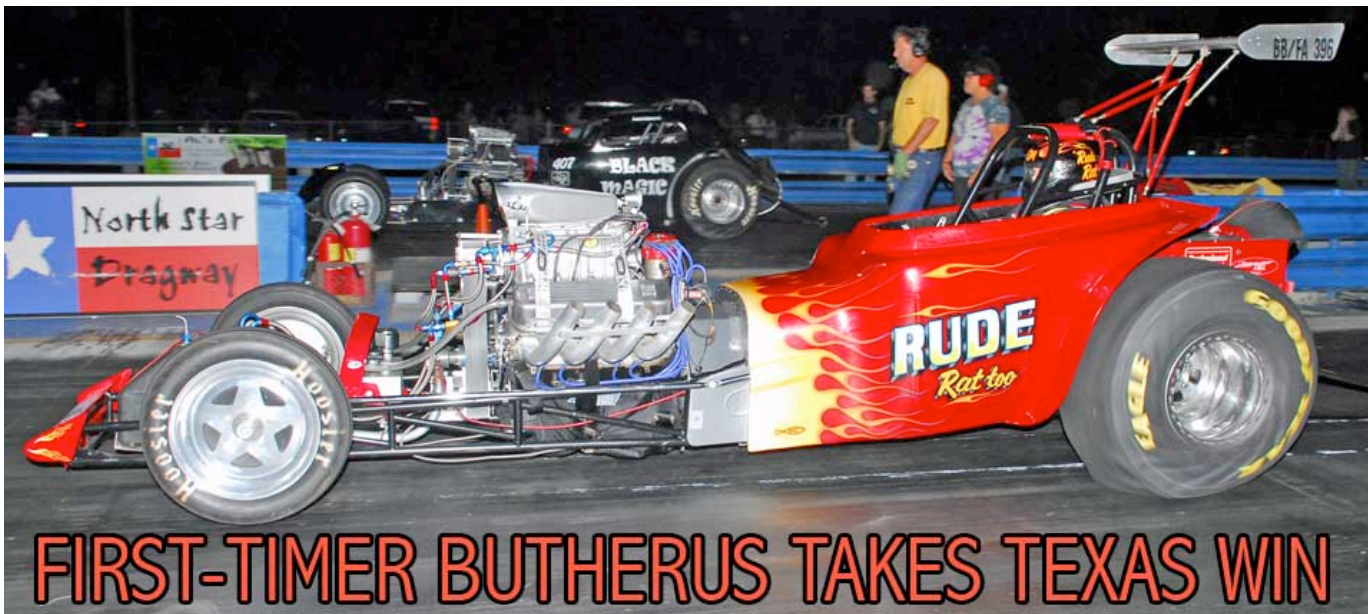
As the cars crept into the beams the crews had done all they could do and it was up to the drivers as the amber bulbs flashed. McSwain got a slight starting line advantage and still had the advantage at half track. McSwain's car started spinning the tires as they neared the finish line and Poloson drove around with a 4.05 at 174 mph to take the win over McSwain's 4.09 at 159 mph.

"What a night for the Sundown team! Tom (Wood) was making small changes in our tuning combination and in the first round we were rewarded with our best E.T. and MPH ever! In the final, Donnie McSwain and I were locked together for the entire race and we got to the stripe first by just inches. Thanks to North Star Dragway for a great race track all night and to all the fans that came out to watch and spend time with us in the pits," said Poloson.

Former OFAA regular Tom Butherus and the "Rude Rat" team took the win in the Texas Blown Fuel series, defeating Chris Stouffer in the final.



The next stop on the OFAA 2010 tour takes the series to Ben Bruce Raceway in Evadale, Texas for their Independence Day Weekend event that will be held July 3. [DRO](#)



FIRST-TIMER BUTHERUS TAKES TEXAS WIN

Words by Chris Graves

Photos by Max Cackle Photos

The Texas Blown Fuel Association joined the Outlaw Fuel Altereders in headlining the North Star Dragway Witko Nationals on June 5 in Denton, Texas. After two canceled events (AHRA booked) and a rainout, the TBFA teams were highly anticipating their return to the strip as ten cars came to battle in the second event of the season.

With a full field and a capacity crowd at North Star Dragway the TBFA guys and gals were called to the lanes for first session of qualifying. Six teams made their TBFA debut at this event including Eddie Taylor's "Faded Memories" FED, Wes Breiton's "Bad Oman" altered, Dustin Johnson's "Fair Warning" altered, Tom Butherus's "Rude Rat too" altered (lead photo), Rick Grindstaff's "Quarterflash" FED and Rich Witko's blown funny car.



Rich Witko



L.H. Newlin



Dustin Johnson



Paul Harris

With a track temperature of 123 degrees and air temp at 97 degrees there was plenty of heat as the first pair fired up. L.H. Newlin in the "Cantankerous" altered clicked off a 4.79 at 147 mph with Tom Butherus along side at 5.17 in the "Rude Rat". Eighth mile burnouts by Rich Witko and Leonard Ament followed the first pair. Witko hiked the front end and clicked off a wild 4.92 at 116 after a few pedal jobs while Ament wheeled the "Black Magic" 1948 fiat to a 4.84. Dustin Johnson drove the beautiful "Fair Warning" machine to a 5.11 opening lap with Wes Breiton clicking off a 5.00 in the opposing lane.

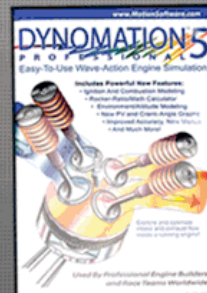
TBFA President Rick Grindstaff lined up with Paul Harris in an exciting pair. Harris left and drifted to the centerline, corrected it, then Grindstaff drifted to the center as they neared the stripe, both drivers doing their best as Grindstaff went 5.10 at 135 mph to Harris's 5.61. Chris Stouffer blasted to a stout 4.68 at 154 mph in the Stouffer

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& Meador "Defiant" front engine dragster along side Eddie Taylor's dragster "Faded Memories" that tripped the clocks with a strong 4.71 at 148 mph although suffering some engine damage.



Wes Breiton

The second session brought some improved racing conditions to the TBFA teams, all searching for that magic 4.65 elapsed time. Wes Breiton stepped up to a 4.85 at 146 mph and Dustin Johnson improved to a 5.01 at 138 mph. Rich Witko clicked off a 4.61 at 152 mph, a career best pass, while Leonard Ament improved to a 4.81 at 142 mph. Paul Harris blasted to a 4.63 at 151 mph with Rick Grindstaff clicking off another 5.10. Chris Stouffer nailed down the number one qualifying spot with another 4.68 and claimed the JamWorks Chassis Low Qualifier bonus. Everyone advanced to the all run first round, except Eddie Taylor, whose engine damage was too severe to make the call.

When determining the qualifying order, which is used for points distribution only, a time under 4.65 is disregarded if the driver's other time trial was not under 4.65, which is the case for Rich Witko and Paul Harris. First round is an all-run field with pairings and lane choice designated by "luck of the draw."

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Rick Grindstaff



Leonard Ament

Rick Grindstaff and Leonard Ament opened eliminations in a dragster vs. altered battle. Ament wheeled the "Black Magic" to the win with a 4.76 at 143 mph. Grindstaff's 5.16 at 139 mph. Rich Witko's funny car came out next against Dustin Johnson's "Fair Warning" altered. Witko laid down a 4.60 at 144 mph which broke him out by five thou, giving Johnson the win with a 4.99 at 139 mph. Wes Breiton and Tom Butherus squared off in a wild race. Breiton drifted towards the centerline as he neared the stripe and ended up tagging the finish line cone on a nice 4.79 at 145 mph pass, with Tom Butherus along side taking the win in the "Rude Rat" with a 4.85 at 138 mph.

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Paul Harris unexpectedly had battery problems firing up for first round, which gave Chris Stouffer the automatic win. Stouffer had put down two straight 4.68 passes in qualifying and blasted to a magical 4.65 at 156 mph to ensure a spot in the semi-final. The luck of the draw prior to first round gave L.H. Newlin the bye run in the nine car first round. Newlin needed to run better than Dustin Johnson's 4.99 to advance to the semi-final, as one of the four quickest winners. Newlin launched hard, blipped the throttle once and laid down a 5.20 at 141 mph to take the round win, but didn't advance to the semis.



Chris Stouffer

The semi-finals paired Tom Butherus against Leonard Ament and Chris Stouffer versus Dustin Johnson. The "Rude Rat" team of Tom and Phyllis Butherus made the tow from Goddard, Kansas, to race with the TBFA series. It was sure worth the trip, as Butherus took the win in an extremely close race with a 4.75 at 148 mph to Ament's 4.78 at 142 mph. Chris Stouffer was the man to beat on paper as he lined up with Dustin Johnson. Stouffer's streak of high 4.60's continued as he advanced with a 4.67 at 146 mph over Dustin Johnson's 4.98 at 139 mph.

With the track temperature still in the low 90's as the clock neared midnight, the TBFA finalists pulled up behind the Outlaw Fuel Altered final, which was won by Nick Poloson over Donny McSwain. Butherus and Stouffer did their burnouts and crept into the beams. They left the line together and Stouffer steadily crept ahead, tripping the clocks with a 4.61 at 148 mph, a little too quick, giving the win to Butherus who went 4.95 at 144 mph to take the win!

Butherus took home the first official TBFA event win in history back home to Kansas and the first complete race is in the books.



Rich Witko, owner of North Star Dragway and TBFA racer shared his thoughts on the Witko Nationals. "Wow, this was the best race I've ever participated in and I had more fun than I ever have racing," he said. "It was an honor to race with the Texas Blown Fuel Association, great people and great racers. I want to thank Rick Grindstaff for his efforts in putting together such an innovative, fun and fresh group to race with. I also want to thank all the fans for their enthusiastic support. I must give credit to Dennis Piranio and Leonard Ament for their help getting my funny car to go fast! I also want to thank Chris Graves for his hard work and awesome coverage of the TBFA. The Witko Nationals was a great success and I look forward to more."

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With the runner-up finish, Chris Stouffer took over the points lead with Leonard Ament and L.H. Newlin rounding out the top three.

The next event for the Texas Blown Fuel Association is July 17 at Ben Bruce Raceway in Evadale, Texas. For more information on the TBFA please visit www.texasblownfuel.com.

NEW DOORSLAMMER SERIES HOLDS FIRST EVENT



Greg Godwin (right) met Robbie Matthews in the Pro Mod final.

Words and photos by Ian Tocher

Number-one qualifiers registered wins in three of four heads-up, no-breakout classes at Orangeburg Dragstrip June 5-6, the first of six scheduled events this year for the newly formed Coca-Cola Outlaw Doorslammer Series (ODSS) presented by Hooters.

Among those prevailing from the top starting position were Tony Johnson in Outlaw 10.5, Greg Godwin in Pro Modified and Outlaw 275 Drag Radial racer Wes Whittle. Only local driver Chris Tuten from nearby Pelion, South Carolina, broke the trend, winning in Limited Street from last place in the qualifying order. Todd Sinclair also picked up his second race win in as many days in a combined 6.0 and 7.0 index class.

In a short, four-car field due to breakage and accidents for several competitors during Saturday's three qualifying rounds, Johnson opened with a 4.52 pass on Sunday to beat Curtis Rhodes and his '68 Camaro from Childersburg, Alabama, before facing off with Mark Swanson in the final.



