

World's Largest Mopar Magazine

WILL DODGE BRING BACK THE CHALLENGER IN '09!

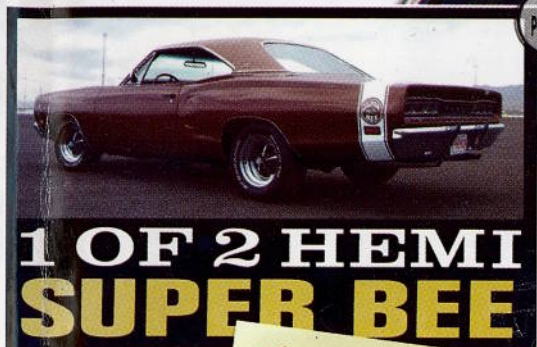
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MOPAR

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**UNRESTORED '69
440 DART**

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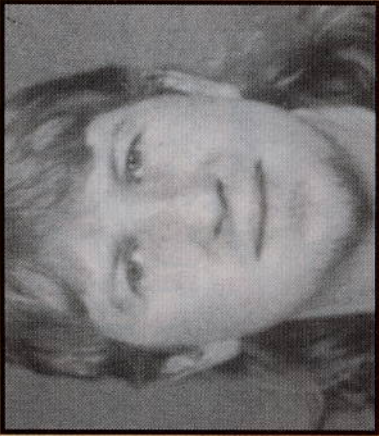


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MOPAR STYLE



With Sr. Editor Robert Wolf

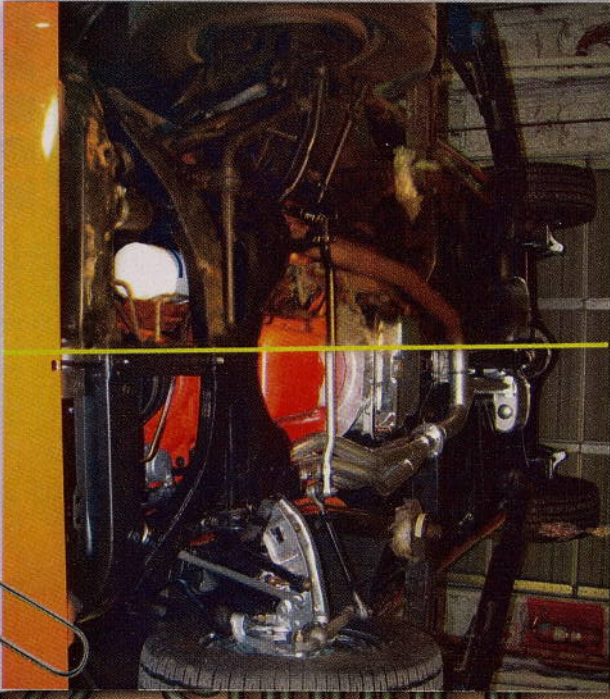
Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day dol-drum of life. With work, kids, and everything that needs to be done around the house, your hot rod can often spend more time gathering dust than netting speeding tickets. For me, it's another day, another airplane, going to who knows

where. Sometimes I even forget where I'm headed. But on a particular Monday morning in June, even though there were no secret plans, I knew exactly where I was going... the Hot Rod Power Tour!

With all the traveling I do, the Indianapolis airport has become somewhat of a second nature to me, but this

HOW TO BUILD A POWER TOUR CAR...

by Dave Ferro



It was last Christmas, but wow, it seems like only yesterday. The little lady was still reeling from her birthday present, a '70 Challenger R/T (see MCG April 2005), and a lightbulb went off! I was looking for a few extras to put under the tree. You know, for a true Mopar 'ole lady, just the normal gifts won't do. We just had the car out for a nice blast and with the kiddies in the back in the crisp air, the thing handled and ran great! As I drove, I pondered how tight the car felt, how truly "new" it felt. Amazing as it sounds, it still had a set of bias belted tires on it that I installed twenty years ago. Knowing what a difference it would make, I decided to finally bring her into the 21st century with a set of radials. As we drove, my mind wandered until I got the thought of pimping her ride. No, not like the TV show where they ghetto the ride, just a few updates.

