



FUEL FOR THOUGHT

BY LANDSPEED LOUISE

“Accomplishments at Bonneville come when racers conduct themselves with honor and integrity. Why? This sport isn’t about prize money, sponsorship, or lucrative endorsements. Never has been and God willing, never will be. Never.”



Better Together - Why Partnerships Produce Speed Records

At Speedweek this year you may find two entries by steam cars – a first for the sport. Normally I would be elated over such a development in a segment, but the two teams used to be one team – partners who split so acrimoniously that one of them filed a lawsuit against the other.

Ugh!

After spending a great deal of time listening to both sides I opted not to write an article for the New York Times because I could think of no good way through the sourness for the readers of the most respected newspaper in America. No details here, if you want to know, go ask ‘em yourself.

Chuk Williams started his steam speed dream more than a decade ago. Charles Burnett’s “Inspiration” steam record in 2009 gave him more resolve. Harry Scholle convinced Williams to use the new “Cyclone” steam engine he was developing, but then failed to deliver a working engine to Williams in time for the 2011 Speedweek. The partnership unraveled with a vengeance.

Undeterred, Williams found another steam engine, hauled “Steam Speed America” from Florida, won high praises from the BNI technical inspectors and made shake down runs at World Finals last year.

Meanwhile, Floridian Scholle found a new partner, Nelson Hoyes, and they are building a car of their own for

getting wired.

What saddened me most about this situation was the absence of the bond that normally welds partnerships together with such penetrating force that the efforts become magical at times.

Partnerships in motorsports are nothing new. They are forged and fabricated for a plethora of reasons. Successful land speed racers understand clearly that what they are doing together would be impossible alone and none set out to stomp on another team’s dream, or engage in underhanded games. Strutting around with fake smugness or casting artfully crafted mean-spirited innuendos into the community puts you on a fast track for ostracism.

Accomplishments at Bonneville come when racers conduct themselves with honor and integrity. Why? This sport isn’t about prize money, sponsorship, or lucrative endorsements. Never has been and God willing, never will be. Never.

Yes, there are a multitude of small sponsorships, but none hijack the racing program for some trendy marketing campaign, or publicity stunt. A precious few big money sponsors support racers in the upper echelon of the sport where speed costs a frighteningly immense wad of cash to produce numbers north of 400. Without them the sport would stagnate.

Thankfully, the vast majority of big money names come with a healthy respect and rookie humility that engenders a unfathomable reciprocal payback. Case in point: JCB’s Anthony Bamford and his British Dieselmex crew. The guy wanted respect for his company’s new ditch digger diesel engine and instead won the hearts of a nation, industry and sport.

Thank Dieselmex project leader Tim Leverton who made sure his team came to the salt to share. They all went home with so much more than a few records. Leverton understood cooperative integrity was tantamount to achieving team and company goals.

It was the same, albeit on a much smaller scale, in 1950 when Bill Kenz and Roy Leslie showed up with the 777 streamliner. They earned five class records including

the distinction of being the first to park a 200MPH record in the books with a production automotive engine. The Kenz & Leslie auto repair and racing partnership began in 1938, ending in 1965 when Kenz retired. That’s some run boys and girls.

“Bill and Roy were polar opposites,” observed Ron Leslie of Kenz and Leslie Distributing in Wheat Ridge, CO, “but they had a combination that worked. Dad was the midget expert, but on the salt it was all Bill; he had an innate ability to reason out a solution and could first build something in his mind. They both had viewpoint, but respected each other’s talent in particular areas.”

Dave Macdonald and Lionel Pitts agreed it is impossible to run a car all alone. They became pals in the 1960s, bought and raced a number of various cars taking turns driving until Lionel found ’82 Pontiac Firebird that led them into their “F-body” wonder years.

You might think in 40 plus years they had a few good battles of will. Forget it. Those two have never had an argument. Why? Mutual affection and respect.

“It’s always been about getting the car to go fast and taking down another record,” said Pitts with his signature supreme casual coolness, “I thought Dave had more experience and should drive for the fuel records, so I go after the gas records.”

They have only one firesuit and two helmets, never try to “one-up” each other because the partnership is all about getting the job done on every run.

“Lionel is lay back and I’m a ‘Type A’, you know, run, run, run,” chuckled Macdonald, “I’m the motor guy and he is the detail guy. We have a big checklist and he covers most of it. Lionel is my stabilizer, someone I can rely on without hesitation.”

Apple farmers Richard Thomasson and Ed Tradup are renowned for their “Danny Boy” lakester and streamliners. They met because Ed could TIG weld and Richard needed lots of modifications and repairs to his Swedish motorcycle.

When they decided to go racing together in 1975, the foundation was that whatever they did would glorify Jesus Christ in all facets of their racing program.

“We keep it fun and the struggle for funds makes us take our time,” Tradup said with effusive laughter, “We flipped a coin to name the car, pick its number and who would drive.”

The partnership is loaded with com-

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Lowdown
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since the Cord 810 - gotta keep it vintage ya know. Utilizing front wheel drive, the truck could just drag its back end around.