It was over at the start, as Swanson and his Procharger-equipped Camaro moved seven-thousandths of a second too soon, while Johnson powered his supercharged '68 Camaro to a winning 4.53 lap at 175.23 mph.

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Despite the relatively easy weekend, Johnson, from Conyers, Georgia, expressed satisfaction with his team's performance.

"We were quickest in every round of qualifying and eliminations, so that's a good thing," he pointed out. "Plus, we won, so that's always good, too, no matter how it happens."

Godwin, driving the nitrous-boosted '63 Corvette owned by Orangeburg Dragstrip owner Buddy Boozer, made an off-the-pace bye run in the first round of eliminations, then easily handled Tyler Miller in round two before making another bye run in the semis to secure lane choice for the final with a 3.93 effort at 185.41 mph.

Robbie Matthews from Columbia, South Carolina, meanwhile, made it past veteran chassis man Tommy Mauney in the opening stanza, followed by wins over a red-lighting Danny Blankenship and a traction-

challenged Troy Jordan in the semi-finals.

In a classic nitrous versus blower final, Matthews left with a .065 advantage off the start and went 4.07 at 177.37 mph in his supercharged Kaufmann Motorsports '57 Chevy, but Godwin soon reeled him in and won going away with another 3.93 at 184.64 to earn the race win.

Godwin wasn't too concerned when he saw Matthews leave first.

"I wasn't going to push the tree because I knew we could run a low 3.90 and the best they'd run all weekend was in the 4-ohs. This was our race to win," he said.



Pro Mod winner Greg Godwin (left) with series promoter Roy Hill. George Howard is working with Hill on the Outlaw Doorslammer Series.

Whittle, running the narrow 275-designated DOT tires on his '98 Mustang for the first time, also was quickest throughout eliminations as he dispatched Peter Harold and Johnny Canaday from the eight-car field before going after Jacksonville, Florida's Kevin Fiscus in the final round.

Opening with a .054 holeshot, Whittle, from Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, secured the win with a 5.10 at 150.50 mph, while Fiscus was forced to shut off early and coast to a nine-second pass.

"It was hot out here today, but we had fun," said Whittle as he shared victory lane with Fiscus. "I may have to race these little tires more often."

Tuten, who carries the Orangeburg Dragstrip sponsorship on his '87 Mustang, arrived to the track late on Saturday, allowing himself only one chance to qualify for the eight-car Limited Street field. As luck would have it, he encountered problems in his attempt and was relegated to last place and given a race-day date with number-one starter Eric Dillard and his twin-turboed Mustang.

In probably the biggest upset of the weekend, Tuten left with a sizable .072 head start that allowed his 4.83 at 154.63-mph pass to edge Dillard's 4.76 at 166.91 combination by just two thousandths at the finish line.

"That was an awesome race; neither one of us knew who won," Tuten recalled.

In the semis Tuten defeated David Reese, who battled traction issues all weekend long, while his final-round opponent, Brad Edwards, advanced from an opening-round bye to beat Jeremy McElrath.

This time, Edwards moved first, but his 5.06 at 157.45 couldn't hold off the 4.96 at 152.28 put together by Tuten.

"I didn't think I could win here," Tuten admitted later. "I have the smallest motor in the class, a 302 with a single, 94-millimeter turbo on it, and this is my first time racing Limited Street. Sometimes the good Lord just smiles on you, I guess."

After winning the combined 6.0/7.0 index final on Saturday night over Robert Holton, Sinclair entered Sunday's action brimming with confidence.

"I knew we were going to win this even before hitting the water box," the Chester, South Carolina-based 6.0 driver stated after beating Jerry Cline in a double-breakout final: 5.99 to 6.98. "I was a little surprised it sped up like that, but I knew I had him all the way."



Chris Tuten

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The Georgia Rumble, the second leg of the Coca-Cola Outlaw Doorslammer Series presented by Hooters, is scheduled for July 9-11, at Silver Dollar Raceway in Reynolds, Georgia. [DRO](#)

Dunne got it done at Maple Grove

Words and photos by Jake Amatisto

This past weekend in Maple Grove featured some tight heads-up racing, close battles in the index classes, and combined with the ShopHEMI.com Late-Model HEMI Shootout, it made up one exciting drag race that mixed old and new.



Joe Dunne

In Pro Street, Joe Dunne returned to the Maple Grove event and was the number one qualifier with a 6.19 at 227 and managed to make it all the way to the finals to face Vinny Dimieri. Dunne took the win with a 6.25 at 228 to Dimieri's 6.70 at 173 mph. This is Dunne's second win at this track.

Super Street saw another repeat when Bill Lutz sailed past a tire-shaking Tony Nesbitt to get the win. He also was able to set the record when he busted a 6.79 to back up his previous 6.83 pass.



In Nostalgia Super Street it looked like Dave Beeson had it in the bag, but when he met Kevin Parent (shown) in the final, he couldn't produce the killer 7.20s at 190 mph he had been running all weekend. Parent left first with a .043 as Beeson cut a .064 and it was side by side but Beeson's car nosed over at half track, giving Parent the win.



Jamie Stanton (shown) met Steve Cagle in the final of Xtreme Street. Stanton busted a killer .004 reaction, but Cagle gave chase with a .048. The result was an 8.15 to 8.19, with Stanton taking the win.



Greg Delaney

In Pro Stock, the Baskin family stole the show. Armed with a new small-block powered 2010 Camaro, Greg Delaney was supposed to meet up with Skip Baskin, but they decided to split the winnings when a brief rainstorm rolled in. In other Pro Stock news, Rick Riccardi busted two perfect reaction times (.000), but he was stopped by Baskin's quick Nova in the semis.

In Street Radial, Mike Fratena was able to take out the number one qualifier, Brad Schehr, on a holeshot. Fratena left with a .014, and got to the stripe first with an 8.79 to Schehr's 8.77.

In Mean Street, Don Baskin and Alan VonAhnen met in the finals once again. Baskin managed to grab the victory with a 10.04 to VonAhnen's 10.11.

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Andy Warren



Kurt Neighbor

In the index classes, Jake Winters won in Open Comp when Donnie Bowles redlit by only .001. Late Model EFI saw Bobby Barrick win over Robert Mays, and in Nostalgia Muscle Car Andy Warren took down Danny Towe in an incredibly close drag race. In Nostalgia Super Stock, Kurt Neighbor bested Gary Bates for the win. True Street resulted in another overall win for Vinny Fiore and Frank Soldredge who busted a 7.84 average. Results of the Late Model HEMI shootout to come, but Doug Duel beat Eddie Rosa's Charger on a holeshot victory, 9.97 to 10.02. **DR**

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Words and pictures Ivan Sansom & Rose Hughes

Thanks to TSI Timers (Europe) for access to the timing data

Unbroken sunshine, baking hot conditions, record temperatures for the time of year, all of these came to a halt on the Saturday of the Main Event washing out the first day of professional qualifying at the FIA season opener, and Sunday will also be remembered as the never ending day when so many incidents (power cut, tree chopping, oil-downs) resulted in a six hour first session and prevented the running of a hoped for third session. Still, by the conclusion of eliminations on the holiday Monday, what a race it was with drama galore and stunning performances, and not the little matter of the appearance of the R2B2 squad with Melanie Troxel racing in FIA Pro Modified demonstrating just how much attention European drag racing is now getting on a world stage. Speaking with a couple of crewchiefs after the event it was clear that the track had more bite than they were expecting, and the loss of two qualifying sessions caused a few upsets and not the tracktime they really needed to get dialed-in, but expectations were for 4.5s from the fuel cars (if we stay at 1320 feet for the fuel cars) and 5.8s from the Pro Mods if conditions hold when the tour returns to Santa Pod in September.

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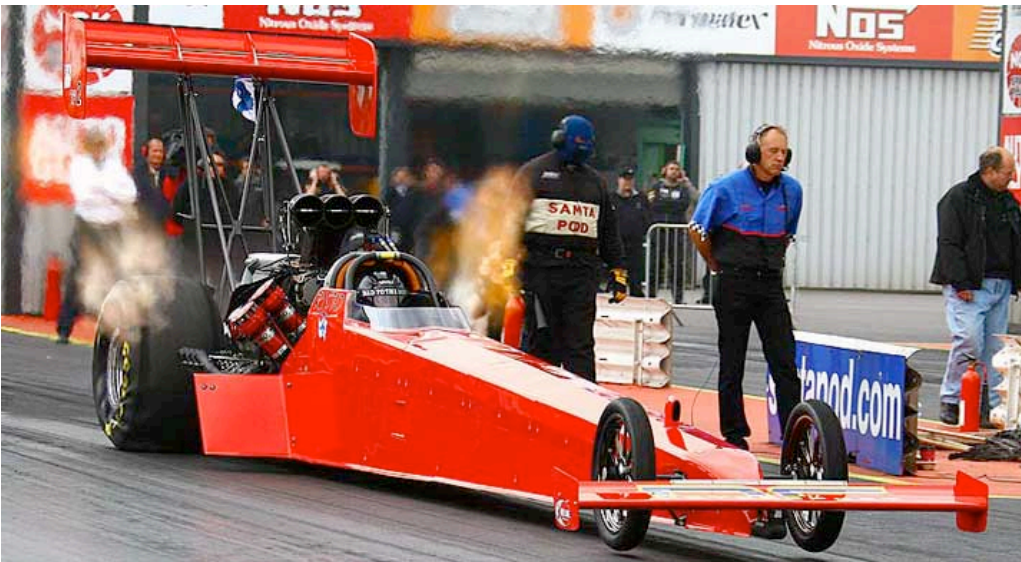


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FIA TOP FUEL DRAGSTER



After a couple of seasons running on the NHRA tour, Urs Erbacher made a dramatic return to 'home' turf heading the seven car field (it would have been eight but for Janne Ahonen's mount blowing up on a restart in the first qualifying session) with a nice and clean 4.754/319.31mph blast on Sunday evening; the TS being better than Erbacher's own European speed record set back in 2006. After an early click off on his first round bye, the Swiss driver carded a 4.785/278 to defeat Micke Kågered in the semifinals (the incrementals suggesting a low seventy on a full pull) and a 4.785 that easily covered Risto Poutiainen to take the event win and reset the Euro speed record at 314.87mph. "We're very happy, only burnt one piston all weekend, and if this is the last time over a quarter mile I'll keep the record until I'm an old man!" laughed Erbacher post race. With the persistent rumours of 1000 foot becoming the norm in Europe for Top Fuel in the near future he might get his wish, but here's hoping we still get to see the nitro burners running out the back door for years to come.



Steering some new Hadman pipe (ex-Bernstein spare with no runs on the clock), Risto Poutiainen was also smiling after the initial full pull carded a 4.801/292.71 to put him second on the ladder behind Erbacher. The grin got bigger when Poutiainen defeated long time nemesis Andy Carter in the opening round of eliminations with a pedaling 4.889 at a big 319.25mph that would have resulted in an Finnish semifinal against Anita Mäkelä, but a fluid leak put paid to that after Mäkelä's crew had thrashed to turn her car around after a first round fire. The final would have seen both Poutiainen and Erbacher chasing the back up for their 319 mph passes, but Risto's shot at the record and event win went away as he went up in smoke just past the tree.

