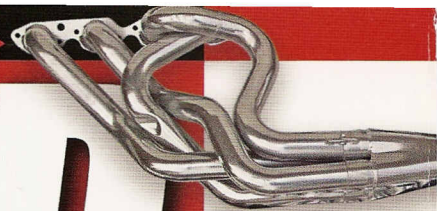


TESTED: FIVE STREET/STRIP HEADERS ON ONE ENGINE



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**HOT ROD** WHERE IT ALL BEGAN



# MEMPHIS

Smooth, nearly flawless, fast, and varied. All these words describe the fifth running of the HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™, presented by Comp Cams and run at Memphis Motorsports Park on May 10, 2008. Our annual test of street car legality and dragstrip dominance, limited to running a spec 93-octane gasoline, was the smoothest running, most competitive we've had and saw a wider range of vehicles competing than the first four combined. It wasn't without a little weather delay, but let's back up a bit.

The Pump Gas Drags™ was created four years ago as an answer to what street legal drag racing has evolved into since the first days of the HOT ROD Fastest Street Car Shootouts of the early '90s. As with any type of competitive motorsport, progress usually drives a class away from its original roots. In this case, what began as mostly legit street cars racing under a strict set of rules for overall bragging rights supremacy (and a jacket) had morphed into full-on race cars with no pretense of street-ability running for cash purses. Sure, the new Pro Street and Super Street race cars of the NMCA are fast and exciting to watch, but they've moved so far away from the original intent that they're no longer even recognizable as street cars. HOT ROD created the Pump Gas Drags™ (and, later, Drag Week™) to return to the foundation of pitting fast street cars against one another for magazine glory.

It works. We put out the call in the Jan. '08 issue for PGD competitors to send in their applications, and we picked through them to invite 75 to show up to Comp Cams' facility in Memphis. Since the entrants tend to be vehicles that don't fit into (or wouldn't be competitive in) any other class of heads-up drag racing, the types and combinations varied greatly. Over the years we've had musclecars, trucks, SUVs, and imports battling it out for Top Eliminator hero status.

**HOT ROD**  
**PUMP GAS**  
**DRAGS** 2008

PRESENTED BY

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CAMS





# MAY

## Street Car Action at the Fifth Annual **HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™**, Presented by Comp Cams and TCI Transmissions

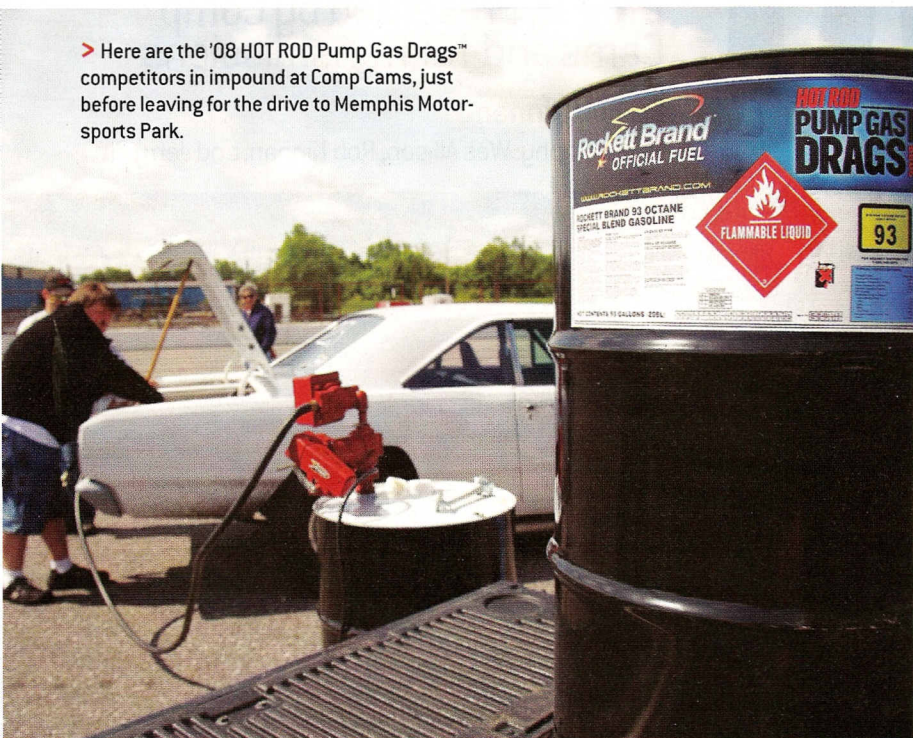
By Rob Kinnan

Photography: Wes Allison, Rob Kinnan, and Jerry Pitt





> Here are the '08 HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™ competitors in impound at Comp Cams, just before leaving for the drive to Memphis Motor-sports Park.



The rules are fairly simple: All vehicles must be currently registered, insured, and have all the required street equipment such as lights, turn signals, a horn, and so on. They must also be equipped with the safety items that the NHRA requires for the performance they are capable of. Tires must be DOT-rated and the rears can be no wider than 11.25 inches as measured with a go-no-go gauge (unlimited if running Drag Radials). To weed out the cheaters, we make them show up to Comp Cams on Saturday morning for complete tech inspection, where all this stuff is checked. Often, several cars don't make it past tech for various infractions, but this year everybody made it through just fine.

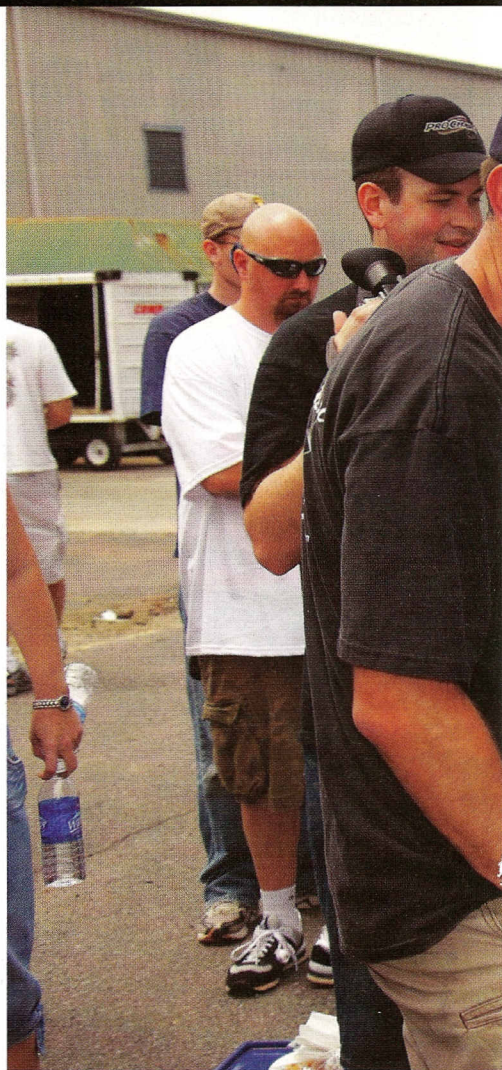
After the street and safety portion of tech, we drain all the existing gas out of the fuel system and pump 10 gallons of Rockett Brand 93-octane gasoline into the tanks, then seal the tanks and hoods so competitors cannot open them after tech. Once everybody is finished, we make them drive on the highways and byways through Memphis on the way to Memphis Motorsports Park about 30 miles away. Breakdowns on the road and the subsequent passing by the chase truck are grounds for instant disqualification—only two cars didn't make the drive this year. Once at the track, they get about half an hour to cool down and then it's to the lanes for qualifying, where they run to make a 32-car eliminations ladder. Not one of the quickest 32 cars? Then you're out. Done. Finito.

This year we changed the rule to give everyone two qualifying passes, should they

so choose. Many did. Then the storm clouds began appearing in the distance, and the Doppler weather computer in the tower told us it was going to get ugly in a hurry. Pump Gas Drags™ is held on Saturday, with Sunday reserved as a rain date, but we had never used it. So we quickly called everyone to the lanes for the first round of eliminations. Once they were paired up, we ran the first round of 32. Sixteen competitors moved on and 16 went back home. Then the storm hit, and boy howdy did it hit. Tornadoes, sideways-blowing rain, and hail came in a rush, and for the first time ever we allowed anyone with a trailer on the grounds to put his car away for the night. We relied on the honor system, knowing everyone who made the Top 10 would be fuel-checked, so there wasn't much they could do... if they were smart.

