

Special time travel edition words & photos mike collins

But they did it in true 21st style century - the blue beast's an honest-to-God 760hp, 800volt, all-electric eCOPO Camaro concept with more power than the 2019 427 V8 - trying to woo Vapers, but not the tree huggers! Wanting to know more I went hunting, finding film of it at NHRA's Wild Horse Pass where it ran 10.14 at 128 on this awesome off-the-trailer run that saw the tough lookin' hugger carry the front wheels past the Christmas tree! Produced with renowned e-racers Hancock and Lane Racing, GM's first all-electric concept production race car later ran a best ever 10.01...



Photo courtesy Mecum Auctions



Photo courtesy chevrolet.com



The tree!



All eCOPO mcSnips courtesy Cody Lane

It's no surprise that they turned up at NHRA's Lucas Oil Winternats the following weekend hoping for a 9-second pass – they ran 10.02 on Friday then driver Patrick McCue thrilled fans on Saturday when he ran a wild 9.83 at 133mph – mission accomplished on 90% power! Nearly forgot, the eCOPO engine is a GM crate motor, j'st whip out that lil' ol' LS mill in your car and it mates right up to the bellhousing and that's super cool! Just like that Hugger orange ZL1, one of a pair sold last year at Mecum Auctions for just over a million dollars! Wonder what a 50th anniversary COPO Camaro will fetch in 2069, and if the eCOPO will make it into production and join their numbers! Can't leave Pomona without mentioning my favourite NitroPowered babe Leah Pritchett who, sadly, did not have the type of weekend we all wanted, hitting tyre shake for Q1's slow ET, a 7.912 at 85.25 behind half-a-dozen full pulls led by Steve Torrence's 3.716 at 330.07, but his CAPCO car smoked 'em at the hit in Q2, and so did Leah, her improved 6.406 being pushed down to 14th (bottom position in a truncated field!), after eight full pulls led by defending event champ Doug Kalitta's 3.716, his 326.87mph putting him at number two. Q3 saw Brittany Force hitting on all eight to run 3.696 for pole ahead of the CAPCO car's third straight 3.71! Leah was "on a pass," but as you see (below left), around half track the engine fireballed (I got lucky with the Snip!), and Leah got plenty of hi-light reel exposure for her Black Raspberry fueler - and ran a 3.963, 214.59 to go 12th. In Q4 Leah was haulin' hard and the engine let go again (inset below left), and ran a 4.011 - but check out the shot from ace lens man Mark J Rebilas, he caught the remnants of her fireball in the smoke for Leah's 2019 Winternats Sparkling ICE Photo Gallery. Her DSR teammate Antron Brown ran a 3.696 j'st like Brittany's JFR car but his huge 333.08mph speed gave him the pole, until the next pair when CAPCO head honcho Billy Torrence grabbed it by a "couple hun' (as they say on NHRA.TV), with a 3.662, 326.79, and then 2018's Mello Yello champ hit a 3.657, 331.61 - enough to ruin his Dad's time at the front, but they loved having both CAPCO cars on top! Sunday's first round saw Leah finally make a full pull - Antron Brown left first, his 0.047 a few ticks ahead of Leah's 0.050, but she led passing the tree, to win with a stout 3.707 at 325.61 ahead of Ant's 3.733, 329.26. Round two was rain-delayed 'til Monday when Leah's motor let go yet again while she was "...experiencing 'colorful' engine issues against Terry McMillen in the quarter finals," ending her race, However, her sponsors gained even more exposure in the hi-light reels, with another great Mark Rebilas shot (bottom right), adding more power to her gallery with the caption from Leah, "And in this very moment, we all knew this was the Monday of Mondays. Valve train issues are definitely causing havoc..." Closer than you've ever been - an in y'face warm up with Leah – crank it!



mcSnips courtesy NHRA.TV

Courtesy Sparkling ICE



Mark J Rebilas photos courtesy Leah Pritchett Sparkling ICE

Although it was the start of the NHRA's Mello Yello season, ours was over at the Pod back in 1968, but I was still busy as the track's PR man, having fun and learning a lot with a film crew shooting a TV commercial. When they realised we needed more extras, posters to add some life to the track tower's blank walls and a trophy for the race winner - suddenly I'd become a cold calling hustler for the crew organiser - no problem, apart from mobile phones still a thing of the distant future! Happily Mrs T of Taylor's Tea Bar fame lived locally, and knew me well enough to give us access and allow us full use of her telephone for some "rescue" calls, or we might have had problems - like getting buckets of change for the calls, and at the very least it would've been kinda cramped trying to work in a call box! Once Mrs T realised how much we'd got to do, she provided beverages and snacks with a warm smile. But you didn't come to hear about our social life, so let's cut to the chase...

