

Guys,

Here's the "final" Silver State results for Sunday's 2009 event.

I just got home from Vegas. Yesterday's run could not of went any better. Thanks to all of you for the 'good luck' calls and messages. I had to nurse the truck home so it took longer then usual (ailing differiantial). but the Pantera ran like a scalded monkey on crack.

My #2 son (Dolan) came up with me this year to support the old man and that by itself was an experience to remember. Driving into the finish line I expected to find his smiling face with the truck and trailer but he was no where in sight. . . and no one had seen him since Saturday night when I figured he back tracked to the Green Lantern after I sacked out at the Hotel Nevada ;-]>

Then like any dad I started to worry something happened to the kid towing the trailer down to the Finish Line from Ely to Hiko which is about a 3 hour tow. It should have been a no brainer but he was no where in sight and no one had heard from him or seen him!!!

A couple other people who had driven trucks and trailers down to the Finish Line to meet they're drivers told me they saw a truck and trailer turned over off the side of H-93 but they weren't sure if it was my truck and trailer! They said two Nevada Highway Patrol and emergency worker's were on scene so they didn't stop. But they didn't know who it was.....some of you guys who know me can guess how I felt about that moment.

I was scheduled to be the 2nd car off the Start Line on Sunday morning. In front of me was a race prepared '73 Plymouth Cuda. For power he was running a stroked Hemi making and I am only quessing here about 650 HP. This was a dedicated race car and I was proud to even be gridded next to him.

Gridded behind me was MKM Racing's Mike Borders in a Cup race car with easily a 700+ HP engine....I knew Mike was easily capable of 200+ MPH speeds in that cup car.

Everyone else in Grand Sport, Super Sport, Touring, Grand Touring and Unlimited divisions were all behind us! ;-) In the rest of the 150 Mph Class in the Grand Sport Division the usual assortment of Z-06's, Viper's, a Lambo Gallardo and one new 2009 Corvette ZR-1 with 600 HP. A total of 23 cars in my class. All of them ORR veterans and all but one a Silver State veteran.

I felt pretty good about running in this group with a street legal modified Pantera that gets driven on weekends at home. Yea, I had a big grin from ear to ear the entire time I was on the grid line looking at all this high priced machinary next to the only two vintage automobiles in our class.

I got to know the owner of the '73 Cuda (Bob Schilling from Colorado) pretty well. We immediately hit it off and decided since we were running #1 and #2 respectively on Sunday morning that we'd have some fun along the way and see if we could keep Mike Borders and his Cup race car off our asses. The lose spur of the moment plan was to just run as fast and as safely as we both could up to our limits and again keep Mike out of our rear view mirrors and

stay on the road.

Most participants go to the ORR's to win a trophy attempting to match they're goal speed or come as close as possible to whatever division and class speed they have teched for. But NOT everyone.....Coming close to your goal speed is an honorable goal but for some of us we're more interested in catching the person who started in front of us. ;-]>

There was one very major change in the course conditions this year. Between May and August, NDOT added "Rumble Strips" on the "center line" of portions of the 2 lane road.

The reasons cited by NDOT was a 48% decrease in traffic fatalities elsewhere on rural 2-lane roads in Nevada and no amount of concern and lobbying by Silver State board members or local politicians including the mayor of Ely was successful from stopping the work.

There was allot of local concern that if the fastest driver's did not return next year the city of Ely would lose all the tax and business revenue that about 300-400 drivers, navigators and crew and family members brought into Ely twice a year which is just a small town of only about 5,000 people. They count on the money that the NORC and Silver State participants spend in hotels, restaurants, bars and the local autoparts and hardware stores. There is also allot of donated money on the side that goes to schools and local charities....K&N Filters, Optima Batteries and Royal Purple are all very generous sponsors. Several of the driver's also have deep pockets as well and have been very generous to the community of Ely so any threat to the Silver State or NORC events immediately was met with resistance.

