

Volume XII, Number 7 - July 2010



DRAG RACING

MAGAZINE *Online*

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Burk's Blast

By Jeff Burk

Just a positive attitude isn't going to solve the problems

Let's all hope that the disaster NHRA's Seattle race was is a one-time thing for NHRA drag racing and Pacific Raceways. Let's hope that going forward not another racer will test NHRA's emergency stopping system, there'll be more cars in all of the professional and sportsman classes, the grandstands will have a lot more fans, and the Nielsen numbers for the NHRA broadcasts will soar. Because, dear readers, if the Seattle race is indeed a peek into the future, then the future isn't looking that good for NHRA drag racing.



RO MCGONEGAL PHOTO

I can hear some of you out there already groaning, "There's Burk going negative again and bashing the NHRA. What is his problem anyway? He said he wasn't going to do that anymore"

I'll tell you what my problem is. Asides from the fact that I LOVE the sport, I and a lot of other people can directly trace our success in business to a successful NHRA. And whether we like it or not, if NHRA drag racing suffers financially then we will too. And that is an inescapable fact.

To be sure, drag racing sanctioning bodies like the ADRL NMCA the IHRA are having some success but no other drag racing sanctioning body has the number of competitors, fans, sponsors and the level of organization that the NHRA does, and none of them generate the attention and money that the NHRA does.

Don't get me wrong I believe that drag racing can survive without a healthy NHRA but its status as a major sport in the U.S. cannot.

The problem the NHRA, its sponsors and racers are facing today is in my opinion is that NHRA racing has become too expensive for all but the wealthiest people to get involved with and be competitive. And even worse, I say that NHRA drag racing has become so damn expensive that most average fans can't afford three days of tickets. I wrote something to that effect a couple of editorials ago but it's worth repeating. The average fan can't spend three days at an event. It's too expensive and there are too many other demands on his time. I think more and more people can only afford one day at a National Event.

I also opined that if the Baders or Bruton Smith couldn't fill their stands that's an indication of a serious problems. If the NHRA races at Sonoma, Brainerd and Denver have a repeat of Seattle's dismal crowd and car count then the NHRA as we have known it might be in serious trouble.

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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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At Denver they sold around 20,000 tickets to a recent race featuring AA/FC and AA/FD and I'm betting the ticket price was around \$25 or lower.

If Denver doesn't get the crowd they usually do for their national event that will be a very bad sign indeed I think NHRA drag racing today simply isn't the compelling and exciting experience it once was, and the length of the track has nothing to do with that.

There is an old saying that familiarity breeds contempt. If a fan only sees an NHRA race once a year and they've been going to that race for five or 10 years the odds are prohibitive that they've seen and will see the same faces and cars every year. When you have drivers with fifty, a hundred or more race wins in a career, they become like relatives at a family picnic.

Five years ago it wasn't unusual for 45 nitro cars to show up for 36 spots. Qualifying was a war and worth paying 45 bucks to watch. For the past two years it's a good day when both of the nitro classes have full fields. Still the NHRA and their track partners insist on charging their fans a big ticket price to watch nitro cars essentially practice! And they wonder why there aren't more butts in the seats? They must think fans are morons. Listen up, NHRA, when there are 16 spots in a field and there are just 15 cars in attendance qualifying isn't compelling, it's just practice! For decades NHRA officials have allowed racers and manufacturers to bastardize Funny Car and Pro Stock bodies in the name of aerodynamics until almost the only way the fans might be able to identify one is if they put a bar code on them and issued the fans readers. If the NHRA didn't have scoreboards so that the fans could see the speeds and ET's Pro Stock they might be mistaken for Pro Gas.

As an example of how boring Pro Stock has become, at Seattle they ran the Pro Stock class after Top Fuel and Funny Car and the stands were almost empty. The Pro Stock racing up to that point was remarkable yet the fans at Seattle couldn't have cared less who won.

The only really exciting class in NHRA drag racing in my opinion is Pro Modified and it damn near took an act of God to make them a professional class.

Then there is the endless track prep. Yes sir there is nothing like sitting in the stands of a Midwest track in the summer with 95 degrees of heat and 90 percent humidity watching guys burn rubber with a torch and then scrape it off followed by 30 to 50 minutes of farm tractors running up and down the track. Try explaining that to the wife and kids. It just isn't entertainment!

Drag racing wasn't always like this. It wasn't always a millionaire's game. There was a time not all that long ago when men and women of modest means could race the professional classes and the fans could afford to attend an NHRA national event without taking out a payday loan.

NHRA drag racing didn't get expensive accidentally. Wally Parks and the executives he hired were tasked with turning NHRA drag racing into a cash cow and they did. NHRA more than doubled the number of national events, courted corporate America to come into the sport, and when they couldn't get the national TV Networks to cover the races they paid them to do so. They are today paying ESPN around \$8,000,000 a year for TV.

So what is the solution? The truth is, I don't know. Some people think a return to quarter-mile racing for nitro cars will bring the fans back. Who knows? NHRA believes they must have 300-mph speeds from the nitro classes to sell tickets. Maybe, but 300-mph fuel cars don't seem to be packing fans into the stands these days.

One thing appears certain. If the cost of racing remains as it is there will be fewer and fewer professional teams and, worse for some of us, fewer sportsman racers. If they don't find a way to cut the cost of racing, improve the show and make it more entertaining they will keep losing fans.

I sincerely hope that I'm wrong. I hope that this year's obvious drop in fan and racer attendance and flatline-at-best TV ratings is just a glitch. Perhaps the races at Sonoma, Denver and Brainerd will have big crowds and full fields. But if what we have seen so far this year is a real trend then I hope that Tom Compton and his staff will finally come to the conclusion that some drastic changes are needed and in a big hurry because in drag racing reaction times and speed have always been a large part of the formula for winning.

[» Click here to read more Burk's Blast](#)

Jim Baker's *Then & Now*

Moving to Arizona

TIME TO MOVE ON... By the fall of 1966, it was apparent that we would not be able to continue operation at Tri State Dragway. A highway relocation, which would eliminate the shutoff area of the track, had started construction.

During a business trip to the Phoenix Arizona Metro area, I attended a Funny Car event at Beeline Dragway featuring such early names as: Gas Rhonda, 'Dandy' Dick Landy, Doug's Headers, Randy Walls, Dick Harrell, and a host of other stars. The crowd was SRO and created a traffic jam on Beeline Highway (AZ. 87) all the way back to Mc Dowell Blvd.



Beeline, AZ, 1966: [Dick Harrell](#) hikes the front wheels on his fuel injected Bill Thomas built '67 Chevy II F/X car. I cannot remember if he won the event, but he was one of the front runners that brought out a packed crowd! (Photo by Bill Thomas)

Boy, was I impressed!

In the next few days, my brother-in-law and I made a deal with Leo Redkey and Bob Huff to operate 1/8-mile drag races at PIR. (Yes, the same Phoenix International Raceway of NASCAR fame today.)

A few weeks after signing the papers, we returned to Phoenix to find that a summer storm had flooded the Salt and Gila Rivers and washed out the entire asphalt pit area at PIR. With no pit area we had 'no deal,' ala Howie Mandel.

As we left PIR, a man driving a blue Cadillac Convertible waved us to stop. It was Mel Larson. Mel owned Arizona Raceways and wanted someone to operate it with him. We struck a deal, and were in the Arizona drag racing business by Nov., 1966.



Phoenix, AZ, 1966: There were 1/4 mile drag races held at PIR until a California Top Fuel car missed the shutoff area turn and crashed in the rocks, killing the driver.



Wittmann, AZ, 2010: This is Mel Larson's original Arizona Raceway as it appears NOW! Dubbed Speedworld Dragway by present owner Bernie Longjohn, it is the oldest surviving strip in Arizona. (Photo by Dee Falk)



Wittmann, AZ, 1963: Same track shown above! Mel Larson's Arizona Raceway with a packed house during the 1963 AHRA Winternationals.

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Sportsland Dragway Worlds Record In 1/8 Mile

This headline from an old copy of 'Drag News,' illustrates our beginning in the Phoenix metro area, in Nov 1966. Mel Larson had renamed Arizona Raceway to SPORTSLAND.

By Jan 1st, 1967 we ran 1/4 mile races that were very well attended by racers and fans alike. However, as summer neared and heat rose in the Valley of the Sun, profitable operation was tougher and tougher. When NHRA's Bernie Partridge requested that I apply at the new OCIR in California, the opportunity was too good to pass up.

In a future edition of 'Then & Now,' I will revisit much more history of Arizona drag racing, from my perspective. And I'll share some more of the great highlights of drag racing in Arizona today!

Steineggar & Eshenbaugh Take Top Honors

Here is a sample:



Speedworld Dragway, 2008: This is the fully restored 'cacklefest' version of Arizona's prolific Top Fuel racers, Larry Stieneggar and Al Eisenbaugh. (Photo from Nancy Schaut's Arizona Collection by Paul Hutchins)

Kalitta Takes Top Fuel At A.H.R.A. Winter Nationals



Beeline Dragway, Scottsdale, AZ, Feb 1967: This world famous drag racer is from Michigan, not Arizona. However on this date in Arizona, Connie Kalitta started a sweep of National events with his Ford Cammer-powered Bounty Hunter, a feat which may never be equaled. First, as pictured here, he won the AHRA Winter Nationals. He next earned a similar NHRA win at Pomona, California, the following week. Kalitta then traveled across the USA to Daytona, Fla. (remember those all week races from my second DRO article) and won the NASCAR Winter National Championship too! (Photo by Charles Miliikin)

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The team using Lenco products won the DRO AA/FC Challenge Series presented by Lucas Oil at historic Cordova Dragway on Saturday June 26.

They also set both ends of the track record at **5.925/242.28**

The Pedaler team moved to fourth place on the DRO Nitronic Research Top Ten list.



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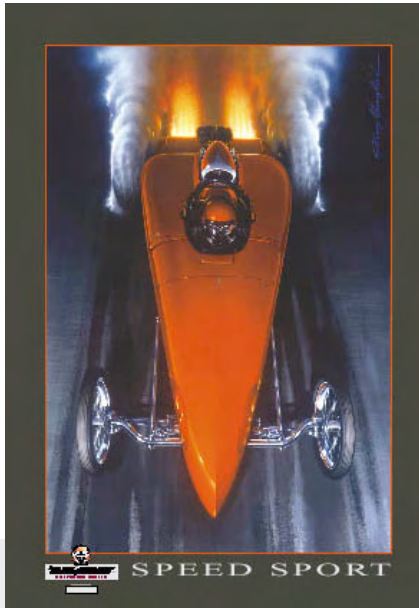
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Tucson, AZ, 1957 to present Nostalgia, 2010: Supreme artist Kenny Youngblood painted this portrait of Arizona's greatest drag racing legend, the Speed Sport Roadster out of Tucson. Kenny's description: "The Speed Sport roadster is one of the sleekest and 'baddest' fuel burning creations of all time, and arguably the first successful mid-engined dragster. Lyle Fisher, Red Greth and motor wizard Don Maynard campaigned the Chrysler-powered roadster to many victories over the slingshot dragsters of its day. 'Oi Noisy' was known throughout the world of drag racing for its unique exhaust (note eight 'spaghetti pipes' out back), and for hauling ass!"