A call to DragRod's office got me a number for Weekend Warrior's local driver Alan Blount who was happy to provide a trophy, and after a few lengthy calls more extras were rustled up for the next day's shoot, JB gathered a few "Let's Go Drag Racing" posters to be picked up by a company courier, again for an early delivery. Meanwhile back at the track, each time Bootsie made a pass for the cameras, and there were a few, the clutch began to slip a tad as it tried to hook up with 600plus NitroPowered, fuel injected Chevrolet ponies! You may recall me telling Tim P that this was not an ordinary car and we returned in time to witness a lengthy staging process, stopped three times as the cameras weren't ready to roll! Bootsie called me over, said the motor was getting hot, the clutch wasn't happy and neither was he, pulling hard on the brake, suggesting I should hang onto the roll cage to stop the car being dragged through the start line!

No problem except, as you can see from the shot at right, the headers were aimed right where I was standing, drowning me in the fumes from Motovation's 60% nitro load! Eventually we got the "action sign, both cars launching hard, Stripduster away first with the front end high in the air, Bootsie finally nailed the sucker, his front end also lifting, the screaming fuel injected Chevy blasting off the line leaving behind a rooster tail of thick tyre smoke almost engulfing a black shadowy figure reeling around like a drunk man. Strange, not a drop had passed my lips, but the power of G Max nitro fuel had done its stuff, Bootsie was smoking through the quarter mile, and I was almost floating over the start area! But this was forgotten by the time Tim said he was ready for the big parachute sequence, Bootsie grinning and chuckling as he said "You know this is crazy Mike," a statement more than a question, as was my response, "Yeah, but what'll it look like on film!"

Shortly later he made a check out pass, cruising rather than driving down the track the wrong way for our sunset finale while Tim let me watch through the big 600mm lens - talk about in y'face, even at slow speed! My view was awesome - Bootsie said it was kinda cool from his perspective too! Apart from my original drive in Hustler, my track time had been in tough stockers and muscle cars where you drove on the tach, but while talking with him for our planned lead feature I'd noticed there wasn't one in Motovation, so naturally I asked how he drove without one, and his reply has stayed with me forever, "Scream it, drop it," chuckling out loud as he added "And then hang on!" When it was time for the real deal Bootsie did just that, the fuel car sliding and twitching, slicks scrabbling for traction on the unused top end of the track, then they bit and suddenly a fully wound out Motovation was screaming straight towards us...