We woke up Sunday to sunny skies and mineshaft air conditions, meaning the cars were going to really haul the bacon. The MMP staff had the track prepped quickly, veteran starter Augie McCallie was in place with the trigger in his hand, and we proceeded with the race, with only two no-shows (they had broken already and just headed home).

When all the shouting was done, Jim Plimpton and his wicked, black Thunderbird stood on top of the mountain and earned the HOT ROD Top Eliminator jacket, taking out veteran PGD racer Ray Doughty in the final round. Read on to discover how it all shook out and to see who made the HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™ Top 10.



> A lot of guys run Mickey Thompson Drag Radials, which were in scarce supply at the beginning of the year. That forced many to scramble and run on either used tires or beg and plead others for a pair.





> Keith Turk ran tech inspection with an iron fist. Here he's seen giving Lee Saunders a ration of crap about something.

## THANK YOU'S

We could never pull off an event like Pump Gas Drags™ without some help from our friends outside the magazine, so we need to recognize them here. First and foremost is everyone at Comp Cams, starting with the company owners, Ron Coleman and Scooter Brothers. The hardest-working folks behind the scenes are Chris Douglas, Chris Brown, Tammy Holland, Hailey Nailor, Brian Reese, and John Wilson. All good people. Also thanks to our other sponsors, TCI Transmissions, Jack and Tim at Rockett Brand Racing Fuel, Dynabatt [a division of Performance Distributors], and Royal Purple.

Of course, we also couldn't do it without Keith and Tonya Turk, who run tech and registration, respectively, and are just good people to know. Brian Lohnes was once again the master of the mic in the tower, Jeff "Hummingbird" Brooks brought the event live to the Web on HOTROD.com via his mad video skillz, and Wes Allison made everyone's car look as good as it possibly could with his Canon. And lastly, thanks to Brian Brannen and Jeff Ward at Spectacle Solutions in Memphis (901/461-2893) for opening their shop to racers in need after they hurt their junk at Thursday night's test and tune. Thanks, everyone!

> Prior to the festivities on Saturday, MMP held a test and tune on Thursday night where a lot of PGD racers tested their stuff. This is Chip Owens' 572 Hemi-powered '70 'Cuda hoistin' the hoops. Chip lost in the first round of eliminations but ran a decent 9.86 at 136.

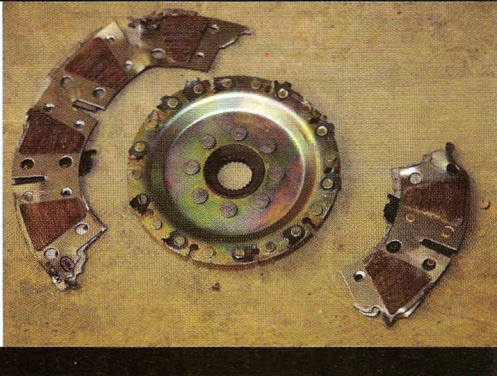




# MEMPHIS IN MAY



> Repeat offender Taner Bosnali grenaded the clutch in his fourth-gen Camaro on Thursday night, prompting a Friday thrashfest at Spectacle Solutions in Memphis. Taner burned up the phone lines to get the parts he needed to fix it, but the wrong parts were sent, so the clutch couldn't be installed correctly.



## BRIAN BRUNT

Wixom, MI

'07 Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8

We invited Brian Brunt's SRT8 Grand Cherokee to throw some more diversity in the field, and it certainly did that. Though the truck had teething problems the whole time, on Spectacle Solutions' chassis dyno, the Bischoff-built, Eddie Gregory-tuned, Vortech YSi-blown 426ci new-Hemi laid 670 hp and 720 lb-ft to just the rear tires. On Thursday's test passes, the truck laid down and the check engine light came on, so Brian put it on the dyno to figure it out. Turns out the truck was leaving so hard in all-wheel drive that it was making the front Nitto drag radials too light and spinning them, causing the computer to go haywire. He ended up disconnecting the front driveshaft and ran it in two-wheel drive, but it shot ducks on all passes, running a 12.90 in qualifying and was easy first round fodder for Nathan Mann's way-bad Capri.







**ROBIN ROBERTS**

Glendale, AZ

'76 Pontiac Trans Am

Robin Roberts just has a tough time at Pump Gas Drags™. The poor guy can't catch a break and seems to hurt something every year. This year it was a cam bearing that went away while he was on the onramp to the highway from Comp to the track. "It spun, I heard bad noises, and shut it off," Robin told us. Postdestruction teardown revealed a spun cam bearing but no other damage, but it didn't matter... his '08 PGD was over.



**TOM PAPA**

Oceanside, NY

'57 Chevy

Tom Papa has been to every Pump Gas Drags™, the first three as a helper to Rob Schmidt and the last two as a competitor in his '57. Tom really stepped it up this year and had his heavyweight (3,900 pounds) running high 8s with a shot of spray and EFI. Unfortunately, his 10.06 qualifier pitted him with his best bud in the first round, and Rob showed no mercy. They left almost even, but Rob's 8.72 was too much for Tom's still-quick 9.17.



**JEFF MCCONNELL**

Leavenworth, KS

'80 Chevy Malibu

Jeff is a past Drag Week™ class winner who threw his hat into the ring for the Pump Gas Drags™ with a nitrous'd small-block under the hood (with a MegaSquirt EFI system tuned by Scott Clark). At some point, he pushed a head gasket out of it and was forced to run naturally aspirated. His high-10-second performance was at a severe disadvantage against Tony Deaton's mid-9 Camaro, so Jeff needed a big holeshot for any chance of survival. But a comatose 0.616 reaction time relegated him to spectator status as Tony ran off and hid, 9.44 to Jeff's 10.91.



# MEMPHIS IN MAY

O'Reilly AUTO PARTS O'Reilly AUTO PARTS



> Here they are, the '08 HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™ racers in the staging lanes, ready to rock 'n' roll for the first round of qualifying.

**“Nathan won first round, but the thing was smoking like a coal-fired locomotive.”**  
—Brian Lohnes

#### DAVID PASCHALL

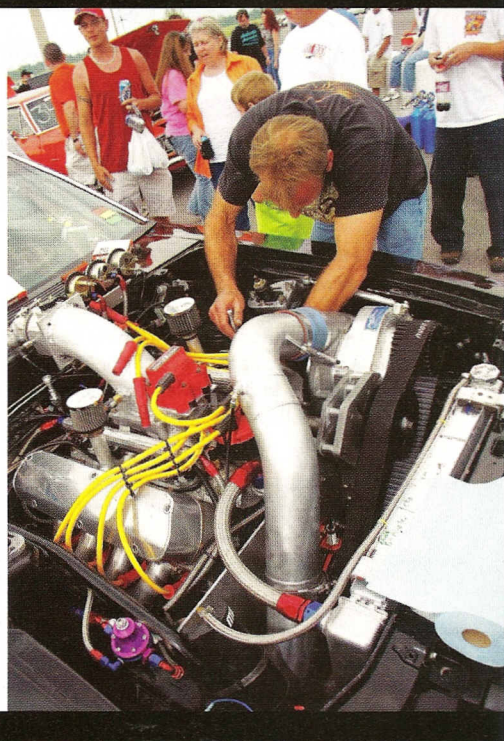
Big Sandy, TN  
'72 Buick Skylark

David brought some class to the digs with his big Buford, a Saturn Yellow beauty packing a fairly simple T/A Performance—headed 455 (500 hp or so), a TH400, and 3.73s in the 12-bolt. It's a mid-11-second ride, which made it easy pickings for Jeff Cleveland's Camaro in the first round. David drives the snot out of this car and is the one who kind of has us thinking about creating another class for Pump Gas Drags™.

#### NATHAN MANN

Little Rock, AR  
'81 Mercury Capri

Nathan's Capri is a fast one, with a ProCharger F-3A blowing 18 pounds of boost into a 371-inch Windsor with all the best internals and TFS Twisted Wedge R heads. It puts 1,000 hp to the tires and looked to be a contender for the crown this year. On the drive to the track, Nathan got a little lost and drove 10 miles out of the way but turned around and opened it up a bit on the highway to get back in line without being passed by the chase truck. He made it but qualified with what at first appeared to be a disappointing 9.82 to take the 16th spot. That was a lucky draw, however, since the ladder put him beside No. 32 qualifier Brian Brunt in the first round. Nathan had no problem with the Jeep and stepped it up to a 9.34 but hurt the motor on the pass badly enough that he couldn't return on Sunday. Bummer.