This orange beauty first found my eyes at Davis Monthan's AFB drags in the '50s. At the time it featured a carburetor fed 354 cu.in. Hemi for power. The car, like all of drag racing, grew with knowledge and became an absolute Top Fuel terror in the early '60s. It not only won everything available in Arizona, but toured the with wins across the country. No other group from the 'Grand Canyon' State has represented drag racing at a higher level.



Fontana Heritage event, Fontana, CA 2010: This is the restored 'Speed Sport', once again powered by a carburetor fed Hemi power plant at cacklefests! (Photo by James Drew)



(Art courtesy of Red Greth and [Ken Youngblood](#))

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8th Annual KOOKS CUSTOM HEADERS JUNE 4-6 2010
NMCA MUSCLE CAR NATIONALS
MAPLE GROVE RACEWAY-READING, PA

5TH ANNUAL NITRO NMRA-NMCA SUPER BOWL
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JULY 15-18, 2010

2nd ANNUAL NITRO NMRA-NMCA ALL STAR NATIONALS
MAX DRAGWAY - CHARLOTTE, NC
AUGUST 6-8, 2010

August 27-29, 2010
NMCA MUSCLE CAR NATIONALS
MILAN DRAGWAY-MILAN, MI

9th Annual NMCA WORLD STREET FINALS
GATEWAY INT'L RACEWAY - ST. LOUIS, MO
OCTOBER 7-10, 2010

3rd Annual NITRO NMCA LONE STAR SHOOTOUT
Nolan Ryan Dragstrip - Houston, Texas

VIEW COMPLETE SCHEDULE

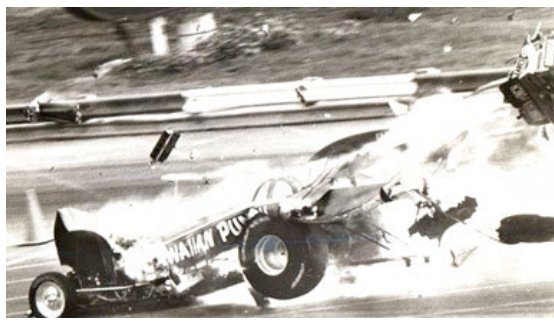
InnerVIEW presented by: **SDPC** **Lee Beard & Don Schumacher PART TWO**

PART TWO: STILL THINKING ABOUT 1,000 FEET & ELECTRONICS!

When I left you for the June DRO deadline, you were implored to read the two part interview with Lee Beard & Don Schumacher, conducted by Jeff Burk. Hopefully you have done so. At the end of Part 1, I boldly stated that the distance should be established at 1,000' for everyone. Here are some further thoughts.

Shortly after the June deadline for my DRO article with Part One on board, there was another tragic accident at Englishtown, claiming the life of popular Neil Parker. HELLO NHRA, it is past time to take positive action!

While deeply saddened by the tragic loss of another life at Englishtown, N.J., I am also troubled that I did not publish my strong support of the 1,000' distance after the Scott Kalitta tragedy two years ago. Of course the Alcohol Funny car was racing on the full quarter mile distance, so we will never know if an extra 320' of shut-off area would have saved his life.



O.C.I.R. Irvine, CA: If you do not hear NHRA analyst Mike Dunn calling for a return to 1/4 mile racing, might this be the reason? Somewhere in the middle of this inferno is ESPN's erstwhile announcer at **1310 feet** in the Hawaiian Punch funny car. WOW. (Ed. Note: Did Roland use a 150 gallon fuel pump in 1982?) (Photo by Don Gillispie)

Common sense tells us that we have reached a place in the history of drag racing where the tracks need to be shortened, OR the cars must be slowed down. Twice in my lifetime, NASCAR track builders fashioned huge racing complexes where cars ran so fast regular races could not be held on them. They are: Daytona Motor Speedway and Talladega, Alabama. No other 'super tracks' of this size were ever built and races at these two venues require 'restrictor' plates under the carburetor to limit speeds!

HELLO, NHRA: The problem of drawing crowds is not about the distance, it is about the quality of the show! And a good show requires great promotion. When it comes to promotion, NHRA is in a 'deep rut!' They place the same number of pre-made TV ads year after year. There is no individual hype. Good promotion is not about informing your audience of an event, it is informing everyone in the area, so many times, in so many ways, that they believe it is a big 'must see' deal. It is not about the distance and it is not about watching 100 Pro Comp cars idle off the starting line either.

And I can absolutely guarantee that the fans do not want slower cars with less horsepower!

You cannot go back. On Memorial Day, my former crew chief, Ron Ogilvie, and I went to the Rock-a-Billy Heritage reunion at LVMS. There were 23 AA/FC there burning NITRO and running oh-so-slow. Two or three made it into the fives; however because of current track preparation, they could hardly do a burnout either.

I left drag racing for a few years to operate a business. Since moving to Las Vegas in 2005, I have not missed a single NHRA event there. The overwhelming sound and vibration of today's NITRO engines is over the top.

Consider this: During the Saturday, June 27, ESPN telecast of NHRA qualifying at Norwalk, Ohio's Summit Nationals, flash bulbs were popping in huge numbers when Funny Car star Ashley Force made her 4.032 qualifying run. I have only witnessed that much support on two other occasions: One was Mohammed Ali when he stepped into the boxing ring in Zaire to fight George Forman; and the other was at the Las Vegas Hilton for the 'KING,' Elvis Presley. The drag racing fans of today, do not want watered down performance, just so the races can extend 320'. BELIEVE IT!

A number of people have asked IF Don Schumacher or Lee Beard ever actually drove the types of cars they now produce? YES, they certainly did.



Orange County Int. Raceway, Feb. 1971: Don Schumacher blasts from the line in one of his many winning Funny Cars of the era. As much as son Tony has won in present Top Fuel, he has not eclipsed the sheer dominance father Don commanded in these early days.

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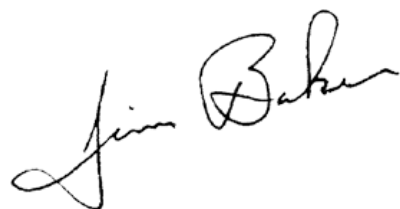
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Indianapolis, NHRA Nationals 1973: Present day Crew Chief 'supreme' Lee Beard does a wild burn out prior to a qualifying run at the U.S. Nationals. Both Lee and Don know what they are talking about in the two part interview with Jeff Burk! BELIEVE IT.

NO CHUCKLE, this month: Out of respect for Chris Martin, whom I admired as a writer and looked forward to working with at DRO; and for Alcohol Funny car racer Neil Parker, I cannot offer a 'chuckle'. It is great to smile, but sometimes our heads must bow.

Until next time, *Be on Time!* 



Getting Nostalgic



A Match Made in heaven

By Brian Losness

Well this is the second of my columns. I'm not as nervous as before, since I haven't received any packages in the mail that required me to dunk them in water before opening them up. That's a good thing. So I will begin with a follow up to the first column.

I stated that I think that there should be a standardization of engine rules so that the funny car guys and the top fuel guys run the same set of rules. Well now we are starting to hear rumblings of such a thing. A group of top fuel guys in the Midwest are going to just that thing. I really think it is the way to go. Keeping the costs in check in all types of racing is paramount to making sure that that portion of the sport will be successful, in my humble opinion. This opinion is shared by people who are far more intelligent than I, so I feel comfortable saying it. I said it before and I'll say it again: Those of us who love nostalgia fuel car racing need to have both floppers and long cars both at events. We will see if those rumors come to fruition and those rules come into play.

As I talk about nostalgia racing, I believe I would be remiss if I didn't write about the birth of the nostalgia effort. This, in my opinion, would have to be the AA Gassers. Now this might start an argument, but that isn't always a bad thing. I can see that there would be some who would call me ignorant, because they feel that the gassers never went anywhere, but have always been a part of the active drag racing fraternity. Gassers have always been a part of drag racing. As far back as many of us can remember, there have been guys wanting to take that Willys or Anglia and stuff a supercharged gas or alcohol burning motor in it, and attempt to shove a brick through the air and see if it would go straight. Now some fifty years later, that same thing is still going on.

In the western part of the United States, we are lucky enough to have a couple of groups that run the supercharged gassers. I would like to talk about the two groups that I have been able to watch in the past couple of years. Both of the groups have just put on excellent shows, no matter where I have seen them. The first of these two are the AA Gassers, a group that runs a majority of the teams out of central California. In the opinion of many, Steve Woods has forgotten more about running a AA Gasser than most people will ever know. This group has some wonderful cars, but their take on the gasser theme is a bit more expanded, including sedans and coupes such as Corvettes and Chevelles. This group also allows for the use of two steps and powerglides/Lenco glides and other electronics.

There is another group up in the northern part of California, Oregon, and Washington, called the AA Supercharged Association. This group of cars seems to hold more true to the gasser body types: no electronics, manual shifted Lencos, no automatics. The body styles are more traditional than the AA Gassers. This group of wonderful racers put on a great program a few weeks ago at the Oldies but Goodies Race at Firebird Raceway in Boise, Idaho. Close, tight, side by side racing. The only slight drawback was the fact that the group could only bring seven cars for the event. This was due to mechanical issues from the previous events, which happens in these regional series.

I guess I'm just going the long way around the tree and asking, "Would it make sense for these two very good groups to sit down and maybe work to get these series to merge?" There is a plethora of reasons that point to this being a win/win for both parties. A more positive car count, a great angle of marketing, such as early body style vs late model coupes. All things that promoters love. Both groups have great looking cars, and there are even a few that run both series, so I'm just wondering that in the economy

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DEAD-ON

by Jok Nicholson

Who's to say?

(Editor's Note: Nicholson must have been channeling Burk, but who are we to say?)

Who's to say... if I wanted to write a column about a subject that has been close to my heart for decades it would be a good thing or a bad thing?

Who's to say... I can't write about just anything that comes to my mind. Of course it needs to be about drag racing and not politics (which I am sick of anyway).

Who's to say... you couldn't use an editorial column like this to give a little push to some ideas that just may not stand out like they should? (The answer is easy. Nobody can say I can't. That is why writing for Jeff and Kay at DRO is the best thing for me.)



Who's to say... why thousands of drag cars are sitting in garages instead of supporting local tracks? I don't think it's all about the money. Sure, some of the owners have been strapped down a little with the struggling economy but not all of them. I think it is a general "lack of enjoyment" they get when they go to their local tracks.

Who's to say... that going to a local track shouldn't be fun AND affordable? Unfortunately, the trend of bracket racing over the last 10 years or more has been going in the opposite direction: more money, less fun and fewer people in almost every venue.