FIA Top Fuel Dragster

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Urs Erbacher | (CH) | 4.7548/319.31 mph | (winner) |
| 2. Risto Poutiainen | (Fin) | 4.8013/292.71 mph | (runner up) |
| 3. Stig Neergaard | (Den) | 4.8519 | (first round) |
| 4. Mikael Kågered | (Swe) | 4.9918/247.84 mph | (semifinal) |
| 5. Jari Halinen | (Fin) | 5.0901 | (first round) |
| 6. Anita Mäkelä | (Fin) | 5.7876/171.09 mph | (semifinal) |
| 7. Andy Carter | (UK) | 8.0146 | (first round) |

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FIA PRO MODIFIED



The 'New Generation' really socked it to them in Pro Modified, which, perhaps, wasn't that much of a surprise given a 3.99 ticket from an eighth mile test in Sweden just prior to the race. How good were the Lindberg Bros? How about Johan carding a 6.084/233.97mph on his first quarter mile pass with the new car, close to two tenths quicker than the rest of the field in that first session. Second session and a 6.014/232.43mph put them on top of the heap of the 23 racers that had recorded a time (28 being on site). The Firebird was a 6.0 bracket car during eliminations with a 6.049/236.13mph, 6.012/236.07, 6.014/221.09 series putting Johan into the final where he should have faced up with Andy Robinson but the home favourite burnt pistons and blackened the crank in the semifinal giving Lindberg a solo, with a 6.042/236.09 missing the five second ticket he was looking for, but it will come later in the year of that there can be no doubt.



Jan Gunnarson's Badillac made it's first appearance at Santa Pod and blew the crowd away despite a holeshoot loss to Andy Robinson in the opening round of eliminations when a 6.047/228 flashed up in Gunnarson's lane (3.953/187 at the eighth). At over 100lbs over the FIA minimum weight, this is another spectacular entry that will be in the fives before too long.



Adam Flamholc has spent a lot of time Stateside during the off season and starting of the year with yet another new ride, gearbox problems and an early shutoff 6.463 meant that the Amalie Oil backed driver had the unenviable task of facing up with Troxel in the first round of eliminations. However, a 6.304/218 was enough to overcome Melanie's

wild 6.601/228.90 and a solo over a broken Marko Lantto put Flamholc in the semifinals where he would fall to Andy Robinson's piston smoking 6.112/221.

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To accompany the announcement of the WorldWide Pro Modified Association, Roger Burgess shipped over the R2B2 Camaro that Micke Gullqvist had wheeled to the runner up spot in Gainesville, with Melanie Troxel making her European debut behind the wheel. There was little doubt the Americans were serious about this race, with their A Team coming over headed up by Al Billes and a whole load of mystery pieces in the container, but getting hooked off the line on all-asphalt Santa Pod surface wasn't something that they were that familiar with. Troxel drove the wheels off the car to get into the top half of the field with a 6.243/239.85 for seventh spot in the second session and cold and damp conditions for the opening round of eliminations threw the team a curveball and Troxel had the car sideways attempting to light up the winlight but a first round exit ended her day in competition. Not to be undone, and following on from a lengthy conversation about the available traction with the smartest guys in the FIA pits (regular readers will know who we are talking about...), Billes chucked a big tune up in the car and Troxel sped to a 5.937/242.42mph test, quicker and faster than the current European record. The car is now in Sweden, and, despite no firm plans for the rest of the year, we strongly suspect Troxel, Billes *et al.* will be over again before the end of the season, we certainly hope so.

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A new paint scheme on Rolf Ammann's Blown Nugget 38 Chevy coupe will need a bit of a touch up after the Swiss driver, perhaps bored of scuffing the wall on a couple of occasions over recent seasons, completely demolished the Christmas tree on getting crossed up on the burnout during the first qualifying session.

FIA TOP METHANOL DRAGSTER



Following on from the epic that was FIA Top Methanol Dragster in 2009, the 2010 season got off to a pretty special start with the bump spot after the curtailed qualifying matching the quickest ever eight car field at 5.527 seconds. Despite only sitting in seventh coming into raceday, Dennis Habermann used a holedshot to defeat fellow German Peter Schöfer in the quarter finals with a 5.472/256.11 holding off a 5.430/250.99 by a foot at the finishline. Semifinals and Dennis left with a 0.0001s RT and then outran the A/Fuel car of Derek Flynn on a 5.465/255.23 to 5.509/260.53 match up. Waiting for Dennis in the final round was the formidable, and familiar, sight of his elder brother and reigning European champion Timo. Normally no slouch on the lights, but a 0.168s RT put Habermann the elder in catch up mode thanks to Dennis's 0.0064s RT holedshot, and Habermann the younger switched on his first FIA event win light (following on from his first event win at Easter) with a 5.480/257.60 ahead of Timo's 5.376/259.53.



At the front end of qualifying, Fred Hanssen had Will Hanna on hand to tune him to a 5.397/264.07 to sit on pole position for the first time. The Norwegian was so close to being the first FIA TMD into the 5.2s with a spectacular 5.3091/266.69 in the opening round of eliminations which is the quickest to date from a blown alky combination in Europe. The Habermanns were waiting in the semifinals, and Timo's 5.331/250 ended Hanssen's day after a losing 5.375/266.70.



The quickest of the four A/Fuel cars in qualifying was Derek Flynn at 5.420/260.55, a new PB for the Gold RV driver that put him in at third on the ladder. A tweak of the tune up and Flynn ripped off his first 5.3s pass with a 5.350/271.46 mph that was faster than the current European speed mark, but not without drama as no chutes saw him run some distance into the field at the

end of the shutdown area. A dustdown and Flynn was able to make the semifinal but dropped back into the 5.50s to hand victory to Dennis Habermann and not secure the back up for the speed record.

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FIA TOP METHANOL FUNNY CAR



A depleted field in Methanol Funny Car, with only six entries at the Main Event missing class stalwarts like the 2009 champion Ulf Leanders, whose car is still over in the States and Leif Andréasson, waiting for his new ride to appear (it's current owner is having too much fun in America at the moment) as a replacement for the Dodge he has just sold to Malta. With low qualifier (at 5.796) Dan Larsen blowing the motor in the first round of eliminations and then backfiring off the startline after a thrash to take his semifinal bye, it was left to Jürgen Nagel to make it a German clean sweep in the Methanol ranks after three byes when Danny Bellio, Arvid Grødem and Larsen were all no shows or shut off in eliminations.



The Turner racing team have shifted over to the Methanol Funny Car ranks after 20 years in dragsters, although it did involve some late night thrashes to get the ex-Jeff Carroll Monte Carlo race ready after it arrived shortly before the meeting. Rob was understandably taking it carefully in the first outing but it should be running competitive numbers before too long.

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Arvid Grødem was another Methanol veteran getting a handle on a new car for 2010, this time with the Sunoco backed Mustang that the Norwegian Westside Racing team have acquired from Jeff Burnett over the winter. A couple of low sixes suggest that the team were heading in the right direction, but they could have done without the small oil trails that cost them a qualifying shot and their chance at taking on event winner Nagel in the semifinals.

FIA PRO STOCK CAR



The FIA Pro Stock Car pits breathed a collective sigh of relief when Jimmy Ålund announced his US Tour during the winter, and it was left to Michael Callin to take his first FIA trophy from third spot on the ladder (at 6.886/201) and then a 6.801/202 in the quarters followed by a semifinal bye over a no show from Jonas Dantanus. In an all Swede all Michael final, Callin left the startline first with a 0.0321s RT to Malmgren's 0.0404s leave and a 6.792/203.50mph kept him ahead at the finishline.



With long time rival Ålund over the pond and Richard Sundblom shaking down an ex-Tommy Hammond Cobalt, Michael Malmgren came into the Main Event as the pre-race favourite and a low ET of each session, qualifying with a 6.774/204.23, taking his first round bye with a 6.763/205.10 and defeating Sundblom in the semis with a 6.781/202.42 gained him lane choice over

Callin in the final. A 6.788/202.46 wasn't enough to get around Callin's holeshoot and left him a foot behind when the win light came on in the other lane.

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UEM TOP FUEL BIKE



The Main Event was the second round of the series for the UEM championship chase and Kai Selkämaa did his chances of taking the points title at the end of the year with a second final round appearance in a row. However, the Finn wouldn't repeat his victory in Hungary at Santa Pod as British fuel bike veteran Steve Woollatt defeated him in the final with a 6.689/192 to Selkämaa's 6.893/186. Woollatt wasn't that happy with his performance over the weekend, despite a best in class 6.603 and was hoping for more after carding a 4.050/182 half track PB in RWYB testing at the start of the month on the PBR Puma Dealer.



Another UK Top Fuel Bike stalwart who lacks the finances (and time) to follow the European tour, Steve Carey opened his 2010 season with a revised fuel system on the Purple Princess PBR Puma. Revealed after a couple of seasons where the bike has been more notable for an alarming mid track wobble, Carey was relieved to get back down into the sixes during eliminations although he lost out to Woollatt at the semifinal stage.

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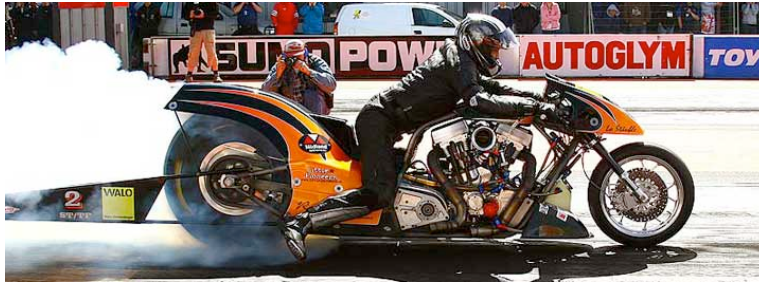
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UEM SUPER TWIN BIKE

With the team principal taking the win in Top Fuel Dragster, Lorenz Stäuble provided cause for a double celebration in the Swiss Erbacher camp with victory over the UEM Super Twin Bike field in similarly dominant fashion. Stäuble headed up the eight bike eliminator with an off the trailer 6.656/215.84mph that would stand for class low ET until Stäuble himself lowered it with a 6.608/215.96 in the final round win over Job Heezen, after defeating Svein Olaf Rolfstad in the quarters with a 6.785/207 and Trond Hoiberget in the semis with a 6.772/211.



Stauble still has a bit of catching up to do after a first round exit in Hungary, as current points leader Job Heezen continued his hot streak that extends back to August 2009 with another final round appearance. Third spot on the ladder with a 6.912/209.96 resulted in a first round bye when Ismo Mäenpää was shut off but Heezen didn't take things easy with a 6.745/208.96. This gave Heezen lane choice in the all

Zodiac match up against Roel Koedam, who'd outqualified his Dutch compatriote with a 6.905/173 and a 6.779/187 suggested a close race for the final round spot, but Koedam's chain split 200 feet out giving Heezen the win light. Although he lost in the final with a 6.815/205 Job reflected that "4 UEM finals and 3 Santa-Pod finals on a row isn't too bad for a dark horse...."