Anyway, back to the center-line rumble strips.....Driving up from Vegas to Ely in the truck the center line rumble strips definately got my attention but I would have to wait until Friday to find out how it felt apexing over the rumble strips in the Pantera....in a truck they felt okay...no worse then the rumble strips on the side of the road most of you have run over.....

and on Friday running the Pantera something close to legal speed they did not feel too bad but they definately were worrisome. I knew come Sunday it would probably not be any better at 150-180 speeds I hoped to be at.

Back to Sunday and the "START". Bob's '73 Hemi Cuda and I gridded side by side at the Start Line.....we gave each other the usual 'one-finger salutes" grinned at one another and at about 8:15am Bob got the 1st Green Start Flag of the day.....A loud, tire smoking start got Bob's Hemi Cuda headed down the 90 mile road course.

The Starter pointed to me and pointed to the Atomic Clock (no I am not kidding!) so I knew I had 1 minute before I got the "GO" flag. About 10 seconds from launch I increased the R's to about 4,000 and with a wave of the green flag I dropped the clutch and was off headed down course towards the 1st and then the 2nd sweeper turns which are less then two miles apart. I approached the 1st sweeper at close to 140 Mph and by the 2nd I was at 160 Mph. . . no "rumble-strips" yet.....

After the second sweeper I straightened out and checked vitals.....maybe 2-3 minutes had

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passed but I really can't remember how much time elapsed. Oil pressure definately was 70 psi when I checked. Oil Temp was 200 F and the water temp had not even hit 180 F yet. Approaching the first 10 miles my engine oil pressure dropped to 65 psi and oil went to 210 F....water was finally stablized at 180...and then IT happened.

I HIT the 1st set of center-line rumble strips. They were identified on the course notes but without a navi-quesser I'd have to find them myself since I have never used a navigator...well one time I did use a navigator in Texas but that is another story. ;-]>

The only way I can describe the feeling of hitting these rumble strips "at 175-180 Mph" is to describe how it feels when you have a bone or teeth jaring MOMENT and you feel it to the top of your head...It wasn't a good moment. The HIT was enough to get more then my attention. Or a better way to describe the PUCKER FACTOR here is to say you could not of pulled a greased string out of my backside. ;-]>

I pulled OFF the rumble strip immediately and the ride over them could not of lasted more then a second but the feeling I had at speed was a whole another experience then it was at 85 to 90 MPH two days earlier. Even with 'bump-steer' it was not a good experience.

I got my focus back on the road in front of me and worked at avoiding hitting the strips again....but I did so anyway because you could not avoid hitting them at speed. There was no way to avoid apexing over the center line rumble strips.....By the 2nd or the 3rd time I felt a little better and started enjoying the ride confident with the Pantera's modified suspension and tires.

Somewhere around mile 30 I looked down at the speedo and it was jumping around 200 MPH.....the GPS reality was closer to 175 MPH. The Pantera and the engine were just screaming. Everything was good. I definately felt in the zone. My lines through the sweeper turns, the dips, and finally the turns in the canyon road at mile 70 were perfect. And the last 20 miles were just as good. The Pantera handled beautifully so I slowed down a bit.

I never caught up to Bob's Hemi Cuda and never expected to either....but I can say with some pride that Mike Borders never came close to me either. ;-]> As I crossed the Finish Line I had to remember no one but Bob and the Hemi Cuda and some course workers were there to greet me because everyone else was BEHIND us! ;-]>

At this point I am again looking for my son who is no where in sight. Bob and I talk to Race Control on the portable radio's they issue to each driver now and no one had seen or heard anything. Yea, now I am really worried.

We get a call in to the Nevada Highway Patrol who advise they will call me back. Two hours later after all most everyone had run I see my son driving up in the truck and trailer with a big grin. . .I could have KILLED him. He turns the truck around and walks back to me and Bob and says, "How'd you guys do?".....Bob mumbles something and walks off.

Dolan looks at me and KNOWS I am tweaked....."Okay I am a little late..." I was so happy to

see the kid (he's 28!) I just gave him a hug and said, "lets get this Pantera on the trailer son".....we loaded up and headed to Ash Springs to gas up and head to Vegas. I was just happy he was okay.

