



2009 Year in Review

While every year is full of ups and downs, I just think of this one as a very busy year. Normally I would write a story of the highs and lows, but there has been so much going on I thought I would let events from my calendar tell you the story of this past year.

January 18, 2009 a very old back injury flared up so bad that I actually passed out while brushing my teeth.

January 27, 2009 Just what I wanted to do 10 days before Pomona...have back surgery.

January 30, 2009 - Filmed some things at the race shop for the show I host on SPEED Channel "**Drag Race High**." I do not think they were able to use much of it due to all the medication I was on following the back surgery.

February 4-9, 2009 - NHRA - Pomona, California. Five straight days of rain in not so Sunny California. One qualifying run and a DNQ, not the way to start the season.

February 18, 2009 - The 18th was a big day for me. After lots of work and traveling to the San Diego area, the season premiere of "**Drag Race High**" was broadcast on "**SPEED**."

February 18-23, 2009 - NHRA - Phoenix, Arizona. Qualified 10th and lost to Shawn Langdon first round.

February 27-March 1, 2009 - Belle Rose, Louisiana. SPEED Channel gave me the opportunity to be a technical advisor on their hit show "**PINKS ALL OUT**." What a great show and a great opportunity. It was cold in Belle Rose, but a lot of fun being a part of such a huge show.

March 2-6, 2009 - My son Dalton and I went to several different tracks to test his ATV's for the upcoming opening event of the AMA Motocross season.

March 12-16, 2009 - NHRA - Gainesville, Florida. We qualified 10th and lost the first round to Antron Brown.

March 20-22, 2009 - "Pinks All Out" - Dallas, Texas. This was only my second "**Pinks All Out**" but I continue to be impressed with how big this show is. The crowd for this event was massive. "**Pinks All Out**" wrapped up around midnight on Saturday. I decided to surprise my wife Donna and Dalton by staying up all night and showing up to watch Dalton at the first National event of the **AMA ATV** season in Pell City, Alabama.

March 26-30, 2009 - NHRA - Houston, Texas. We qualified 4th. In the first round we beat Troy Buff. In the second round we lost to Joe Hartley. At that time we had no idea how important this one run would be.

April 2-6, 2009 - NHRA - Las Vegas, NV. It was a hard decision but we elected not to go to this event. At this point Mark and Lauren have paid for running the Top Fuel car completely out of their pockets. I made the decision to stay home. With Vegas out, I traveled with Donna and Dalton to the **AMA ATV National** in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

April 11-12, 2009 - I spent the weekend in Union City, TN watching Dalton ride with AMA Champion Joe Byrd.

April 16-21, 2009 - NHRA - Atlanta, GA. Before talking about what the Top Fuel car did, I need to tell you about Mark's accomplishment. Mark was running his GTO in the Top Sportsman Invitational. To say he was having trouble getting down the track is putting it mildly. When the last qualifying run was made Mark was over it. Mark had no intentions of driving the ill handling car on race day. That's when a lot of good help from several talented individuals stepped in to fix the car. Just to name a few Rick Jones of Quarter Max and Adam Lambert of Penske Shocks came to the rescue. The man who really topped it off was "The General," David Glidewell. On race day "The General" had applied some Magic to the GTO and told Mark if you trust me just get in it and drive it. Things happen for a reason and Mark went from not believing in himself or his car to the National Event Winner. The whole Top Fuel Team was behind him on the starting line and for us to see that win light come in the final was indescribable. What Mark did was way better than qualifying 12th in the Top Fuel and losing first round to Antron Brown. This was really an exciting weekend for Mark. At about 2 AM Lauren called to say their awning on their motor home had filled up with rainwater. Mark was then trying to get the water out when the awning fell and hit Mark on the head. Donna and I got to the track quickly to check on him. Donna and Lauren took him to the hospital to get him checked out. Mark was fine with just a few bumps on his head. After losing the first round we decided to stay and test on Monday. I was honored to be asked by Mark Oswald and Brian Coradi to drive Antron's new car in testing as well. Seven laps in one day, that was fun. We made three in our car and four in Antron's.

April 24-26, 2009 - "Pinks All Out" - Charlotte, NC. This was absolutely unreal; FOUR LANES WIDE and over 30,000 fans!!! While I am being filmed for the show I am so excited to see the first four lane drag race that I have my cell phone out videotaping it myself. It was really cool.

May 30-April 4, 2009 - NHRA - Madison, IL. My older sister Tracey (I always say older because she hates when I do that) and I drove to the race. This reminded me of when we were kids going to a bracket race. The biggest difference was my old bracket dragster wouldn't run 300 miles per hour. We qualified 8th and lost the first round to Brandon Bernstein.

May 8-10, 2009 - "Pinks All Out" - Memphis, TN. What started out as a horrible day weather wise, turned into a very fast action packed show right here at my home track. There were big crowds and it was a great show.

May 14-18, 2009 - NHRA - Bristol, TN. We qualified 6th and lost first round to Morgan Lucas.