- ▶ Turnouts are getting smaller so entry fees and pit passes cost more?
- ▶ Racers complain about less prize money so entry fees and pit passes cost more?
- ▶ Cost of opening a drag strip and operating it have gone up so... entry fees and pit passes cost more? (See a trend here?)
- ▶ Big money races put the pressure on tracks to perform better. That meant better track prep, better timing equipment that needed to perform perfectly... entry fees and pit passes cost more. Years ago it was a standard deal to pay \$100 a day to race for \$5,000 to win and round money started at second round winner. Some tracks might be doing it but most have given it up as being too risky.
- ▶ Cost of fielding a car that can repeat run after run and be relatively easy on parts started the dragster generation. That cost tracks a lot of cars when door car owners chose not to run against dragsters. Basically, it is like taking a knife to a gunfight. Before you freak out, yes, I know a door car can still win -- many do -- but hundreds, if not thousands, of door cars sit idle.

Who's to say... those cars and their owners will not come back to the track if they felt like they could be competitive or at the very least the cost of going to a race wasn't going to empty their pockets of \$150 for a weekend? Nobody knows that answer for sure, but there will soon be that alternative for thousands of racers.

Who's to say... a bracket racing organization could not be put together that focused on one major goal? That goal would be to attract racers who have been staying home to bring their cars out for a fun event. Low entry fees, good payout and some entertainment put on by local racers. This could make them feel welcome again instead of feeling like they are behind times or out of touch with the "new world drag racers."

Who's to say... this is happening everywhere? Not me. I know some regions of the country are filling the pits and racers are enjoying the events. To those track operators, I tip my hat to your efforts, congratulations. You are the tracks that probably treat racers like CUSTOMERS and work to find out what they want.

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Who's to say... the "vocal majority" has not put track owners behind the eight-ball? A small group of very vocal and determined racers can somehow force a track owner to change how he runs the track. It could be ten guys complaining and the track owner feels all he gets is bitchin' for his efforts. The other ninety guys who are there every week may never say a word; they're happy with how things are going. This is the key for the track operators that are filling the pits; they listen to what the satisfied customers don't say as well as the ones who complain about everything. They learn from it, not react to it.

Who's to say... if you bring a few fresh ideas on entry fees and payouts, and get rid of some of the technology that has left tracks with 40% of the car counts they used to have, that it wouldn't work? Treat all the racers equally, from the guy who wins two rounds a year to the guy who wins five or six events a season. This is not a new concept, but it is one that has been overlooked.

Who's to say... this new Association couldn't win the favor of track owners, racers and fans in all sorts of different locations around the country? I feel it is a viable idea and because of that and who is involved, I am glad to announce my personal involvement in the development and operations of a new "look" at bracket racing, the Grass-Roots Bracket Series.

The Grass-Roots Bracket Series was founded by Scotty Richardson, one of, if not the, best bracket racers in the country. With national championships, national event wins, divisional titles, and the winner of more big-money bracket races than he or anyone else can remember, Richardson has decided that bracket racing needs some personal attention from someone who made a living at it for years. I am honored he chose me to join him in this attempt to bring out the racers that have basically lost interest in high entry fees and pit passes, the feeling you need a dragster to win S/Pro and the whole "high-dollar racecar" syndrome that has managed to undermine a sport that was originally developed to keep money out of the equation of having fun at a bracket race.

Who's to say... the Grass-Roots Bracket Series will be the greatest answer to drag racing's problems? Nobody has that answer, yet. We do know the plans are set for the Grass-Roots Bracket Series to present local races at local tracks where points will be earned by racers to earn a spot at the Regional Championships. We also know that entry fees for the local races will not exceed \$30 and the payouts will be at least \$1,000 to win. No big buck races, no double entries, and no B.S.; just a good old bracket race where the winner today earned it and can hold his or her head high when the race is over.

Who's to say... you can't have five or six Regional Championship races that have \$10,000 to \$15,000 purses and yet have NO ENTRY FEE for the racer? We say it WILL HAPPEN this way in 2011 and, thanks to the track owners and sponsors that are lining up to work with us in 2011, we hope the Grass-Roots Bracket Series comes to a track close to you so you can race with us.

Who's to say... there aren't several hundred guys reading this column who have cars parked in the garage? They haven't lost the desire to go race but they have lost interest in spending so much money to do it. I hope this will awaken that "sleeping giant" of parked racecars and bring them to their local tracks more often, especially for a Grass-Roots Bracket Series event.

If you want to read or know more about the Grass-Roots Bracket Series check out the website at www.grassrootsracers.com or stay tuned to Drag Racing Online as all announcements pertaining to the Grass-Roots Bracket Series plans will be posted in this magazine.

Who's to say... your comments don't count? If you have any questions about this month's Dead-On column or questions about any of the items I wrote about, you can send your replies to jok@dragracingonline.com. **DRO**

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News & Analysis

Why isn't Dan Olson using the rev limiter to slow 'em down?

By Jeff Burk

Top Fuel guru Dan Olson, at the behest of his bosses at the NHRA, is hell bent on slowing down the current Top Fuel and Funny Cars so that they won't or can't run over 320 mph. Or is he?

NHRA management has been trying to accomplish this more or less since Darrell Russell's tragic death at St. Louis more than five years ago. So far they have failed to do so, and only shortening the length of the track succeeded in lowering the speeds numbers. Currently the NHRA and their nitro guru Olson are in the middle of expensive and tedious testing of smaller fuel pumps, smaller clutches, smaller engines, and flow restricted superchargers. That research so far has supplied little or no results.

And now the issue is getting urgent again with Top Fuel cars going nearly 325 mph on the 1000-foot tracks.

So, here is my question. Why doesn't the NHRA or Olson simply adjust the rev-limiter that is mandatory on every NHRA Top Fuel or Funny Car and control the speeds using engine rpm and nothing else?

Back when former nitro racer/tuner Ray Alley had Olson's position he went to the MSD folks immediately after Russell's death and had them design a rev-limiter that was incorporated into MSD's ignition system.

The MSD engineers had the device ready to use in less than 90 days as I recall. After some testing Alley mandated that the device activate 3.8 seconds into the pass and at that point it would pull a maximum of 25 degrees of timing out of the engine starting at 8200 or 8300 rpm. The system works brutally efficiently. If the engine exceeds the maximum rpm limit, timing is taken out immediately and if the driver isn't off of the throttle, the engine tends to blow the rods out the side of the block!

Fast forward to 2010. The speeds recorded by Top Fuel cars are reaching the 325 mph mark and the ETs are rapidly dropping below four seconds. So, on a good run the MSD rev-limiter may actually be working for less than a tenth of a second. The Funny Cars aren't at that point yet but, if history is any indicator, they soon will be.

In checking with the MSD folks before writing this I found out another interesting fact. The MSD device -- which isn't actually a rev-limiter but an ignition timing limiter -- as it currently functions won't instantly take 25 degrees of timing out of the motor when the max rpm is reached unless the engine hits the limit hard and fast.

As it was explained to me by an MSD spokesman, if the engine just "tickles" the rpm limit then the device may just take 5 or 10 degrees of timing initially. Evidently some crew chiefs have found this characteristic of the device allows them to partially circumvent the rev-limiter and go faster.

So here is the \$64,000 question. Why are Dan Olson and the NHRA trying to re-invent the wheel by trying to come up with a brand new set of engine specs for Top Fuel/Funny Car engines. It would appear to me that any or all of the changes NHRA and Olson are proposing are going to cost the car owners a lot of money in one way or another.

According to MSD, they could easily change the settings on the "rev limiter" so that it came on line at 2.8 or 3.0 seconds into the run and set the rpm limit at, say, 7800-8000 -- and it wouldn't be expensive.

As I understand it, the crew chiefs would be able to keep their engine and drive train exactly as they are. Their data would still apply, right? So there wouldn't be a need to buy new heads, superchargers, fuel pumps, ignition systems, etc. They could keep and use all of the parts they now have in stock and wouldn't have to design, build and test a new engine combo!

So, what is the holdup? Car speed is directly related to engine rpm so lower maximum rpm means less Top Speed for the car. Am I missing something obvious here? **DRO**

RED, WHITE, BLUE

Words and photos by James Drew

Lead photo by Matt Schramel

Layout by Clifford Tunnell

This year, as it has in the past years, Auto Club Dragway at Fontana (CA) put on a big bracket race plus a giant fireworks show with help from the Stater Bros grocery store chain in Southern California, over the fourth of July weekend.

This year's event drew the largest crowd ever. Along with the fireworks, there was a family area with activities for the young kids, and the traveling wall covered with the names of soldiers lost in Vietnam.

As for the racing, as Auto Club Dragway played host to the SoCal Pro Gas Association, SCEDA (Southern California Economy Dragster Association), and the Lucas Oil Super Eliminator Dragster Association with separate races on the 3rd and 4th of July.

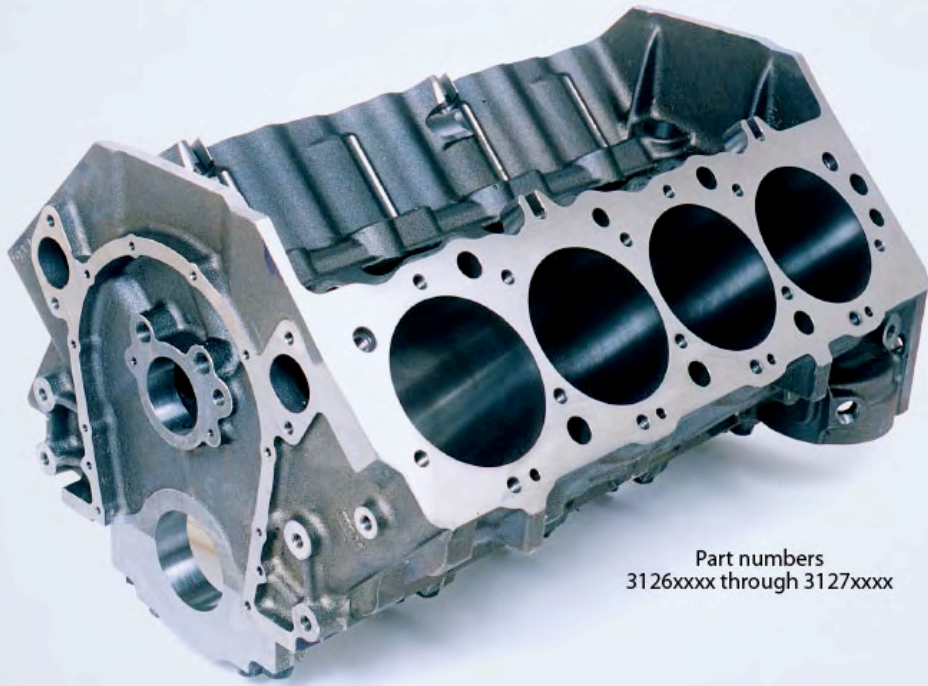


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SCPGA



Mike 'Cookie Man' Blodgett Sr. led qualifying with his '23-T roadster, delivering a perfect 9.90 ET. Greg Martin, in his 1995 Chevrolet Lumina, won over Darryl Mitchell Jr.'s topless 2003 Chevy Cavalier. Mitchell, who took down number one Blodgett Sr. in the first round, broke out alongside Martin. Although both men broke out, Martin ran closer to his index, with a .057 RT and a 9.881 @ 147 mph to Mitchells .034 RT and 9.856 @ 153.7 mph.