UEM PRO STOCK BIKE



Ulf Ögge, the reigning Pro Stock Bike champion, came into the Main Event on the back of a win in Hungary and was confident the Bike Line team had sorted out the engine problems that had hampered the performance of the Buell out east. Qualifying second behind Anders Abrahamsson's 7.248 with a 7.262 wasn't quite where Ögge wanted to be, but victory in eliminations over Zoltan Toth, Fredrik Fredlund and Jesper Thiel, the latter being the race of eliminations with a 7.145/179 for Ulf outrunning Thiel's 7.194/182, gave him a final round spot. The points lead was stretched a little more with a 7.167/182 defeating Gert Jan Laseur in an all G2 Buell race.

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In his first full season in UEM PSB, Gert Jan Laseur made his first final after defeating Richard Gipp and then taking out two of the Veidec/Motospeed Suzukis in succession when Kenneth Vik and Anders Abrahamsson couldn't keep up with the Eurol/Zodiac Buell, but a weekend's best 7.285/185 wasn't enough to best Ulf Ögge.

UEM FUNNYBIKE CUP



Christian Jäger and the Black Seven Suzuki Funnybike team are pretty hot at the moment, three wins in three events, two at UEM level and a healthy lead in the Funnybike Cup. Seven second passes and another semifinal victory over strong favourite Rikard Gustafsson gave Jäger the shot at low qualifier Steve French which he duly took with a 7.314/188.

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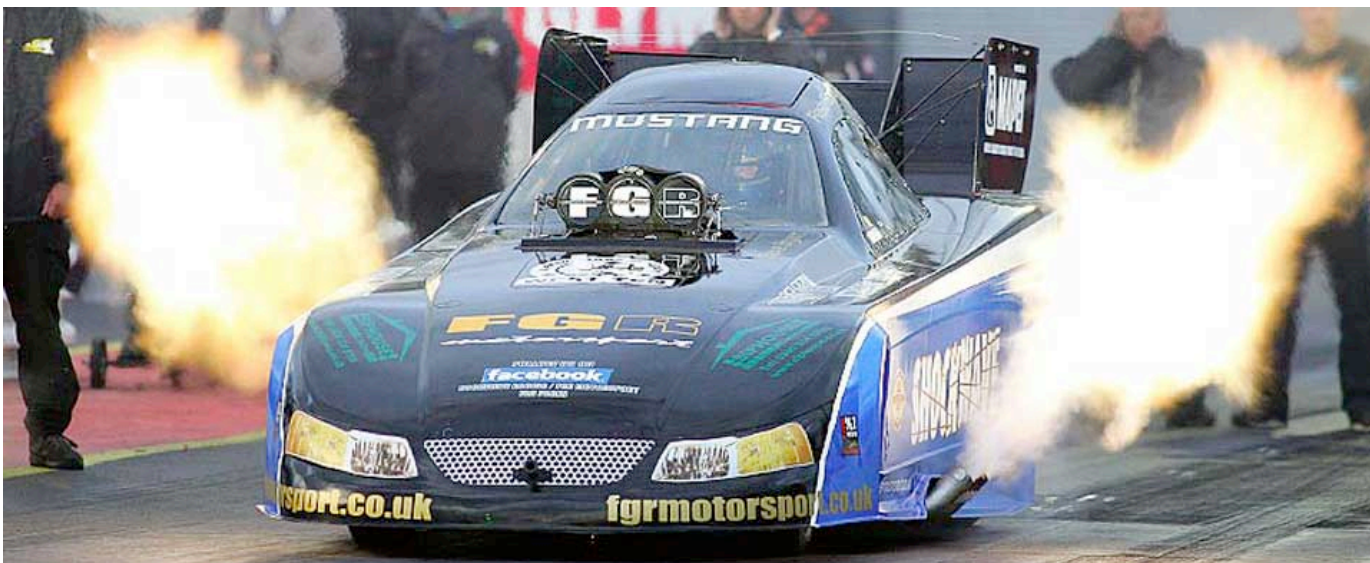
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Sweden's Rikard Gustafsson is determined to set a spectacular European Funnybike record before debuting his Top Fuel Bike, and he produced (again) the run of the event on two wheels with a new PB 6.469/201 (and low ET of all the bike classes) on a real easy set up in the opening round of eliminations, but tires shake put him just behind Jäger at the finishline in their semifinal race for the second meeting in a row. "Maybe they have my bike as a voodoo doll" commented Gustafsson with a wry smile on his face, "my goal to be faster than the yanks is costing me the title this year, and a big shame that I did not back it up. It would have been a nice European record. Hopefully my luck is changing and that all work will pay off. But I'm getting there, the 6,46 was with a very soft setting and the new clutch set-up together with a lighter bike seems to work." Rikard now has to wait until August for another chance as the organizers of the next two UEM rounds have declined to take the Funnybike Cup, but we are really looking forward to seeing what he'll achieve at the Euro Finals in September back at Santa Pod.

NOTABLES



Three fuel funny cars fronted at the Main Event, although Gary Page's new mount was sidelined after engine damage on it's shakedown pass. This left Gordon Smith and John Spuffard to pair up in the Shockwave and Showtime Mustangs, Smith taking the win in the final with a 5.351/250 to Spuffard's pedaling 5.523/296.31 effort.



First time at the Main Event for a long time, and certainly not before time, the ACU Super Street Bike class got a shot at running in front of the big crowds that the European championship rounds bring in to Santa Pod. An all run 25 bike field put on an impressive display, and was spearheaded by Steve Venables who, despite recovering from back problems that had made him miss the previous championship round, qualified low with a 7.402. Eliminations and Ven stepped it up in fine style with a 7.331/194, 7.481/190, 7.314/184 and 7.351/193 series that culminated in a 7.327/193 to 7.434/193 victory over 2009 points champion Rick Stubbins.

Although struggling in 2010 to get his Top Fuel Bike down track, Eric Teboul isn't having any problems with his hydrogen peroxide rocket bike. After resetting the track record in a strong crosswind at Easter, the flying Frenchman blasted into the 5.3s with a 5.331/247.66 in a stiff breeze on the Sunday and then improved by a tenth for a new absolute world record at 5.232/249.02 pass when the wind dropped on Monday. Half track and Teboul was at 230.05mph in 3.452 seconds; we're seriously thinking about something very close to a four second pass on a still evening at Hockenheim with the elongated shutdown area will enable a longer fuse.

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Stig Neergaard, Denmark, FIA Top Fuel Dragster



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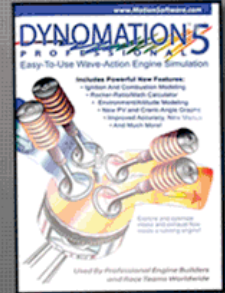
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- 6th – 8th August, Sunoco Drag Challenge, Gardermoen, Norway (UEM Drag Bike only)
- 13th – 15th August, NitrOlympX, Hockenheimring, Germany (FIA only)
- 9th – 12th September, FIA European Finals, Santa Pod Raceway, UK **DRO**



PROJECT MUSCRATE

Somebody's got to do it...

By Jay Roeder

Hi everyone and welcome back! You know what? I've discovered a few things in the last months that have changed the way I look at life in general. First thing was that I have had way too much stress in my life for far too long. I found myself fretting over every little seemingly insignificant (to most people) problem on a daily basis and it really ruined my attitude.

I just recently realized that I haven't written an article in nearly six months! Most of the business and personal "issues" are dealt with and I am under strict orders from my now 3-year-old son Michael to, and I quote, "fix the race car so we can go do burnouts!" What a kid! I am so lucky to have such a wonderful wife, Amy, and Michael that both want to get back to racing and have some damn fun for once.

I also realized that no matter how hard I try I can't fix everything. For someone like me that is a hard realization to accept. I'm a "fixer". It's what I do. Life is too short people. Do something fun while you can. The bills and drama will always be there when you get back. So, armed with a fresh new attitude lets get back to the 'taters!

In the last article, I showed you how I cut the hole in my spanking new HO Fibertrends hood and positioned and fitted the big ol' hood scoop onto it. I still need to finish fiber glassing it on permanently and I will show that later.

What I have spent my time on is more of the miscellaneous stuff such as finish welding the rest of the roll cage, cleaning up some of the "boogers" (ahem) around the aforementioned welds, cleaning and de-greasing, and generally getting things ready for paint and coatings. As the article title says, "Somebody's got to do it." And I guess that is me. This is the part of every project that I despise. It's really not much fun and it isn't a new challenge. It's just work.

This is what the driver side cross member looked like after I removed a section to gain more clearance for the Hedman Heddners I made from a kit.



As the pics will show I have also mounted the bracket for my Moroso switch panel (#74190) and I positioned it on the front hallow in the middle of the car. I sat in the driver's seat and made vroom-vroom noises and that seemed the place to mount it. It simply welds or clamps onto the bar. I welded it into position. Once the wiring begins the main cover plate simply attaches with a couple of quick fasteners. Pretty slick and easy to get to if needed.

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This is the finished product after lots of bending and trimming. Sure would have been easier to just bolt in an aftermarket K-member but NHRA said no.



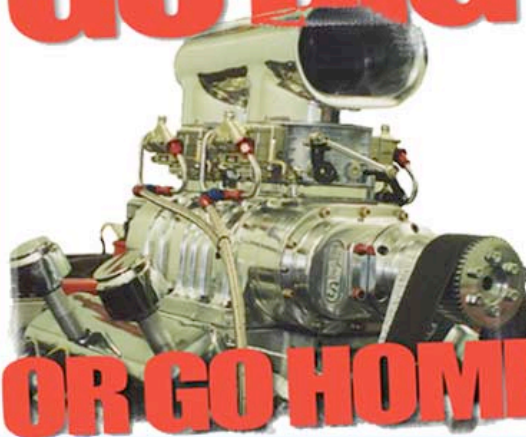
Both sides are finished and looking good. Should pass Tech no sweat.

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I also decided where to mount the parachute lever and I hope it passes tech. I didn't find any specs in the rulebook that said I couldn't mount it directly in front of my head off of the front bar of the "funny car" cage so that's where it went. My reasoning is that with it mounted directly in front of me I won't have to look to the side to find it in the event I miss it the first time. And, well, also if Michael is riding around the pits with me he won't be able to accidentally release it from "his" side of the car. You know me, always the thinker!

I used a chute release and cable kit from Competition Engineering (# C3452). It comes with an 18-foot Teflon-lined cable, universal mounting bracket, aluminum handle, and a small Rod End on the end of the cable for a bind free operation. I simply pre-assembled the lever / bracket assembly and tack welded them into place. It appears as though I will have plenty of cable length for final assembly and it is trim to fit.

I noticed Competition Engineering just came out with a new parachute release cable clamp (# C3453) that meets NHRA general regulations of having the cable clamp within 12 inches of the chute pack edge, so I am going to order one of those also.

The next item I attacked was the window net mount. With the funny car style roll cage, there isn't much of opening left for your arm to get outside of, but it still requires a net. Finding a narrow, angled window net does not appear to be easy. I was told to have one custom made to my dimensions. I decided to just make my own mounts that will allow me to use a more commonly available angled net and it worked out pretty well I think. I ordered a window net mount kit from Allstar Performance (#10219) which uses a really slick spring loaded release mechanism that takes up less room than the more typical latch type mounts and makes it a little easier to get in and out of the car without impaling yourself on the permanent part of the mount.



Here you can see the newly fabricated floor tunnel piece and the gap that it will fill behind it.



