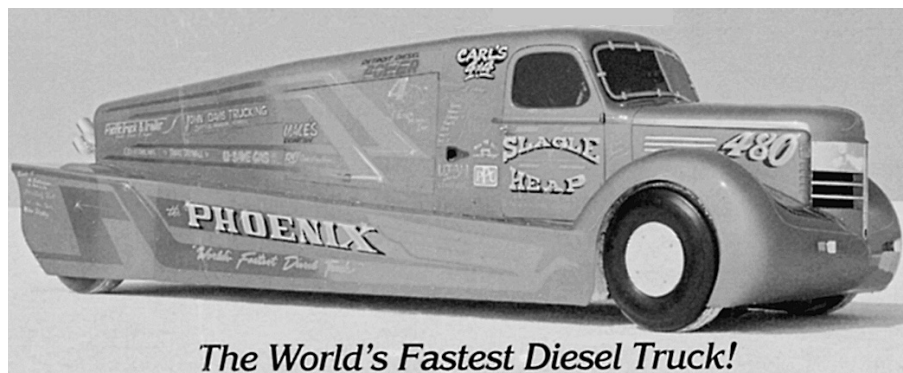


Fuel For Thought

with "Landspeed Louise" Ann Noeth

A Boy and his Toy



The World's Fastest Diesel Truck!

It's big. Mighty big.

It's fast. Jaw dropping fast.

It's green. Flashy emerald green.

Girls and boys, moms and dads, meet the Phabulous Phoenix, the world's fastest diesel truck that flicks through the light beams at more than 272 miles per hour. Its driver is a gosh-darn friendly fellow from Grant's Pass Oregon — Carl Heap.

Heap, 62, who makes everyone who visits his pit area feel welcome, could be described as the "Mr. Rogers" of the salt. It was nearly two decades ago when together with truck pulling buddy, the late R.B. "Bob" Slagle, the pair came up with the idea for the big truck that turns heads wherever it goes.

"We were looking around to do something with more horsepower when another friend of ours invited us to see what goes on out on the salt," said Heap of his late 80's salt baptism, "We thought, 'gee, that looks easy,' the existing record was

172 MPH and we bet 200 MPH would be no trouble at all."

The Phoenix, a former dilapidated quarry truck rose from the rust and debuted in 1989, ran 154 MPH and promptly roasted the clutch into oblivion on the first pass. They were back three months later and laid down two passes good enough for a new record at 184 MPH.

"We were full of ourselves," chuckled Heap as he recalled his early land speed racing attempts, "We thought we had it made and didn't realize that we had been bitten by the salt bug; here we are 15 years later still beating our heads on the rock salt."

When the Phoenix rumbles off the Bonneville starting line drawing from its 4000HP Detroit Diesel 16V-92 engine no one can ignore its departure. More than a sight, as the four turbochargers and two superchargers spool up to power, the Phoenix spews sound waves pulsating outward as a boulder would do after whacking the surface of a still lake.

Even if you are not on the starting line, you know the green giant is

on the course because the sound of the screaming engines combined with the billowing black smoke flying out of the exhaust stacks demands attention. Each pass possess a hypnotic attraction as your brain struggles with believing that something so big can go so fast.

"The Phoenix has opened the eyes to many that there are other types of vehicles that offer a great challenge in our sport that don't look like a roadster, lakester or streamliner," noted SCTA Chief timer Glenn Barrett, "It's great to see Carl and his crew come back year after year pursuing goals because they demonstrate that they are people who don't just talk, they do something about it, every year the truck gets improved." That's why the Phoenix turns heads when it runs, creating a wall of 'rail birds,' everyone stops, walks to get a good view of the course and watches it run.

By 1992, the Phoenix had a partially streamlined body with R.B. Slagle running in Unlimited Diesel Truck class and he set a record at 212.478 mph at Speed Week to become the first trucker to enter the prestigious 200 MPH Club. When Slagle died in 1998, Heap assumed not only the driving chores, but became the leader of a merry band of delightful diesel heads.

"I really look forward to who is going to walk around the corner next," explained Heap who takes great comfort in his 'salt kin,' "Whatever aches and pains I might have disappear when I get to the salt, it is a reunion you yearn for every year. The racing is the glue that holds us together, but the people are the most important part of land speed racing."