In Lucas Oil Super Eliminator action, Eddie Fischle rode his Lucas Oil Mesa Hose Special to take the win in the final round over Andy MacDougal. The race was decided on the starting line as Andy cut a -.016 RT to give Fischle, with a lovely .014

RT and running a 7.871 ET on a 7.90 index at 180.89 mph, the win over MacDougal's trailing 8.944 ET at an anemic 106.21 mph.

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SCEDA

In the "Box" class, Gabriel Torres drove his '01 David Beckley built dragster to the win over Rob Strong's '66 Chevrolet Malibu, Torres ran a 7.765 ET on a 7.76 dial-in to beat Rob Strong's 10.845 on a 10.83. Both drivers cut great identical reaction times of .006.



In "No Box" action Mike Agnew, who works part time on the Auto Club Dragway starting line track crew, was hot this weekend racing his bright red 1969 Chevy Chevelle. He defeated previous Summit Track Champion Alan Hoeffler in the final round. Agnew cut the better light with a .046 RT and ran a 10.387 ET at 128.37 mph on a 10.38 dial to Hoeffler's further-under 10.468 ET on a 10.48 at 115.02 mph.



SCEDA Stock & Super Stock racing saw Daniel McClelland race his 1980 Chevy Malibu wagon to the win over Jeff Intericchia's '66 Dodge Coronet. Daniel ran a 12.971 @ 101.19 to Jeff's fouled 11.441 @ 116.74 mph.

Second generation racer Zach Meziere found the SCEDA Jr. Winner's Circle like his family often does, beating Brandyn Phillips. Zach cut a .029 light, running a 7.940 @ 72.64 on a 7.90 dial to Phillips' .011 RT, 8.056 ET on a 7.98.

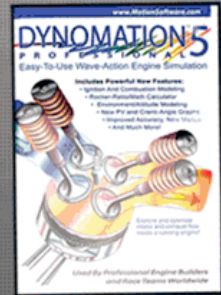


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When Independence Day dawned, it did so on a round of smoking action. SCPGA President Greg Ventura ran a 9.902 ET for the top spot in his '66 Chevy Nova, but he would fall in the third round to Saturday's runner-up Darryl Mitchell. But in the final round it would be Paul 'PJ' Glacalone in his flamed 1955 Chevrolet who defeated Charlie Waggoner Jr. This was a good race, but was won and lost on the starting line, as P.J. cut a fantastic .008 RT to Waggoner's decent .016 light. The final times were 9.902 @ 139.23 mph to Charlie's losing 9.947.

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Asked about the race, Waggoner said, "Man, I was catching PJ but I could hear him pedal the gas each time I got fender to fender and I had my pedal floored. I was not going to be able to pass him without breaking out, so I let him take the stripe and the win."



Don Gatlin of Bakersfield, Ca had one of those great days at the race track, winning in two different classes with the same dragster. In Lucas Oil Super Eliminator, Gatlin started from the sixth spot to beat Saturday's big winner, Eddie Fischle. Gatlin seems to know how to race, winning more than losing in final rounds. He cut a .007 light to Eddie's .012. Gatlin ran a 7.907, taking the win light as Eddie broke out, running a 7.892 for the runner up spot.

Then, in SCEDA "Box" action Don Gatlin would again dash someone's double up dreams, this time defeating Gabriel Torres. Gatlin put in the effort with a .013 RT and a 7.689 on a 7.68 dial at 163.85 mph to defeat a late .088 Torres who also ran right on his dial: 7.715 at 157 mph.

Don Gatlin, along with his crew chief and wife Dora, pocketed another \$1000.00 dollar check, making for a total of two grand for Sunday's two class wins!



In SCEDA "No Box" it would be Mike Agnew who won the Run on Your Dial In cash Sunday, along with a pair of Gater Sun Glasses from Means Racing for having the best package. Mike absolutely dominated Non E on the 4th. He was a machine all weekend, and in Sunday's final round he would meet the always tough George Chatterton III, who had his Hitman '37 Fiat Topolina alky injected SBC running strong, but in the end it was Agnew's day. George cut a better light, .021 to Mike's .027, but Agnew's '69 Chevelle was at the finish line first, taking the win with a 10.347 on a 10.35 dial at 128.22 mph to Chatterton's 8.556 at 146 26 mph on an 8.57 dial. Mike won four times in total this weekend, making him the biggest winner!

Saturday's runner-up was a winner on Sunday in SCEDA's Stock & SS Combo. Jeff Intericchla ran his '66 Dodge Coronet to victory with an 11.400 on an 11.38 dial at 116.75 mph. The runner-up would be John Brooks in his Ford Mustang, who broke out with an 11.656 on an 11.68 dial.

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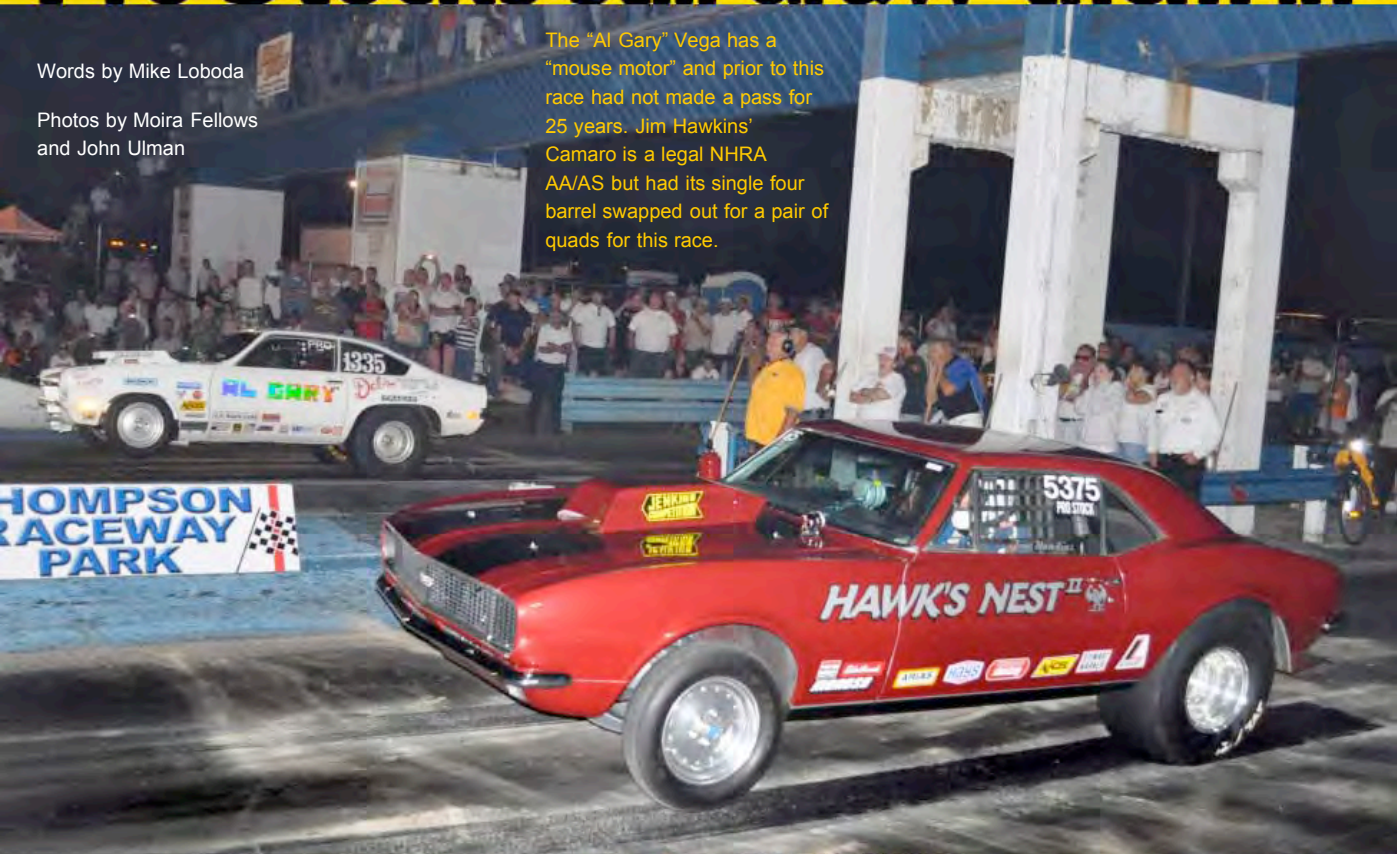
SCEDA Juniors saw Madison Whitten defeat a Meziere in the final, but this would be Chandler as brother Zach won on Saturday. Madison ran a 7.920 at 80.98 mph on a 7.93 dial as Chandler went even further under his dial with a 9.010 on a 9.02 dial at 72.94 mph. **DRO**

Pro Stocks still draw them in

Words by Mike Loboda

Photos by Moira Fellows and John Ulman

The "Al Gary" Vega has a "mouse motor" and prior to this race had not made a pass for 25 years. Jim Hawkins' Camaro is a legal NHRA AA/AS but had its single four barrel swapped out for a pair of quads for this race.



There were the typical obstacles to overcome that are part of trying something new, but in the end the first (that we know of) Nostalgia Pro Stock event was staged and completed on historic Thompson Raceway Park's quarter-mile track located in the doorslammer crazy area of northeast corner of Ohio.

Pro Stock fans in Ohio are many so Thompson Dragway was a natural location for the event. The historic track was among the first to have an "Independence Eve" Pro Stock Shootout. It was an annual Pro Stock event at that track every July 3rd from 1970 until the cost of booking Pro Stocker for match racing became prohibitive in the mid 1980s forcing the track to drop the event. But thanks to the UMTA racers the tradition has been revived.



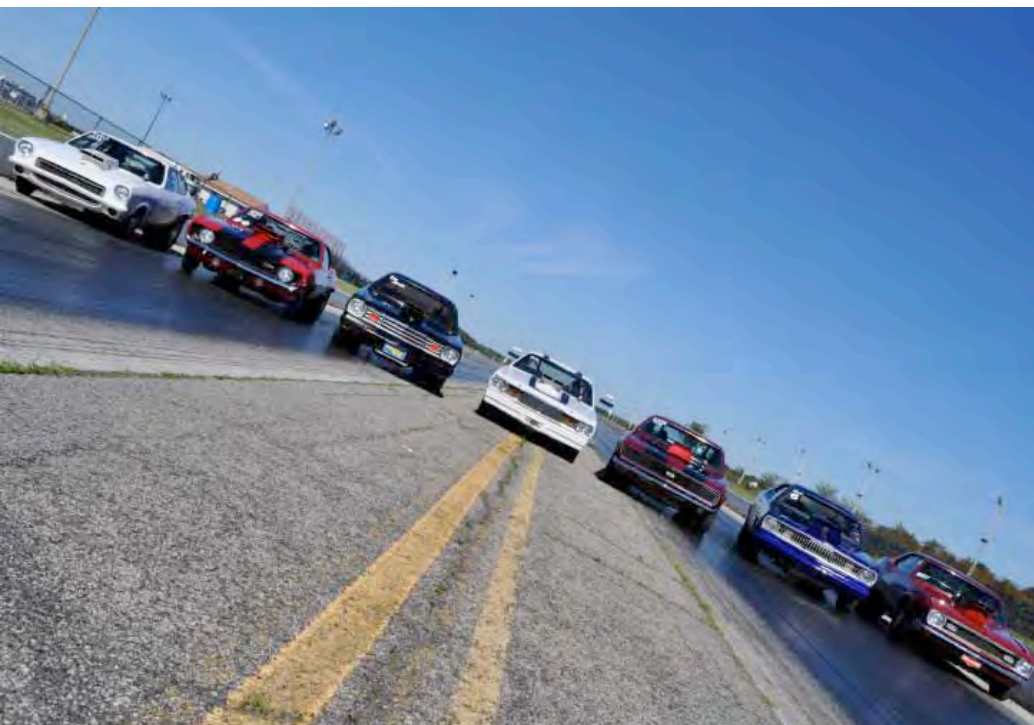
Vintage Pro Stock fans jammed into Thompson Dragway and stood anywhere they could see the action.