I cut slots into the flange to allow bending without a fancy machine. Not that I wouldn't like to have a fancy machine!

I decided to mount the bottom of the net with the included aluminum flat bar but I went to the local hardware store and bought a couple feet of plastic-covered braided steel cable first. I did not want the lower mounted brackets attached to the side diagonal bar of the cage simply for comfort of getting in and out. So, I welded the lower mount tabs to the rocker bar and ran the cable in between the net mount and the chassis tabs. Now when the net is released it simply lies down next to the seat out of the way.

Next order of bidness was fabricating the removable tubular style transmission cross member. I started out with a Competition Engineering universal kit (# C3600) and it worked great! I had been using the factory cross member until this point so while the engine and trans were still in place for mock up I removed the factory unit, and the front and mid plates I had previously made held everything perfectly in place. I then did the dirty work of drilling spot welds and using an air chisel to carefully remove the factory frame mounts from the car. What a pain in the butt! Don't ever let anyone tell you the factory spot welds are weak!

I then cut the main mount tube to length and drilled holes in the ends of it to insert the required tubular sleeves to prevent the bolts from crushing the tube. I tack welded them into position. The outer mount tabs were tacked into place on the factory sub frames that are now housing the custom sub-frame connectors I previously fabricated. The included transmission mount bracket fit fine with my existing poly mount after I elongated the holes in the bracket about a 1/2" to fit the Ford style mount.

The next item on the list was finishing the floor. I had a gap between the old factory floor and the new 4-link dropped cross member of about an inch that needed to be filled. I started out by cleaning up the edge of the original floor and making sure it was flat and removing the paint for welding. I then grabbed a piece of sheet metal about 2 1/2" wide and 3 feet long and bent a half-inch lip on one of the edges using my tried and true old school method of my welding bench, a piece of angle iron, two "C" clamps, and a hammer. Boy, I would love to have a nice metal brake someday!

I then did some quick measurements of the center of my bends required to go over and around the floor tunnel and cut a series of 1/4" wide slots into the half-inch lip at those locations. It was then as easy as the government spending money we don't have to bend the piece into position. I used a few "Cleco" fasteners to temporarily hold it into place and my dad's old body hammer to coax the metal into conforming to the odd shapes. I then removed the piece and punched out some holes to allow for spot welding and installed it permanently. The remaining edges will be sealed with a flame resistant caulk before painting.

The last project I tackled was replacing the metal I had removed from the factory front cross member for header clearance. According to the NHRA, any material removed must be replaced. This was no easy task, let me assure you. It involved compound curves and odd shapes. Must be a job for me!

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Here is the tunnel piece temporarily held in place by Clecos. I later spot welded it into position.



I also made a couple outer pieces between the new frame rails and the rocker panels.



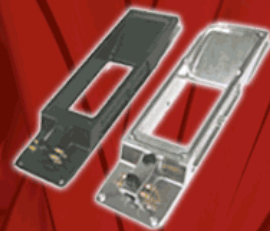
The fabricated transmission cross member.

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Window net installed



The cables at the bottom are used to attach the net to the rocker sill bar and diagonal. The cables will be trimmed to fit in final assembly.

The pictures tell the story but I first made a couple of templates from white poster board and transferred them onto .090" thick sheet metal. I used my press and a crude forming tool (exhaust pipe) to form the initial bend shape and went from there. After MUCH trimming and bending I ended up being pretty happy with the results. Best part is, that was the LAST major fabrication I had left on the car! Woo hoo!

From here on it's cleaning, painting, wiring, plumbing, brakes lines, interior work, etc. Man, I think I just depressed myself again! Like the title says, "somebody's got to do it." Might as well be me!

Until next time, always remember, there is always HOPE (real hope).

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MORE HORSES

by Jay Roeder

Jay,

I have a full tube chassis car and changed the rear gears from 456 to 410, now my ET is up from 8.79 to 8.96. Is this natural, and what happens if I put the 456 back in?

Tony
Waldorf

Tony,

I would have to have more information about your combo to be really sure but in a nutshell, yes, it is possible. I'm guessing that your engine likes the higher rpm range of the lower gears (4.56). As for what would happen if you installed the 4.56s again, um, wouldn't it run what it used to? Hope this helps.

Jay Roeder

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TECH QA: Tranny Tech

Q Question on Starter Engagement Problem (Dart 550hp pump-gas/175hp NOS SBC, JW Performance TH400 with JW UltraBell, 66 Chevy Biscayne on Art Morrison Chassis)....

I've managed to build my car from scratch, from the chassis on up, including the motor from a well respected race shop short block, and everything was great for about two years, but then I started having occasional starter engagement problems (starter engagement tooth alignment was seemingly in spec), that over about a year got worse and worse to the point of almost rare engagement (400 Dart Little M block, CSR Mini 350-style non-staggered starter, JW 'The Wheel' Heavy 168tooth flexplate). I pulled the starter and checked alignment, and it seemed in spec, but the starter pinion gear would tend to not mesh well depending on the position of the flexplate ring gear, just banging into the back of the flexplate instead of meshing. The flexplate had a very slight runout, but not bad. I first tried replacing the starter pinion gear (\$80), but that didn't work. I tried various shims (both vertical and horizontal, going way over spec to 'open it up' as much as possible, lowering the starter pinion gear away from the flexplate ring gear), but that didn't work. I replaced the aluminum starter mounting block (\$40), thinking maybe it might've warped, that didn't work. I replaced the flexplate (\$190), that didn't work.

Totally frustrated, I bought an entire new starter (same exact one, \$250), that didn't work. I kind of doubt the block mounting surface for the starter is not square to the flexplate, since it was fine for a long time. I even swapped a different battery in thinking maybe i didn't have enough amps to force the gears to mesh, that didn't work. \$500 later I've totally run out of ideas, and am utterly frustrated to say the least. I was thinking maybe ordering a replacement 'staggered 400-design' starter mounting block (the Dart block accepts both staggered and 350-style), maybe it'll have a better chance at keeping the starter aligned better. I don't know.

Rich 'Ratty' Katz
Pittsburgh, PA

A Most of the time starters and flexplates just work. We take it for granted that they do what they do. We have, however, had issues with egg shaped flexplates, etc. What I have found is that most of these starters like 16 volts. Because it sounds like you have pretty much touched on all areas to check, I would suggest you might call Meziere Enterprises. They have a very top notch line of flexplates and starters for all applications. They might have some tips for you too.

Thanks,
Mike Stewart – Mike's Transmission Lancaster CA 661-723-0081

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RHS PRO ELITE SBC 23-DEGREE CNC-PORTED IRON CYLINDER HEADS



Engineers at RHS have recently designed the only Small Block Chevy 23-degree cast iron head for 360-434c.i. engines that is CNC-ported from the factory. The precision accuracy and durability of the RHS Pro Elite SBC 23-Degree CNC-Ported Iron Cylinder Heads are derived not only from the CNC-porting of the intake and exhaust runners but the CNC-ported combustion chamber, as well.

The CNC-ported 240cc intake and 85cc exhaust runners optimize airflow volume and velocity while the 53cc combustion chambers are also CNC-machined to relieve the valve shrouding that occurs when the edge of a valve is in close proximity to the combustion chamber wall. Overall, the full CNC-porting process provides more consistent runners and smoother port-to-chamber transitions, thereby increasing both airflow

efficiency and horsepower. In addition, these new heads from RHS are designed to use offset rockers in order to maximize the intake window at the pushrod opening for increased airflow.

As with the rest of the Pro Elite family, these SBC iron heads come with a host of unique features, including premium bronze valve guides and a multi-angle valve job. Also, ductile iron valve seats are inserted to better prevent seat and guide wear with alcohol and other racing fuel applications. The ductile iron 2.100" multi-angle intake and 1.625" radiused exhaust valve seats allow for superior airflow and improved atomization with racing fuels. In addition, the heads feature a refined water jacket for more even water flow to reduce hot spots in the engine. For racing classes that mandate the use of cast iron cylinder heads, RHS has designed the ultimate advantage by utilizing the latest in airflow technology.

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WE'VE GOT MAIL

CHRIS MARTIN #11

What Jeff has written about Chris Martin came from the heart, and it shows.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away we tried to lure him away from *National Dragster* to become the editor of Petersen Publishing's old Drag Racing Magazine (long gone now). Chris spoke to me about the position, and I was super-enthusiastic because I felt the move would be good for him. It would openly expose him to more than NHRA drag racing (as an NHRA employee Chris would sometimes take vacation time to see "other" races, as he did when he flew to the Motorplex to witness Eddie Hill's first four second elapsed time). It would also get him out of the weekly grind of deadlines.

Ultimately he decided not to take the job. I wish he had because his influence on that magazine would have been extremely positive. But one wonders if he could have handled the structured responsibility of having to run the whole show himself. We will never know.

When NHRA decided to publish their quickly forgotten and relegated-to-the-remainder-piles 50th Anniversary book Chris should have been the writer. Hell, he could have done the whole thing off the top of his head without ever looking up a single statistic. But by then his reputation with management at 2035 Financial Way had deteriorated to the point where there was no way they'd let him do it. He wasn't politically correct enough. If he had done the book it would have been great *and* it would have included all of the sport's heroes from the first five decades. Instead, NHRA ended up appearing like collective fools for excising the accomplishments of drag racing's most famous driver, "Big Daddy" Don Garlits because of their personal animosity towards him over political matters (such as the two Tulsa PRO races that ran opposite Indy).

Chris Martin was the very worst kind of employee for the National Hot Rod Association because, unlike the dozens of others who toed the line and agreed with every bizarre concept someone in upper management came up with during a liquid lunch, he'd openly balk, laugh at their idiocy and then step outside for another deeply satisfying inhale. Of course, we know they should have been listening to Martin, but hey, that's the way of the world we live in. Perception is everything, and the perception management had of Chris was as negative as you can imagine. Too bad, because they lost by not capitalizing on his exceptional skills.

Like others of his generation, Chris lived life to the fullest. There wasn't a beer, a line or a joint he'd pass by, and for the uptight, that made him a bad guy. But, as we've all seen from politicians and religious leaders, while they'll shout to the hills their beliefs in family, monogamy in marriage and honesty in business, how many of them have we seen exposed as being the hypocrites they are? Who looks worse when that happens, the exposed or someone like Chris, who's been right out front with his life from the very beginning?

If I believed in cryogenics I'd be taking up a collection to freeze Martin's brain until it could be downloaded at a later date. If that were possible future generations would get a history of drag racing the likes of which they'll never otherwise see. Instead, 25 years from now some unfortunate school-ager doing a paper on drag racing will be pulling his misinformation from the likes of NHRA's dreadful book, because books last forever.

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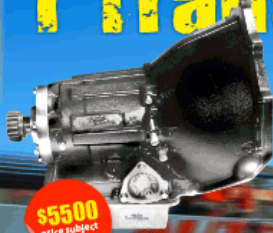
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Sadly, brilliant, tormented, talented, outrageous, funny and scintillating people like Chris Martin do not, and we are all the worse for it. Instead of relegating individualists like Chris to the offices without windows or the unemployment rolls, we should be embracing their contributions to our lives because, in the long run, those contributions are a helluva lot more meaningful, lasting and important than whether one wears a suit and tie to some boring and useless staff meeting. In so very many ways, when the Great Accounting takes place in another life, it's the Chris Martins of the world who will be judged to have contributed the most to the rest of us while having had more fun than those who, during their lives, were somehow considered "better." What bullshit.