What's the secret of such success? Heap quipped, "No brains, no headaches", but when pressed confessed, "I tell folks there is no magic at all, surround yourself with good people and everything will fall into place. An old boy taught me that if you get enough good people they push you up, they support you." Just take a look at who makes Carl look good and go fast:

Technical and Mechanical Support Crew

- Shane Davis
- George Neilson
- Pete Schmidt
- Darren Provost
- David Provost
- Bob Wall
- Johnny "Y" Yanutik

Family Moral Support Crew

- Jan Heap
- Travis Heap
- Carla Johnson
- Cindy Cook

Regular Monday Night Crew (they do anything passed their way)

- Kenny Butler
- Roger Evensen
- Steve Evensen
- Tom Evensen
- Dan Frieze
- Dick Howell
- Dick Hunter
- Matt Terry

VIPP Salt Wax Crew (Very Impor-

tant Puzzle Piece)

- Pete Briggs
- Wayne Schmidt
- Bob Steele

Lunch Crew

- Mary Briggs
- Judy Butler
- Sandi Howell
- Merlee Schmidt
- Alice Steele
- Rusty Wall

Fly-In Crew

- Joe Bush
- John Davis
- John Davis, Jr.
- Art Dick
- Carl Jones
- Jim Sullivan

The Phoenix relies on the biggest push truck in the sport - a 1965 Peterbilt that goes drag racing in its spare time. Owned and driven by George Neilson, it regularly turns over 114mph in the 1/4 mile powered by 8V92 engine, half the size of the Phoenix engine. "George does it out of friendship and to get a thrill," explained Heap who puts the Phoenix in gear at 40MPH, pulls away at 100MPH and shifts only twice: once at 140MPH and then into top gear just over 200.

Another who has fallen under the "spell of the green machine" is Ugo Fadini (www.ugofadini.com), a fastidious Italian model maker from Genoa who builds the most extraordinary, exacting replicas on the planet. Fadini has just turned out a fabulous scale model of the Phoenix. The level of detail is astonishing; Fadini is such a fanatic that he apologized to Heap because a FEW of the 400 rivets were not in the right place.

The blame for more speed in 2003 is Bob Wall's fault. To convince an unbelievably Heap that the Phoenix needed more help at the rear, Wall built a model and wind tunnel and spent more than 1,000 hours experimenting in his basement scratching his head and figuring things out.

After fooling around with 14 test versions, a new, tapered tail with a wickerbill was fabricated to reduce back end turbulence and improve the down force. This made the front a bit light, so a wing that looks like a metal detector was added to keep the Phoenix planted on the course.

"The wickerbill and wing added some drag but the increased stability makes Carl feel more comfortable," said Wall, "We heard from so many so-called experts about the aerodynamics that we decided the only way to the truth was to perform wind tun-



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Venue	Year	Class	Speed/MPH
Bonneville Salt Flats	2003	U/DT	272.685
Bonneville Salt Flats	2002	U/DT	263.487
Bonneville Salt Flats	2002	U/DT	254.450
Bonneville Salt Flats	2001	U/DT	251.244
Bonneville Salt Flats	2000	U/DT	231.356
Bonneville Salt Flats	1992	U/DT	212.478
Bonneville Salt Flats	1990	M/DT	188.340

nel tests." In the end, Wall 'donated' 20 more MPH permitting Heap to crank out a 280MPH pass and boost his record to 272.685 mph.

"We never really get frustrated," explained Heap of the long journey into speed, "Its like climbing a set of stairs. First tires were a big problem, and then the transmission was eating itself up until Art Dick helped us jump that hurdle when he built us a proper overdrive transmission. Our latest problem was the wind and aerodynamics, we just gnaw away at each stumbling block that comes along."

For the 2004 season look for Shane Davis to suit up for driving duty this year. Son of trucking firm owner John Davis, Shane's brother, John Davis, Jr., is also a sponsor through the family business, John Davis Trucking, in Battle Mountain, Nevada.

"I've been around big equipment all my life," said Davis, 35, whose wife Kimberly won't let him drive the family vehicle at home, "The Phoenix is a beast of its own, there is nothing else like it. It's a handful to drive and the first time it scared the death out of me, but by the time I had completed my licensing runs, I managed a 199 MPH and couldn't wait to go faster. It keeps you busy, you don't have any time to be scared."

The Davis family met Heap years ago when the hauler truck broke down on the way to Bonneville and limped into their facility. Today, the Davis' not only supply operating capital, but also send a truck to fetch the Phoenix in Oregon, haul it to the salt and back home again.

"We found some horsepower laying around in the engine over the winter," announced Heap, who need-

Phoenix Specifications

Owner / Driver: Carl Heap

Class: Unlimited Diesel Truck

Wheel Base: 25 feet

Length: 30-ft - 42-ft w/tail & wing

Engine: 1472 CID Detroit V-16-92

Estimated HP: 5000+

Fuel: No. 2 Diesel w/ additives

Air Supply: 4 Turbo Chargers & 2 Super Chargers

Paint & Body: David Provost

Weight: 18,000 + pounds, 19,000 + with tail and wing

Drive Train: H&S Mfg.

Custom Overdrive: A. F. Dick Mfg.

