

Fuel For Thought

Landspeed Louise

Boys of Bonneville

Heads up hot rodders! Look lively land speed racers! There's a new "movin' pitchure show" ya just gotta see. Boys of Bonneville is what film people call a documentary, but what I call a marvelous home movie. Home, as in Bonneville, the place where speed can always be found waiting for you to try.

This wonderfully crafted documentary has absorbing historic footage combined with a fine cross-section of folks who speak with authority (Hugh Coltharp, Gordon E. White) and sometimes only awe (Jay Leno) about David Abbot (Ab) Jenkins (1883-1956) whom many steadfastly believe is the "Father of Salt Racing: and his son, Marv Jenkins.

It was Ab's dogged determination that put the Bonneville Salt Flats on the international racing map, not to mention the hundreds of speed marks he set there proving the salt's worth.

Considering his limited resources, Jenkins racked up remarkable achievements. What distinguished him from his contemporaries was his precise use of local, "tribal" salt knowledge and unlimited guts. He was a deeply religious man who put his faith in God, and by God, he went far.

Jenkins was often oxymoronically called "The World's Safest Speedster" because he set more world records than any other driver, past or present, yet he

"The film chronicles the Jenkins family amateur racers who set practically every distance record there is - kilometer and mile - 17 are still standing," said Hugh Coltharp, "And they did it under absolutely terrible conditions. Today if you are tired, you go sit by the pool, or relax in your air-conditioned hotel room".

One-time considered Utah's "one-man public relations machine," Jenkins racing fame got him elected Mayor of Salt Lake in 1940 without ever giving a speech, or spending a nickel on a campaign. He served until 1944.

Ab Jenkins was the certainly the first person to catch "salt fever" and luckily he passed it on to succeeding generations. When Jenkins died at age 76, on August 9, 1956, the world was a little slower for him having done so.

If the film has one flaw, it failed to clearly document that it was Jenkins, and his son Marv's, super human driving efforts on behalf of General Motors Pontiac Motor Division that caused the executives to change the car's boring "Series 860" name to "Bonneville" when they set dozens of speed marks out on the salt. It is the only car in the world that "earned" its name and not simply "given" its name. The comments from Donald Davidson would never be missed especially if it replaced with the Bonneville

When writing my book, Bonneville Salt Flats, I was privileged to be given unrestricted access by the Jenkins family to their personal files and photo collection. I spent several days in Noma and Marv's St. George, Utah home researching the early days of the sport going through Ab's entire career. It was a phenomenal collection of documentation, photos, letters and personal commentary of the era.

I came away thinking, "There ought to be a film made about these two" and now there is. Although the Jenkins name has faded away in motor sports, Director Curt Wallin has done a masterful job in resetting the consciousness level together with great editing and well-paced, informative writing that even a Hampton Socialite would be happy miss a nail appointment to see the film.

Back in 2007 John Price, a wealthy Salt Lake businessman in real estate whose 501© (3) private foundation is primarily a supporter of the arts, tapped Curt Wallin to do a 20 minute video for his auto museum on Ab Jenkins Mormon Meteor.

This "little job" included meeting Marv Jenkins, Ab's Son, at his home in St. George, Utah, during which Marv pulled out a big box stuffed with what amounted to more than 10,000 feet of original film documenting the deeds of he and his hero

Jennifer Jordan came along to rewrite scenes after the crew was told "it's too long" by film folk and picky film festival officials. The resulting 81 minutes (far too short in my opinion) is what made everyone happy.

This is the first feature-length score for musician and composer Gerald Hartley and Wallin tells me that 90% is the original composition with the remainder being period music. If you like the color, feel and graphics in the film, then thank motion graphics artist Steve Smith.

So why isn't this motorsports gem playing in a theater near you? Basically, the same reasons why you can't just show up on the salt and expect to run what ya brung - it's a tightly controlled process.

Considered an independent film, Boys of Bonneville battles against studio films trying to find a slot at theaters. Studios and big production companies (like Spielberg) have tight contracts with theaters, especially chains, to screen whatever they churn out.

For the film's sake, I hope Wallin and Price seriously look into the art house theaters across the country - those independent movie houses where you can see some of the best work in film not homogenized by the fickle and flighty Hollywood system.

For the present, if you want to see this on the big screen, check the screen-



Ab & Augie - Indy



Ab & Marv Jenkins MMIII



Boys of Bonneville - BSF shoot



Patrick Dempsey

was prouder of his million-mile "no accident" street driving record than all his speed and endurance records combined. His watchwords were simple: Safety First.

Moreover, the vintage film footage shows first-hand what a relaxed champion he was - exiting his Bonneville Salt Flats racing machines after grueling 24-hour endurance runs as though he were climbing out of a limousine on Broadway.

It took several decades to topple Jenkins exhausting, 48-hour endurance record. As for the marks that have fallen, it required the efforts of several drivers compared to Jenkins single-man driving shows. However, many records still remain intact today.

renaming.

"Curt got this film about as right as you can," noted Coltharp, "He had several versions: 7.5 hours, 3.5 hours and the 90 minute and each distilling kept the very best each reduction. I'm just sorry they didn't put more in about the Pontiac Bonneville connection."

As Marv Jenkins was once heard to remark, "Before my dad got a hold of it, the Pontiac was a car for retired ministers."

Land speed racing continues today on the flats, it is an iconic slice of what remains of American frontier life, great daring-do with all the ponies now under the hood.

dad out on the Bonneville Salt Flats reaching back to the late 1920s.

"I arranged to get all of it to restored and transferred to digital format," recalled a bowled over Wallin who first thought TV show" from the footage before morphing the project into a documentary, "We bought the film its own seat on the plane to New York with its own personal courier."