The plan was simple, 15" Magnams, big radials, maybe new exhaust, (my oldest daughter mentioned the car was too quiet), some little stuff. By Christmas morning, family room reeked like a tire store and there was more. New center caps, lugs, a powder coated original air cleaner, and even a Gunslinger pistol grip shifter. Funny, even at

time after I uncoiled myself from an over crowded jet, I wasn't going to find myself hailing the obligatory Thrifty rental bus and cramming my gear into a minivan - oh no, not today. The sun was shining bright and there was half spent high octane fuel eating away at the ozone layer from Wisconsin to Illinois. Two thousand or so of the hottest cars in the country were motoring their way from Milwaukee to Kissimmee, Florida and if my trusty ride,

After grabbing my luggage, I headed for the curb and found Bill easily, with his Satellite's throaty exhaust note and the top laid back, he had attracted a gaggle of curious onlookers hovering around the car. Bill, a far too-nice-for-his-own-good Midwesterner, politely entertained the crowd

Bill Uhl, and his drop top Six Pack Satellite were on time, I would be far ahead of the pack arriving at IRP that Monday afternoon.

while I loaded my baggage into the B-body's spacious trunk. They all watched with envy in their eyes as the old Satellite's exhaust reverberated off the

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30 DAYS!



How could we not? At this point it was hard to keep from going full-bore and remember, this is supposed to be a driver! Actually, the motor compartment was looking pretty shabby, so we had somewhat of an excuse. Besides, we couldn't have that primped 440 looking like a diamond in an ashtray, could we?

After a few smokies, we stripped the motor compartment of bolt-ons and accessories. Next, we dropped everything out from under the Challenger. Following assembly line techniques in reverse, we pulled the front suspension, engine and trans, as a subassembly. It was neat seeing all the goofy stuff I did to this car as a kid! Just as cool was the originality. I've had the matching number motor in storage for quite some time, but it was nice seeing the matching number trans in there.





I should've known that first police stop was a bad omen. Within five miles, police lights were again in the Challenger's rearview mirror. Dave had just finished demonstrating how well the Gear Vendors' overdrive works by running it up to a 100 mph cruise, where the Challenger purred like a kitten at 3,000 rpm. I think the cops at the gas station must've radioed ahead because the unit came out of nowhere. Frank, who was our shadow for the whole trip, got a matching ticket, but somehow Bill escaped a ticket.

concrete walls as we rolled out two days earlier. Thanks to the great parts we received for this

Because I had pressing matters, Dave Ferro and his friend Charlie Dallas started the Power Tour by themselves

Dan Blunt of Specialized Incorporated trucked the bright orange E-body to Chicago, then Dave and Charlie took it for its shakedown cruise straight into Milwaukee; the starting point for the Tour. A fuel lean-out problem reared its head early. Because of the unprecedented heat wave gripping the northern part of the country, Dave diagnosed the problem as vapor lock. Luckily, Dave built in back up systems for almost all the critical items on the Challenger. With a simple flip of a switch, a backup electric fuel pump solved the problem.

Bill and I arrived early afternoon at the IRP track and were met with a full house of the area's coolest heavy metal. Each stop of the Power

project from the boys at Imagine Motorsports. The car looked great, but was having fuel injection problems.

Look for a full feature on the car in a future issue of MCG Complete, but not quite running, I got my first look at the much anticipated Poison Dart

project from the boys at

Imagine Motorsports. The car

looked great, but was having

fuel injection problems.



I quickly found out manually operated auxiliary electric fan, the Challenger's stock radiator kept a smile on our boy's faces the whole time. When Dave and Charlie finally rolled in at nearly 5 p.m., Bill and I learned they had picked up a shadow - a pair of Daimler-Benz engineers piloting a battleship grey '73 Satellite powered by a hot little stroker small block.

HOT RUMOR!