May 21-25, 2009 - AMA ATV - Delmont, PA. Donna, Dalton and I traveled to Steel City Raceway. Dalton didn't have the best of weekends missing the main by one position. Oh well, it was a great trip.

May 28-31, 2009 - NHRA - Topeka, KS. Ahhh TOPEKA !!! First of all we were honored to represent the Kansas Army National Guard at this race. We then went out and qualified 5th. Race day was a nice HOT Kansas day which worked to our advantage. First round we beat Joe Hartley. Second round we beat Brandon Bernstein. In the third round we beat Shawn Langdon. Final round we did what got us there but it was not enough against Larry Dixon. Although we lost, suddenly we found ourselves looking at the points. Coming into the race we were 105 points out of the Top Ten and now we were only 43 behind.

June 4-8, 2009 - NHRA - Chicago, IL. The site of my first ever Top Fuel race and my infamous backwards burnout. We qualified fourth. In the first round we beat JR Todd. In the second round we beat Brandon Bernstein. In the semi finals we lost to Antron Brown. Now we have made our way into the Top Ten but only by one point.

June 11-14, 2009 - NHRA - Englishtown, NJ. We qualified 8th. In the first round we beat Doug Kalitta. In the second round we lost to the Army car. We are now in the Top Ten by 32 points.

June 19-21, 2009 - "Pinks All Out" - Budds Creek, MD. This was a fun weekend. Besides my normal running partner Ken Herring, we had a special guest for this show, Jack Beckman. Jack did a great job on the show. Budds Creek loves their racing and it was packed with real fast cars.

June 25-29, 2009 - NHRA - Norwalk, OH. We qualified 9th. In the first round we beat Doug Kalitta. In the second round we lost to Larry Dixon. We now have a 42 point lead over Joe Hartley.

July 4, 2009 - Drummonds TN. I finally got a weekend home. Cale, my oldest son, Dalton and I bought lots of fireworks and blew up everything in sight.

July 9-14, 2009 - NHRA - Denver, CO. I caused the team a lot of extra work on our Friday night qualifying run. When the car left the starting line it shook a little. I pedaled it and it got real light on the front quick. What goes up must come down, and it did in the form of a bent race car. The guys did a great job fixing the chassis. We ended up qualifying 11th. In the first round we lost to Doug Kalitta. This was a race we did not need to lose. Coming into this event we were only 38 points behind Kalitta for 9th place in points. We left Denver 100 points behind Kalitta. On Monday we had the privilege to take a tour of NORAD located in Cheyenne Mountain. It was an awesome tour and very informative.

July 16-20, 2009 - NHRA - Seattle, WA. The team spent this very short week at Brad Hadman's chassis shop. Brad has been building all of my cars for a long time. As always, he did a great job rebuilding our car in a short period of time. We qualified 7th and lost to Antron Brown in the first round.

July 23-27, 2009 - NHRA - Sonoma, CA. We qualified 11th. In the first round we beat Shawn Langdon. In the second round we lost to Cory McClenathan. Points wise we made up a little on Kalitta but Hartley was staying right with us. Hartley was 44 points behind us for that final Count Down spot.

July 30-August-3, 2009 - AMA ATV - Buchanan, MI. I went with the family to watch Dalton race. The track is known as Red Bud and it is one of the biggest races of the year on the **AMA Nationals** circuit. Dalton had a great weekend with a Top Ten finish.

August 7, 2009 - Union City, TN. I was looking forward to a weekend at home. Things got busy in a hurry when we received a call that Dalton crashed while training at Joe Byrd's. Donna and I took off towards Union City at a very high rate of speed, I might add. Union City is about a hundred miles away. We received several different calls about Dalton's condition. The first call was to inform us that Dalton was being taken to the hospital in Union City, TN. The second call was that he was being air lifted to Memphis. The third call was that they changed their mind and were going to send him to the local hospital in Union City. After turning around several times we got stopped by the Highway Patrol wanting to know what our hurry was. The fourth call ended with Dalton being air lifted to The Med in Memphis. Dalton had a severe concussion and a broken shoulder. This meant the end of Dalton's racing season.

August 12-17, 2009 - NHRA - Brainerd, MN. We qualified 9th. In the first round we lost to Brandon Bernstein. Joe Hartley went a few rounds further and cut our lead over him to only 24 points. That is just over one round.

August 19-24, 2009 - NHRA - Reading, PA. We qualified 13th. In the first round we lost to Cory McClenathan. And again, Joe Hartley went a couple of rounds. We are now only 3 points ahead of Hartley for the final spot in the Count Down. This is just crazy going into Indy, the cut off race for the Count Down. We are battling for our lives.

August 26, 2009 - TEST - Indianapolis, IN. We had no option; we had to test if we wanted to keep our spot in the Count Down. Without going through every run of testing I do not think we came out of testing any better than we went in. For sure, it was not for lack of trying. Our good friends Brian Coradi and Mark Oswald were there for every lap. Brian and Mark gave us a lot of assistance, but there are just a few differences in their car and ours for everything to work the same.