**KELLY MYERS**

Baysprings, MS  
'84 Chevy Pickup

Kelly ran the PGDs last year and came back a little quicker for 2008, with a 10.30 timeslip in her pocket and the attitude to go a few rounds. The truck qualified with a 10.45 at 126 but had no chance against Eyrych Clark's Camaro in the first round. Kelly lobbied for the Most Legit 10-Second Car (err, truck) award and nearly won it. The truck is cool and quick. It runs a 396-inch small-block with Brodix 210 CNC-ported heads, a big Lunati cam, and a Nitrous Works juice setup. The trans is a 700-R4 built by Bowtie Overdrive with a Precision Industries converter, while the stock leaf-spring suspension uses CalTracs bars to plant 315/60-15 Mickey Drag Radials.



**DAVID SILLS**

Florence, MS  
'67 Dodge Coronet

We made an exception to the sealed fuel system rule for David Sills, since his car began leaking fuel after parking it in impound. It was a true safety problem, so we allowed him to open the trunk and fix it while we stood watch to prevent any funny business. The problem turned out to be a broken O-ring (foreground in photo) on his Mallory fuel filter. The fix was a little butchery of some gasket material, but it worked and the leak stopped. He qualified with a 10.26 and got lucky in the first round when Kevin Thompson's Chevelle broke and gave David a single. He ran a 10.81 but couldn't make it back on Sunday for the next round, where he would have faced the much quicker Jeff Cleveland.

**RAINEY B. HORNE**

Chattanooga, TN  
'72 Chevy C-10 Pickup

There's no doubt where Rainey B. calls home. Just look at his truck and you'll figure that out in a hurry. We really dug this thing, and the fact that it runs in the 10s makes it even cooler. The motor is a 434ci small-block (4.155x4.00) with a Scat crank, Brodix heads, and a Motown intake with a BG 750 Mighty Demon. A whiff of Nitrous Express laughing gas gives it more pep. Rainey drew Jack Miller's fast Mustang in the first round, and to his credit he chopped down the tree with a 0.017 light. But he had nothing for Jack's off-the-throttle 9.28.







**ROBERT PEFFLEY**  
Covington, IN  
'78 Ford Fairmont

On the bumper! That's what we like to see. Robert is a heretic, sticking a small-block Chevy and a Powerglide in his Ford, but it's good for 9.80s on NOS nitrous. It ran the number [9.86 at 135] in the first round, but a slow 0.404 reaction time didn't help his cause against Jim Plimpton's T-bird, which ran an easy 9.02 at 141 to advance, banishing the Fairmont to the cornfield for the day.

## MOST LEGIT 9-SECOND CAR

**JACK MILLER**  
Nokesville, VA  
'68 Ford Mustang

If you've been reading HOT ROD very long, you recognize Jack Miller's awesome Mustang, since it has competed in many PGD and Drag Week™ events and was also featured in the magazine July '07. A 427ci FE is twice-blown with a pair of Paxton blowers and has run 8.40s on a regular basis. Jack's car is always a potential winner at PGD, but luck hasn't been on his side, exploding a supercharger in 2006 and redlighting in 2007. Same story this year. After an easy first-round win against Rainey Horne's truck, Jack faced number-three qualifier Plimpton's T-bird. It should have been a heck of a race, but as you can see here, Jack lost the hook on the line and couldn't catch Plimpton's 8.31 at 175. See ya at Drag Week™, Jack?



**TOM HUNSAKER**  
Springboro, OH  
'69 Plymouth Barracuda

Always one of our favorite cars, Tom's Barracuda is a longtime PGD repeat offender. Packing a 528 Hemi with dual-plug heads, a magnesium cross-ram intake, a Comp roller cam, and a nitrous setup with water injection (water-only is legal for PGD), it has run 9.80s while looking like a show car. Tom qualified an unfortunate 17th, pitting him with number-one qualifier and everyone's odds-on favorite to win it all, Lee Saunders in the Viper. Lee showed no mercy on the launch, leaving Tom with a 0.038 light to a sleeping 0.420 and lifting to an 8.92 [at only 130 mph] to Tom's quickest-ever 8.78 at 136.







## BRETT EVANS

Glen Carbon, IL

'70 Pontiac Trans Am

Pontiac fans will like to hear Brett kept his car all Indian with a Pontiac 541 under the hood. It's got an all-Pontiac 4340 crank, GRP aluminum rods, Ross pistons making 10.5:1 compression, Edelbrock heads, a 1250 Dominator on a Victor Jr. intake (under the stock Shaker), Hooker headers with Spintech mufflers, and an NOS Big Shot plate nitrous system. A Coan TH400 with a Gear Vendors bolt-on overdrive feeds power to a 9-inch with mild 3.50 gears, and CalTracs bars plant Mickey Thompson Drag Radials. Brett qualified a strong 13th with a 9.57 and won his first round against Houston Alford's Camaro but didn't make the call on Sunday.

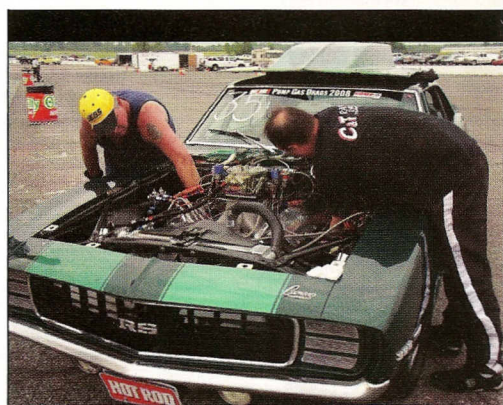


## KEVIN THOMPSON

Memphis, TN

'65 Chevy Chevelle

KT has been to PGD before, but we don't think he'll look back on 2008 too fondly. Kevin ran an 8.96 to qualify a strong Sixth, but that was the pass that hurt the motor (it completely lost oil pressure), so he was on the trailer for the first round, where he would have probably had an easy time with David Sills' Coronet. The Chevelle is a wolf in sheep's clothing, beige in color with a show car-clean interior, but all business everywhere else. A 598 Rat motor with FAST EFI and lots o' spray make it one to fear.