While on the Power Tour, Mopar builder Matt Delaney called up Hemi engine builder John Arruza while running 175 mph in the independent 'Guda (MCG February 2005) to congratulate him on building one hell of a motor! I heard he told John there was another 25 mph in it at least! I also heard a Camaro trying to keep up got stopped and ticketed for 125 mph and was the slowest car in the pack!

ture gauges rose, so did the Dave's a madman behind the wheel, so when he told me poor cooling littered the berm. Thanks to a

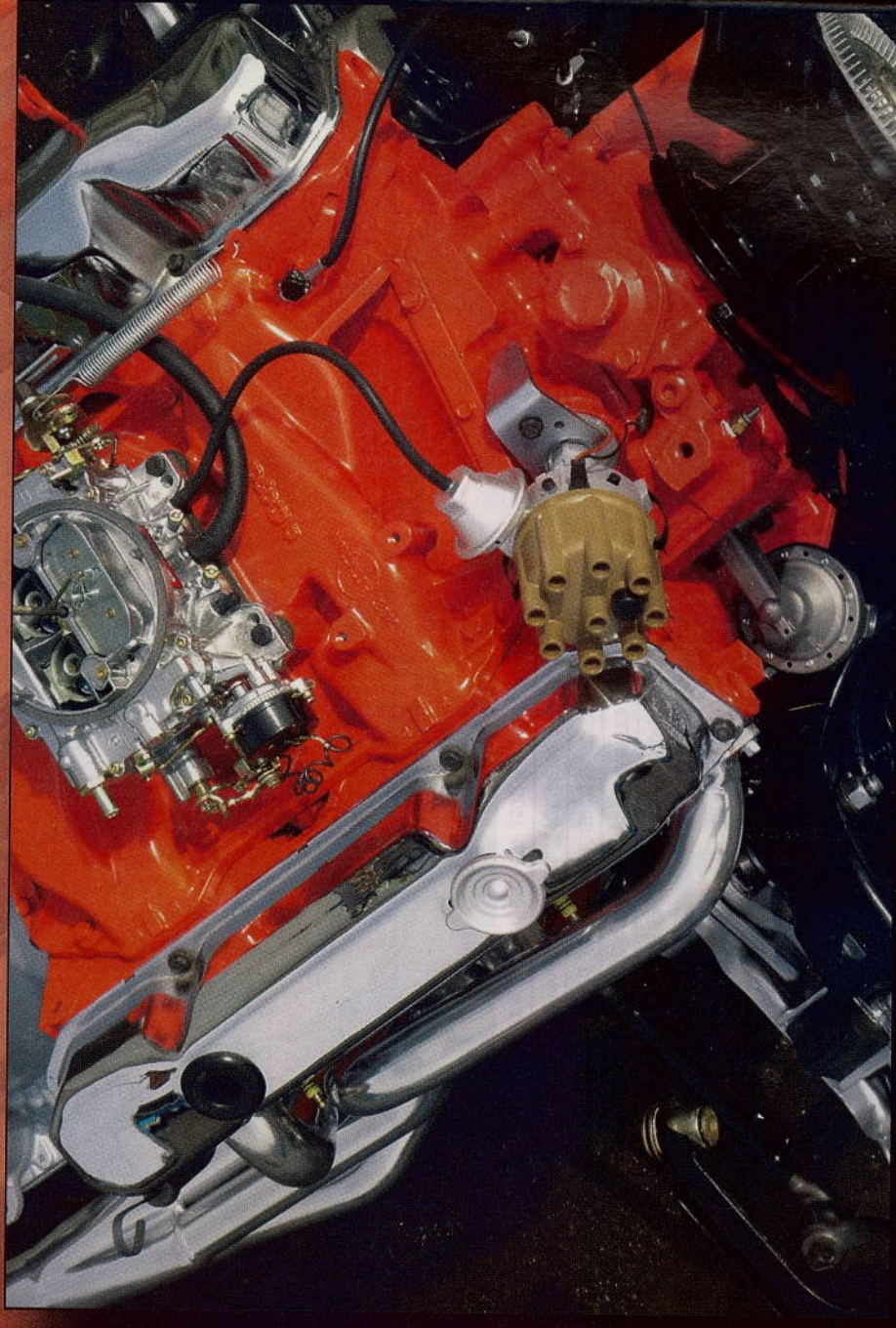
first two legs of the trip, I knew these guys had something to prove. The