September 2-8, 2009 - NHRA - Indianapolis, IN. The Big Go, as it's called, is not only the biggest drag race of the year, it is also a marathon for the race team. It was down to this race if we were going to make the Count Down or not. Four qualifying runs are in the books. With one

round left to go Joe Hartley and our team are still not in the show. Hartley is in line ahead of us so he is up first. Hartley drops a cylinder off the starting line and that's it. We have made the Count Down. I am very happy for all of us to have had the chance to do this. Mark and Lauren, thank you and I Love You. All right, now we are ready to try and get in this show. The team pulled it off. We qualified in the lucky number 13 spot. We lost first round to Larry Dixon.

September 11-13, 2009 - "Pinks All Out" - Bakersfield, CA. Famoso Raceway. Need I say more? Home of the March meet for over 50 years. This was my first trip to this track and I sure hope it is not my last. **"Pinks All Out"** for this show displayed nostalgia all the way. There were so many nice, cool, and old cars there. This was last episode of the season. I want to thank Speed Channel for allowing me to be part of the show.

September 16-21, 2009 - NHRA - Charlotte, NC. This was a busy week. Earlier this year I had the chance to film some Public Service Announcements with my former BIGGEST rival Doug Herbert. Doug started a foundation in honor of his two sons, Jon and James who were killed in an auto accident. The organization is called **B.R.A.K.E.S** which stands for Be Responsible and Keep Everyone Safe. **B.R.A.K.E.S.** teaches teens safe driving so that no other parents have to get a phone call like Doug did. Ray Iddings, the producer of **"Drag Race High"** had volunteered his time to film and produce the Public Service Announcements for **B.R.A.K.E.S.** Ray did several different versions of the announcements. One of them has the footage of the infamous burn down between Doug and I. Ray, I want to thank you for all your help.

We attended a dinner at Lowes Motor Speedway. This dinner is an annual fund raiser for **B.R.A.K.E.S.** The emcee was Bob Frey. There were a host of famous people included. During the evening the long version of the PSA was shown. Doug and I both were called on stage to be made fun of by Bob Frey. Doug was made of fun for picking on someone so small and me for being dumb enough to pick on someone so big. It was a great evening.

The weekend at the track did not go so well. We qualified 14th and lost to the ARMY car first round. We are still in 10th place.

September 24-28, 2009 - NHRA - Dallas, TX. We qualified 13th and lost first round to Shawn Langdon. At this point we are just pulling our hair out trying to make the car run better. Everyone on the team is working hard but we are just not getting a good time slip to prove it.

October 1-5, 2009 - NHRA - Memphis, TN. This is my favorite race of the year. This track is only 20 minutes from my house. If there is one race I have always wanted to win, it is this one. We qualified 16th and lost to Larry Dixon first round. I am sad to say that the Memphis track was closed just a few weeks after the event.

This was our last race of the season. It was a very tough decision to make, but the right one. No one can blame us for not continuing. This team raced almost all season out of Mark and Lauren's pocket. Everyone at MPE Motorsports wants to thank Mark and Lauren for all they do. All the equipment is ready to go for the 2010 race season. We are still on the sponsor hunt and hope to have something soon.

Since the Memphis event things have not slowed down for me. I have been to Vegas twice. The first time was to play golf in the Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospital for the **Children Open**. This was more stressful than staging for a final round. I am not a golfer and I did not want to embarrass myself. It turned out to be one of the most fun events I have done. The second time out to Vegas was for the Vegas race and the **SEMA** show. Unfortunately, the trip to the race was as a spectator. This trip was not so much for the race or **SEMA** as it was for a meeting with a potential major sponsor. Unfortunately, what looked very promising did not work out. We are going to keep looking and we will find the right marketing partner to work with. I also traveled to Gulfport, MS to an event called **Cruising the Coast**. This is the biggest car show/cruise I have ever seen.

I went to Pomona for the final event of the season, again, as a spectator. While in California I was very proud to attend the **NHRA** banquet. This year was my first ever Top Ten finish.

My oldest son Cale continues to do well at the University of Memphis and skateboards almost every day.

Dalton's shoulder has now healed. He has started racing in the indoor motocross events and cannot wait for the Nationals to get started again.

Donna has spent all her time trying to keep up with everything all of us have going on. Donna is the levelheaded one in this bunch and she keeps us all pointed in the right direction.

The race team has spent a lot of this off-season working on Marks other racecars. Mark is a constant blur of motion. I do not know how he keeps up with all the things he has going.

Mrs. Lauren spent most of the year planning her daughter Jessica's wedding, spending time with her grandchildren and working on her charity, Hope4Sudan. This wonderful lady never slows down.

As for me, I have to say this has been a great year. We made the Top Ten, we all have healthy families and we continue our dream of winning races.

One last thing, this really has nothing to do with what events took place this year. I just want to say to Mark and Lauren that I appreciate everything you two do for the race team, my family and me. I know you do many things for many people. I also know you are not looking for applause or credit for doing it. You do these things from your heart. Thank You for being great people.

All of us here at MPE Motorsports wish everyone a safe 2010.
See you at the races.

Clay Millican



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