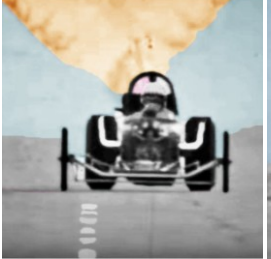


The only colour shot I ever took of Motovation

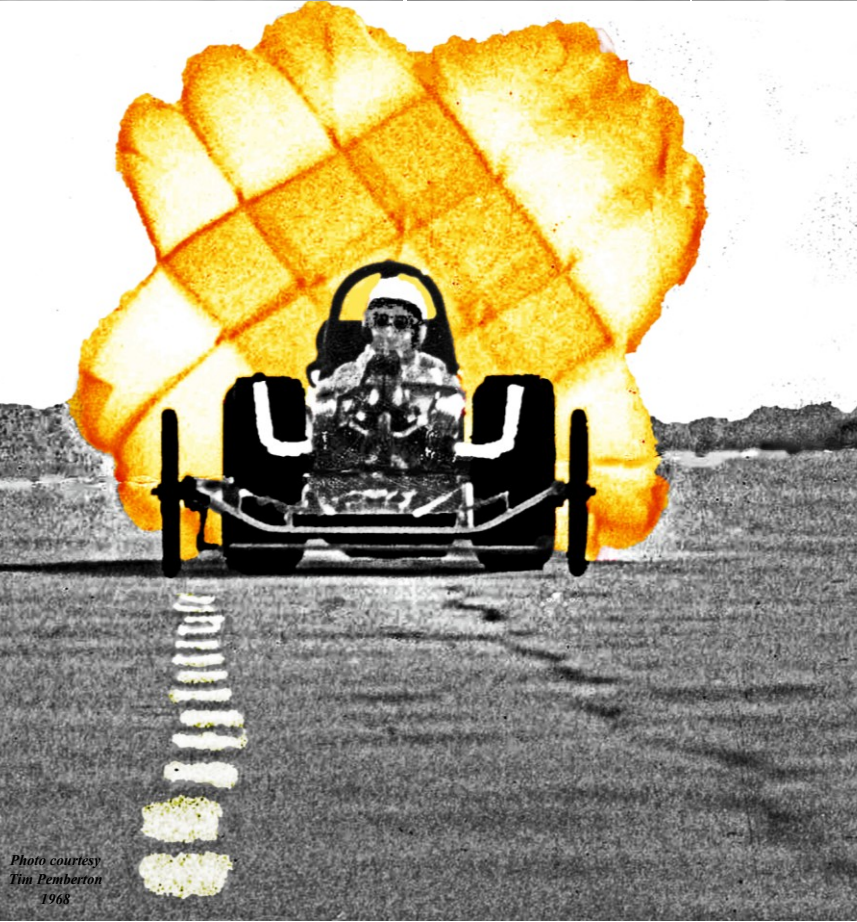
Photos courtesy Tim Pemberton 1968



We were stood tall, I was grinning like a Cheshire cat, enjoying the thrill of our first Nitro Champion driving full bore at the camera as requested - talk about cool, and then Tim dropped his arm and Bootsie hit the parachute release...



mcSnips from a 1968 Tim Pemberton film courtesy Mackenzie Rough 2019



It was mind blowing, the kissing-close power waves from the still fast moving Motovation an awesome sensation and then the chute thwapped past - wow! Superbly made and skilfully put together by Tim Pemberton's team, the work at the track became 30 powerful seconds of TV commercial to advertise Cadbury's Contrast. Our model was stood tall after winning in a man's world so she had to look like a woman - Mister Big wanted boobs! And no way could we provide 'em when our gorgeous but petite heroine wore a genuine, high gloss, aluminised fire suit, too large for me and a loose fit on Roy Phelps! Even with many newspapers stuffed down her front, she still looked like a shiny aluminum fire suit wearing a face mask and helmet! So unfortunately this footage, seen only by a select few, was shelved, lost forever! And that was a pity really as the film was kinda cool to say the least. We were all blown away by Bootsie's wrong way run, Stripduster's wild wheel stand and the side-by-side racing from cameras on Motovation - it was wild, but for Contrast the man needed boobs! Oh well...

Although it was shot in black and white, the clip was pure magic, Motovation more than a little sideways as it thundered towards us - powerful memories indeed, sustained for 50years by three track shot prints given me by Tim (two above and one at left), later found screwed up in a box! Hope you agree they cleaned up pretty good... What's that you say? There are 8-track shots above! Yep, forgot I went huntin' after part one - a good reason to turn the page for a stunning 21st century treat...

Photo courtesy Tim Pemberton 1968

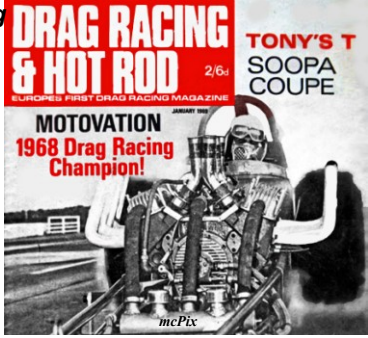


But first, here you can see it wasn't a spark plug, but stylish local lass Ros who put a smile on Don Beadle's face as she clambers up onto Motovation for a souvenir shot. Too late for a chance at TV stardom, Ros was a major part of Stu Bradbury's start line crew (inset left from last month), with a smile that kept everyone happy on cold race days, or even TV shoots! But at the 1969 BDR&HRA finals she was lost behind Stu's wild send off for the big guns of the day.



Okay, back to the plot - feeling good about part one last month, I thought, "Let's give it another go," typing out a few words and hitting the search

button and found myself watching a fuel tank sliding in front of some casting company rep's idea of drag race fans on a wet track, then a front mounted blower came into view and suddenly, there's Don Beadle, not me, just letting go of the roll cage! Hitting the pause button I realised he'd far more experience than me behind Nitro powered rails and was standing bent low, and right behind Motovation, far away from the sweet smelling taste of NitroThunder that had made me weak at the knees! But hey, this was amazing, as I realised that it was not what Tim had screened for me!