Thanks to a

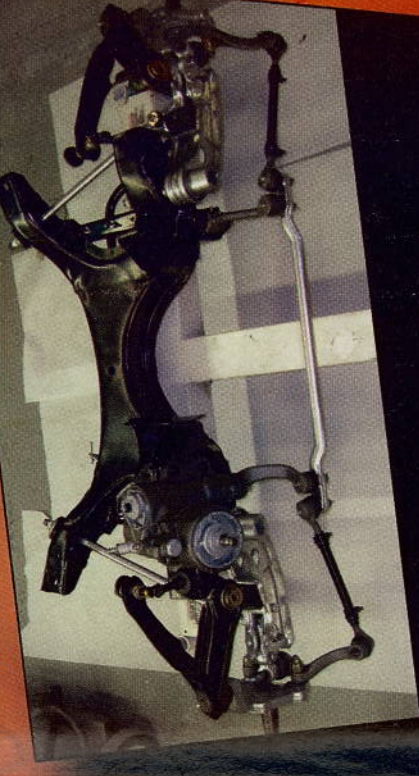
'73 Satellite belonged to Frank Griesser (better known as Mean Machine on moparts.com) who's thick German accent easily gave his nationality away. Handling co-piloting duties was Frank's co-worker and friend Matt Heyen; a Brit who grew up in Baltimore, Maryland.

With their arrival came stories from the road. It seems that right off the bat they

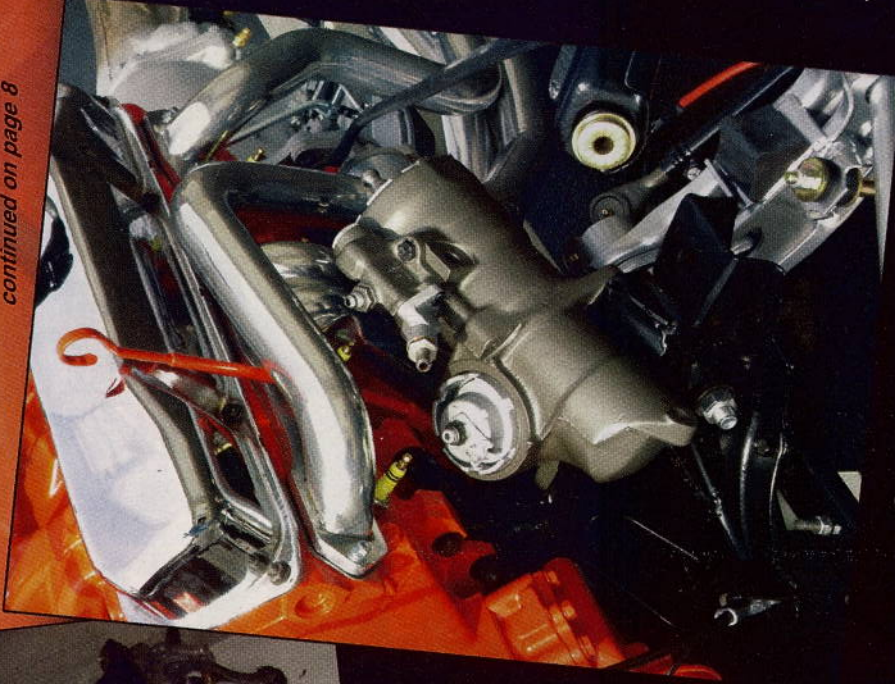
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The Edelbrock carb was put on last summer, the Mopar electronic ignition has been there since the 1980's and the internals are basically what we screwed together in the garage twenty years ago. Remember though, the car had only gone 7,000 miles in all those years!



Once we cleaned it up and removed all the old bushings, we powder coated the entire front suspension for long lasting good looks. Powder coating is being used by most of the nation's top shops and on many of the hobby's most beautiful cars. It's one of the most durable coatings known. In fact, salt spray tests have proven it to last up to 140 times longer than regular paint. Look for a feature on this process in an upcoming issue. We also screwed in a full array of polyurethane bushings and all U.S. made ball joints and tie-rods. Sure is pretty, but, also this suspension can outperform what left Mother Mopar far and wide.