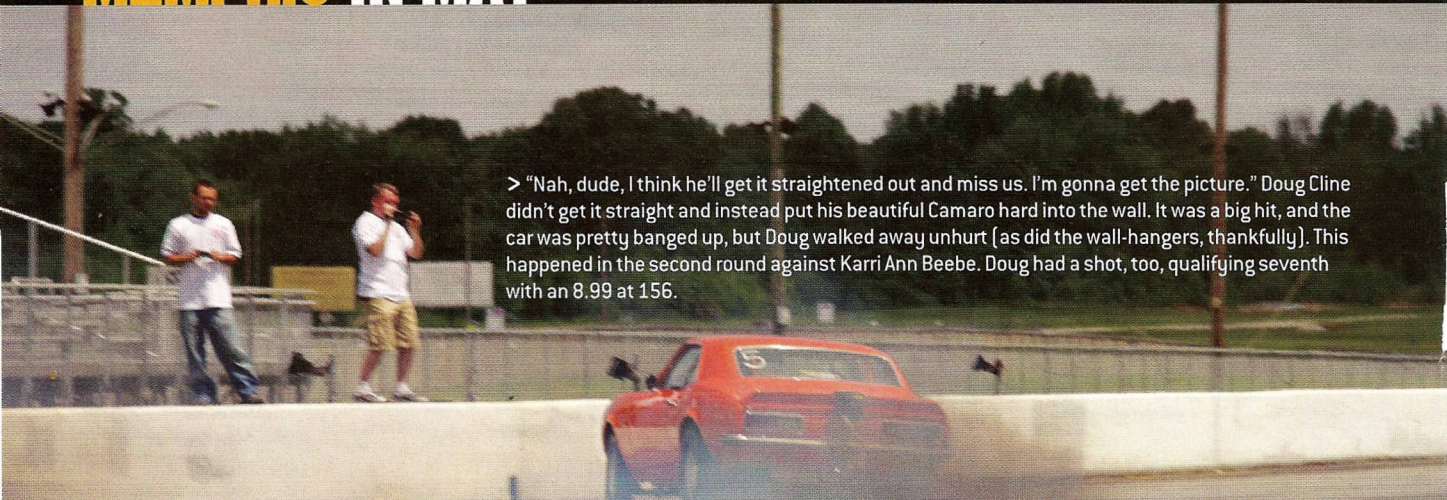
## CHRIS JOHNSON

Houston, TX

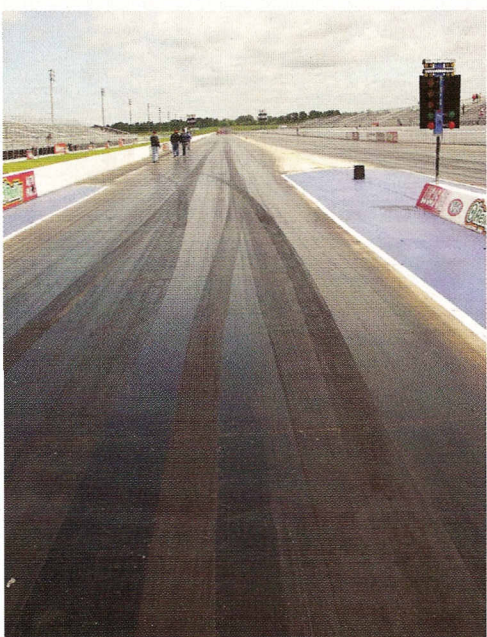
'69 Chevy Camaro

That's a 565ci big-block with AFR 357cc heads, a Profiler Sniper intake, and several stages of nitrous from an NOS Big Shot plate and Fogger setup that Chris and his helper are tuning on. The car usually runs low 9s but could only manage a 9.94 in qualifying and was a no-show for the first round.





> "Nah, dude, I think he'll get it straightened out and miss us. I'm gonna get the picture." Doug Cline didn't get it straight and instead put his beautiful Camaro hard into the wall. It was a big hit, and the car was pretty banged up, but Doug walked away unhurt (as did the wall-hangers, thankfully). This happened in the second round against Karri Ann Beebe. Doug had a shot, too, qualifying seventh with an 8.99 at 156.



## QUICKEST REACTION TIME

**EV BERNARDO**

Bristol, VA

'96 Ford Mustang

We met Ev during last year's Drag Week™ and were completely in awe of his homebuilt, twin-turbo, Chevy-powered Mustang. You wouldn't know it to look at it or listen to it motor down the highway, but this thing is a real, deep-8-second player. Ev put it number two in qualifying with an 8.69, trailing only the Viper (and earning the Quickest Reaction Time jacket with a telepathic 0.005 light in qualifying). He put away Chip Owens in the first round, but the engine was obviously hurt, "smoking like a tire fire," as Brain Lohnes said. He decided it was too hurt to come back on Sunday after the rain delay.



**HOUSTON ALFORD**

Amite, LA

'91 Chevy Camaro

You wouldn't know it to look at it, but the engine under the primed hood on Houston's beater Camaro is a 632 with Larry Meaux–ported Dart heads, and it has nitrous in case the cubes aren't enough. Houston's had his share of troubles at Pump Gas™, and this year was no exception. He could only manage an 11.38 in qualifying and was first round fodder for Brett Evans' Trans Am.

**"Anybody have any  
Mechanix Wear  
gloves?"**

**—Houston Alford**







**“That drive to the track... very funny! But you can't mess with a Drag Week™ survivor!”**  
—Dominick Zvacek

## MOST LEGIT 10-SECOND CAR

### DOMINICK ZVACEK

Pleasant Hill, MO  
'73 Chevy Camaro

The coolest thing about Dominick's Camaro is the Jerico four-speed that makes watching and listening to this car one of the most visceral pleasures in life. He bang-shifts the wee out of this thing, and it's music to the ears. Dominick made the drive to the track just fine, but once there, electrical gremlins cropped up that prevented the nitrous solenoid from opening, causing his big-inch big-block to cough and sputter down the track to low 10s, way off the car's potential. He was a sitting duck for Doug Cline's Camaro in the first round, but on the way home, the Zvacek family (Dominick, wife, Luann, and daughter, Maddy) took its time and visited George Ray's Dragstrip, a time warp of a place in Arkansas.



### JERRY WARREN

Lyles, TN  
'77 Buick Skylark

It's the KISS principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid. Jerry's Buick is the epitome of a street machine, with a 434-inch big-block Chevy with GM cast-iron rectangular-port heads, a 950 Holley on a Weiland Team G intake, and two stages of nitrous, while a TH400 sends power through a big and heavy (but bulletproof) Dana 60 rearend. It normally runs low 10s and ran a 10.47 in qualifying then a 10.45 in a first-round loss to Shawn Anderson's Firebird.

### SIMON EDWARDS

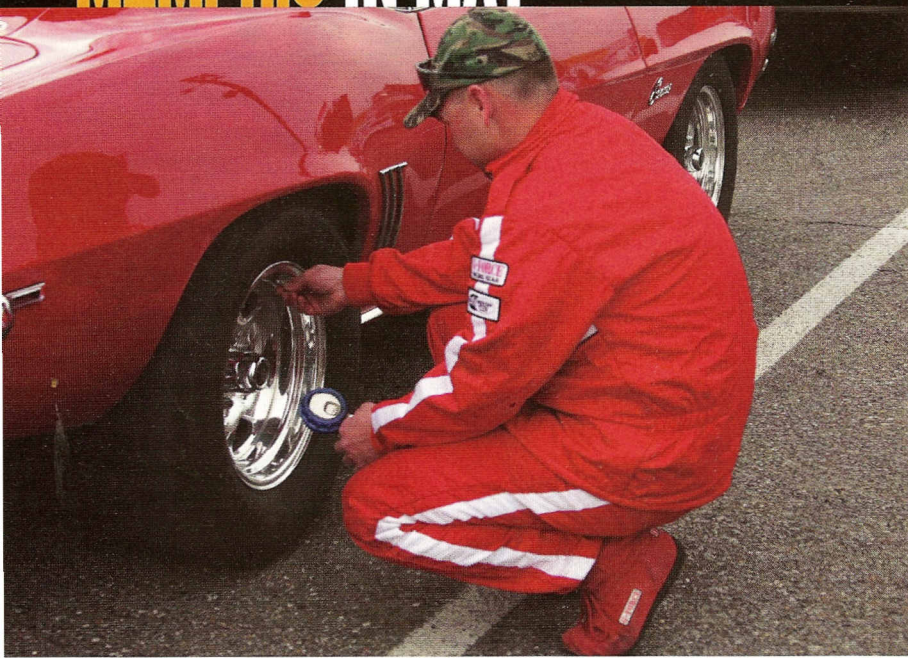
Iberia, MO  
'68 Chevy Camaro

Simon was the first guy to enter at Comp Cams and carried his shoe-polished No. 1 proudly. The Camaro runs a 540 with Brodix BB2 heads, a big Comp solid roller, and a 100-shot of nitrous, and puts it to the track with 275/60-15 Hoosiers. Simon qualified with a 10.60 and picked it up a hundredth in the first round, but it wasn't enough for Jason Junemann's low-9 Dart.