There were few problems...No accidents and only 4-5 DNF's (Jim Weeks running an Unlimited race 1971 Chevy Camaro, a wild '66 Chevy Chevelle running in the 180 Mph Class, a late model Viper, Vette and a 63 427 Ford). The '63 Ford Galaxie was running in the 145 Mph Class....I love this car and its been raced by the same owner and driver (Ted Spendlove and his son Blaine for years. But he had a tire blowout at 150+ Mph.

Blaine and Ted had the good sense soon as they got the big Ford safely stopped from a 150 Mph to radio the closest course workers that he thought there "might" be some tire debris on the road behind him so they set out yellow caution flags to warn the rest of the cars behind them while course workers inspected the road behind them.

As it turned out there was only a couple pieces of tire debris on course and the closest course workers had the pieces of tire debris OFF the road within a couple minutes and the yellow caution flags went to green and the race continued without further delay.

Potentially this could have caused a Red Flag STOP and no one could have continued until NDOT and other event officials gave the all clear sign.....that might have delayed the race an hour or more.....so safety and contingency plans worked exactly the way they were supposed to work and everyone did their jobs and there were no further delays or problems.

Sunday night in Vegas at the Awards Dinner we found out that Tom Ciancitto had the fastest average speed of 174 MPH. Tom was running his tube frame F1 Truck which has a '1937 Ford Pickup 'body' that makes about 600+ HP....Tom has run this amazing truck at open road races all over the country since 1999....this was his good luck 10th year! Tom has also run El Mirage and Bonneville but can't seem to remember seeing Dave "the Pope" Me-Outta running anything but said he would check with Mike Cook! ;-]>

Seriously, Tom is a great guy.....Tom's highest 174 speed average was about 30 Mph SLOWER then the fastest average speed set in 1999 by Chuck Shafers CUP car or 3 MPH SLOWER then Junior Wilson's Pantera in 1995 or so.....

In fairness to Tom he did it Sunday on a road that is not as smooth or as in good a condition as it was 10 years ago.....Tom's 'truck' (if you want to call it that) is a brick....its a fast brick with a tube frame race chassis but it is a brick...and the truck never ceases to surprise those that see how really fast it is.....add the rumble strips and you can appreciate just how fast 174 MPH was on Sunday.

Equally impressive was John Tiemann running his '69 Ford GT40 which averaged 160 Mph. Like Kirby and Mike T's purpose built GT40 replica's it is a thing of beauty.....Painted in the original Gulf Oil colors. I am sure all the Texas Big Bend and Nebraska Sand Hills ORR veterans remember John and his GT40....I'm sure Kirby and Mike Trusty also know John or know ABOUT John. ;-)

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John is a very fast driver.

Here's something else that was impressive.....We had a total of 8-9 vintage automobiles mfg before 1974....most of them were Ford Mustangs and they ran in most speed categories and all the Ford Mustangs finished!!!

I was happy to be the 2nd fastest car in my division....And equally glad to pay off my side bet to Bob on who would have the fastest speed average in our division and our class.....Bpb's average was 153 MPH and mine was 152 Mph...Mike Borders CUP car was not even close at 146 MPH....but then in fairness to Mike he was also running cup race gumballs too...I am sure he was lifting his feet every time he rolled over those rumble strips.

So in summary this year's Silver State does not get any better. I can not remember a better year. We earned allot of respect from allot of check book racers many years ago but there are a few ORR veterans who only want to remember when a Pantera doesn't pass tech or does not finish.

I always get the "come over to the light Mad Dawg".....or "when are you going to sell that pain in the ass and get a Covette?".....yesterday the answer was very simple and very quick and that was;

"When hell freezes over that's when I will retire the Pantera". Or when maybe I can convince one of my kids to take the reins. If not I may have to adopt one of you slackers so we keep this Pantera in the fight.

Words of unsolicited advise for next year:

If you are planning to run your vintage Pantera in any open competition with other marques. Be ready to race 2 weeks before the 1st competition or stay home until you are ready.

Its painful explaining why some Pantera's that do show up to run show up either looking like hell or they aren't ready to pass Tech.

Mad Dawg Antenucci
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