Jon Asher
Senior Editor
Competitionplus.com

CHRIS MARTIN #12

Dear Burk, Your last column concerning your friend Chris, was your best to date. I got chills, and had a tear in my eye. You expressed your feelings in a way we all can relate to. I do feel sad that you are losing such a great friend. For Chris, the Magical Mystery Tour continues. Cheers Chris, we'll all miss you.

Jeff Hayes
Lyons, New York

CHRIS MARTIN #13

Jeff, love your article for Chris. He is a legend and an incredibly smart man I've always been amazed by, for many reasons. He would literally exhaust my mind with his endless tirade of racing trivia and strangely named bands from funky back roads across America, while barely drawing a breath as he jumped from one galaxy of information to another.

You are right, life is measured by the real friends we have and yours is blessed through Chris, as his is by the many people that love and admire him. He is definitely a rebel with several causes and I will always treasure the time I spent in his company.

Sweet Laura South
Florida

CHRIS MARTIN #14

Hey Jeff, very nice words about Chris, you did very well on that piece! As you know I have also known him for a very long time and there wasn't a lot to not like about Chris... I'm sorry to learn of his plight at present, though from your piece he seems to be at peace with himself and the life he led!

Richard Brady
Wyoming

CHRIS MARTIN #15

Burk, my sincere condolences on the pending loss of a great friend and fellow journalist Chris Martin. I hope you can find comfort knowing you were able to share many good times with Chris. We upright Homo Sapiens are lucky, we seem to be able to hang on the good memories. I hope you can find a beautiful sunset and a snifter of Grand Marnier to reflect.

Earl Helm
Salt Lake City, Utah

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CHRIS MARTIN #16

Burk, you are right, why wait until someone is gone to say what should be said while alive? It brought tears to my eyes. I know what it is like to lose a good friend. I never got the chance to say my goodbyes to him; I will never let that happen again.

I had the pleasure of meeting Chris a couple of times while helping Greek. I could not stop laughing as he told stories with Greek.

Chris, it is great to know you and I will miss you, you go ahead and have another sponge bath, get some more drip and enjoy the time you have left. You will be missed.

Lee Lones
Chicago, Illinois

CHRIS MARTIN #17

I think you wrote an excellent article and it gave me goose bumps and almost brought tears to my eyes. Over time I have come to very much enjoy your articles. Myself and a lot of my friends have lived our lives the same way that you described Chris Martin's life, and I ain't a damned bit ashamed of it. I still enjoy all of those things, drag racing the people around drag racing and everything that goes with that lifestyle and when something happens to me I won't regret a thing. Jeff Burk I just want to personally thank you for this web site and the enjoyment I get out of it.

Thanks.

Randy Vowels
Kentucky

CHRIS MARTIN #18

Jeff, sorry to read about Chris, I never met him, (maybe saw him at a race) but I always read him and always found him amusing, opinionated, and odd. He usually said about what I was thinking, but he had the guts to say it!

Hope God is ready to take him home peacefully.

Richard Burbick
Sebring, Florida

CHRIS MARTIN #19

I met Chris Martin through Dave Wallace in the '80s and spent some time with him at different tracks "bench racing" the music biz (usually at the 1000' mark). Not only is he a drag racing historian, but he knows his music as well.

Good luck, Chris, on your journey and I'll be sure to burn a "fatty" for ya! Thanks Jeff!

Garry Fish
Yucaipa, California

CHRIS MARTIN #20

Jeff, you really tug at the heart strings. I hope someone writes this kind of love, honor and friendship for me someday.

I am sorry for the loss of such a good friend. Our thoughts are with all he touched in life.

Ron Snell
Atlanta, Georgia



CHRIS MARTIN #21

Over the years I've enjoyed Chris's take on drag racing. He has an insight few have. His stories, be they right on or pissing me off, he knew the state of drag racing and its pulse.

One thing for sure, Chris always inspired me. For that I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Few inspire these days, and we are losing part of drag racing's soul. Chris did it on his own terms though.

Stormy Byrd
Reseda, California

CHRIS MARTIN #22

Jeff, I was unaware that Chris Martin was seriously ill, nor that he had been in hospice.

While I did not know Chris personally, I enjoyed his writing over the years. Yes, he could simultaneously piss you off while making you laugh at his outrageousness. He seemed to relish creating the highest waves possible, but his love for drag racing and its people was obvious.

Your tribute to Chris was both heartfelt and sad for yet another light soon to be extinguished. You are to be congratulated for sharing this with all of us.

Godspeed and forever win lights to Chris Martin, and thanks for the fun he shared with us all.

Jim Hill
Daytona Beach, Florida

CHRIS MARTIN #23

Burkster, well done on Chris Martin. May he go with God when his time comes. Prayers for you too. Sometimes it's the survivors that suffer the most.

AC Hauswald
Houston, Texas

CHRIS MARTIN #24

What a great guy Chris is; best writer in the world. The smartest man on the planet with the history of the AHRA. We will miss him, but we will see him again!

Don Spencer
Houston, Texas

CHRIS MARTIN #25

Ever since I discovered DRO I always enjoyed Chris's columns. Because he was so open about his "vices" the news was not a big surprise. I will try not to be sad for him per his request but I will be sad for you, Jeff. That's a tough deal. Hopefully he won't suffer too much. The sport is losing a TRUE LEGEND.

Thanks, Jeff, for letting us know.

Brian Cowdrill
Carbondale, Illinois

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CHRIS MARTIN #26

If he wasn't the greatest there was no one "GREATER!" We all pass the "Finish Line" of life. I loved his writings. Don't know if I ever met him, but I had too! Him partying more than me?! Oh, him and John Raffa at the "Gate!" When do I send the money for them to "Pass?" Two of the greatest! And, Woody Hatten & Steve Collison, oh I am losing all of my friends! Please put in a good word for me too! I will be there and too broke to paid attention! Have the money that I have loaned you, make that time. Wait, I am coming too! I hope not this year!

Thanks Jeff for this site!

Jack Redd
Camp Springs

CHRIS MARTIN #27

Jeff, I'm sad for you and sad for me as well (though I met Chris only three times, I think). It's because I wish I had gotten to spend more time hangin' out with him.

Chris, if you're reading this, thanks for giving me a glimpse of the real deal.

Ian Tocher
Roswell, Georgia

CHRIS MARTIN #28

Jeff, your piece on Chris Martin is right on. I never met the man, yet I feel like I know him well based on his writings. I feel a kindred spirit connection to him as my lifestyle has been similar (racing & drugs/alcohol - I love my RYE Whiskey and my smoking of God's own herb), yet in recent years somewhat toned down. I'm 63 and have had a passionate love affair with drag racing since I was eight years old. They, that know me, still call me The Wild Child.

I miss Chris Martin's columns in Drag Racing Online. He would always make me laugh and bring back memories that are still alive and well in my much abused mind. I would love to see some form of a book or gathering of his columns. I would pay money for this. If at all possible, bring it on.

William L. "Wild Child" Sparks

CHRIS MARTIN #28

I met Chris at CFR in '85. It was the D5 ET finales. Had some race friends say, "Hey, some dude with a National Dragster jacket wants to talk to ya about your car." Still have my copy with the "dial in on" stuff Chris did back then. Thanks Chris.

Steve Peasley
Minnesota

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LOSNESS AT LITTLE OFF POINT

Hi, great job on the first introductory column. I'm glad to see a nostalgia only section on DRO. I agreed with your point about the rising costs of the front engine cars, but personally I feel you missed the main point of their demise. Basically they look awful and not nostalgic at all. The skinny tires, tall injectors, and terrible looking bodywork all add up to a Frankenstein looking car that never even raced back in the day. The best thing would be to move over to the new rear engine top fuel cars. They look great and just like the old cars. The funny cars are the stars, though, as you pointed out and are the best thing to happen to drag racing in twenty years. Best of luck with the column in the future.

Miles

LOSNESS RIGHT ON THE MARK AND A FEW OTHER TOPICS

Brian, you have hit it square on the head with your article "Getting Nostalgic" on DragRacingOnline.

As a long-time racer, just recently getting back into it in a blown fuel altered, I know that there is a great potential for the NFC cars to be successful in many areas of the country and that probability can only be enhanced by having a field of NTF cars that can run the numbers at the same event.

There are lots of guys out there that have the same thoughts that you do about a points mag setup as a tool to limit the expenses and cut some of the insurance concerns. I'm one of them. On the other hand, there are guys like Mike Patterson, who runs an NTF car deal with a 426-based engine. He contends that with his set up, not having the option of a MSD 44 mag causes him multiple incidents of engine damage. NHRA has gone so far as to threaten the Sacramento track operator with loss of sanctions and other penalties if the track allowed Mike to run his car there with this MSD equipment (this all according to Mike as broadcast on his weekly radio show during an interview with Ken Black, operator of Keith Black Racing Engines). I like Mike and have the utmost respect for his opinion and abilities, but I feel he is wrong on several levels here:

- ▶ First off, the rest of the field is limited to a points mag.
- ▶ There are other 426-based combinations run by the group, all with points mag set ups (learn how to make it work, just like everyone else).
- ▶ There is a general consensus that we must keep the costs down in this niche of the sport so we can enjoy bigger turnouts because more people can afford to get a car to the track. If we have to have an Exxon to sponsor us, we are going to live a very short life, since we will never be the big show, which is where the majority of the advertising funds go. Adding \$6-7K to the cost of these cars (the cost of a MSD complete set up and spares) can mean the difference between someone having a spare short block or heads and being able to run the full season or having to sit the rest of the season out waiting on money to rebuild. The price of these electronic mag ignition systems are astronomical compared to a points mag. MSD wire sets run \$350. For that, I can buy a used SuperMag 5 and have it serviced for another \$100.

Now I would like to move on to a more pressing subject.

I run a car with the Outlaw Fuel Altered Association. It's an older S&W 120" WB funny car chassis. It could easily be converted back to FC configuration and is in the process of that now, so we can run in both worlds-Fuel Altered and NFC. The problem here is that we are in no-man's land in Texas as far as Nostalgia FC and TF racing is concerned. There are no organizations down here to run with, so we are going to change that. It is my hope to have Southern Floppers Funny Car Association up and running for the beginning of the 2011 season. I'm looking for someone to step up and get a Nostalgia top fuel deal going. If not, I plan to approach my Fuel Altered association leadership about running combined events if we can work out any issues that come up with that approach.

This is a post I put up on the Classic Funny Car website last week:

"We folks down south are tired of y'all up North and in the East and out West having all the fun. So we have decided to start up our little funny car deal down here. There seems to be a lot of interest and several cars in the Houston/Ft. Worth-Dallas/San Antonio areas but little in the way of an organized effort. So we are looking to change that with the birth of the Southern Floppers Funny Car Association. Most of us are fuel altered owners, that can make the body change and run NFC-if maybe a little out side of any single set of rules. So we are looking for a little guidance from our more mature brothers in the established organizations to give us some info and a little push in the right direction.

While I have been able to organize things in different environments over the years, one thing I learned is to seek out good advice and tweak the BS detector to alert to the bad stuff. Help me out here guys. We aren't competition; we are potential match races that could add up to a 16-car field when you need it! If you have something to offer, email me at jim@fuelishhabitracng.com."