# MEMPHIS IN MAY



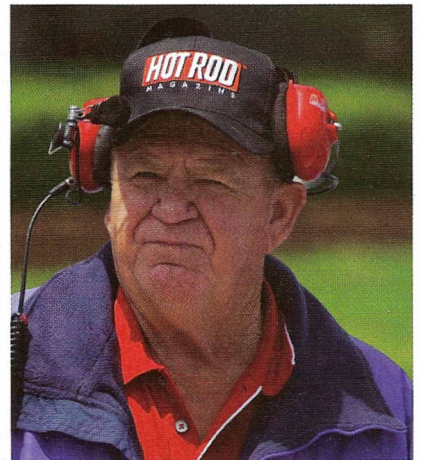
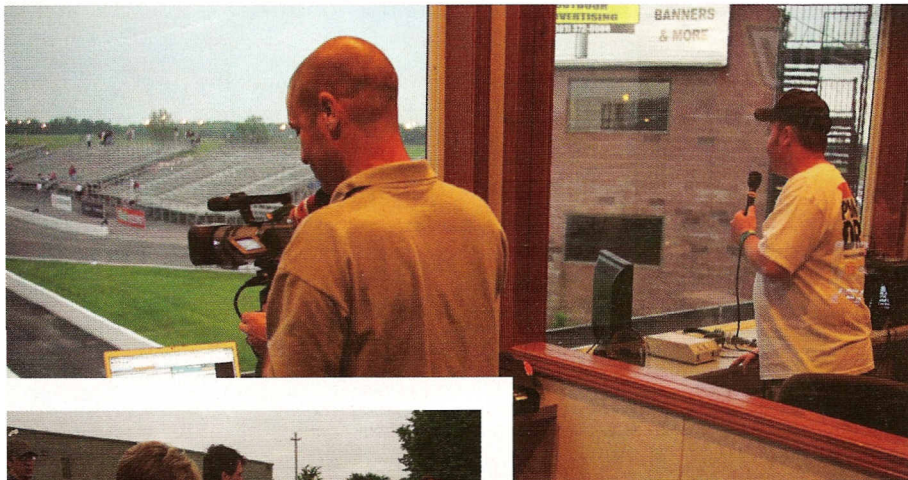
## CHRIS MAJOR

Parker, CO

'69 Chevy Camaro

Chris is an alumnus of Bandimere Speedway in Denver, where the density altitude is always in the clouds. Good thing he has a ProCharger F-1R supercharger to make up the difference. The car has run as quick as 10.40s at 132, according to Chris, but it certainly wasn't doing that in Memphis, qualifying with a 12.01 and losing the first round with an 11.46 at only 116 mph. We suspect tire pressure was not the problem.

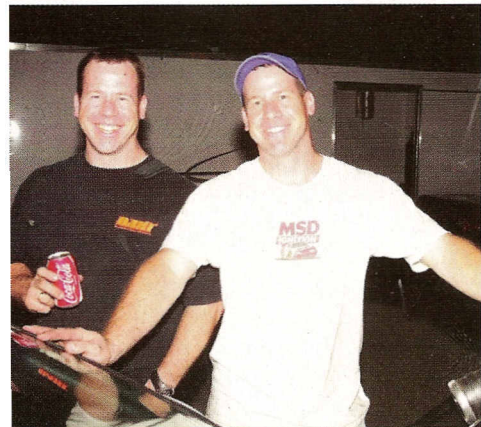
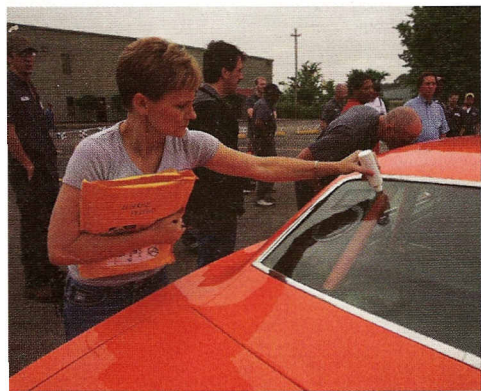
> Below: Memphis Motorsports Park starter Augie McCallie has been flipping the switch since the very first HOT ROD Fastest Street Car Shootout™ back in 1992, and visiting with him is one of the highlights of any trip to MMP. I know, Augie, I still owe you a shirt.



> Above: Huge, special thanks to these two guys. Announcer Brian Lohnes (right) normally sells fertilizer for the Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., but his weekends are spent behind the mic (and in tech inspection) at New England Dragway. He also moonlights as a HOT ROD freelancer and announcer for Pump Gas Drags™ and brings wit and knowledge to the tower, sometimes to the consternation of the facilities managers. On the left is Jeff Brooks, who provided live streaming video and several video interviews on HOTROD.com.

> Left: Anybody who's been to Pump Gas Drags™, Drag Week™, or our Top Speed Challenge™ knows (and loves) Tonya Turk, our den mother, registration queen, and the most organized person involved with any HOT ROD event.

> Below: Perennial hard-luck case John Hughes and his twin brother, James, had everyone doing a double take as they pulled off their Parent Trap routine all weekend. We still can't tell you which is which. James was on leave from his second tour in Iraq, and he's going back.







TOP TEN  
**10**

## FASTEST SPEED: 178.17 MPH MOST LEGIT 8-SECOND CAR

**LEE SAUNDERS**

Lakeland, FL

'98 Dodge Viper

Lee's wicked, twin-turbo snake (from Heffner Performance) has been the favorite for two years, since it's a legit 7-second ride, but luck has not been on his side. Last year, he blew by a checkpoint and didn't turn around, resulting in an immediate disqualification. This year was a bit more controversial. In the second round, it appeared Shawn Johnson (*far lane*) redlit, handing Lee the round, but that's not what happened. The computer went haywire, and slow-motion videotape shows the light went red before Shawn ever moved. There was no data for the run, so we had to rerun 'em, during which Lee appeared to slip and deep-stage, which usually results in a redlight for a car this quick. That's what happened (a -0.023 light), and Saunders was done. Too bad, since once it was all over, we let him make an exhibition pass. In what he said was the same exact tune-up, the boards flashed a 7.99 at 183.10. That's why we have eliminations at the Pump Gas Drags™.

TOP TEN  
**9**

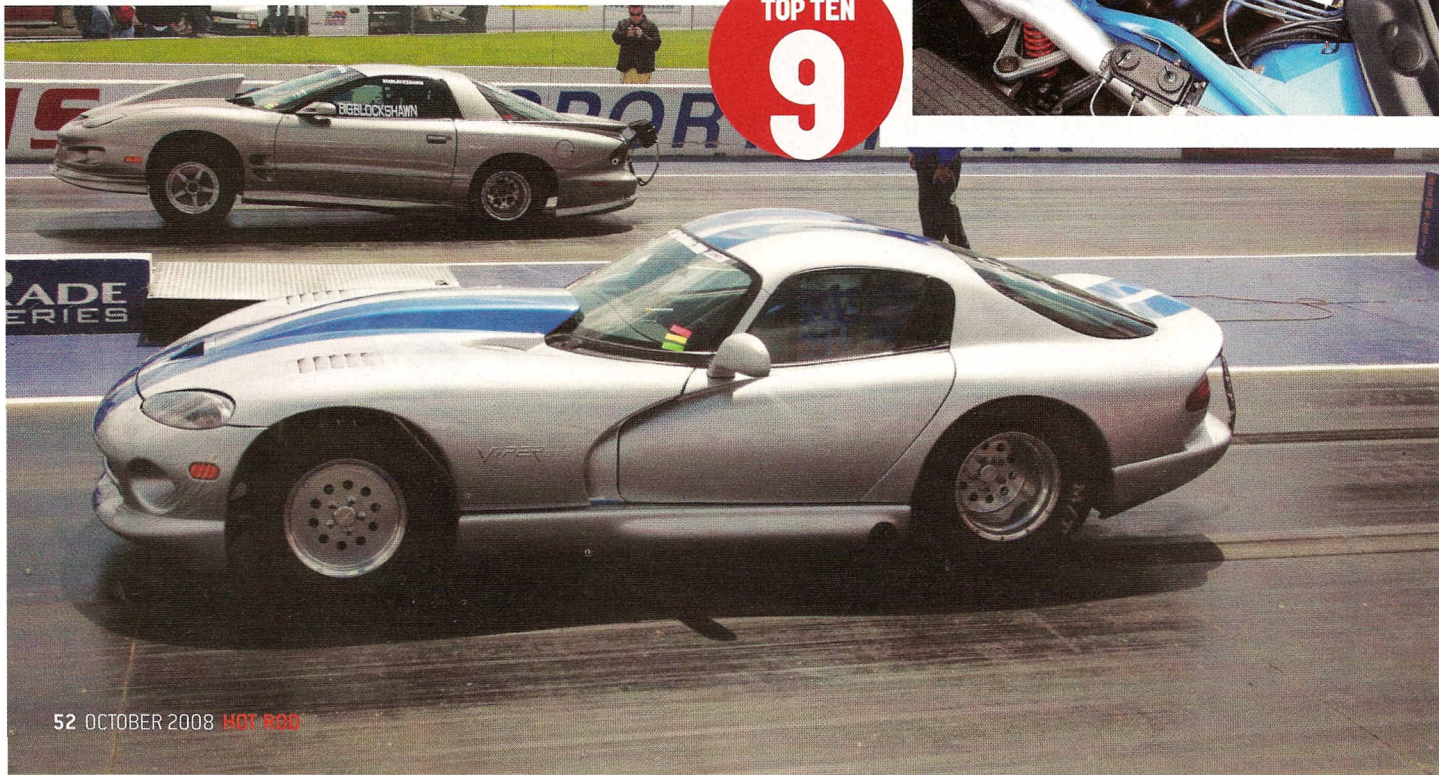
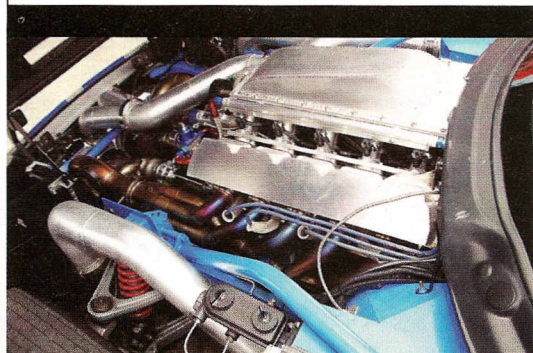
## HONORABLE MENTION, QUICKEST REACTION TIME: 0.005

