



FUEL FOR THOUGHT

BY LANDSPEED LOUISE

Epic Washout

This year marks 100th anniversary of racing on the renowned Bonneville Salt Flats. As the first century of speed goes into the history books, there is an overwhelming consensus among the go-fast crowd that they may, in the not too distant future, be forced to park their rides because the salt surface will no longer support safe, high-speed record runs.

The Ack Attack might well be ground zero for this point. In 2012 the team and motorcycle streamliner was ready to assail 400MPH, but the salt was not. Their bid for a world record was stymied by unacceptable, thin, bumpy salt conditions.

This year's line-up for Mike Cook's Shootout (Sept 12-16) saw 18 teams pay the \$1,000 nonrefundable deposit for shot at a world record. It was to be the largest gathering ever of American automobiles and motorcycles taking a swing at FIA and FIM world speed honors. All were locked on a speed target.

Then came the rain. And it kept coming. What was to be a milestone of mega proportions if even HALF of the players had showed ended up as an epic washout. Such is the dominion of speed seekers. The only salt photos I got were a flock of birds swimming around at road's end.

At the time of this writing Cook hoped to salvage the meet with an October rain date. If the weather cooper-

The new 485CID Reher-Morrison naturally aspirated fuel-fed engine and 2-stage nitrous up the ante for this car.

Nish Motorsports, driven by Mike Nish, who is after Charles Nearburg's record; he really wants to earn a black hat with any record better than 425MPH. Nish says the Jerry Darien-built unblown HEMI engine will put 2,000HP into the game.

Truz Missile is designed, built, owned and driven by Mary and Jim True, current WLSR holders at 253MPH. The red, white and blue streamliner was looking for 270MPH+ using a 1-liter Kawasaki ZX10R engine running on gas.

Barnyard Bearcat, owned and driven by Jim Knapp, is after a plus 300MPH record.

Paul Drayson's electric Lola. A stunning car that has already nailed a 204MPH FIA world record, but with its new Bonneville wheels and tires ought to be able squeeze another 10 to 15 miles per hour out of the glittering green car, not to mention give His Lordship Drayson a warm and fuzzy about competing where his countrymen have done such honorable battle.

Buckeye Bullet/Electric streamliner, driven by Roger Schroer, is the current WLSR holder at 307MPH hungering for 400MPH. Once a humble student project at Ohio State University, the new car was built with plenty of money from an

the "motorcycles only" BUB International Speed Trails. Chris Carr is the rider and has already bested Ack Attack a couple of times for the crown and would like to wear it once more.

Sam Wheeler's new powertrain package in its existing skin is poised to give Carr and Robinson serious competition.

Ron Atterbury is just about done building a new Jack Costella designed streamliner for Jaime Williams. Powered by a turbocharged Hayabusa, the bike hopes to charge past 250MPH.

Texan Al Lamb, riding a modified, partially streamlined blown fuel Honda wants a record past 280MPH.

Jim Higgins will ride his stoker Hayabusa somewhere around 230MPH.

Australian Kim Krebs will ride her turbocharged Suzuki 750cc turbo looking for 240MPH on the dials.

Australian Greg Watters is riding his 1650cc Hayabusa and thinks 260MPH will suit him just fine.

There were a few "wild cards" that include: ThompsonLSR/driven by Danny Thompson, who is updating papa Mickey's 1960's era streamliner. Now stuffed with a pair of 500CID HEMIS; he says, "I couldn't care less about a record and only want to lay down runs faster than any other piston-powered machine."

Target 550 is /the dream car of

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ates the four-wheel contenders will be: Speed Demon, owned and driven by George Poteet, who has a solid 450MPH potential powered by a Duttweiler dual turbo small block. This is the only car positioned to challenge the Turbinator's world wheel-driven record.

Spirit of Rett, owned and driven by Charles Nearburg, is a current WLSR holder at 414MPH; he bested the Summers Brothers 1965 record in 2010.

eccentric Frenchman looking to dominate the electric car market overseas.

Thundering along on two wheels: Ack Attack/streamliner is ridden by Rocky Robinson. Designed, built and owned by Mike Akatiff; it is the current FIM top dog at 376MPH. Ready to drop the wheels on the salt, they want to blast past 400MPH.

BUB "7" is designed, built and owned by Denis Manning who also hosts

Marlo Treit and driven by Les Davenport. Powered by a pair of supercharged Dodge V8 Hemi motors, the team won't be happy until they earn a 550MPH time slip.

Max Lambky's Vincent Black Lightning sidecar/streamliner will be ridden by Hartmut Weidelich and Don Angel.

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home but my friends and I, in three topless roadsters (no tops no wives), managed to stretch the ride to 5 days and a (too short) 1500 mile round trip. What a contrast. The central U.S. trip was two weeks of near perfect weather. The west coast ride went from tee shirts to sweaters under jackets. A nippy low of 46 degrees at sea level to an exhausting high of 108 was encountered within a hours driving time. We were praying for rain to cool us off and it finally happened at about 8000 ft. in the Cascade Mountains. The rain turned highway construction projects to mud and dinged the cars a bunch, but we only laughed about how bad the cars looked. A couple of us coincidentally blew some exhaust gaskets (trying to keep up?) adding plenty of annoying audio to the already muddied up visual displays. The fun is on the run, stretching a short trip into days, a long one into weeks.

