

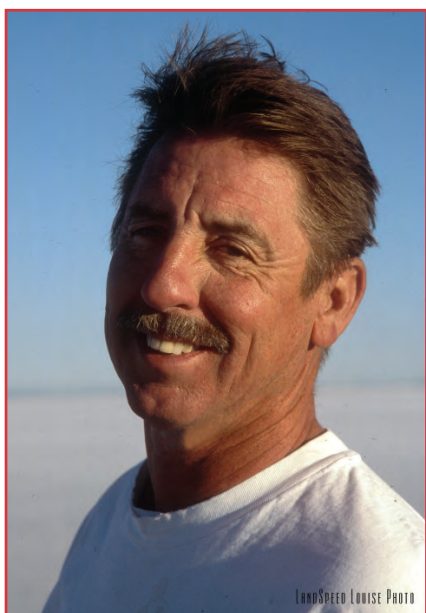


# Fuel For Thought

*Landspeed Louise*

## Preventing Camera Collisions

Around Thanksgiving last year Chrysler began airing a series of TV ads promoting their Ram truck product line-up. Dubbed "HEMI proven, A history of Performance" it touted the virtues of the engine with three historical action sequences – one of which happened to be of Al Teague driving his hand-crafted Spirit of 76 midnight blue streamliner to its 409 World Record in 1991 on the Bonneville Salt Flats.



It was a slick job of drawing you into wanting to be part of the HEMI heritage, that if you believe the history you must want to buy a RAM truck. Go watch it here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjdFHGoNMTE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjdFHGoNMTE) and then come back and read on.

Back already? For those of you who didn't go watch the commercial it starts with narration by actor Sam Elliot speaking with easy-on-the-ears, yet slight gravel intonations: "Long before a HEMI engine powered a Ram truck, it was born up here (cut to action sequence of XP-47 airplane) tested down here (cut to action sequence of a pair of top fuelers launching off the line at the 1964 NHRA US Nationals) and proven beyond a doubt out here (cut to action sequence of Al Teague driving Betsy) and is only available in a pick-up under here (cut to truck with hood slowly closing followed by quick, sexy macho cuts of the truck acting like a truck)."

When I first saw it on the tube I thought, "How nice that Al was remembered, recognized by Chrysler after all this time, especially since the car is now in a Salt Lake museum."

I called Al and his wife, Jane, to wish

them both happy holidays, kidding Al a bit saying that I hoped he had bought Jane a nice present out of the wad of dough he made on the commercial.

What he told me kicked off a five-month "truth and justice" hunt, because you see, Al was never paid a single red cent. I was flabbergasted and flummoxed on a number of fronts.

First, that Chrysler thought so highly of Teague's motorsport accomplishment to use the historic footage to sell its trucks, but had not thought Teague worthy of any payment for participating.

After all, as far as I know, Al Teague is the man who has made a HEMI run faster than anyone else on earth – that includes every single blessed engineer at Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth now or ever – thank you very much.

Further, it was Al Teague's life and reputation that was on the line when he went hurtling through space and time chasing world record glory – not the Pentastar crowd back in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

And if Mark Dees hadn't stepped up and paid the FIA fees for him, there would have been no world record record. It is no secret Chrysler never

suppliers that stepped-up and helped out here, there, anywhere in whatever small or larger way they could as the years rolled by.

For example, from Al's drawings Tim Rochlitzer would bend chassis and roll-cage sections in his Santa Barbara shop and then ship them off via UPS to Los Angeles. This went on, back-and forth, for months – never once did the box include a bill.

There are several dozen stories like this, all the people who stepped up with time, talent, teamwork and a dab of cash on a rare occasion to help a simple, humble guy live his life's dream.

Each and every time Al and Betsy roared down the course, they would stop the action all across the salt: in the pits, on the starting line, in the staging lanes, tools were laid down and everyone turned their attention to the man and his HEMI-powered missile.

All this combined blew my head gasket. How could they do this, especially to one of the sport's most beloved ambassadors? Of all the people to exploit, Al Teague, the hero of the hot rodders, a guy who would do and has done, for anyone who asked, just burnt my toast.

Bill Summers will tell you that once

looked into this deal a little deeper and now, months later, report the details. This is not an attack on Chrysler.

Rather, it is hoped that by sharing this most consternating tale it will prevent other land speed racers from getting swallowed up by big business and blinded by momentary media dazzle.

In the fall of 2010, a gal from an advertising agency in Texas telephoned Al asking for footage of his streamliner setting the world record.