**TONY DEATON**

Charleston, SC

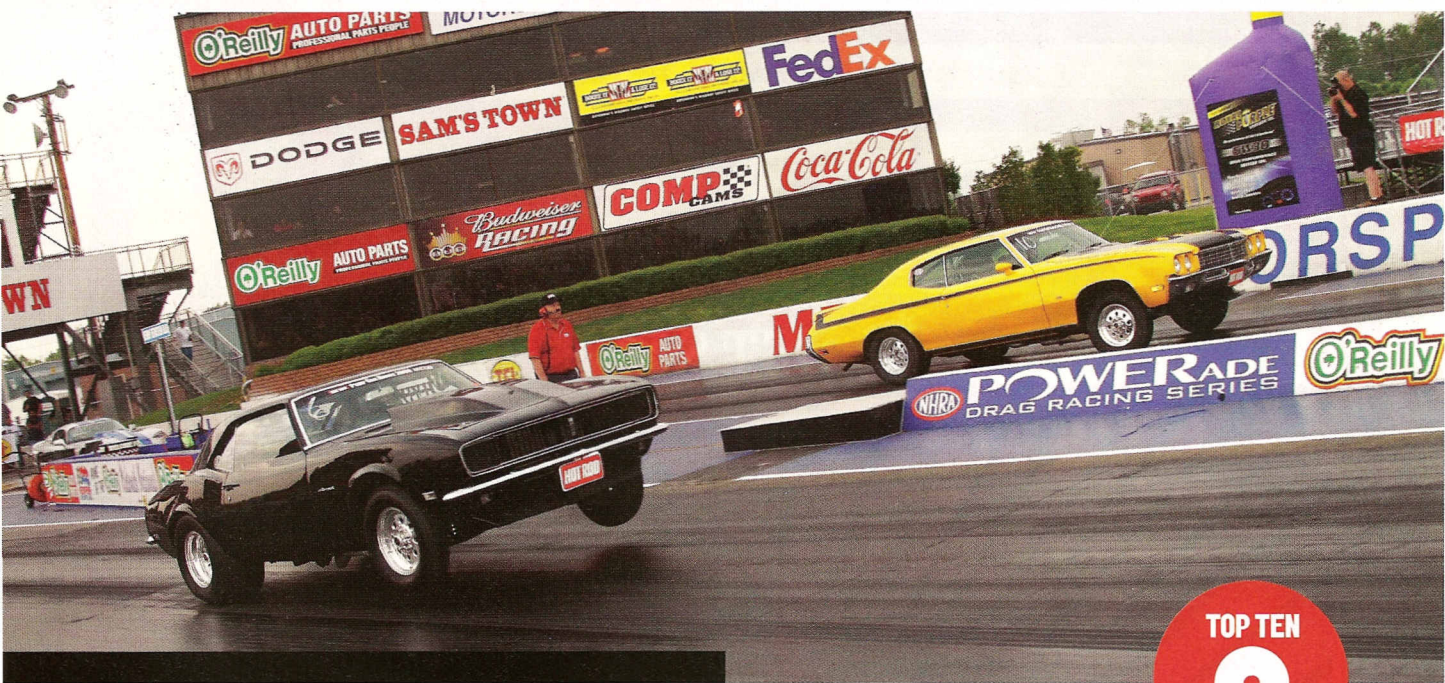
'69 Chevy Camaro

Tony Deaton showed up to PGD with 565 inches of multistaged nitrous under the hood of his hot-looking Camaro and laid down a 9.42 after idling in traffic for an hour. He laid waste to Jeff McConnell's Malibu in the first round but lost to Ray Doughty's Nova in the second. Still, he ran the second quickest e.t. (10.11) of the second-round losers, putting him in the No. 10 spot in the Top 10. The engine has Brodix BB2-X heads, a Comp 0.708-lift roller, Hooker Super Comp 2 1/4-inch headers feeding into 3 1/2-inch Flowmaster mufflers, and uses its 9.61:1 compression wisely with an NOS Sportsman Fogger and plate nitrous setup. A Hughes glide and 12-bolt plants the ET Streets with ladder bars in back and Moroso drag springs with Competition Engineering shocks up front. It's simple, fast, and a Top 10 hero. Tony also posted an 0.005-second reaction time, tying him with Ev Barnardo for the quickest. We gave the award to Ev, however, since he did it first, in qualifying, while Tony did it in the second round of eliminations.





# MEMPHIS IN MAY



TOP TEN  
**8**

## KARRI ANNE BEEBE

Westland, MI  
'68 Chevy Chevelle

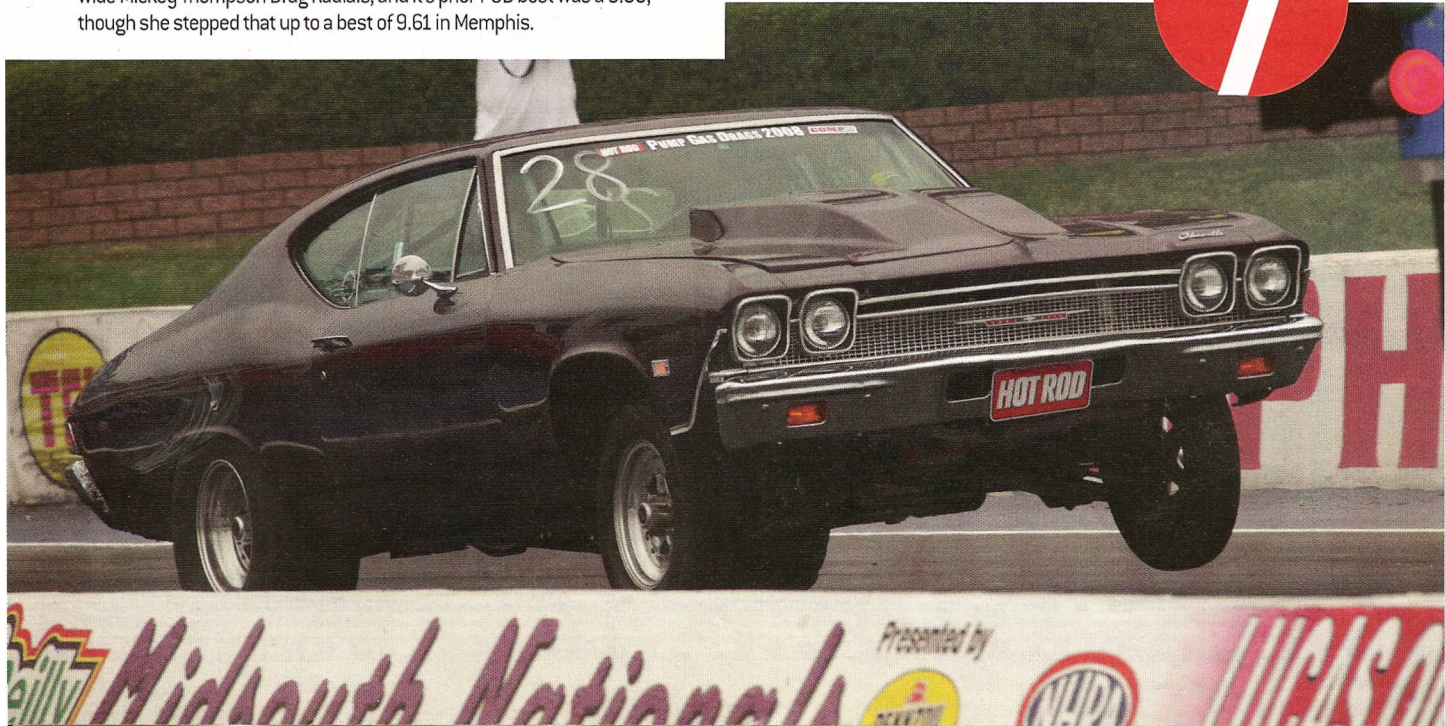
Karri Anne is the first woman to break into the Pump Gas Drags™ Top 10, and she did it in one of our favorite cars. As announcer Brian said, "This is definitely the Most With the Least Award winner here. She went way deeper into the race than anyone could have predicted. The car was clean and well done but definitely not a showstopper. It was the used car lot special of this year." Karri Anne benefited from a 15th qualifying position that pitted her against Chris Major in the first round (she won), then she got by Doug Cline when he wadded his Camaro up in the wall. She lost to eventual winner Jim Plimpton in the quarters and honestly earned her spot in the Top 10. The car's combination is a 421-inch small-block with Dart Iron Eagle heads, a Comp roller, FAST XFI, and an NOS dry Fogger setup, backed by a TH400 with a BTE converter and a 4.33-geared 12-bolt. The suspension is equally basic, with adjustable upper and lower rear control arms and Moroso Trick Springs in back and Moroso springs in front. Tires are 315-wide Mickey Thompson Drag Radials, and it's prior-PGD best was a 9.80, though she stepped that up to a best of 9.61 in Memphis.