For one thing I didn't recall doing it in the rain, and it was not Stripduster but Houndog racing against Motovation! "Wow, what the f*ck's going on..." I thought! And the intro was just as amazing; they'd morphed my sky-high flag start over his opponents roll cage and head, but hadn't noticed me landing between Bootsie's front wheels! That set me laughing - "Health and safety, what's that!" And check Movin' Mike turning to look at Bootsie before blasting down track trailing spray an' smoke!



Had a late thought - might well have missed this race and rain while we were at Mrs T's as we were there awhile a couple of times - and things happen fast on the track!

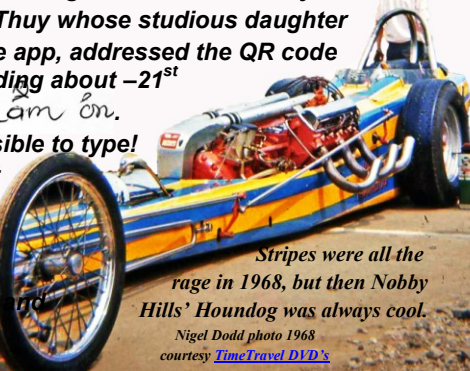


The white helmet's Bootsie's as he drove right over me to get a hole shot! So there we are, 8-seconds in out of 32, and that's all folks, leaving you the best to enjoy "live" and in glorious monochrome, maybe finding out if the butler did it! Actually, they didn't have Bootsie blasting by the camera; I guess it was far too dangerous to show kids at tea time! But you get to enjoy Mike H really driving Houndog in the wet!

In truth, given the fact it's 50years old, I was still impressed with the fashion in which Tim Pemberton's team captured some drag racing magic by skilfully editing this ancient clip. So please enjoy it, either as a Golden anniversary gift in celebration of finally getting to see Motovation's awesome wrong-way drive down the track again - or a 40th anniversary Street Machine treat as Hot Gossip hits another cool exclusive or three in print! Either way you choose, it's taken more than just my input to make these pages leap from 1968 into a 21st century multimedia extravaganza! Okay, perhaps that's a tad OTT but who gives a monkey's, it was for me an amazing discovery, and talking of which, late last night I heard a quote on the internet, supposedly from Albert Einstein, "If you judge a fish by how it climbs a tree, you'll end up thinking it's stupid!" Well, I swim like a fish, love to climb trees, and was told using a QR code in a magazine was kinda complex, yet managed to hit a home run first time at bat, and boy was I over the moon! However, one thing I have no interest in is owning a smart phone, so on a visit for lunch with my long time pals down at American Autoparts, I hit on 'em all with no joy, even approached total strangers, and made a cute new friend who told me it was easy to download the app, and her laugh when I showed my dinosaur text an' call phone was delightful - can't wait for our next meeting! But then I got lucky with my pal Thuy whose studious daughter Thu-Hoang smiled around "No problem Michael," and not too many moments later she'd got the app, addressed the QR code I'd printed on paper and her screen filled with the clip you've been reading about - 21st century voodoo my friends! My grin ear-to ear as I said to them both *Cam on.*

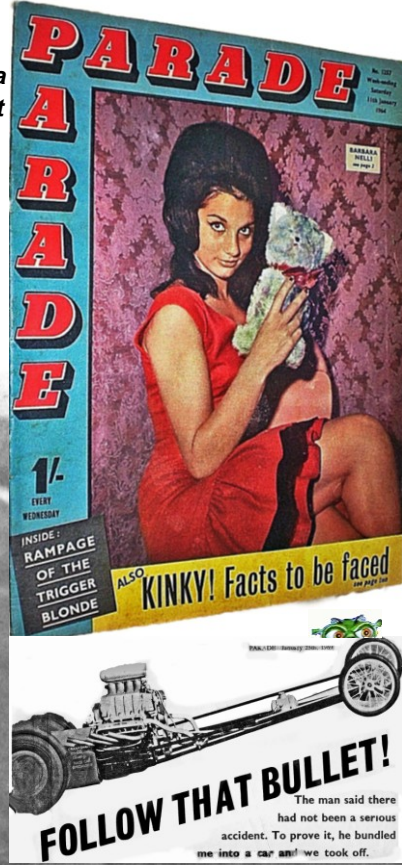


That's "thank you" in Vietnamese 'cos they're special - and it's impossible to type! So there y'go folks, address the "green for go" QR and see just what it was like when a professional, award winning team were set loose amongst some dedicated racers in 1968. J'st ran it slo-mo and saw at least 20 smooth hand-cut edits in a fast, kinda furious 15seconds of racing. Awesome stuff, so thanks to everyone who made it all happen. God bless you Bootsie, it was indeed crazy - but 'kin' 'credible! And 50years later I'm sure you'll agree it's a far out clip to discover...