I've been around these cars for a long time and I've never seen a set of headers fit like these from TTI. Notice there is even clearance at the steering box! A work of art, they didn't even need a ding to fit everything. Hardly visible is the mini starter from a late model V-8. Besides being smaller and lighter, this unit is much more efficient than the old factory hulk. The valve covers are twenty-year-old smoothies that we cleaned up and polished a bit. Certainly a deviation from stock, but we liked 'em.



tangled with a built-to-the-hilt Camaro G-machine. The Chevy boys quickly learned that it's not always horsepower that wins the day. The much more capable modified Camaro hacked off when the nearly stock Challenger hit 125 mph! There were also nightmarish stories of the previous day's

night in Indy, so Dave, Charlie,



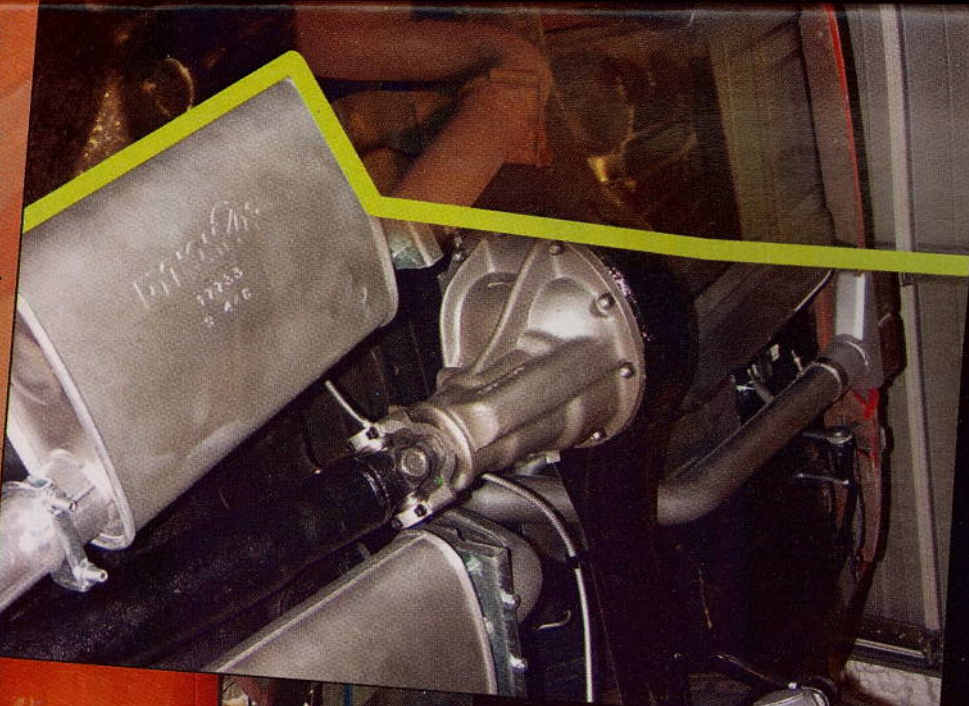
Going back in, very much the same way the factory did it. The engine, transmission, and front suspension, all as one big subassembly. Die-hard restorers may notice we didn't reapply the undercoating "exactly" like mother did. We just wanted a little better protection than what left the factory. Notice we correctly plated all the linkage and fasteners, just like a restoration job, but not quite.

Another crazy before and after mix, this time showing her rear. Yet to be installed is the adjustable pinion snubber from Magnum HP Inc., however, Randy's Ring and Pinion supplied their new 8 3/4" case with 3.91 gears inside. I highly recommend these brand-new units, especially when laying down those "smoke bombs." Eaton Spring hooked us up with a custom spring rate, just for carrying Rob Wolf's eighty-seven pound camera bag. Actually, that allowed us clearance for the 265/15 radials by lifting the back of the car one inch. For detail, we powder coated the Quanta gas tank for long lasting good looks and hung it from a set of stainless steel straps. This one should be looking good for quite some time to come. Not shown is the hidden electric fuel pump we installed for emergencies. Like the front, the rear suspension and all its components were powder coated. Check out those stainless tips from TTII!