I look forward to seeing your next piece on DRO!

Jim Overly

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WAKE UP THE AGENT ON SATURDAY MORNING

Yeah, six days of racing news!

Cat Fuller
Rogers, Arkansas

ENGLISHTOWN TRAGEDY

What a terrible day when I heard of an alky driver's death! Seriously, I stopped my work and said to myself, "Noooo!" Is it the track or just coincidence? Terrible, no matter what happened. To see a sportsman racer or any racer lose his life bums me out heavy!

The Joliet race needs to go to US 131. Our state will support that race big time!

Rick Rzepka
Clinton Township, Michigan

MAYBE ENGLISHTOWN SHOULD BE SHORTER

Jeff, in the aftermath of the tragic accident at E-town involving Neil Parker I am now a proponent of shorter racing distances at various tracks. A standard amount of safe shut-off distances needs to be established. If the track in question does not meet the "standard" then that track should only be sanctioned for 1000 ft events. That would mean ALL classes would run to the 1000ft mark. Those tracks with ample shutdown lengths would remain 1320. Regrettably, it will probably not happen soon enough.

Jack Issi
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

WOULD A SAFETY RAMP HELP?

If the Englishtown track had to be so reckless and stubborn not to extend the shutdown area, at least they could build a safety ramp to allow out-of-control cars to clear the wall rather than hit it straight on.

A lightweight removable ramp to avoid zoning problems before the wall claims another life.

Sad deal.

W. Sanders
Kansas City, Missouri

CATCH NETS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Another fatality at Englishtown. Catch net systems alone are not the answer. Stop running tracks that are too short for the speeds. I'd rather see a half dozen short tracks taken off the schedule and the number of races reduced than to see one more of these senseless tragedies.

George Kenney
Naperville, Illinois

REDESIGN THE SAND TRAP

There needs to be a MAJOR (!) rethink of the system designed to stop cars at the top end. I think removal of the retainment device, and a redesign of the sand trap. Gravel & sand if left flat. Might as well be ice! Enter at high speed, exit at high speed. And we know the rest.

Rick Johnson
California

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LITTLE COMPETITION

NHRA needs to do something very soon. I have been a fan of drag racing forever but watching the first round of top fuel at Englishtown... absolutely terrible. Not one pair made a full pass and the commentators act like 227 miles a hour was a good run? These cars are overpowered, period.

The conditions have to be perfect to get a good run. This is not drag racing, this is turned into a speed show.

I want side by side drag racing. Tone the cars down so it can be affordable for more teams. They can't fill a sixteen car field anymore without allowing more team cars: BORING!

Keith Schultz
Gold Canyon, Arizona

IT'S THE SUPERCHARGER

The quickest way to slow down the fuel cars is to eliminate the supercharger. Loosen the rules on the A/Fuel cars and there will be instant 4.90's. Also there would be instant 32-car fields. The cost of racing would go way down due to lower stress on the engine components.

Gene Youngberg
Stevens, Pennsylvania

KEEP IT SIMPLE

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Let them have their 500 CID engines, just take away the MAJOR power adder and make the crew chiefs work their magic with that!

Harry T. Garland III
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

WE'D ALL LIKE TO KNOW

Why do I get the feeling that AHRA is going down the tubes before it ever got off the ground? All these cancellations, plus comments from some folks that I know involved with a particular AHRA sanctioned track, that they have been stiffed for money by AHRA.... What's goin' on here?

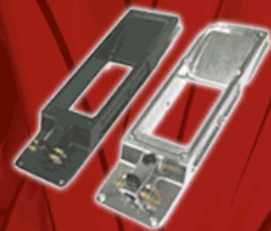
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CHRIS MARTIN #1

...lighting a candle for Chris Martin...

Philip Bradford
Tacoma, Washington

CHRIS MARTIN #2

Very sorry to hear about Chris Martin; he rambled sometimes but it was good reading and he made some hard points. I'm glad I had the chance to read his views.

Charles Rutherford
Montpelier, Virginia

CHRIS MARTIN #3

Great piece, Jeff. Glad you got to see Chris one last time. There will never be another one like him.

Marc Gewertz
California

CHRIS MARTIN #4

Burk, we will cry with you when Chris passes.

Bernie & PJ Partridge
Rancho Cucamonga, California

CHRIS MARTIN #5

Chris Martin, enjoyed your prose, even the induced ones.

What can be said, man, but "Rock On!"

Dave Koehler
Koehler Injection
Urbana, Illinois

CHRIS MARTIN #6

Well said. I'm going to miss him too and I only knew him through his writings. You have my sincere condolences.

Bill Cummerow
Elsmere, Kentucky

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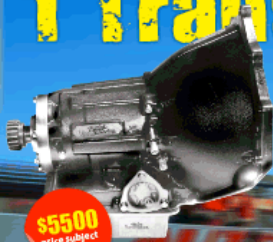
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CHRIS MARTIN #7

WOW... That was a pretty touching letter to Chris Martin today. You must have really thought an awful lot of him. I wish I could have met him. Sounds like one of my kind of people.

Tex Cooper

CHRIS MARTIN #8

Sounds like Mr. Martin is my kind of guy. I'm reading your story thinking this guy has had a wonderful life as most could only dream of. Dragstrips, NHRA battles, dive bars, a bunch of drag racing history in his mind and heart! I'm jealous and will try to do more of the things I love in his spirit.

Rick Rzepka
Clinton Township, Michigan

CHRIS MARTIN #9

Dear Jeff, by now you're probably growing weary of what has probably turned into an endless cavalcade of mails about your friend and ours, Chris Martin. Everyone in this crazy business has a Chris Martin story, he has touched so many lives through the years. With me, it was when I was struggling to launch my own deal. He was still at National Wally, and I remember that I was dancing on the ceiling for a week that I got to talk to CHRIS(!), and that, man of his word, he did indeed put my stuff in 'Bits from the Pits' (at this point a lotta folks would say, "he won't remember it" but the thing with Chris, is that he probably WOULD).

In a recent letter to Pat Dakin, I said that you know you're old if you still call it 'Indy', or make references to the 'Hurst Bridge', but I guess aging also gets ample doses of when you start losing the icons that played huge roles in your life. I'm still not over the death of Ronnie James Dio, and I don't like (and this is putting it mildly) that I now open your mag with a sense of dread, wondering if this is the day....

....did you ever see that movie S.O.B.? When the event that none of us wants to happen does, you all should intervene, as it were, and plop a silly Viking hat on Chris & take him out for one last road trip. I've heard that where Lions was is still just an empty lot. Sounds like a good as destination as any....

God, this just sucks, that's putting it mildly.

"Chicago" Jon T. Hoffman
Woodstock

CHRIS MARTIN #10

Uncle Jeffy, thanks for being such a good friend to Chrissie. That boy always talked highly of you (and I don't mean while loaded). You are his best friend and I don't say that to get sloppy on ya. The next day after you guys left, I said, "You have some good friends Bubba," and he said, "You know it, none better."

It is going to suck big time losing that meathead brother of mine, but it will be easier knowing he was happy with his end, you know, going through the lights on fire, no chute, yelling, "Where's the brakes?" Anyway, I will let you know when he finishes the race.

Thanks again for your TRUE friendship to him and the family....

Ernie Martin
Burbank, California

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CREW CHIEFS TOO FOCUSED?

Burk: If I remember right, and I do, the crew chiefs have ALWAYS been opposed to any rule change that involves them having to find a new combination. Why are they unable to look at the big picture? If quarter mile brings back fans to the track and TV, which it will, then why is there so much whining and infighting? The NHRA cannot sustain itself under its current rules, especially if the economy continues to tank. It is just too expensive and we are seeing the same boring results at every race (ie. funded teams dominate). The fans are fed up.

As for Jim Head ("the Nitro Bully"), he needs to leave the sport behind and go back to his homestate of Godforsaken Ohio. This is the same guy that says there is only a small "vocal" minority that is pressuring the NHRA to return to the quarter mile. You are out of touch with reality Jim. I like his recent comment about how parts carnage is so much less at 1000', this after suffering his first major engine explosion ever. Oh, and Jim, be sure to let us know when you are ready for those town hall meetings so I can be sure I am the first one to the mic.

Mike Parsons
Orange County, California

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AREN'T YOU GLAD WE ARCHIVE EVERY ISSUE?

I read your [interview with Chuck and Del Worsham](#) and enjoyed it very much. I have always admired them because of their determination, hard work, commitment and the fact that they are a father and son working together for a common goal while having fun doing so!

Their story reminds me of my son and his dad. His dad drag raced as a hobby and our youngest son, Jacob, has been hanging out at the track since he was about five years old as well. Jacob developed a real passion for racing so his dad stopped racing to support Jacob's dream of drag racing being his profession someday. The two of them work hard, have such dedication and determination, as well. Jacob's first time in a race car (other than sitting in his dad's door car when he was little) was when his dad bought him a dragster three years ago. He is an outstanding drag racer who is well respected among racers who have been racing for many years. And I know someday it will be his profession! Chuck and Dale Worsham are an inspiration to our family that the dream is possible. Thanks again for interviewing the Worshams!

Diane Otto
Richmond, Virginia

WHAT'S UP WITH ROUTE 66?

I have heard that Route 66 Raceway is being allowed to deteriorate. Is this so, and if so, why?

Did they overbuild in the first place, and only have one big event a year there? They need to promote that place to fill it.

Richard Burbick
Sebring, Florida

MORE PROBLEMS WITH ROUTE 66 ENTRY

Route 66, not just strollers are banned. I tried to get in with my stadium seat yesterday but was turned away because it has metal tubes, a security issue. When I pointed out that I could buy dangerous tools in the midway I was told that the tubes are hollow and they don't know what could be hidden inside them. Really? Do they think I am going to assemble a hidden sniper rifle, or perhaps fill the tubes with vodka or heroin?

Where is the common sense? I appealed but was denied so I am going to scan and email all of my Route 66 tickets for the past 10 years to the GM of Route 66, telling him that I am done because of this idiot policy. One of the other local tracks can get my money.

George Kenney
Naperville, Illinois

HAT'S OFF!

A tip of the fedora to DRO for printing my email about Route 66 stroller policies. I have followed you (Jeff Burk) from the SS&DI days and appreciate all the hard work you put into the sport.

Daniel Albert
Oswego, Illinois

Daniel's original letter was the second item on [this page](#).

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NOT SINGING IN THE RAIN

I read the story from the fan about Rt. 66 not allowing strollers in the track. I was at that race. Here's something else you may not know that really slaps the fans.

We all know it rained a lot and often. The parking lots were a muddy mess. It can be a long walk. After the loyal fans muddled their way in, a LONE sign, right before the entrance to the track, read that umbrellas were ALSO not allowed in the track. So, the fans had to slosh their way back through the muddy parking lots to put their umbrellas in their cars, and then back to the entrance. It's bad enough being caught in a torrential downpour with nowhere to hide, not being allowed to bring your umbrella?

Eddie Szot
West Palm Beach, Florida

NOW HERE'S A TRACK THAT UNDERSTANDS HOW TO TREAT ITS CUSTOMERS

I am marketing director for Byron Dragway in northern Illinois and noticed you had an e-mail from a guy named Dan Albert in Oswego, IL. complaining about Route 66 and NHRA. I wondered if you could forward my e-mail or phone #(630-494-1065) to him.

