



Fuel For Thought

Landspeed Louise

Hero Worship, The Sick Truth

Merry Blessed Happy Everything! Many years ago I penned this month's column and it was published in a variety of places. Folks keep bringing it up to me so I guess its message still rings true. At this time of year, when we take extra time to give thanks, to be grateful for all we are given and able to do, I offer this slightly updated essay about an ordinary person who was capable of extraordinary things simply because he applied himself.

Great accomplishments, especially in sports, tend to cultivate admirers. Sometimes the feat is so fantastic, or the ability to deliver repeated outstanding performance so incredible, adoring fans pop up in droves with a little help from the media.

Sometime these athletes are elevated to the exalted state of "Hero" or "Heroine" and they begin to reap the monetary benefits of generous endorsement packages, increasing their fame as they hawk a particular service or product. "Appearance" fees can easily exceed their sports paycheck.

Over the past few years we have seen a lot of heroes and heroines, but I wonder if the moniker is rightly deserved. By my reckoning, people we admire, especially people our children admire, ought to be required to live up to the title by demonstrating more than the ability to whack, or shoot a ball, smack a puck, tackle a spandex-clad sprinter, or look good under hot camera lights.

Is it so much to ask of a role model to conduct themselves in a dignified manner, to live a life that will pass the test of time and not require an excuse? In other words, "Wow, what a tremendous (insert sport) player, too bad he beats his wife."

What about those two pro-sports clowns who thought drag racing their exotic cars on city streets was macho until one of them punched out? Thankfully, the damn fool didn't take any innocent bystanders with him.

If heroes and heroines want to bask in the limelight of admiration, it is my opinion that they should not:

- Beat their spouses
- Buy, sell, or use drugs
- Be alcoholics
- Be compulsive gamblers
- Drink and drive
- Assault people, on and off the playing field
- Rape young girls
- Kill people
- Steal sponsor money
- Be arrogant and cruel to fans

The list goes on. Why take up more space

with what you already know? The point is, if we, the spectators, the indulgent fans, ignore the bad behavior, we send a message to our youth that acting irresponsibly, recklessly, and even criminally, is OK — just so long as you make the next game and score those points. That if you play sports well, the world will forgive you acting like a horse's ass, hurting people, lying, cheating and stealing. Come now, what rational, caring parent wants that ideology stuffed into their kids head?

If this great nation allows crummy conduct, then we as a nation fail not only to our youth, but dishonor our national heritage as well. Many of us learn by example and if the example set by our heroes and heroines is poor, then we had better not complain when the kids grow up without a sense a shame when they act badly.

When the baseball strike came along, it lost me as a fan. One too many contract disputes over big bucks made it clear to me that the players and owners were playing the greed game. I chose not to let them worry about my money ever again.

Over the years the bad behavior has become bolder, meaner, and humiliatingly arrogant. I was ashamed for the country when Charles Barkley spewed out his mean-spirited, snide comments about sportsmanship at the Olympics.

I was astonished that bully Sprewell was allowed to again play basketball after attacking his coach. That Pete Rose and Michael Jordan were such gambling addicts showed me they had more money than good sense. Rapist/boxer Mike Tyson is despicable.

Let's not forget the unconscionable conduct of Tonya Harding and crew. As for the Iverson case, can someone tell me why the authorities allowed that jackass to cavort with abandon for days after he brandished a loaded firearm and physically abused his wife?

Darryl Strawberry has served multiple prison terms and suspensions from his sport for crimes in domestic abuse, drug and alcohol problems and tax evasion. Then there are his illegitimate children.

NASCAR driver Kurt Busch should be ashamed of his childish conduct when he was pulled over and mouthed off calling the officers "punks" who "should be directing traffic somewhere," according to the Arizona sheriff's report which also noted Busch refused what he called their "gay-ass" field sobriety test. Kudos to team owner Jack Roush who suspended Busch for two races.

The team owners are not without blemish either, a survey by the editors of

Sports Illustrated found that ticket prices have skyrocketed as much as 80% over the past decade. Excuse me, but the playing hasn't got 80% better.

Who needs 'em? Not me. Not America. Certainly not American youth. My disappointment with professional sports also extended into motorsports.

Sponsors have taken such a front and center role, splashing their corporate message like a tidal wave over the spectators in the hopes of dislodging the

unfolds on one of planet earth's most majestic natural wonders, a fragile, crystalline surface that has astounding resilient tenacity when it comes to supporting high-speed time trials.