During the period of time that Thompson hosted an annual Pro Stock race drag racing doorslammer legends such as Bill "Grumpy" Jenkins, Ronnie Sox, "Dandy" Dick Landy, Gapp and Roush, and "Akron" Arlen Vanke, as well as local favorites Ron Hutter, Billy "the Kid" Lyons, and Gardner and Evans were featured in booked-in those four-, six- and eight-car fields and they raced in front of sellout crowds. Vanke returned to Thompson as the Grand Marshal for this year's event.



"Akron" Arlen displayed his Mopar Pro Stocker

The race was conceived and put on by Dave Breedlove and Mike Loboda of the United Manual Transmission Racers and promoter John Shapiro of Cruisin' Times Magazine. It required nine months of hard work but the group ultimately assembled a group of period correct, dual quad, tunnel ram, manual trans equipped cars for a Chicago-style Pro Stock race last July 3.



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Over the 2009 winter months, 10 cars that fit the promoters' vision of early Pro Stock cars were assembled. These cars could "walk the walk" with hellacious burnouts, dry hops, launches through the "gold dust" and heads-up 9-second racing.

The Mopar camp had the original "Queen Bee" '73 Hemi Duster of Billy "the Kid" Lyons, the original '73 Duster of Marfizo and Fermanchik, and Sean Loboda's '72 Duster "Pain Killer."

The Chevy contingent included John Svoboda's original "Canned Heat" '68 Camaro driven by local legend Jeff Gardner; Mike Price's '69 Camaro; Joe Winblad's "Winblad Automotive" '69 Camaro from the Dayton, OH, area; the Timoszyk brothers' "Al Gary" '71 Vega from Detroit; Tom Peter's "Strycnine" '71 Vega from Indiana; and Jim Hawkins' "Hawk's Nest" '67 Camaro from Colorado.

Pontiac fans in attendance cheered for the original "Bionic Bird" '68 Firebird of Frank Jessick. Sadly, no Fords could be found for the match race.

As race day approached, the "Winblad Automotive" Camaro and the "Strycnine" Vega had to bow out due to equipment trouble encountered during early shakedown runs.

A closed test-and-tune session was held for the remaining eight Pro Stockers the day before the race. During testing the "Al Gary" Vega blew its Dana rear end and Mike Price's Camaro's engine suffered a cracked cylinder head. The show appeared to be headed for real trouble. But an all-night thrash by Price installing a complete new top end on his engine put him back in the show.



Above, right: The "Al Gary" team also were able to repair the damaged Dana, rebuilding it in the Vega at the track, and they were ready for the race.



Early race day testing resulted in knocking out two of the eight cars when the "Bionic Bird" Pontiac suffered engine trouble and the "Queen Bee" crashed after a burnout. The remaining six cars, however, put on an outstanding show to the delight of a capacity crowd at Thompson.

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Mike Price and Sean Loboda squared off in a traditional Chevy vs Mopar contest as the first pair in the match race. The advantage seemed to be with Loboda since Pierce had only one test run on his combination and essentially was racing having had no sleep the night before while thrashing to repair the car.

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Sean Loboda's Duster.

The track personnel sprinkled "gold dust" (powdered rosin) on the starting line and broomed it in while the cars and drivers waited in the bleach box. Spectators crowded around both cars until the pair simultaneously erupted into 8000+ RPM burnouts. Then came the dry hop duel, followed by wheels-up practice launches through the rosin, with Mike hitting second gear in mid-air and Sean bouncing the wheels two feet off the ground with the second gear shift. Each car stopped around the 300-foot mark and backed up to the line. A 10-second "rev war" ensued as the cars were staging. You could have sworn it was 1970 and not 2010.



Mike Price's Camaro.

On the green, Sean was caught sleeping and just couldn't make up the difference as it looked as though his slicks were slightly in fresh rosin when he launched, causing his tires to spin. He also got loose in third gear down track, ending any hope of a comeback. Price took the win 10.04 to Loboda's losing 11.22.

The next pair in the box were the "Al Gary" Vega and the "Hawk's Nest" Camaro of Jim Hawkins.

The "Al Gary" Vega was original campaigned as a small block-powered D/Gasser on the East coast by Al Gary before being bought and stored away in the mid 1980s by Dan and Dave Timosyzk. Prior to this race, the car had not made a pass for 25 years.

Hawkins' Camaro is currently an NHRA legal AA/AS modified Super Stocker. He switched the single 4-barrel combination for a dual quad tunnel ram and added the "Grump Lump" scoop weeks prior to heading east from Colorado for this event.

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Hawkins' unfamiliarity with the rosin would enter into play as his tires were slightly out of the tracks and partially in the fresh gold dust. On the launch, the Camaro made a fast break for the centerline, however, the driver fought the Camaro back into the groove and actually caught the Vega in the other lane about five feet from the finish line! The "Hawk's Nest" won with a 10.34 to the Vega's losing effort of 10.51.

Closing out the first round of qualifying were the two fastest cars in competition. The "Canned Heat" Camaro and the Marfizo and Fermanchik Mopar Duster thrilled the crowd with an incredible show of dry hops and rosin launches.

As the cars staged with a fierce revving duel, the edge seemed to go to the Marfizo Duster as he had gotten in one last launch through the rosin, keeping his tires hot.

On the green, both cars came off in unison, wheels up and bouncing between gears with each shift. At the finish, it would be the top end charge of the rat-motored Camaro that decided the race. "Canned Heat" turned in a 9.54 with Marfizo running a close 9.64.

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Second round qualifying pitted Chevy vs Chevy as Mike Price's small block Camaro out ran the Timoszyk brothers' small block Vega. The next pair was Mopar vs Mopar as the "Pain Killer" would face the Marfizo and Fermanchik entry. Loboda in the "Pain Killer" would have to cut down the tree to have a chance against the black Duster of Marfizo that was faster by a tenth or more. In the end, Jerry Marfizo cut the lights a little too close and gave Sean the win via a redlight.

Clearly by now "Canned Heat" was the favorite to win. Jeff Gardner did not disappoint as he outclassed the "Hawk's Nest" 9.48 to 9.72

The Chicago-style final was to be an all-Camaro affair, with "Canned Heat" pitted against Mike Price. But with the 3 a.m. finish fast approaching and a heavy dew settling on the track, it was decided for safety's sake to scrub the last run.

The very first Nostalgia Pro stock race is now in the books. More than 5,000 spectators were treated to some of the best drag racing in 35 years. Hopefully, in the near future, Nostalgia Pro Stock will become as popular as Nostalgia Funny Car is now. **DRO**



FIA/UEM European Drag Racing Championships, FHRA Nitro Nationals, Alastaro, Finland

Words and pictures Ivan Sansom & Rose Hughes

(Stig Neergaard and Risto Poutiainen crash sequence courtesy and copyright of Stefan Boman)

Alastaro delivered up a real surprise or two over the course of a very hot weekend. One of the main shocks was how well the track prep held up under the clear skies and baking hot sunshine, producing the best Pro Modified pass in Europe by a bunch (Alastaro had not been traditionally considered one of the quickest tracks around), and a pile of drama packed stories with the biggest being the two car top end crash in FIA Top Fuel Dragster that almost ended with an amazing fairytale finish.

FIA TOP FUEL DRAGSTER



The home fans had a blast supporting the legion of Finnish drivers in FIA Top Fuel, with five of the nine car field flying the flag. All qualified; some in more dramatic fashion than others, but by the end of the meeting it was Timo Lehtimäki and the TIL Racing team that were smiling more than most having qualified in second spot and defeated Janne Ahonen and Urs Erbacher on the way to his first final round appearance against Risto Poutiainen. In the best FIA Top Fuel race in many a year, both left the line in the same instant (0.085s RT for Lehtimäki and a 0.086s RT for Poutiainen) and then stayed pretty much together to the 1000 foot finishline with Lehtimäki arriving a couple of feet ahead on his best pass of the weekend with a 4.151/279 to secure his first FIA event win having joined the Top Fuel ranks in 2008.

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AN MSD BRAND IGNITION

Having debuted a new car that took him to runner-up spot at the Main Event at the end of May, Risto Poutiainen was looking to build on a solid start to the 2010 championship. In terms of the bald facts, a low qualifying last session effort (4.179), low ET (4.118) and another runner-up finish in the spectacular final against Lehtimäki was a good haul for the weekend. However, Risto's weekend almost ended in an instant after he crossed the finish line close to the centerline in the second qualifying session at the end of a strong 4.167. A car length ahead and also running the centerline was Stig Neergaard who crossed in front of Poutiainen having run a 4.059; when Neergaard dumped the chutes a collision was inevitable, the impact vaulting Poutiainen's ride high in the air and spinning Neergaard around. Somehow both drivers emerged unscathed and would make qualifying shots after the stewards ruled both runs out which then resulted in a series of protests and some ill feeling in the respective camps. Neergaard was able to fix his car but was then bumped from the field in the final session by, you've guessed it, Poutiainen's last gasp pole setter behind the wheel of the spare RFM car that he'd retired six weeks previously.

FIA TOP FUEL DRAGSTER

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. | Risto Poutiainen | (Fin) | 4.179/279.32 | (runner up) |
| 2. | Timo Lehtimäki | (Fin) | 4.203/283.64 | (winner) |
| 3. | Urs Erbacher | (CH) | 4.205/287.99 | (semifinal) |
| 4. | Jari Halinen | (Fin) | 4.248/285.53 | (first round) |
| 5. | Andy Carter | (UK) | 4.300/284.26 | (semifinal) |
| 6. | Anita Mäkelä | (Fin) | 4.353/237.03 | (first round) |
| 7. | Janne Ahonen | (Fin) | 4.399/272.15 | (first round) |
| 8. | Mikael Kågered | (Swe) | 4.466/202.29 | (first round) |
| 9. | Stig Neergaard | (Den) | 4.667/177.23 | |

Low ET **Poutiainen** 4.118s
Top Speed **Erbacher** 287.99 mph

FIA PRO MODIFIED



Micke Gullqvist is enjoying life at the moment. When an engine replacement in his own '57 Chevy Pro Mod ran behind schedule, his association with the R2B2 team provided Gullqvist with the opportunity to step behind the wheel of the Camaro he'd taken to the final in Gainesville and which had been wheeled by Melanie Troxel at the previous round in England. With a highly experienced Swedish crew augmented by a couple of fly in guys from the R2B2 squad, Gullqvist just flattened the opposition in qualifying, with a 6.026/244 mph someway ahead of Andy Robinson's 6.105 in second spot. Whilst Robinson wouldn't be around to contest eliminations, Gullqvist certainly was, and a 5.911/245.76 in the comparative cool of the first round of eliminations demolished the track record and, although the string of low 6.0s that took him to the event win meant that he was unable to back up the ET number, the speed was good for a four mph leap in the FIA Pro Modified speed record. "I think most of us were surprised about the track prep at Alastaro this year; it held up great in the hot weather conditions. In Pro Mod we always start early on Sunday for eliminations and I was pretty confident we could dip into the 5s zone with a track temp of only 100F. And we did with a 5.911/245 mph, which was quite a bit better than I figured we could run." The opposition are now scratching their heads about where to gain the horsepower to match Gullqvist's top end charges (and the short numbers as well), but we predict a fair few runners will be in the 5s before the end of the season.