and I opted to ride with Bill in his convertible. With my hazard directions, we made our way to the heart of downtown with the Daimler boys in tow. Nestled between tall city high rises is one of the finest steak houses in the country - St. Elmo's. We tucked the rides safely into a vacant parking lot across the way and wandered our way up the vibrant city streets. Rounding the corner, we found ourselves staring smack dab at the Power Tour bus. Looks like someone had beat us here . . . who could it be? The question was answered quickly as we were seated next

to the one and only Vic Edelbrock and his gang, who were apparently in need of a good meal too.

I had a slight advantage over my friends, having been introduced to St. Elmo's before. "My treat tonight boys, but you gotta' try the shrimp cocktail." We're talking thumb size morsels literally buried in the most potent fresh horse radish spiked cocktail sauce you've ever tasted. Expecting nothing out of the ordinary, Dave went first - it took about five seconds after his first bite for the sweat to start forming on his forehead. Sinuses seriously cleared, and still a little



ously cleared, and still a little

see if that would insulate the lines enough to fix the fuel problem.

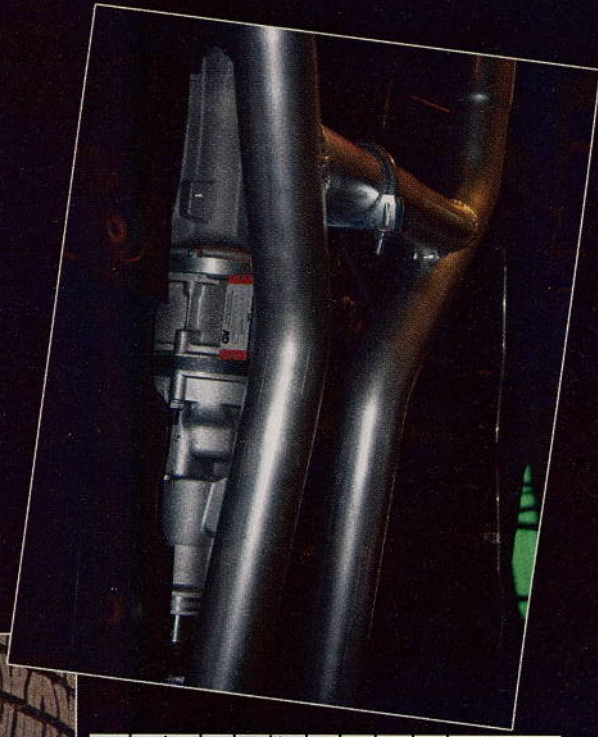
Charlie jumped in with Bill in the drop top, and Frank and Matt were in their usual spot, glued to the Challenger's rear bumper. The cars were hungry, so the first stop was a gas station directly across from our hotel. Before Dave and I could exit the car, Indy's finest were surrounding us! The officers keeping their hands apprehensively on their pistols, as if they thought we were going to make a run for it! I guess the car does resemble the 2 Fast 2 Furious Challenger, but really guys, I think they had been watching a few too many movies. The officers explained to us that early Monday morning, two white

On the Power Tour, each day brings a different road, a different turn, which leads you to a host of new adventures. That's what the Power Tour is all about. The sun was shining Tuesday morning and everyone was up early and ready to make their way to Nashville. This would be my first time in the Challenger. Dave, wanting everything to work perfectly, had been busy covering the hard fuel line with a split rubber hose to

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You're looking at the first TTII H-pipe, built specifically for E-bodies running a Gear Vendors', prototyped in this car. Look for this setup coming to a parts counter near you! The Gear Vendors overdrive unit is most likely the biggest advantage this big block car will have on the Power Tour, allowing us to run a tight 3.91 gear and still cruise at sonic speed. That's if you believe what Rob says about my driving - as if! Gear Vendors has done quite a bit of slimming down and improving, so this new unit fits with only minor dinging of the floor pan. Additionally, they have reconfigured their controller. Formerly driven by a speed sensor, the new control operates based on rpm. We'll explain this in more detail with our driving impressions from the tour.