Al, of course, being a racer and not a film producer, only had VHS tape copies (pre-DVD) of his historic run, not original footage or master tracks but nevertheless offered to send them along to the sweet-thing in the Lone Star state for a look.

Many weeks later Al's materials reappeared on his doorstep, no note, no thank-you, no nothing. Puzzled, Al was simply grateful to have his items returned.

Then, in late November, the phone calls started coming in from friends telling Al how much they enjoyed seeing him in the commercial.

Trouble was, Al knew nothing about it. Al casually remarked to Jane when he finally saw it, "Nobody ever told me they were going to use it, but it's a nice commercial." So utterly Al. And had I not called and stuck my nose in the middle of this it surely would have ended there and then.

I tracked down the director who quickly turned me over to the agency reps in Los Angeles who in turn sent me to the people in Texas – the ones in charge of production.

This took about a month, followed by the real cat-and-mouse waltz, cha-cha and Texas two-step by some of the nicest, most pleasant gals I ever spoke to in my life.

The agency bounced me over to the company who handles the rights, the clearances as they are called in the ad business, to make sure the paperwork is in order for the footage to be used. Now that gal only handled the paperwork, the footage belonged to someone else – the BBC in the UK as it turns out.

Each time I made a call there was a pleasant discussion, a bit of follow-up and with another phone call to give me just a scrap more of information about what the hell happened, but each time I was assured that Mr. Teague had signed off on the footage.

This went on for another couple of months, but at no time, even as you read



supported Teague when he dearly needed it, building first the lakester in 1976 and then converting it to a streamliner in his mother's one-car garage in east Los Angeles.

It was Teague's friends and other

the Goldenrod set its 409 record in 1965, Chrysler took back all its HEMI engines from the brothers, so the company doesn't exactly have a generous reputation in LSR.

I asked Al if it would be OK if I

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this, did anyone produce that all-important piece of paper with Al Teague's signature on it that said he gave up his rights to his World Record Run.

I made it a point of asking Al if he had done so, but all he could recall was signing a release for a television documentary many years ago and that he signed several "standard" releases through the years.

Here is the point of today's lesson: there is no such thing as a "standard" release – especially one from an independent production company working for a network such as ABC, NBC, CBS, Discovery, TLC, National Geographic, or the BBC.

If the production company doesn't get your signature on a release the network won't use the footage, but what you agree to release comes in as variations as there are color chips at the paint store.

Understand that I consulted a trusted media colleague; a high-powered show business executive in Hollywood to make sure my understanding of the process was crystal clear. Every release is developed by, and for each independent production company. It is THEIR standard release, not something used industry wide.

Such releases often include wording that gives them rights to use the film footage of you and your race car in any which way they want, in perpetuity, as in forever, and wherever they want without paying you anything no matter how much profit they reap.

Read EVERY release you sign to make sure it does not contain such insane verbiage. Where it does, and you don't agree, simply cross it out AND initial it.

Equally important, my colleague insists, is that the release contains dates – a beginning date, a span of time and an ending date.

The point here is that YOU have the right to change the terms that you will agree to, to make it something you can live with down the road.

And if you think it is just a co-incident that the person sent to get your signature is the cute little thing with tight clothes, a great rack and a honey-dripping voice then you best open the nitro can and breathe deep.

The production company wants you to sign off so they can be done with you after that moment. Sure, they might send you a DVD, or they may not, but unless verbal promises are written down, what actually gets done depends solely on the ethical standards the film production folks use – nothing else will stand up in a court of law.

If you don't have time to read the release there and then, because you are probably racing, tell the sweet young thing you want to take the release with you and have her write down the address you can mail it to later.

If the film crew is around for a few days, you can certainly take time to read it overnight and have them return the following day for the signed copy – altered in whatever way you want.

Finally, make sure you insist on getting a copy of what you sign. Even if you only take picture of the release with your cell phone, GET A COPY and then put it in the same place you keep your insurance policies, will and speed secrets.


Look, I know it can be a big deal to get you mug, car and crew on television. But whatever gets done should be mutually beneficial to everyone involved.

Through the gracious assistance of a Chrysler PR person that I worked with for years and whose spouse happens to race on the salt, a conference call was set-up for me to discuss Teague's situation with Marissa Hunter, the head of Ram Truck Advertising at Chrysler Group.

From that conversation a month later came a letter from Ms. Hunter to Mr. Teague that said, in part: "Louise brought to our attention the truly dramatic nature of this feat, and provided a deeper perspective on your career and the loyalty you have for the Chrysler Group. It quickly became apparent to us...we owe you a great debt of gratitude for all you have accomplished on behalf of the HEMI engine. We are truly embarking on a renaissance of change here at Chrysler Group, and the loyalty given by great people like you will help us see our way to a successful and lasting future. We recognize your accomplishments, appreciate your bravery, and wish you all the best."