A perusal of the elimination ladder on the Saturday evening brought the observation that whilst the top half of the field looked like a killer (with Gullqvist being joined by fellow Swedish heavy hitters like Freddy Fagerström, Mikael Lindahl, Mats Eriksson, Adam Flamholm and Jan Gunnarson 'up there'), the lower half appeared to be a benefit for the championship leading Lindberg Brothers and their Rockstar Firebird. Once again Johan Lindberg did his job well, this time from third spot with a 6.112 and then used consistent 6.1s to defeat Jari Paren, Roger Johansson, and Urban Johansson before stepping up to a 6.114/232.73 that would have been good enough for victory at all Alastaro Pro Mod finals but this one, this year it merely provided a good seat to watch Gullqvist's victorious 6.030/242.78.

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Marko Lantto and his blown Corvette was the best of the four Finnish qualifiers with a 6.533 putting him in at number twelve, and he was the only one of this quartet to make it past the first round when he defeated the Badillac of Jan Gunnarson; fellow Finn Timo Äikää came in as first alternate and gained a quarter final finish when Tami Brander red lit in the opening round. Seeing red became a theme in the quarters as Äikää left before the tree was activated and Lantto handed Adam Flamholz a win light with a -0.127 RT.

The sole Brit to qualify for the field was Andy Robinson (right) with a 6.105 set on Friday. Trying to improve in the third session on Saturday, Gus provided a heart stopper when a flame erupted underneath the car just before the finish line. It looked as if the onboard equipment had done its job, as the fire died down before erupting again as the carbon fibre body caught alight. A big plume of death smoke in the shutdown area put a very concerned look on the faces of crew and fans alike, but the FHRA crew were quickly on the scene and, although a lot of the ancillaries and bodywork is junk, Robinson is aiming to be back before the end of the season.



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FIA TOP METHANOL DRAGSTER



Methanol Dragster continued its merry way towards another spectacular season with the eight car bump in Alastaro being very close to another European best with Main Event winner Dennis Habermann sitting on the bubble with a 5.562 ticket. When Dennis took out the low qualifier Dave Wilson in the opening round of eliminations, another family clash in the final round loomed large, as elder brother Timo had qualified in second spot with a 5.385 and the two worked their way through the field to their second final in a row. This time reigning European champion Timo was handed the victory at the start line when Dennis red lit with a -0.66s RT (his brother's 0.011s RT was pretty handy) and, although a 5.534 was somewhat off the 5.378 Timo had recorded in the opening round of eliminations, it was enough to put him just in front on the early season points table.



A first round loss on home turf for Dave Wilson was matched by another fall in the opening round in Finland, but at least the Silverline Tools team had the consolation of low qualifier points after a 5.378/268 effort. Losing out to Dennis Habermann's 5.519 with a 5.384 at a huge 273mph wasn't exactly the way Wilson will have wanted to depart the scene, but the car is running well and the next round in Sweden is where he set both ends of the European record last season.

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FIA TOP METHANOL FUNNY CAR

The long and the short of the Methanol Funny Car field was that Jarmo Kuutniemi lost out to Arvid Grødem in the final round of eliminations and got to carry Grødem onto the victory podium. Disappointingly, these were the only two racers to make the event, but Grødem's popular win now puts him in the points lead and has given him some useful data on getting the Sunoco backed ex-Jeff Burnett Mustang downtrack that might keep him ahead of the rest.

FIA PRO STOCK CAR



It's been a while, but 2002 and 2003 champion (and still the cumulative top points scorer in the history of the FIA championships) Michael Malmgren wheeled the Lahega backed GTO to his first event win in a long long time, stretching back to 2004. Although headed by Michael Callin in qualifying, Malmgren dominated eliminations by setting low ET of each round (including a best of 6.767) before defeating Jan Palmqvist in the final round with a 6.865 to a 6.959.

UEM TOP FUEL BIKE



Pre-event testing at Alastaro, after a tentative debut in Hungary back at the start of May, gave Petri Paljakka a huge leap in confidence onboard his Puma Yamaha fuel bike, with qualifying yielding a new PB of 7.354. Eliminations day and a 7.212 gained the Finnish rookie his first round win over a broken Rene van den Berg, and when Jaska Salakari shutdown after the burnout in the final round of eliminations, Paljakka was able to settle himself and produce his first full pull on the ex-championship winning bike with a 6.668/215 flashing up on the boards to make Paljakka the quickest Finn on a fuel bike in history. Not a bad result for the second competition outing on the bike (and indeed any type of drag bike), and Petri is now looking to enter as many races as possible for the rest of the season.



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The Top Fuel Bike final pitted two Finns and long term friends against each other, although Jaska Salakari's appearance on the entry list aboard his immaculate KTM Nitro Duke was something of a surprise as he was also entered in Super Twin competition. However, UEM rules permit supercharged nitro burning twins in both categories and Salakari had two clones to enable him to perform double duty, but it was only the TFB that he managed to get down track, qualifying on pole with a 6.692/201 and defeating current points leader Kai Selkamaa in the opening round with a 6.828.

UEM SUPER TWIN BIKE



After an up and down performance in the previous two rounds of the UEM Super Twin championship, Hans Olav Olstad hit a strong vein of form and consistency in Alastaro that put him on pole with a 6.741/203 and put him onto the victory podium with victories over Samu Kempainen, Jan Sturla Hegre and Ismo Mäenpää as the only rider to keep in the sixes through the three rounds of eliminations. Olstad managed to gain a couple of rounds over championship leader Job Heezen when the latter lost at the semifinal stage.

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Heezen's run of consecutive final round appearances was ended at four by Ismo Mäenpää who'd made the field in seventh spot and defeated a slowing Lorenz Stauble in the



opening round of eliminations. After a bit of assistance from Heezen about his setup, Mäenpää repaid the favour with his first dip into the six second zone and a 6.997/203 victory that put the Finn into his first final and put the points leader back on the trailer. Olstad's 6.833/200 proved to be too strong for Mäenpää's 7.064/202, but his performance over the weekend of his home race has vaulted up the points table.

UEM PRO STOCK BIKE



For the story of Ulf Ögge's weekend we refer you back to the reports from the previous two rounds: Hungary and England. Ögge qualified second (again) with a 7.209, but then dominated the lower half of the ladder (again) with victory over Harry Piensalmi and Fredrik Fredlund with a pair of 7.155 put him into the final (again), this time against Kenneth Vik. A great side by side drag race saw them leave together but Ögge lit the win light (again) with a 7.200 to Vik's 7.205 and give him a substantial lead as the Swede looks to repeat on his 2009 points championship.



Kenneth Vik (left) is emerging as Ögge's closest challenger (albeit somewhat distant at the moment) as the Veidec/Motospeed Suzuki rider converted a pole setting 7.202/187 into a final round appearance to go with the runner-up finish he achieved in Hungary. Like Ögge, Vik's raceday tune up saw a step up with a 7.175 and a 7.173 accounting for Gabriella Nikolovska and former team mate Anders Abrahamsson in the quarter and semi final stages respectively.

Abrahamsson had earlier set class low ET with a 7.143 that was coupled a new Euro PSB speed record at 188.71mph.

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Janne Ahonen, FIA Top Fuel Dragster, Finland



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Jan Sturla Hegre, UEM Super Twin Bike, Norway



Rikard Gustafsson, Funny Bike (and again the quickest bike at the meeting with a 6.596 – too fast for Top Fuel?), Sweden

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Geezers Groove at the Grove



Troy Martin in the "Chi-Town Hustler" and Rocky Pirrone's "Screamin' Eagle" warm the hides.

Words by Evan Jones
Photos by Todd Dziadosz
Layout by Marissa Gaither

Peter Gallen's second run against Phil Burkart was the charm Saturday night, July 3, at Maple Grove Raceway. Racing in the "Poverty Stricken" 1974 Vega, Gallen made the most of another chance against Burkart's '74 Mustang to win the Nostalgia Funny Car class in the Geezers at The Grove Reunion presented by Yuengling.

As the name of the event suggests, the evening was full of "back in the day" cars and drivers as The Grove celebrated the pioneers of drag racing. The two-day event featured everything from a car show to a cacklefest. There was plenty of action on the track, too, including the NAPA Auto Parts Cavalcade of Funny Cars feature show.

That was where Gallen (Broomall, Pa.) was able to successfully defend his title from last year. The race was in a Chicago-style format in which the two cars with the best elapsed time in one round of qualifying are paired for a single championship run.



As it turned out, "Poverty Stricken" and the "U.S. Male" were together for the first run, and it was the best side-by-side race of the first round. Burkart (Yorkville, N.Y.) had a better reaction time off the line and followed through with a holeshot of 5.979 seconds at 240.77 mph. Gallen was right behind with a 5.997 at 242.23.

In the final, both drivers had identical reaction times of .101 that turned into a spectacular run. Gallen set a track speed record with a pass of 248.25 mph, with an ET of 5.846. Burkart was 5.931 at 241.50.



Peter Gallen and winner's loot.

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In Nostalgia Alcohol Funny Car, Marie Ferriolo (Allentown, N.J.) benefitted in the Chicago-style final as her "Thunderstruck" '71 Mustang rolled to the win when Chris Massarella (Lake Hiawatha, N.J.) fouled at the start in his "Total Insanity" '75 Monza.

Ferriolo qualified for the final with a pass of 6.971 at 190.81 in the first round and Massarella had a 7.293 at 183.77



There were also two classes for sportsman racers sponsored by Justice Brothers. Group I featured cars with electronics and that was won by MGR's own Dan Walleigh (Reading, Pa.), who took his '60 Ford Wagon to victory over Dave Faust (Hulmeville, Pa.) with a pass of 10.535 at 118.43 in the final.



In Group II – non-electronics – Roy Croll (Linglestown, Pa.) had a winning run of 10.566 at 119.08 in his '68 Camaro to beat Stephen Curtis Jr. (Malvern, Pa.).

Dale Greenly (Manheim, Pa.) had a back-in-the-day looking '60 Biscayne that he drove to victory in the Geezers Eliminator over John Grater (Zieglerville, Pa.).