I want to see that his problem is never an issue at our track and invite him to Byron Dragway. He can also get to me from our web site, www.Byrondragway.com. Thanks.

Dick Monaco
Byron Dragway

TIME STOOD STILL WITH FORCE

Just finished watching the Route 66 Nationals on ESPN2. Loved the new super slow-mo camera. But again, why did ESPN feel they needed to waste TV coverage on Force on his scooter in super slow-mo? They could have used the time to interview Tim Cullinan, Terry McMullan, Justin Schieffer, Dale Creasy Jr. WHO? I guess I just answered my own question: gotta feed the Force empire! By the way, where was Laurie?

By the way, did anyone count how many times "hometown" was mentioned? Just wondering!

Joe Solano
Mesa, Arizona

MAY BE ON TO SOMETHING

The guy who said to run the countdown with eight cars racing themselves and the other eight race themselves and both winners race each other in the finals is right on. I only hope NHRA reads your 'We've Got Mail' so they can think they came up with the idea.... This would be the best thing to happen to NHRA in a lot of years. We're talking excitement, no buy runs, only the best eight racing the best eight, the little guy gets a chance to go rounds... I bet you would have underfunded teams lining up sixteen to twenty cars to get a chance like that.

Larry Gale
El Cajon, California

THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA WORLD OUT THERE

Burkster, I have to agree with the Aussies. Where does Roger Burgess get off with his "Worldwide Champion" B. S.? The NHRA just "discovered" Pro Mod, like Funny Car and Pro Stock, and now they want to control it.

The audacity of those clowns! They're losing fans right and left and yet they still want to dominate everything they are involved with.

I had a lot more fun last week end at Gateway than I did at the earlier NHRA meet. Long live nostalgia racing! Oh yes, and screw the NHRA (Neanderthal Heads Racing Assoc.).

John Martin
Nixa, Missouri

A SOUTHEASTERN TRACK TRADITION

All of us here in the southeast have been forced to run 1/8 mile bracket racing only. Even at tracks like Gainesville, Bradenton, and Orlando, if you want to run 1/8 mile fine, there are plenty of those tracks here as well. To me it is slow and boring. Not only to watch but to even race in s/pro or sportsman. I have an S/Pro car but can't get a dime for it in this recovering economy.

1000ft and 1/8 mile bracket racing is right in line with the hope and change I've enjoyed from Washington. From the nostalgia racing starved southeast.

Chris Schild
Orlando, Florida

NO WHINING!

Hey... Even though "The Ace's" story broke on another site, I still believe that you should send him (and the Pedregon boys!!!) a complimentary DRO 'no whining' shirt. Seems like Tony and Cruz always have something to complain about. Can't wait to hear Cruz after his official DQ at Chicago. Tony, who I used to admire, seems to be bitter after losing sponsors and a crew chief. Get over it Tony. Like the Ace said, if you don't like it, and it costs too much, go race AA/FC somewhere and be quiet.

PS... nostalgia racing is more fun to watch, and probably a lot less stressful to participate in. Think about it, T-Ped!

Kenny Shane
New York

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ANOTHER NOSTALGIA RACING FAN

NHRA racing? In one word: boring. And the last thing I ever want to see is cat racing from Force's shop! I remember in the seventies when Force was just one of 32 funnies at E-town and at the time he was a leaker and a shaker! Thank God for nostalgia racing!

Gene Cistaro
Swamps of Jersey

A SPREADING PROBLEM?

Could be bad news in the Force camp... a few rumors floating around that Castrol may have to pull the plug at year's end. Castrol is a subsidiary of BP, which we know has its hands full....

Charlie Undershirts
Reading, Pennsylvania

TURN THE PAGE!

OK, enough is enough: Paul Page, while it was cute for a while, MUST GO. He doesn't have a clue about drag racing, and after listening to him at the Indy 500 race I really wonder how he got his microphone plugged in correctly.

Paul, Top Fuel and Funny cars DON'T have Turbochargers!!

I realize after watching Marty Reid that we will never get him back (he does too good of a job), but how about promoting from within? Maybe put Dave Reiff in the booth like the Pro Mod broadcasts, or just move the "Stat Guy" Louis (Bloom) in with Mike Dunn. At least some of the words would be correct.

Ron Ogilvie
Las Vegas, Nevada

WE HOPE HE WAS A BETTER SOLDIER THAN AN ANNOUNCER

Re: Paul Page. I know he gets blasted as an announcer, but I wonder how many people know he is a Veteran? He was in the Army six years and did two tours of duty in the 'Nam. Whatever you think of him, give the man credit for serving his country under some pretty tough conditions.

Cliff Morgan
US Air Force, 1964-68.
Phoenix, Arizona

PSCA ADDENDUM

Nothing was said about Bob Williams winning his third straight C Gas race at Las Vegas and leading in the C Gas Heritage Points. Thanks!

Bob Williams
Alta Loma, California

WE DIDN'T SEND ANYTHING, BUT HERE IS A THANK YOU FOR SOMEBODY

Dear funny car fans, my name is PFC Shoulders. I just acquired a package from you and wanted to say thanks for all the support. All of Alpha Company appreciates every last comment and gesture. It was a real big morale boost for the end of our deployment. I will be trying to get pictures to send over the rest of the time we are here for the fans and drivers to see us with all your cards, so thanks again and we couldn't do our jobs without all your support.

PFC Nickolas Shoulders
Iraq

WHO HAS THE ANSWER?

I was just curious about the time for an AA fueler to go from 0 to 60 mph? Thank you.

Lane Gilpin
Vail, Arizona 



June brings auction to Windy City and celebrations!

By Tracy Winters

D.R.A.W. Board of Trustees Member since 1991

One of the largest fundraising events is held during the month of June in the Windy City. The annual auction held in conjunction with the NHRA National event in Chicago, Illinois. The fun-filled, action-packed event brings plenty of entertainment and fundraising. Those who attend the auction enjoy the dynamic announcing of Bob Frey and Alan Reinhart. Their combined talent brings so much talent and laughs in general. Truly they are a talented pair who makes the auction fun. One of the popular items includes the NHRA Championship quilt by Louis McClelland.

This year marks the 25th D.R.A.W. live and silent and live auction. For me this year will mark my participation in the 18th annual D.R.A.W. auction.

Another fabulous fundraising event that took place in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 13 was an open house in Duluth, Georgia, at R2B2 Motorsports. Melanie Troxel was present during this event that raised over \$2,000 for D.R.A.W.

One of the greatest events that I attend takes place in June. This event is the JEG'S US Open Bracket Championship held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The BIG BUCKS bracket race includes a pit party and golf cart race. The event is so much fun for all who attend. As a matter of fact, some of the events that I enjoy attending the most are that of bracket races. Some of my fondest memories are that of the old MOROSO 5-Day Bracket Championship. That event is truly a legend in the world of bracket racing. The bracket racing tends to most to Florida during November. This November I will be fortunate to attend most of the Florida BIG BUCK bracket racing.

Last but certainly not least, is the celebration of Father's Day. In the world of drag racing, fathers are frequently absent due to their participation in the sport. My father was frequently absent from home during my childhood. His racing and business kept him on the road traveling to racing events all over the country. As a child I attended many drag racing events and have fond events and all kind of stories from these trips. I can remember coming back to school and telling my classmates what cool people I met at the races.

Even though my father was frequently absent, he no doubt had the largest impact on my life. As a teenager in high school even when my father was traveling he would call me to ask me what my goal of the day was. My father always said if you don't have a goal what could you truly expect to achieve. My father has been biggest influence on the completion of my college education, my independence, my adoption of my daughter Alexandra from Russia as a single parent, and the goals that I have been able to achieve in business. The most important thing he has taught me in business was that of a good work ethic and values. Most importantly he taught me to never burn a bridge because you never know when you will have to cross it again.

I am especially proud of the work that I have been able to achieve with D.R.A.W. I know those of you who know her will agree that Rosalee Noble is clearly a saint and is a wonderful person to work with, along with the rest of the D.R.A.W. Board of Trustees. The fact that over three million dollars has been raised since 1985 to help assist the injured racers says a lot.

Chances are that they may be off racing on Fathers Day doing what they love the most, drag racing. In closing, remember to support those fathers and the men in your life that have made a difference this Father's Day. Here's a Father's Day quote by Jim Valvano: "My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me."

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Whaddaya Know?

Test Your Drag Racing Knowledge

The astrological sign for the month of June is Gemini, the Twins, so we are going to double test your drag racing knowledge with a series of questions regarding twins.

#1 What twin-engine dragster ran in the last Top Gas race in NHRA history?

- A: The Kenner SSP Twin Chevy dragster C: The Freight Train
 B: Ray Moats D: The Speedwagon

#2 What famous Chevy racer drove the car?

- A: Jack Moss C: Ray Moats
 B: Floyd Lippencott D: Jim Bucher

#3 What team owned and tuned the last twin-engine dragster to compete at an NHRA national event?

- A: Mike and Louie Cavalieri C: Walt and Art Arfons
 B: Jack and Art Chrisman D: Ron and Jon Capps

#4 Who drove the first and only twin-engine Funny Car in NHRA history?

- A: Danny Ongais C: Don Hampton
 B: John Peters D: Ray Moats

#5 What drag racing magazine editor was a partner in the last twin-engine Top Fuel team in IHRA history?

- A: Steve Collison C: Jeff Burk
 B: David Freiburger D: John Asher

Full name:

Email address:

Congratulations to our May quiz winner, **Jeffrey York**, who was the first to answer all 5 questions correctly!

APRIL QUIZ ANSWERS

1. C, 2006
2. A, Greg Anderson
3. B, 58
4. C, Kurt Johnson
5. D, Bob Glidden

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At The Back Door

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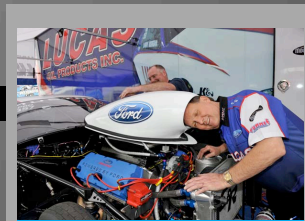
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AND THE WINNER OF LAST MONTH'S CONTEST IS

"Man, these Pope hats are heavy!"

-Bob Fisher, Katy, TX



Click Image to Enlarge!

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"Man, they weren't kidding when they told me that Fords really suck!" – Bill Bench, Hamilton, OH

"You idiot! I said the AIR goes in there, not the hair!" – Tog, Purfleet, UK

"By looking at his hair Jok must have done this a few years back but with the engine running." – Byrce W., Central IL

"Beldar Conehead, Larry Morgan's new crew chief, can properly tune the engine by laying his head on the engine, listen to it thru the carbs, and make the adjustments. He makes mass quantities of horsepower, while consuming mass quantities of beer." – Jeff Hayes, Lyons, NY

"Get the Butch Wax!" –Ron Ogilvie, Las Vegas, NV

"If you listen in here you can hear the ocean." – Allison Putman, Homewood, AL

"I'd knarfel the gartoc to get a win!" – Mike Seidler, Cottage Hills, IL

"The interior of Larry Morgan's Ford Pro Stocker top secret intake manifold, is also the home for the World's smallest barber. A little off the top please!" – Alan Miller, Baton Rouge, LA

"TURN....THE...ENGINE...OFF!!!" (With apologies to 'Young Frankenstein') – Mike S., Raleigh, NC **DRO**