As for me, I'd still like to see a copy of Al's signed release...

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. After 11 years in print only a VERY limited number of the author's special autographed edition remain. For more details and to order, go to: [www.landspeedproductions.biz](http://www.landspeedproductions.biz). 

## Bangin' The Gears Continued from Page 16

"Well," I said. "I was worried you'd disappeared...I've got to go buy some hair dye now to cover the gray you've given me."

"Sorry man, I'd have been worried too. But like I told you, I am a man of my word...you'll have the money first thing Monday morning."

"OK," I said. "Keep in touch, that '57 was one of my favorites."


Monday morn, just as he said, Western Union called, said my \$300.00 was in from Montana and waiting for me. The extra cash came in handy.

Sadly, I never heard from him again. Have no idea what happened to him, or my '57. Did he keep it, or sell it to someone else. I wonder how many owners it's gone through...that's been forty years ago...I wonder if he reads Goodguys Gazette?

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

Roger


C. Nichols @RibetRodz, THANK YOU for the great illustration of my ol' yellow Image-Maker '57 Chev.

JOURNEY BACK TO THE 1960's! Roger's first two books: *Bangin' Gears & Bustin' Heads* and *Fast Cars, 4 -speeds & Fist-fights* tell tales of car craziness like "rat-racing" on gravel roads, illegal drags on state highways, high school fist-fights and racing with trains. *Recollections Regrets & Random Acts* tells the youthful stories of 11 well known men in the hot rod world. The latest: *Accidents & Incidents*, is rod-running stories. To order each or a package deal on all four, visit [www.RAJetter.com](http://www.RAJetter.com). 

## Good Tips Continued from Page 180

### How should I lubricate urethane bushings?

Urethane bushings react chemically with any Hydrocarbon product. That means that any grease, oil, WD-40 penetrant, white lithium grease, etc will harden the urethane bushings and CAUSE squeaks rather than stopping them! ONLY SILICON based lubricants can be used successfully. Our urethane

control arm bushings are molded with a graphite-impregnated material, and normally need no lubrication. Again, silicon based grease is fine if you prefer to lube them. In our experience, most chassis squeaks are caused by ball joints or leaf springs that require regreasing, rather than the urethane bushings. 

## Good News Continued from Page 202

words my mind reflects back to a young seventeen-year-old young guy whose only on-the-job training was shepherding the sheep flock of his brothers. Even though in succeeding years this young man endured many of life's difficulties, there came a time when a man from another country believed in him enough to give him a fresh chance and opportunity in life. As this young man by the name of Joseph proved what he was capable of doing, he was soon placed in charge "over all the land of Egypt." Genesis 41:40 tells us that Joseph was placed in "charge over" his boss' entire household, and all the people were to be governed according to his word, with reverence, submission, and obedience. "Only in matter of the throne will I be greater than you are." With this brief story I suggest that it is strongly possible that one or more of these young men who attend a CRA Hot Rod Camp will excel in their new found field of motorsports and will one day ascend to a position to help keep the sport we love alive and growing.

Years ago CRA sent out an envelope with its mailing, and on the envelope in place of putting a 'return' address in the top corner, a brief question filled those lines. The question asked was this: "What is one soul worth?" One CRA Hot Rod Camp, and you, can make a world of difference in a life, and we thank all who have taken part over these past years. Indeed you have made a difference for the many young guys who have attended throughout these past years. And now, thanks to Goodguys for their support, and for President Dave Smith of Factory Five Racing, the beat goes on...and on...and on!

Are you interested in either sending your son/grandson, age 16 – 19 to a CRA Hot Rod Camp in 2011 or 2012? 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](mailto:cra@integrity.com).

## Flashing Back Continued from Page 203

American dollar was lots stronger than the Canadian dollar, so you could buy cars really cheap. Also, I was buying Corvettes from Canada that had no miles on them because guys wouldn't drive them during the winter. Beautiful cars! More cars that I could retail here, so I was looking for avenues for sales in other

## Classic Goodtimes!

Goodguys Goodtimes Gazette  
December 1997 – Vol 4, No. 12

At Goodguys the traditional Christmas issue is anything but traditional. With a little magic from Photoshop we created the ultimate hot rod sleigh with all the Goodguys elves goofing off as usual! Along with some holiday flair the issue contained all the quality event coverages and articles that members have come to enjoy.