Master Power cross drilled, vented rotors, plated nuts and bolts, powder coated everything else - is this really supposed to be a driver? Well, hell yeah! And it should be a good one at that. No, you most likely won't see mirrors under this one at a show, as most of this will probably be covered in highway grime, rubber, rain slime, and road kill, by the time the Power Tour is over. Then again, with all the coatings in place, she should clean up pretty good. Stop by at Carlisle if you can and we'll see. The car will be on display there, under the grandstand, fresh off the tour.

Tuesday's jaunt from Indy to Memphis should've been a breeze with interstate almost all the way. Not with our luck. Someone had taken out a guardrail the night before and repair crews, having no knowledge that thousands of high horsepower monsters were heading their way closed down a portion of the highway, making the interstate a literal parking lot. Luckily, along the way we found a convenient place to relieve ourselves. Someone told us this was a Corvette survivor that belonged to Bloomington Gold's David Burroughs.



Mopars are defiantly the minority of the Power Tour... but, it's fun to beat up on all the Ford and Chevy guys.

males in a vehicle with Pennsylvania tags ripped off some old people at the Bob Evans restaurant. Is it just me or do you maybe think the old folks would've noticed if the crooks were in a bright orange Challenger with black stripes? Not very conspicuous! Or perhaps the fact that our Pennsy plates spelled out the words "Power Tour"? After Dave and I proved to the police that we weren't even in town on the morning of the theft, the officers

WHERE TO BE IN AUGUST

The Mopar Nationals continues to be a "must see" for all the Mopar faithful. The godfather of all Mopar shows occupies its usual second weekend of August, Friday the 12th through Sunday the 14th. For more information, check out their website at moparnats.org.

The Mopar event with the most cars in the show field is the Moparfest in New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada on August 20th and 21st. Unlike every show Stateside, this two day event reaches its peak on Sunday, not Saturday. For the last couple of years, the hot ticket is to go up to the Woodward Dream Cruise on Friday and then take the short drive over the border to the Moparfest Saturday afternoon. For more information, call 519-342-1284.

the morning started, we decided to take it easy until we got the hell out of Indiana. The ride proved to be quite easy until



brought the car through the gears manually, with the car's simulated Gunslinger automatic Pistol Grip, demonstrating the Gear Vendors six-speed conversion. At around 100 mph, oh crap! More lights in the rearview mirror! We weren't five minutes into the trip and we were getting pulled over for the

about the halfway mark to Nashville. Someone had taken out a guard rail the night before and a repair crew shut down one

lane of the interstate to make the repair. I don't think they anticipated thousands of road warriors headed their way; the interstate was soon a parking lot.

We finally made it to Nashville's meeting spot, the Grand Ole Opry grounds around 5 p.m. And we found a full house awaiting us. Business was calling, so this would be the last stop of the Tour for Bill. With Bill as our passenger, Dave took designated driver status of his convertible and safely piloted the gang out for a night on the town in Nashville. The Hard Rock's glowing neon giant Les Paul sign sucked us in and didn't disappoint. The food was great and the staff was outstanding at sharing shots and directing us to all the happening spots. With the moon lighting

WILL DODGE BRING BACK THE CHALLENGER IN '10

There's a lot of talk recently about DaimlerChrysler building a rwd V-8 two door Mustang killer. A new Mustang "Challenger," if you will. The rumor stems from a short article that appeared in a June issue of Automotive News, where two automotive analysts speculated on plans for the new car. This was not an official Chrysler press release, so don't think this is a done deal by any means. They said the car would be built on the LX platform, the basis for the 300 and Charger, and debut around 2009 when the LX's are due for re-engineering and restyling.

I immediately placed calls to some Chrysler insiders, and no one was talking. I did, however, get the feeling that despite the use of a '72 Rallye Challenger in the Automotive News article, if a new Challenger was to hit the streets in 2009, it was not going to be a retro piece. When I posed the question of styling, I was told to follow what I see at the auto shows rather than what I read, and was pointed to last year's Hemi Firepower show car as reference for what a future Challenger may resemble. Stay tuned to MCG as this story unfolds.

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