Rear Drive: 1:77 to 1 Ratio

Main Trans: 1 to 1 Air Shift

Aux. Trans: 4 Speed Air Shift

Wheels & Tires

Front: Boeing 707 Nose Aluminum Alloy Wheels

39 x 13 16 ply tires on Custom Fokker F-28

Rear: Boeing 747 49 x 17 Wheels with H&S Mfg. special adapters

32 ply tires on Boeing 727 Main Gear

*50% safety rating on Aircraft tires

ed eight years to set a record that granted him membership into the 200MPH Club, "Shane will get the truck up to speed then I'll take over and try for the 300 magic milestone. I'll retire after that." Heap also confessed that a long line of people deserve a ride in the truck.

Consider the truck's enormous pit crew - a human stockpile that could easily service a dozen racecars. You can

tell a Phoenix crewmember by the color of their shirt - green. In 2003 there were 107 green shirts in the pits. The core Phoenix crew is comprised of about 14 people with three who really dedicate themselves to the task of coaxing more speed out of the black, smoke-belching behemoth. Heap's daughter, Carla, can be described as "team ambassador" - a sweetheart of a gal who inherited her father's infectious smile and effervescent personality. This trouble-making writer would very much like to see her someday inherit dad's Nomex booties.

Andy Green, a.k.a "World's Fastest Man" got a gander at the Phoenix when Heap and Slagle brought it to Black Rock in 1997. Green remarked that Heap was 'crazy to run the bloody truck.' Heap retorted that if anyone was crazy it might be the fellow who is trying to go faster than the speed of sound on land, "He was over 700 and I was only going 220." Finishing our discussion on crazy, Heap added with a sly twinkle in his eye, "I've never wanted to drive any other vehicle, I think everyone else out on the salt is crazy, I think the truck is the only safe thing out there."

"Who needs a plastic surgeon when you have Bonneville?" joked Heap, "All you need is a good fast run down the course to keep your face stretched tight. Seriously, I get psyched up before a run and get a little case of nerves until the starter says 'go' then I totally relax into the run until she gets near the 5-mile when it creaks and groans and it scares the liver out of you. I pull the parachute; wait for it to hit and then everything is OK. If the tachometer needle reads something that I've never seen before

I think 'Ah Ha!' I wonder what this is going to be' and can't wait to get out of the truck to talk with Cris and Ed Shearer."

How much does it cost to run the Phoenix? What good would it do if you knew? Heap knows that if he figured it out he would have to tell his wife, Janice, and then she might divorce him, so as long as there is enough there to race it, that's enough knowledge for everyone. Heap encourages anyone interested in land speed racing to first come to one of the speed events at the salt and look around. "Pick out what you like," he counseled, "You'll see something that you think you can do better than the next person. C'mon over and kick a tire at our pit anytime, me and the crew would love to meet whoever you are!"

In my opinion, Carl Heap has no place in land speed racing, because he IS land speed racing. Heap and his merry band embody the true spirit of the sport. Their contributions expand the dimensional quality of the great American Spirit. God love 'em and keep 'em all.

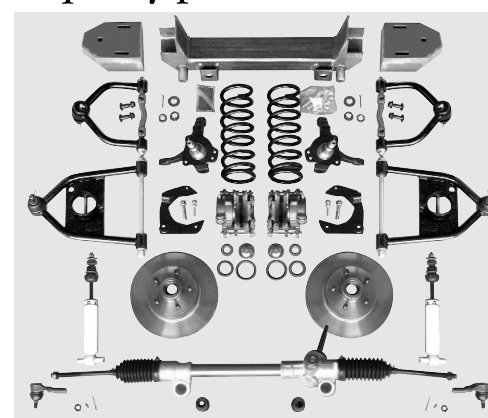
If you are looking to pry speed secrets out of this daring diesel man bring along some rye whiskey and soda, Windsor Canadian in particular might do the trick. 🍷

Louise

Author's note: Long-time Chief Timer Glenn Barrett has announced he will relinquish "the best seat in the house" and retire this year. He, wife Carol and their perky puppies are moving to the St. George, Utah area. Fare thee well, Mr. Barrett and thanks for all the time slips.

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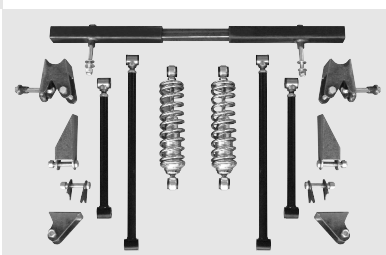
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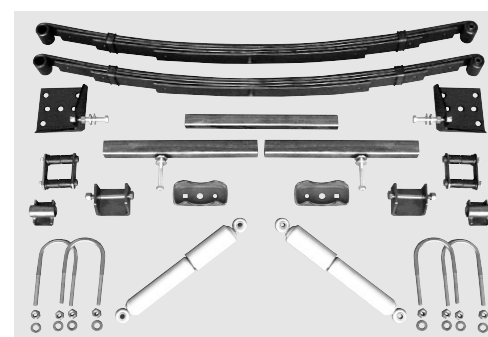
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