## JEFF CLEVELAND

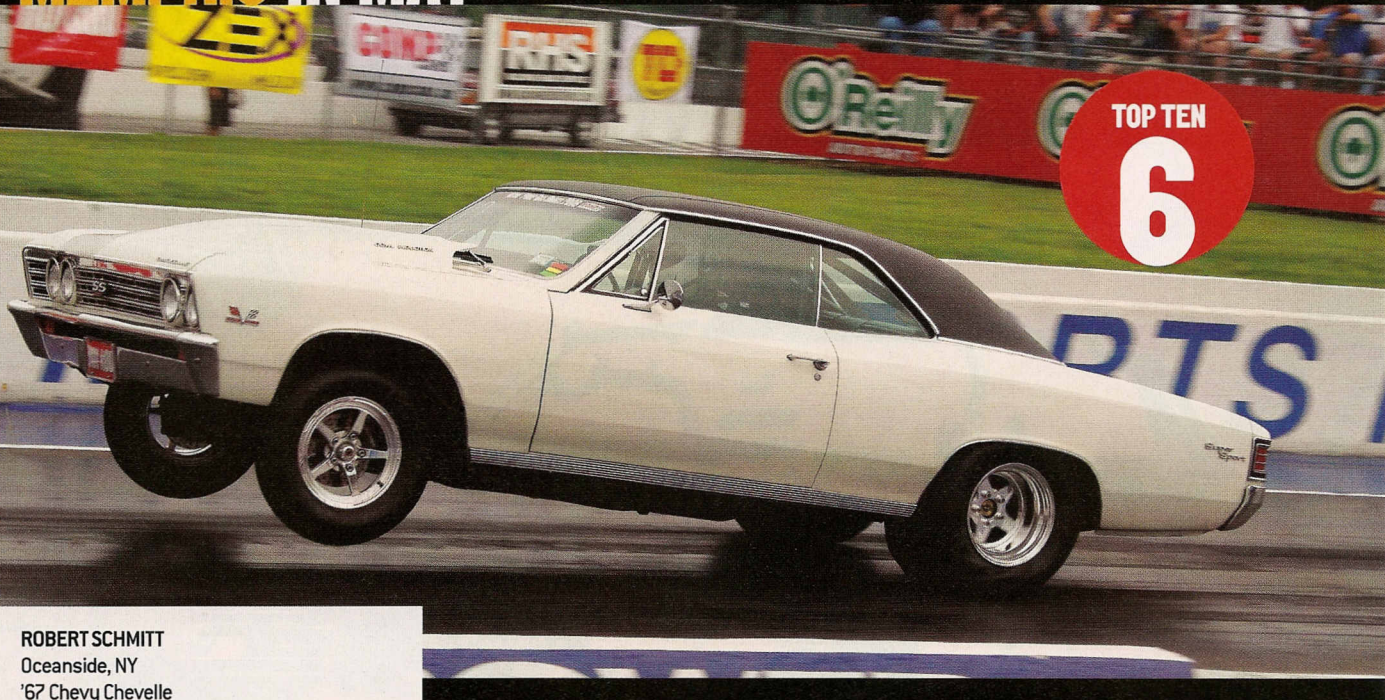
Florence, KY  
'68 Chevy Camaro

It's a street car with a Jeffco planetary four-speed, and that alone makes it cool. But so do the facts that it runs mid-9s, runs a pretty basic Merlin-headed 540 with spray, and has mile-deep black paint. Jeff cut down David Paschall's Buick in the first round (shown here) and David Sills' Corvair in the second, only to go down swinging at Jason Junemann in the quarterfinals. This is a stock suspension car with Mickeys that has run as quick as 9.54. Sweet ride.

TOP TEN  
**7**







**ROBERT SCHMITT**  
Oceanside, NY  
'67 Chevy Chevelle

We'll go out on a limb and say Robert Schmitt's car is the most fun vehicle to ever watch go down a dragstrip. The thing looks stock but runs mid-8s while Rob bang-shifts the bejesus out of the G-Force five-speed. It launches dead even and straight every time, wheels this far in the air, and the nose never drops as Robert rows the gears. It truly is music to the car guy's ears. Robert was the winner of the first-ever Pump Gas Drags™ back in 2004 and has come back to try and do it again nearly every year since. This year, his luck ran out in the quarterfinals against Shawn Anderson's big-block Chevy-powered Firebird, but it doesn't matter. This car is one of the HOT ROD staff's all-time favorites.

## BEST 60-FOOT: 1.331 SECONDS

**EYRICH CLARK**

Natchez, MS  
'67 Chevy Camaro

In eliminations, Eyrich's worst light was a 0.087, so he was an animal on the Tree, though he didn't need to be, until the third round when he faced the eventual runner-up, Ray Doughty. Eyrich nevertheless left on the Nova with a 0.048 to Ray's 0.165 reaction time, but the turbo Nova chased down the nitrous'd 600-inch Camaro and won with an 8.59 at 160 to Eyrich's 8.84 at 150. This is the second year in a row that Eyrich has made it into the Top 10, putting him in some very exclusive company. Other than the cubes (via a 4.600 bore and 4.500 stroke), the Camaro's combo is not that radical, using an Eagle and JE rotating assembly, Brodix heads, a 278/289 0.750-lift cam, and a nitrous plate under a carburetor, backed by a Powerglide and a 4.11-geared 9-inch rearend. The suspension uses stock leaf springs with CalTracs bars and QA1 shocks.

TOP TEN  
**5**





TOP TEN  
**4**



## SEMIFINALS

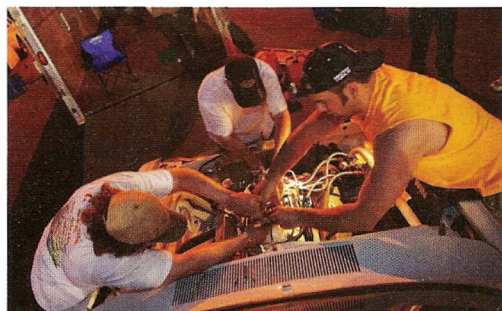
**QUICKEST REACTION TIME: 0.005 SECONDS**

**JASON JUNEMANN**

Rudolph, WI

'68 Dodge Dart

Jason was the No. 10 qualifier with a 9.29 at 145 and put away Simon Edwards' Camaro, Ev Bernardo's broken Mustang, and Jeff Cleveland's Camaro before running into Ray Doughty's Nova in the semifinals. Jason lost the battle at the Tree by a tenth and couldn't make up the difference, running a 9.40 at 147 to Ray's 8.56 at 159. The Hurst Hemi Dart look-alike actually runs a wedge, but it's 572 inches large with Brodix B1 heads and a 1,300-cfm Dominator on top of an NOS Big Shot plate.