Yes sir, it takes all kinds of GOODPEOPLE, and their cars to make rodding happen. Each person measures his fun and excitement by a different yardstick. As some grow older they slow down and pull in their driving range. Other gray beards charge all the harder so they won't miss out on anything. New rodders naturally start out slowly testing the waters. Then, there are a few who become quickly identifiable for, rarely if ever, hitting the long road. So what? Everybody is different and the latter have just established a much narrower set of limitations.

Hitting the "long road" doesn't necessarily move rodders to some elevated status but it most certainly can drastically change one's perspective. Some thrill seeking rodders have discovered the LONG road to be darned near the ONLY road. That former entertainment of every Saturday evening on the K-Mart parking lot, hanging out with Corvettes, Mustangs, a few rods with propped up plastic signs, and rusted out "for sale" '64 Buicks, has almost totally vanished from their formula of fun. Like... Once you've driven a dragster, returning to F/Stock automatic just don't get it. GG

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Dennis Dean, President of the FIA Land Speed Records Commission, who has a broad worldwide perspective agreed that is quite a line-up noting: "As I look at from the perspective of six years on the Land Speed Records Commission, five as President, I'm struck by how "American" the event and this lineup are. While we see interest around the world in FIA World Land Speed Records, the available venues severely constrain the realm of the high-speed records. We just don't see 300+ mph streamliners any place else, much less 400+ mph.

When you peek inside those cars, the big V-8s are just as American, with their roots firmly planted from the seeds sown by the post-WWII hot rodders

working on Ford flat heads with Ardun heads. You just don't see them anyplace else in the world. And the reason is simple... Bonneville.

The Salt Flats are the glue that holds the American LSR community together and it's what has attracted everyone back again. Let's just hope that glue works just as well for decades to come.

I'm just in awe of the bikes. Having grown up around fast cars, up to a point, I feel like with training and practice that I could safely drive a four-wheeled streamliner to a respectable speed. I absolutely can't even visualize doing the same things with bikes. I don't know how they do it, but I have all of the respect in the world for them as they do it."

Note: Photojournalist Louise Ann Noeth is the authoress of the critically acclaimed, *Bonneville: The Fastest Place on Earth*, an illustrated historical review from 1896 to 1997. A massive update is underway to chronicle the first century of speed on the salt. For more details on her fast self go to: www.landspeedproductions.biz. GG

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He felt bad about wrecking my car, but it's something that can/will happen when you drive your car. I told him again, like I did that night, "Don't worry about it. It happens. Metal can be fixed...people not so much." Since it was late November and we weren't taking any more trips, we'd repair the car by spring and no one would even know the car was in an accident...it got done. Two years later, I sold the car and we still have the radical '57. At least, that's the way I remember it.

Now available on KINDLE my first book, *Bangin' Gears & Bustin' Heads: Arsenal Code R.E.D.* What happens when a 15 year old is arrested by the FBI for causing an airliner crash? Is he involved in Domestic Terrorism? It's an adventure of epic proportions. Don't forget to check out my recently "overhauled" website: www.RAJetter.com to order books personally autographed. GG

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Magnette." After the war Bob became a charter member of the fledgling Sports Car Club of California; fellow members were Phil Hill, Roger Barlow, John Von Neuman, the actor Donald O'Connor and Bunny Phillips.

Because of the shortage of factory sports cars there was an interest in building backyard specials. Bob's first sports car was a 1939 Citroen roadster with a Jeep engine adapted to the front wheel drive. Guys were building custom sports cars, sporty cars, boulevard cruisers. The

car in the photographs was in that category. Bob remembered seeing the car in the Los Angeles area before and after the war, and then it disappeared. It was apparently a Mercedes Benz SSK that had been considerably reworked—rebodied in a sense. The Benz basis was seen in the grill shell, windshield and some body panels. It was no doubt a fun car in which to cruise Hollywood streets during the 1940s, but to a true aficionado like Bob the car had not been improved. According to Bob, "the metal work had been done by a fellow known as 'Putty Pete' Peterson, who had a shop on Ventura Boulevard. I think that the drive in restaurant where the photos were taken was also on Ventura Boulevard. A lot of car stuff happened on that street. Once a group drove to a restaurant down at the beach, and one car got an award for being off of Ventura Boulevard for the first time!"

Somehow I never asked Bob whether the car was based on, say, a 1929 Mercedes or if it actually was a restyled 1937 SSK, which it most resembled. And did it use Mercedes running gear, and perhaps the supercharged engine? And I have lately been thinking about a friend of Bob's, Reginald Denny, a character actor in 1930s and 1940s films and who later had a large hobby shop in L.A.; I want to know more about him. Those and other questions will remain unanswered. The only complaint that I heard Bob utter about growing old was that all of his friends were gone. I know what he meant.

New: *The Brotherhood of Speed*, a 60 year history of the Slo-Poks club by Drake and Pennington. Big! 426 Pages, 100s of photos. \$35 (plus \$3 postage). Al Drake, P.O. Box 66874, Portland, OR 97290. GG

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