Wallin worked alone on the project until 2008 when editor John Greene came on board and together they edited a three and one-half hour rough cut. Michael Chandler, consulting editor and writer, was hired next and brought the material and story to a 92-minute polish.

ing tab on the film's website www.boysofbonneville.com. The Speedweek Screening takes place on Sunday, August 14th at the Peppermill Concert Hall 8PM sharp.

In the future, Wallin promises that new videos segments will be posted on the website, so you might want to check back periodically. A collector's edition is planned for next year that will include behind-the-scenes footage.

So how has this film changed Wallin? This is a guy who knew NOTHING about motorsports when he started. Gratefully star struck is how I see it. What we got here is a biologist-turned-

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filmmaker who now has a big audience storyteller hankering.

"Oh, the adventures I've been on," he recalled with teenage enthusiasm in his voice, "To go around the Indy track riding on the back of a fire truck shooting the Meteor, to meet Jay Leno and film in his garage and to have Patrick Dempsey call me with excitement to say he wants to do the narration. At the Newport Beach film festival hundreds had to be turned away. Parnelli Jones showed up, watched the film and then took me out to dinner."


Then his voice slowed and lowered finishing with, "The hardest thing is that Marv never got to see it, the Jenkins family loves it. The mission for all involved was to perpetuate history, to keep the next generation up on where we have been with the sport of land speed racing."

Wallin, who didn't understand anything about motorsports, has learned a lot about the people in the sport, about their ingenuity and how they push, in earnest effort to ensure this marvelous American sport thrives.

As for me, I think our country could use a good story right now and Boys of Bonneville does that nicely indeed.

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.land-speedproductions.biz. 

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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. 

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They also work very well where much vibration is experienced. Throttle linkages are real good examples of this, and the rotation of the fasteners cannot be tolerated well by any other type of locking device. Just be very sure that at least three threads extend through the Nylon, or the locking might not occur. When Nylocs are used with rubber or

urethane suspension bushings, resist the temptation to over tighten. Use a flat washer, and turn the nut one turn after the washer stops turning. Never reuse Nyloc nuts, as the locking effect is greatly diminished after the first use. And don't even think about using them near heat! See you fastener supply house, or aircraft supply for an all steel locking nut that can take the heat.

It's important to think a little about how your bolts should be arranged in the joint. A little trick that I first heard of around airplanes is to try to have the bolt heads forward, and up when ever possible. The idea is that the bolt shank will stay in place and provide some security even if the bolt breaks or the nut vibrates loose. And, you'll have less problem finding another nut than another bolt.

To keep your Zinc plated Grade 5 bolts looking better, try making a simple mask from cardboard, and then spraying them with a coat of aerosol clear lacquer. This little trick works well on any metal surface, especially when cadmium plated. Air conditioning fittings, gauge sending units, and brake lines would be good examples. A little quick polish with a 3M pad will bring up a nice shine that will last a couple years when sealed with the clear lacquer. We always keep a can of clear around when doing final assembly on a project car.

Another nifty trick for better cosmetic appearance is to use Nylon washers under plain flat washers in order to prevent damage to painted surfaces like fenders. While you are at it, buy flat normal USS flat washers one size under your bolt diameter, for example, using a 5/16" USS flat washers on a 3/8" bolt. They generally will still fit over the bolt, but are tight enough to stay nicely centered. SAE Grade flat washers will fit better as is, but are more expensive, and harder to find.


Here's a fastener identification and torque spec chart for use where no spec is published. 

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air to intercept. Over mainland Russia the jets shot flight 007 out of the sky, and all aboard lost their lives."

Although poor choices may only hurt in a minor way for a while, the longer you go, the more harm they bring, however, once you get your focus right and concentrate on that special dream inside, things will begin to change. Not all problems will immediately disappear overnight, but you will find you respond to them differently. It's then you will begin to confess the truth of Isaiah 54:17 that "No weapon formed against me shall prosper...this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord..."

Are you interested in either sending your son/grandson, age 16-19 to a CRA


Hot Rod Camp in '11 or '12? Perhaps you would consider sponsoring a young guy? Call or write CRA for more info: CRA, PO Box 2029, Branson West, MO 65737; 417-338-8537; cra@integrity.com 

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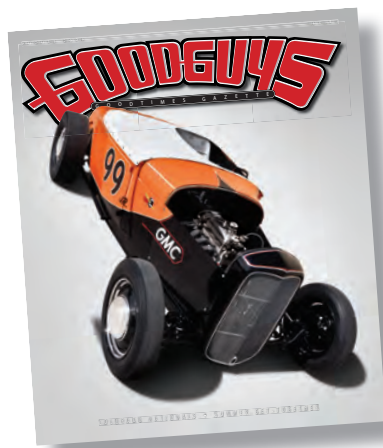
felt almost no pain I grinned; it was the perfect wreck! Even before I raised my head and looked around I was reliving the accident, and in my mind the car hit harder, bounced higher, turned over in the air, then again and again.

I got up, stood, bruised but unbroken. I waved to Jimmy, who was a distant figure midway on the hill. The left rear wheel of my racer was a twisted mess, and after one run my racing was over for the day. But I was ecstatic, the speed trial was a huge success, better than I could have imagined.

Jimmy shouted, began to descend, the small car picking up speed, the white sheet body fluttering. He went past at a fast clip, clear to the bottom and around the curve, out of sight. When he dragged his racer back we discussed our runs in detail, noting every nuance and I relived my wild run repeatedly. What others might have seen as failure I saw as sheer delight; for a long minute I had felt the rush of the wind, and had known the joy not just of mobility, but of speed.

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