The 422 All-Stars brought back their popular '60s-vintage cars and Kyle Rensbeck (Johnstown, Pa.) emerged the winner in his '64 Polara. In the final, he ran 10.558 at 119.02 to defeat Chet Cook (Belleville, N.J.).



Jerry Hangey (Quakertown, Pa.) took his front-engine dragster to Victory Lane in the Back Seat Drivers class. Piloting a '69 S&W, he made up for a slow reaction time in the final, running 7.627 at 179.44 to beat Ed Bliss Jr. (Spring City, Pa.).

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The North East Timing Organization had two classes that ran eliminators on both Friday and Saturday.

Saturday, Joe Morrison (Flemington, N.J.) took his '98 Fiat on a pass of 7.631 at 132.54 in Competition, while Vincent Laurita Jr. (LaGrangeville, N.Y.) beat Ed Hedrick (Washington, N.C.) in his '70 Chevelle, running 10.098 at 132.54.



The same two won on Friday. Morrison took Competition, running 7.533 at 152.04 to beat Bob Sherwood (Hyde Park, N.Y.). Laurita ran his '70 Chevelle to victory in NETO Nostalgia, getting a .002 reaction time and following through with a 10.184 at 119.35 to finish Paula Nappi (Mahopac, N.Y.).

The 2010 Maple Grove Walk of Fame was also announced. The year's class includes Dallas Gardner, Steve Gibbs, Darwin Doll, Darrell Gwynn, Jerry Gwynn, Jack Redd and Kenny Koretsky.



A new addition this year was the Boninfante Performance Clutch Parts Cacklefest that featured 23 Funny Cars, Fuel Alteredes and others firing up their engines at the same time, much to the delight of the crowd, which gave a noisy round of applause when it was over.

SATURDAY RESULTS

Nostalgia Funny Car: Peter Gallen, '74 Vega, .101 reaction time, 5.846 seconds, 248.25 mph def. Phil Burkart, '74 Mustang II, .101, 5.931, 241.50.

Nostalgia Alcohol Funny Car: Marie Ferriolo, '71 Mustang, .198, 6.924, 160.16, def. Chris Massarella, '75 Monza, -.024, 7.533, 163.89.

NETO Competition Eliminator: Joe Morrison, '48 Fiat Topolino, .087, 7.631, 164.25.

NETO Nostalgia Eliminator: Vincent Laurita, '70 Chevelle, .125, 10.098, 132.54 def. Ed Hedrick, '72 Nova, -.001, 10.618, 125.33.

422 All-Stars: Kyle Rensbeck, '64 Polara, .052, 10.558, 119.02 def. Chet Cook, '68 Impala, .109, 10.867, 122.73.

Back Seat Drivers: Jerry Hangey, '69 S&W, .567, 7.627, 179.44 def. Ed Bliss Jr., '70 S&W, .074, 8.258, 160.58.

Justice Brothers I: Dan Walleigh, '60 Falcon Wagon, .032, 10.535, 118.43 def. Dave Faust, '32 Precision, .081, 8.119, 157.61.

Justice Brothers II: Roy Croll, '68 Camaro, .057, 10.566, 119.08 def. Stephen Curtis Jr., '67 Chevy Coup, .104, 11.166, 118.71.

Geezers Eliminator: Dale Greenly, '60 Biscayne, .094, 14.987, 89.14 def. John Grater, .015, 11.559, 113.74.

FRIDAY RESULTS

NETO Competition Eliminator: Joe Morrison, '98 Fiat, .047, 7.533, 152.04 def. Bob Sherwood, '70 Nova, .134, 9.312, 142.18.

NETO Nostalgia Eliminator: Vincent Laurita Jr., '70 Chevelle, .002, 10.184, 119.35 def. Paula Nappi, '79 Corvette, .175, 12.147, 113.80.

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Mike Lewis was at the wheel of the "Stardust" Barracuda.



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LEFT:
The "Pure Hell" guys at work.

BOTTOM LEFT:
Pat Walsh in the "Nitro Nick" AA/FC Vega with "Crazzy" Jake Crimmins.

BOTTOM RIGHT:
"Grumpy's Toy" lines up against the Sox & Martin 'Cuda.

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DRO

switching places

Ashe wins on Saturday at MMP, McCrory gets runner-up.
McCrory wins on Sunday, Ashe gets runner-up.



Words and photos by Dale Wilson
Layout by Marissa Gaither

We've all heard of racers "doubling up" at a big race -- a win in both Stock and Super Stock, or in Super Gas and Super Comp, all in the same day. But here's one for the books -- a bracket win on the first race on a Saturday and a runner-up finish on the last race on Sunday. Okay, so that's cool enough. But what about that same runner-up on Saturday getting the win in the last race on Sunday against the same guy who beat him on the Saturday race?

It happened at a Super 7 Race, the fifth of a seven-race series at Montgomery (Alabama) Motorsports Park over the July 4th weekend. It was a four-race event held over three days, with two of those races played out on Saturday. That first race and the last race on Sunday was when the winner-runner-up and the runner-up-gets-winner deal took place.

The racers in question were A.J. Ashe of Gulfport, Mississippi (above and the winner of the Saturday race and the runner-up of the Sunday race) and Stephen McCrory of Dallas, Georgia, the runner-up of the first and the winner of the last race. It was a big bucks go, with nearly a hundred Super Pro racers going off for \$5,000- to-win on Friday, two \$10,000 to the winners on Saturday, and \$10,000 to the winner on Sunday. The weather was hot, but the track was unaffected, as attested to by the dozens of dead-on runs in both lanes throughout the weekend.

Some background: Jim Howard of Birmingham, brother of famed promoter George Howard, started the Super 7 races when he took over Montgomery in 2007.

"I wanted to make a big money series for the regular guy who bracket races," he said. "It has been awesome. We're still doing it, even in these bad economic times. Last year at the season finale we had 280 entries in Super Pro alone."

The quarter-mile track, with bracket races held on the eighth-mile, now flies the IHRA flag, and will host the Division 2 bracket finals on October 8-10. It recently hosted a quarter-mile Pro-Am divisional and will also host a 2011 Pro-Am race plus another bracket Super 7 Series.



In the finals of Friday's race, famed Southern bracketeer Peabody Harrell (left), from Lyons, Georgia, beat another old hand, Cliff Shipp of Dallas, Georgia. Both were in dragsters.

"I've been getting down to three or four cars all year," Harrell said.

"I had trans problems, so I built another one and came here. My car was 5.04 all day. It was scary how good it was."

Runner-up Shipp had help from friends throughout the

race --- his legs were bummed out, and he didn't get out of his dragster all day.

Then came Saturday and the making of a bit of bracket racing history. Ashe, driving friend Bob Savage's '05 Miller dragster, won over McCrory, driving famed bracket racer Troy Williams Jr.'s Race Tech dragster. The latter red-lighted by .098.

"I had some luck in this race," Ashe said. "You have to have some luck in these big races." Ashe also raced his own '90 Grand Am, a car that he says has won him more than a quarter-million dollars over the years.

In the second Saturday race, Troy Williams Jr. of Bradenton, Florida --- the same --- beat friend Greg Samuels of Deland, Florida, in his '03 Mullis dragster. Williams, racing a brand-new Phantom digger with a 614 Steve Schmidt engine and FTI transmission, had an easy go when Samuels red-lighted with a .094. Williams was racing with a broken left hand.

Then came Sunday's race, when McCrory won over Ashe in the finals. Everything was unreal. A.J. drove his familiar and dependable '90 Grand Am while Stephen was in Troy Williams Jr.'s '08 Mullis dragster; he also raced friend Mitch Cleary's '10 Phantom dragster, and went out at 28 cars.

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Tranny Tech

by Mike Stewart

Mike,

My racing partner just destroyed his new Coan Super Sprag converter after about 40 passes. The local trans guy told him it is because he is leaving on the converter all the time. He has a mag, and leaves on stall which is about 6 grand. He was told to put a two step in the car so he leaves lower and this will prevent blowing out the converter. Is this correct? Second question. We both run Altersds, under 2000lbs no front brakes. We do our burn outs in high gear (glides). The same trans guy told us this would cook the high gear clutches. In checking with everyone, I get about 50/50 that shifting is just as bad as high gear only burn outs? What is the truth here? Thanks in advance for your help.

Earl Helm

Earl,

My wife Christy and I have always run a glide in our dragster. It weighs 2100 lbs. with a 500-inch blown alcohol Hemi engine. We have run as quick as 5.97 and as fast as 239.9 mph.

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ASK THE EXPERTS
TECH Q&A

Check Out That Chassis

By Scott Weney of S&W Racecars

I have a '68 Camaro that I foot brake. I recently back halved it with an S&W 4 link. I have it in the holes that they recommend starting with. It seems to raise the front end higher than I think it should. It rises to the travel stops and seems to stay there all the way down the track. I removed the Koni adjustables and replaced them with a set of stock gas shocks. It seems a little sloppy if I have to ease up on the gas at the finish line then have to get back on it.

The front end is completely new. It does have those Moroso hi lift springs that I have learned over the past two cars that I really don't like. By the way, the car hooks every time. It weighs 3500 with me in it and runs mid tens / sixes. I run a 427 mark 4 engine. I just removed the turbo and installed a powerglide thinking this would help keep it down but it doesn't. With the turbo, it would really jump and raise the front wheels off the ground. The lower links are parallel to the ground like they say they should be.

Should I lower the front of the top bars a hole and see what that does?

Steve Carper
Berryville, Va.

Steve,

You are on the right track, by lowering the top link at the chassis end in will move the IC back closer to the center of gravity, this will apply more load to the back tires for the entire run and let the front end come back down to ride height. The glide will slow your 60ft down a little but the glide having less drag the car will make it back up by the finish line. So you should see the same ET and more MPH.

Scott Weney
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IT'S NEW TO US!

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-ported 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-ported 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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For more information about AMSOIL synthetic motor oils, go to www.amsoil.com.



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With patent applied for, this new and unique system converts all vacuum and turbo hoses to a quick-coupled setup, eliminating broken fittings or barbs during removal or troubles with unyielding, rigid hose ends. They connect and disconnect in a moment with half a twist of your finger and thumb.

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The fittings consist of CNC aluminum rotating collars that snap onto molded nylon male hose ends. These, in turn, connect to corresponding nylon female flanged hose ends. The rotating collars are available in a variety of colors and the nylon molded hose-end connectors accept virtually all common hoses sizes including: 1/8, 5/32, 3/16", and 1/4-inch (3, 4, 4.75, & 6.25, mm). Designed to accommodate OEM and aftermarket hoses, OOMPH! Labs also provides silicone hose in a variety of colors and bore sizes.

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WE'VE GOT MAIL

CAN'T TELL THE CARS APART

On the subject of identifiable bodies. I could not agree with you more. The "blob bodies" have always been a thorn in my side. To me (and many others) auto racing is all about brand loyalty. I like Denny Hamlin, but when Joe Gibbs Racing went to Toyotas I stopped rooting for him. I do not buy from Home Depot anymore, nor do I buy Interstate batteries. Likewise, when John Force jumped ship for the big dough from Ford (after GM kept him in business back when he couldn't make two runs without being upside down and on fire) I literally burned all of my JFR hats and Ts. To me the emblem on the grill is just as important as who is behind the wheel. Kenny ruined it for everyone back with the Tempo (or Topaz, or whatever). Then, when he wheeled out the Batmobile, the NHRA powers should have said, "Stop!" But, hey, he was the King, so anything goes.