With the absence of rear wheels, we had no use for rear wheel wells or wheel openings. This smoothed the bedsides out nicely and provided more cargo room - cargo being another set of doors, a hood and a tailgate. Since we would be driving it from the trailer and into events, we figured we'd need some sort of retractable "helper" wheels in the back under the bed to assist getting in and out of driveways.

As for paint, if the doors and various parts are going to be damaged by dropping onto the ground you would think something forgiving and durable would be in order. Well, that's not how our minds work; we opted for all the metal-flake and pearl we could squeeze on, requiring hours upon hours of sanding and polishing to reach perfection. Why? For maximum shock value when the parts shoot off, of course. To enhance the visual impact we also decided the truck could not be without it's own smoke machine and laser show which would emit it all directions as we arrived.

At this point we talked about the joy of driving the truck into an event as people stared slack jaw at the dragging rear end; sparks and paint shooting off. The crowd would follow us as we slinked to our parking spot. When the audience reached critical mass the show would begin with the lasers and smoke building the suspense. Then, just when everyone was fully enthralled...BAM...the parts go flying off, crashing to the ground. Jeff and I would walk away calmly, not even looking back, as we headed for the swap meet.

As the evening continued, so did the flow of beer and "great" ideas. I'm sure we thought of even more necessary details to achieve the true Ultimate Show Truck, but the rest are lost to history. The only dilemma bigger than who would get to drive was how we were going to top this id[ea] the next time these two buddies got together to have a good time at a car show.

Readers Respond
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weekend. I am mailing a check for \$100 to each student organization that was represented that weekend- the BNHS Cheerleaders and BNHS Student Council. The remaining portion of the donation will be applied to the NEF Encouraging Excellence Scholarships that are awarded by the Foundation each year.

Thank you for coming together to support our community! And thank you Goodguys for your generous donation!

Kim Schultz
Via email

Kim, thank you for getting involved. K!

Fuel For Thought
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-mon goals and common beliefs. They are currently building a new streamliner hoping to see 400 and fetch back a few of their previous class records while having good time.

"We know when to push each other, when to recede and we don't always agree," Thomasson offered up, "Dan Warner gave us our first rule book, which we realize now was the first step to perdition."

Oakland, California teenagers Gary Hartsock and Jack Solomon attended the same high school in the '50s, became car crazy almost simultaneously and joined the Knights Car Club, which led to their partnership after buying the club's deuce roadster in 1967. The deal was each would build a racing flathead and would drive their own engine.

"Were on the same level on what we enjoy," said Solomon, "We both want to set Bonneville records."

The decades old partnership was strong enough to survive the massive wildfire that destroyed their car, tools..., everything. For 2013, Hartsock, 75 and Solomon, 73 are finally getting serious about earning a red hat and hoping the Kroyer-built Chevy V8 will get them the

required time slips.

"We're hoping, keep trying, struggle along but have great fun," said Hartsock.

That's the whole point. **GG**

Bangin' The Gears
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county road to the museum, but a glint of sun off automobile glass hidden in the tree line stopped us. Not one, but fifty-sixty autos lined a fence...gotta stop! We asked the owner if we could 'look.' "Sure, there's cows and goats in there. Oh, might be some Bull snakes, too." Lots of fifties and sixties cars...in one of the ravines '60s cars were piled on top of '50s cars, on top of '40's cars and under those, '30s. It'd take a massive effort to salvage them and there were hundreds of cars in several ravines. We spent four hours there, then drove to the air museum. Two guys came out of the hangars as we pulled in, one, the owner, gave us a personal guided tour. There were historic Bi-planes, early Iowa aviation memorabilia, some WWI and WWII stuff - Americana is alive and well off the Interstates and it looks better thru the windshield of a hot rod or a kustom. After spending several hours there, we continued across southern Iowa, home was 700 miles away.

At least, that's the way I remember it.

- Roger

Now available - The fifth book in the series: *Faded Thunder*, stories of Denver hot rodding, cruising, car shows, drag racing and general chaos on the weekends. Don't forget to check out my recently "overhauled" website: www.RAJetter.com to order the fifth book personally autographed.

Good Tips
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more plywood for your next attempt. You can go so far as to finish the entire mock-up job with glued up wood until you have settled on your final version. In fact, if you wanted to make the final part as a casting, this wooden model can be smoothed with Bondo until you have a pattern the foundry can use to make the forms. The wooden parts can be used as a pattern, or your drawings/sketches can allow the building of your steel parts.

Again, this is a very loose illustration of how a part gets designed. In essence you are locating the necessary holes and then using basic rules of hole to edge distance to let the part tell you how it should look. Our purpose here is to show the thought process that succeeds in the real world. **GG**

Sam Says
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No. Does it need to be the latest and greatest? I think most of us are beyond that. Just like a train wreck, some of the "shock rods" that are out there draw crowds, indeed. But in a world where trends come and go at an alarming rate, try not to get caught up in the game of impressing the masses with something they haven't seen before. Instead, do things to the best of your ability with the resources you have. Also, if you are so inclined to log onto the internet, remember that most sites are a high concentration of like-minded individuals, and their influence should be taken with a grain of salt. And above all, if your friend's last name happens to be Jones, don't think that you have to keep up with him! **GG**

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