TOP TEN  
**3**

**SHAWN ANDERSON**

Chippewa Falls, WI

'00 Pontiac Firebird

Call him Big Block Shawn. He does, and so does everyone else. That's because he stuck a self-built 555ci Rat motor under the hood of his fourth-gen and topped it with plenty of nitrous. A Powerglide backs it and spins a 4.30-geared 9-inch hung with a Top Gun four-link from Greenlight Performance. On his techsheet, Shawn said it has run as quick as 8.80 at 153, and we saw it as quick as an 8.85 at 154 in a losing effort to Jim Plimpton's T-bird in the semis. If you've read everything up until this point, you know Shawn nearly got screwed when the timing system failed and we all thought he had redlit in the second round. Saneer heads prevailed and he ended up winning the rerun of that round, then took out Schmitt's Chevelle in the third round to face Plimpton.

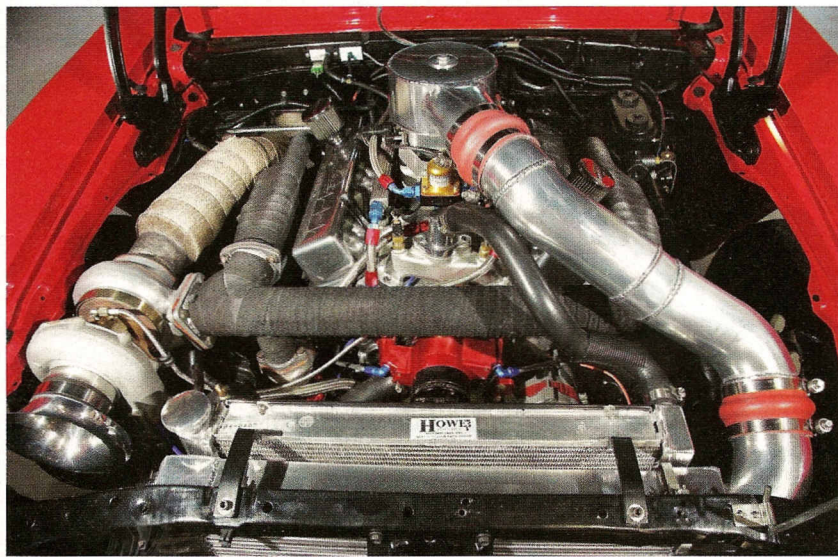




## RUNNER UP

### TOP TEN

# 2



#### RAYMOND DOUGHTY

Highland, NY  
'70 Chevy Nova

Ray is another one of those guys who have the potential to win it all, and he keeps coming back fighting. This year he took runner-up to Jim Plimpton's Ford. First, let's talk about the car. It's a bright-red Nova with a 4.155x3.75 small-block Chevy that carries on Ohio Crankshaft crank and rods, JE pistons, a Comp 0.671/0.636-lift cam, and Airflow Research heads, but it's the big PT88 turbo that stuffs all the air into the motor. Ray wouldn't tell us how much boost and power it's making, but consistent 8.70s has us thinking "a lot." A TCI 'glide and a Strange 9-inch handle the abuse, and CalTracs bars work with leaves to plant 295/65-15 Mickey Thompson Drag Radials. The front subframe was replaced with a Smith Racecraft piece with TRZ control arms and Moroso Trick Springs. We're sure Ray would like a do-over of that final round; his 0.250 light was exactly a tenth off of Plimpton's 0.150, and the tale at the end of the track was an 8.536 at 163 for Jim to Ray's 8.674 at 160. He may not have won it, but at least it would have been closer.



## WINNER!



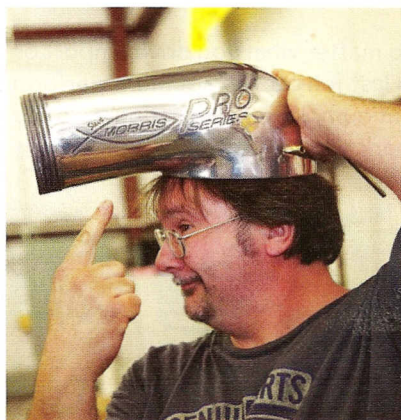
### QUICKEST ET: 8.318

**JIM PLIMPTON**  
Franksville, WI  
'88 Ford Thunderbird

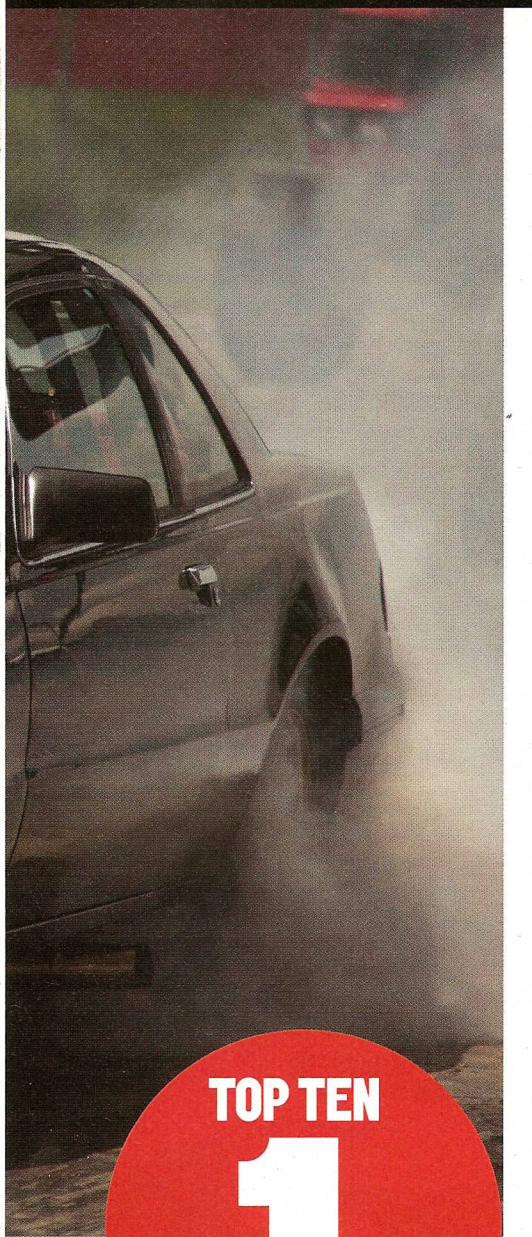
The '08 HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™ Top Eliminator is Jim Plimpton's bad-ass black 'bird. To be honest, we all expected Lee Saunders' Viper to be in this position, but Jim outlasted and outraced him, and everyone else, to take the top spot. We'd never heard of the guy before, and his car looked interesting, but nobody thought it would win—that is, until we heard it run. "The first sign that the T-bird was shag nasty came when he fired it up inside the Spectacle Solutions shop. The thing was literally shaking the building. It was by far the hairiest-sounding car at the event and had a strange exhaust note for the blower motor. It was very poppy as opposed to the normal dullish roar that comes from a motor with a huffer."

Steve Morris is responsible for the ProCharger-blown 572ci Ford, which makes 1,723 hp at 7,000 rpm (and 1,333 lb-ft at 6,300), and it has all the best parts inside. A Bullet cam of "super secret" specs and custom Metz headers round out what we know about the engine combo. The trans is a 'glide, rear is a Dana 60 with 3.54 gears, the rear suspension is ladder bar, and the front is a bolt-in kit with drag struts—that's all Jim will tell us about the car. What we do know is that it is truly wicked and sawed through some serious players to take the top spot. Congrats, Jim and crew for a spectacular showing at the '08 HOT ROD Pump Gas Drags™.

> Below: Pump Gas Drags™ is not all serious. Here's Jim crackin' 'em up at Spectacle Solutions, where he tuned on the car Friday before the PGD.







> Above: Steve Morris Racing Engines built the big-inch Ford to make ridiculous power with a direct-drive ProCharger F-3 blower, which exhales through tubing that leads to a huge water-to-air intercooler and is then redirected into the CSU-prepped Dominator carburetor. The T-bird almost didn't make it past the drive, as Jim saw 300-degree water temps on his data logger in Memphis' traffic. It didn't seem to hurt anything, though. **HRM**

TOP TEN  
**1**

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