The same thing is true now. The big names like the aero of the blob

bodies, so don't expect it to change... unless people really voice their opinion to Glendora. Identifiable bodies might bring the Big Three back to the NHRA. (I will not even address the Toyota FC bodies and what business they have in American drag racing, I could write a ten page rant on that alone!)

And this is not just for FCs; Pro Stock cars should have a BIW straight from the factory to build on. They are becoming a nondescript blob just as the Funny Cars have become. Pro Stock should be just as it was at its inception, stock sheet metal and stock block engines.

To respond to another question, NO, Pro Mod will never replace Pro Stock for me and most of my friends for two reasons. First, Pro Stock is the pinnacle of technology for naturally aspirated stock production based racing cars. Second, the powers controlling Pro Mod have allowed it to become an unidentifiable class. They no longer look like real cars, and the inclusion of the blown alcohol aftermarket Hemi has made them little more than left hand drive alcohol funny cars... just another fiberglass blob running down the track. Ho-hum, yawn, yawn. Just a few years ago I loved PM, but they have pretty much ruined it too.

Speaking of which, Burkster, you better keep an eye out in your own back yard. I went to your meet in KC a couple years ago to watch the gassers and was pleasantly surprised at the AA/FC cars that were there. Mustangs, Camaros, 'Cudas, a Maverick... and they all looked like real cars. They put on a great show and I really enjoyed it. But now look at things. Romine's Mustang, some of the late '70s Trans Ams and the early '80s Dodge Omnis are ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY GOING TO RUIN THE NOSTALGIA FUNNY CAR MOVEMENT. I know, I know, the swoopy bodies are a bit faster so guys are stretching the envelope, but let's remember why we are watching Nostalgia cars in the first place; it is because of the look. Let's not ruin this class too.

I think that the reason that the "street car" racing associations are so popular with racers and fans is because they are regular cars... cars like the fans have out in the parking lot or at home in the garage. It's just not near as much fun to go to the track and watch unidentifiable blobs go down the track, it doesn't matter how fast they are.

Scott Cornish
Lincoln, Nebraska

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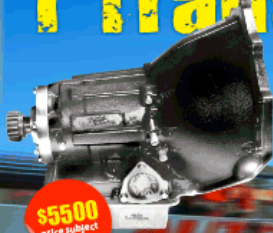
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FREAKISH BUT NOT SO FUNNY?

I don't get Pro Mods. They look like a cross between a pro stock and funny car, kinda freakish looking. The only thing missing is a 10-foot tall Rat Fink sticking out of the roof holding a giant shift lever.

Bill Pinkston
So Cal

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Jeff I thought you gave up trying to save the NHRA? Yet here you are once again beating a dead horse wondering about anything and everything! You have admitted your heart is in Nostalgia racing. Follow that!

Joe Sherwood
Albuquerque, New Mexico

APPLES AND ORANGES?

DRO, loved Brian (Losness's) article on Salt Lake. I would like to know how the Baders feel about the two events they just had at their palace. The Super Chevy race verses the NHRA Circus: which drew bigger crowd?

The crew at Salt Lake has always put on good shows, glad to see that the fans supported them.

Bryan Kelley
Phoenix, Arizona

MAYBE THE WATER IS JUST AS DANGEROUS AS ASPHALT

Burkster, did you note that the IHBA has gone to 1000 feet for the fast boats. Monkey see, monkey do?

Same excuses.

Glenn Mortensen
Charlotte, North Carolina

UNCARING?

I think it's time to revisit Bret Kepner's list of drag strip lengths. When will NHRA care enough to prep the whole track for the Pro Stock and Pro Mod cars, not just 1000 feet? Those two classes are the most unstable at speed.

Whoever puts the results on the NHRA website should be sent to compassion school. They listed Mark Niver as a No Time No Show for the finals. The man lost his life doing what he loved. His

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EVERY RACER IS IMPORTANT

Well here we are again, dealing with another tragic death in the sand trap at an NHRA event. How many more before someone figures out there's a flaw in the design of the top end catch system? It simply doesn't work! There needs to be a major rethink of that system.

Every racer should put pressure on the NHRA to get a system that works. Your life depends on it!

Rick Johnson
California

WHEN WILL NHRA START LISTENING?

I am so fed up and angry with the NHRA/IHRA that I am considering, after nearly 50 years of being involved in drag racing, quitting watching! This organization is now acting like some kind of Union boss, dictating the racers' every move and bringing the sport down to a downright death sport all to make more money for themselves. Hopefully the recent deaths this year will wake somebody up that really understands the sport and will take some comprehensive action to make things right.

The stoppage by the drivers of the Pro Stock class round at Seattle due to track conditions speaks volumes just how bad it really is getting. Running these cars on tracks that are half concrete and half asphalt with big transition bumps and far less than necessary short shutdown areas at 200-300+mph is criminal. They keep putting restrictions on the drivers/owners/sponsors of teams for more safety, and that is somewhat a good thing, but they should be coming down hard on these track owners to extend their tracks, get rid of the bumps, and install multiple safety nets that are not so strong as to break a car in half and kill the driver. Install side track safety nets 30 feet tall like all other motorsports do, to protect the spectators from harm. Be ultra diligent to keep the traction in both lanes equal and fair to everyone all the time. If someone loses due to a bad side of the track, then re-run the pass.

Every racer knows, like me, that this is a dangerous sport and you can be hurt or dead in an instant as with ALL other motorsports. I think that all racers need to get together and form their own union headed by Warren Johnson and Cruz Pedregon and John Force. I don't think that these guys will let this garbage go on anymore. They already know everything I'm saying is needed. No FIX, No RACE!!!

Let's get back to the beginning, if a person can build a car that will run 450 mph in the ¼ mile then he should be able to do it, and the tracks should be there for him to do it on. I would give the track owners one more season to get up to specs or they will be replaced by one that will. NHRA/IHRA are shortchanging all of us by concentrating against the drivers rather than making the tracks as good as can be to handle all drag racers.

Thanks.

Warren Caldwell
Florida

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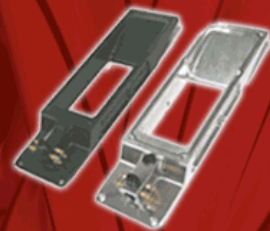
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TRACKS NEED PREP BEYOND 1,000 FEET

From what I've read recently, NHRA is once again crapping on the Pro Stock class by not preparing the track for them as well as the other two main Pro classes, causing quite a bit of concern from angry pro Stock drivers in regards to their safety. Could this be an attempt to see if in Pro Stock, drivers would park their cars in protest? I myself feel maybe something like that should be done, however you take the chance of hurting the sport.

I've heard stories that people feel Pro Stock should be replaced by Pro Mod, but I am one fan who doesn't feel that way. Pro Stock is a class that everyone can relate to, and its popularity is wide spread.

I think what Pro Stock fans should do is complain to NHRA about this, and possibly bring this issue up to some of the sponsors of Pro Stock and get them actively involved with correcting this matter. I'm sure sponsors such as Summit Racing, Jegs, and many others could help resolve this ongoing problem.

Karl Wortman
Akron, Ohio

MAYBE THE AARP COULD HOLD CLASSES

RE: Just Wondering... Isn't it about time the sanctioning bodies started thinking about a maximum age that a driver can be and still hold or get a license to drive a professional gasoline, nitro or alky burning car? Or at the very least make all drivers take a driver's test every couple of years in front of a select group.

Many states have policies in effect that require older citizens who want to drive to take a behind-the-wheel driving test as early as age 65, and at intervals of every year. With many of the many older stars of the sport reaching Social Security age, it would seem reasonable to have similar license renewal procedure for driving racecars.

Dale Tuley
Upland, Indiana **DRO**

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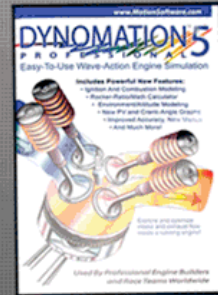
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Pets raise money for DRAW!

By Tracy Winters

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



Now that you have read the title, I am sure you are wondering what new venture D.R.A.W. has embarked upon the raise money for injured racers and their families. The truth is, this contest is not a new venture.

The Drag Racing Association's Division One representative, Pat Shaeffer, has been hosting this contest for several years. It is held in conjunction with the NHRA TOYO TIRE NATIONALS in Reading, Pennsylvania, October 7-10, 2010.

The organization has an unusual way of hosting the contest. Those who wish to enter the contest send a picture of their pet to Kelly Shaeffer by September 1. The contest allows entrants to send in a photo that may show the owner with the pet if so desired. The photos cannot be larger than 4" x 6".

The winner is chosen by monetary donations at the NHRA TOYO TIRE NATIONALS. The votes are accepted as one penny per vote for each pet that is entered into the contest. When the voting is complete the winner receives a plaque with photo, the pet and owner's name and the date of the award.

Some of the previous winners of the pet contests include: Brian, Byron and Tim Worner's Irish Setter; Frank Manzo's Yorkie dog and Jeff Leflurs dog Corona. The truth is that dogs are more than just a pet, they are more of a companion and part of the family. This is a means of showing of our pets and including them in our drag racing world.

Shaeffer also has a special connection with pets as she brings several of her animals to nursing homes to help lift the spirits of the nursing home residents. Her dedication to D.R.A.W. and in general to those in need has been well recognized by the organization and the NHRA Division One racers.

Look for details on other fundraising events and come celebrate 50 years with D.R.A.W. at the upcoming NHRA events. For details on the D.R.A.W. pet contest you can e-mail Pat Shaeffer at minityw@yahoo.com or tracyw@racewithjw.com.

In closing I will leave you with this quote: "I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me they are the role model for being alive." - Gilda Radner



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At The Back Door

DragRacingOnline.com Caption Contest!



Reader Joe Sherwood forwarded this photo of the "Cra-Z-Boy" jet-powered recliner. We don't know where or when, but what's the caption?

Write Your Own Caption!

Name

Location

Email

Submit Caption!

AND THE WINNER OF LAST MONTH'S CONTEST IS

"Put a quarter in – steer the hook over this way – AND GET ME OUTTA HERE!"

-Eddie Ray, Michigan

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"Bubble Boy finally passed his license test at the tender age of 54." - Jeremy, Liberty, Missouri

"Let me guess...he qualified on the bubble." - Bill Bench, Hamilton, Ohio

"I come in peace." - Ian Moore, Rockingham, West Australia

"Snow globes, lane 5. Thank you." - Bob Fisher, Katy, Texas

"Talk about a Funny Car, that's just plain hilarious!" - Jack Issi, Pittsburgh

"Yes, it makes popcorn too." - Glenn Mortensen, Charlotte

"George Jetson, you've been Overhauled!" - Tom Scheetz, Conesville, Ohio

"Man, that Taco Bell stop was a bad idea!" - John Blaski, Cleveland, Ohio

"Inbreeding...don't do it." - Alan Sargent, Braselton, Georgia [DRO](#)