Land speed racers call themselves amateurs. Ha! Sure. Tell me another one. These people are as good as it gets when it comes to exhibiting professional competitive deportment. By nothing more than their actions and genuine humility for a homespun sport, they embody the



contents of their wallets that the racing sometimes takes a back seat.

The merchandising is so overwhelming that fans are becoming "message weary" of the garish marketing display that subliminally nags fans to "spend, spend, spend."

I'm no fool. I realize it takes money to campaign a pro car. Competing for points in a series can mean a dollar hemorrhage just to stay competitive. However, what happened to racing for the love of the sport, not hustling to add commas to a bank balance? Things had just about got to the point where I thought all professional sports was a load of hooey.

Then I met land speed racers attending time trials at El Mirage and Muroc. I watched some fine driving, enjoyed some outstanding hospitality and reveled in the inter-team congeniality. By the time the Bonneville Speedweek rolled around, I had hardly noticed that I found a whole new set of heroes and heroines.

It is marvelous how husbands and wives, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers, all combine to wage war against a timepiece. The whole affair

best of what the American Spirit ought to represent.

Aaron Copeland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" plays in my head when I think of them. If this is amateur, America needs more and the "professionals" would do well to be more like the land speed racer.

Nothing made this clearer to me than at the sport's 200MPH Club banquet, an annual party where members who have exceeded the namesake speed, gather to re-congratulate themselves, induct new members and pay tribute to the greatest in the sport.

Rounds of polite applause would sound as names were read, until Al Teague's name was mentioned. Beers were abandoned, everyone began clapping and 300 people rose to their feet.

As for the man at whom the honor was directed, geez, he was in an awful state. Teague appreciated the recognition, but he was obviously uncomfortable being in the limelight. Here was a guy who the entire room admired. Why?

Teague is the hero of the salt I discovered, just a regular guy who had a dream

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Lowdown

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the lines of your smoothed-out sled are uncluttered and the lighting is just right. You're happy; the photographer's happy; the camera is leveled and the shutter button is pushed. Now all that's left is to shoot your window card to record your information. Wait! It's blank! This is a very frustrating moment for us. Usually, no information means no photo in the Gazette, so fill out your window card. Maybe even add an extra detail or two for us to include in the caption accompanying your car's photo. This little piece of paper is our most important source of information regarding your ride after we get back to the office.

These points are just a few of the factors that go into what gets shot at the event and what gets selected for inclusion in the Gazette. None of them are rigid "rules", but they may sway us one way or the other when culling down our mountain of photos for the next issue.

Before I wrap this up I should dispel a very common myth at Goodguys events. It's that award winners are guaranteed a photo in the Gazette. Unfortunately we can't guarantee that any car will be in the Gazette. If we did that there would only be award winners in the coverage. Goodguys is about everyone, and we try to make the event coverage reflect that.

I can't say it enough – go to Goodguys events for the fun! Photos in the Gazette and awards should just be icing on the cake, not expected occurrences. See you out there! 

KIRK!

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Rodders Respond

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Plymouth sedan would grace the 'grounds in Columbus.

We live across the border from Detroit in a small town called Belle River. This car is no trailer queen, so we drove the five hours to the fairgrounds. Everybody from the customs agent to people in the Meijer's parking lot were giving us thumbs-up.

You really can't describe the experience of Columbus to someone who's never been - a great facility, incredible people who put the event on, outstanding rods and customs, and fantastic weather. Sweet! 

Thank you Goodguys!

Drew Sprout
Belle River
Ontario Canada

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that he built in his mother's one-car garage and tinkered with it until he got it

just right. In a dozen years, I have yet to find anyone who has anything bad to say about the guy. And although he is retired from active racing, his accomplishments have taken on mythic proportions.

Here, at long last, after a long, weary search, was a true-blue American Hero. People admired him, racers tried to emulate him and fans were in awe of him every time he fired up his midnight blue streamliner and roared off down the nine-mile course in search of another piece of history. As humble as he is fast, this country could use a few dozen more like Teague. Oh, and by the way, he doesn't beat his cheery wife Jane, smoke dope or speed on the street. Maybe that's why he isn't a household name. You think?

