



FUEL FOR THOUGHT

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THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

They are, for the most part, the invisible people. They perform assigned tasks quietly, cheerfully, for the love of the sport and to keep the racer safe. They are volunteers – the backbone of land speed racing's three sanctioning bodies: SCTA, USFRA and ECTA. Let me tell you about just one.

For 20 years, a double decade, Nevada resident Dave Newby has greeted nearly every person who ventured onto the salt during Speedweek and World Finals. Very seldom in all that time has he ever watched the fabulous cars, trucks and motorcycles run – the pits and starting line are just too far away. No matter. Dave stays and plays his part, that of salt centurion, Director of Security to be precise.

Why? "I enjoy the work and the people," he said with a big smile, "I've made a lot of friends over the years. It's like a big family. They come back year after year, and I offer congratulations for records and consolations if they blow-up their toys."

A happy, congenial fellow with rugged features, Newby, 64, oversees gate receipts, program sales, traffic control, parking, credential inspection and orchestrates 24 hour a day pit security. That last bit means all the racers can safely leave race vehicles, trailers and equipment without worry. Never has a car, or trailer been stolen on his watch. Not one in 20 years.

Few people know that for years Newby worked a full-time job in Wendover on graveyard shift and then came out to the salt and pulled another full-shift for the racing community. Occasionally, he has also used vacation days to keep the salt secure. Volunteers do those kinds of things without being asked. Volunteers are people not to be taken for granted.

You can easily spot Newby as you approach the end of the three-mile access road hoping to wander onto the salty speedway of dreams; he's the one in uniform, but had few problems over the years.

"I've had to ask a few rowdies to leave and had others who objected to the \$5 pit pass, but when I explain to them that a movie will cost \$10 and only last 2 hours, but the pit pass is \$5. and lets you stay ALL DAY then they recognize what a good deal we have."

His reputation for keeping the salt as safe as Fort Knox has also brought other interesting assignments include providing security for private time speed events set-up by Britain's Richard Brown riding a rocket-powered bike, some tire testing projects and then Craig Breedlove in 1996.

"They made some fun runs, got stuck in the mud a couple of times, but mostly the car just sat there under the tent while the crew entertained sponsors and the press," he recalled. "They spent a lot of time taking pictures and putting on stickers."

Unlike Breedlove who never stopped, actor Patrick Swayze who filmed a movie a year later, always acknowledged Dave and his staff, "The production company fed me and my security crew; Swayze was so fascinated by the vehicles that he wandered away from the set to watch the races and held up production."

Andy Green, the ThrustSSC driver, shook Dave's hand and got in without a pit pass, "I figured if he drove all the way from Black Rock on his day off, I could help him enjoy his visit to the USA." Art Arfons remembered that Dave's late wife Carol used to serve him at Anna's Kitchen in the 60's! The crew of the Enola Gay told him during the dedication ceremony of a memorial statue at the Wendover welcome center that the salt was a lot thicker in the 40's, almost as high as the surface of the road!

"I've gone out on the salt by myself to reminisce and just be quiet," he confessed, "The salt gives you a great sense of contentment; it's very relaxing." Newby is never alone on the salt. Accompanied by "Shultzie," his seven-year old "Canine Commander" the feisty salt and pepper registered toy miniature schnauzer chews up rocks for fun.

"I have always wished that I could run a car on the salt," he mused openly, "but the only time that has happened is when I was forced to chase down some gate crashers I'll never drive a real racecar because I don't have the experience or the talent. Besides, the racers have invested too much to let a novice like me go down the black line for a fun run." Oh Really? Hey Dave, If I had a ride, you have one too! Thanks for all the time you've given land speed racing!

Dave is battling cancer this year, but will nevertheless be out on the salt, so stop and take a minute to meet this unselfish, dedicated man if you haven't already done so because he is moving to Salt Lake City to be near his kids and grandson William. The chemotherapy hammers the immune system and he has to stay out of bright sunlight, but rest assured, if you're on the salt and Dave's there, everything will be just fine.

"He quipped, "If I can make one more year, I will finally be legal, 21 and free!"
Go Dave