Stripes were all the rage in 1968, but then Nobby Hills' Houndog was always cool. Nigel Dodd photo 1968 courtesy TimeTravel DVD's

This stunning image was used by the star of our tale to lead his two page feature on our sport in 1969's January 27th issue of Parade, a weekly magazine featuring girls, jokes and adventure tales for men - but I used it to catch your eye when you were thumbing through the mag at the book stall! The story that's about to unfold is true, but the names haven't been changed to protect the innocent, it's j'st the balls to the wall truth, so let's start by saying I've no idea who's driving in this wild shot that graced DragRod's back cover early in 1968, a successful season, following which you'd have thought we'd have been taking things easy as it came to a close, but far from it. In fact the DragRod office and our BDR&HRA team was busier than ever, especially yours truly as we became heavily involved with promoting Drag Racing '69, our first major International car show set for Croydon's renowned Fairfield Halls. Much time was spent flooding media with PR and happily the response was wonderful, including a dude named Patrick Blake from Parade, his call leading to a meeting where he spent time asking many questions about the sport, falling in love with this wild wheel standing image and then added the fun factor for yours truly when he said, "In truth I need to go down a drag strip, and then I can tell my readers what it's like..." No problem, just made a quick call to Ric who said it was cool to use the Mustang and arranged to meet at Santa Pod the following Sunday for the running of a late season extra meeting. Being PR man and having taken a few folks down track in stockers, it was no problem, except the track was more than a little slippery so I launched a tad more gently than normal, power shifting early but still getting some sideways motion before clicking it off at the top end for an easy 16-second pass. I could tell he loved it but screwed up by saying "I took it easy cos I didn't want to scare you." "Well thanks for that," he replied, "but I really need to feel some power if I'm going to write about it Mike," his voice tapering off as he looked me in the eyes. "That's cool," I replied while thinking, that's probably what I'd say too! Problems, what problems?



jbPix DragRod

Well you can see the track's slick, the Mustang getting out of shape as I power off the start line! After grabbing the shot JB left for a cup of tea, sadly I might add as, by second gear time we were close to full-on sideways - no problem, j'st kicked it an' flicked it cowboy style! Yeehaw, the well set-up Mustang responded by straightening up - almost! Then we were thundering down track, sashaying all the way with Patrick hanging on with everything - including his cheeks, my mirror showing a glazed look in his eyes. Back in the fire up road he finally let go of the seat, shaking his head, colour slowly returning to his face. But he couldn't speak so I gave him a piece of Stimorol to lube his throat, yet he still struggled as he said "Wow, that was too muckin' fuch," but with a big grin on his face. "Yeah right, now treble that feeling at least and you've got an idea what a dragster could be like." "No thanks Mike, that's enough for me," was his response. Actually it was for me too as we really were fishtailing quite wildly for most of the quarter mile. Ric was massaging his babe's shoulders as I power shifted with the car close to pointing straight at him! He may well've trusted me with his Mustang but still gripped his babe's shoulders so hard he drew blood with his fingernails! Happily she forgave him later, telling me it was incredible to see, but would've been better without the pain! Patrick's story was cool, he loved Hemini and Tudor Rose, used photos of both, gave a great plug for the show, and I loved his "Follow that bullet!" He also enjoyed the ride to the max... "In theory it's the most dangerous of motor sports, but in practice it's the safest. (My line and it fit just right!) And to prove his point he bundled me into a large American car and buckled me in before there was time for protest. It was a freezing day, but the perspiration beaded visibly as we approached the starting line. My palms went clammy, then I was grabbed by something which tried to throw me out the back window, one very anxious Hail Mary later we were at the other end of the strip It had taken 10 seconds of my time - and possibly - just as many years off my life." Must admit, had it been my first ride I could've thought that way too as it was truly crazy to way beyond half track - had to be for Ric's reactions, but I still drove it 'til he left for the US! 1968 was a totally awesome season for us racers who lived at Santa Pod, with some magic memories that I hope you've enjoyed...