Note: Photojournalist Louise Ann Noeth is the authoress of the award-winning book, *Bonneville: The Fastest Place on Earth*, a complete historical review of the first 50 years of land speed racing now in its 7th and final printing. Publisher MBI has informed Noeth when the current inventory is sold the book will not be reprinted. For more details and to order, go to: www.landspeedproductions.biz. 

Good Tips

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the idle RPM amperage is sufficient, as many of the cheaper imported alternators only reach their rated power at higher RPM levels. Belt diameter and the length of belt contact can affect the output as well, so you might want to stay away from "high performance" smaller diameter pulleys.

Like many jobs encountered in building a hot rod, adding electric cooling fans is fairly simple. With good attention to a few principles outlined above, you'll be able to select, install, and wire a set up that will make your rod a little more comfortable and reliable. You never now when the roads will be torn up for construction on the way to your favorite Goodguys event! 

Table Top

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You might have noticed the nerf bar on the front of the truck. Truth be told, I forgot to finish filling in the front pan before it was painted. I came up with the idea of a chrome nerf bar to fill the void and it actually worked out very well in my opinion. I just wrapped a small piece of styrene rod in Bare-Metal foil and made two simple brackets to hold the bar onto the front frame rails. The taillights came from AMT's '57 Chevy truck, the same kit I took the bed from. They look like downsized Cameo taillights but work well with these rear fenders. No sense in muddying up the rear of this truck with a license plate, as the law could never catch up with this hauler anyway!

I hope you've enjoyed my second build for the Gazette, and that my tips

have helped you. Most of what I've learned has been from making mistakes and having to fix them, finding a better way to get the job done. It's the best way to learn, so get to work on your projects!

As always, if you have any questions at all you can contact me through my web site at www.TheFidgiter.com. Thanks for reading! 



Good News

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their sins."

And just think, this One is the very One who has given us all things that we might enjoy it all, from street rod building, to racing...all this to be in proper order after rightfully putting Him first in our lives.

Because of all this, Jeannie and I pray you and your family have a wonderful and blessed Christmas time with your family and friends. And just maybe there might be someone who comes to your house for this special time of celebration who might ask you that question... "What's Out In The Barn?" Without a doubt you'll be able to give them the most important answer!

Are you interested in either sending your son/grandson, age 16 – 19 to a CRA Hot Rod Camp in '09? Perhaps you would consider sponsoring a young guy? Call CRA for more info: CRA, PO Box 309, Valley Springs, CA 95252; 209-786-0524; cra@integrity.com. 



Goodguys Great Northwest Nationals Gazette Pick - cont'd from Pg. 119

TECH INFO

Owner: John Gunsaulis
Spokane, WA

Year: 1932

Make: Ford Phaeton

Engine:

Stock 200ci 1932 four-banger with a Model C head, Tillotson updraft

carb, exhaust made from a 1936 torque tube.

Drivetrain:

Three speed transmission

Chassis:

Stock frame, brakes, axles.

Wheels/Tires:

Kelsey Hayes wheels, 5.00-16 front tires, 8.90 rears.

Body:

Australian 1932 Ford Phaeton, chopped windshield, custom mixed Martin Senour paint by Russ Freund.

Interior:

Stock, custom tonneau cover by George Frank.



Goodguys Great Lakes Gazette Pick - cont'd from Pg. 201

TECH INFO

Owner: Erv Woller/Ring Bros.
North Lake, WI

Year: 1969

Make: Camaro

Engine:

474ci Stroker, Kaufmann Racing Equipment CNC ported aluminum heads, Pro Systems 1000cfm carb, Hurricane intake, Hooker headers, owner fabricated NASCAR side exhaust tips, Ford 9", Detroit Locker, 3.70 gears, Moser axles.

Chassis:

Rewelded and smoothed stock frame, Air Ride tubular control arms, Hotchkis sway bars, Air Ride Shockwaves, Wilwood rotors and 4-piston calipers.

Wheels/Tires:

17 and 18" Boyd Smoothie II's, 245/45/17 and 274/40/18 B.F. Goodrich tires.

Body:

1967 Pontiac Le Mans convertible. GTO conversion, stock body, custom mixed tri-coat paint sprayed by D&W Collision in Archbold, OH.

Interior:

Ididit steering column and wheel, AutoMeter gauges, original seats, upholstery by Maumee Trim, Defiance, OH.