Celebrating Some Extremely Fast and Highly Technically Experienced Regional Women in the World of Motorsports Featuring: Sally Donaldson, Samantha Broidy, Jody Peretz, Dawn Hayes and Louise Ann Noeth aka “Landspeed Louise”

By Tim Baer

On the evening of March 8th, in honor of International Women’s Day, I attended the Live Story Telling Event of Women’s Motorstorm featuring the women in motor sports and beyond at the Larz Anderson Museum in Brookline, MA, Museum Director, Sheldon Steele along with support from Vanson Leathers and Training Wheels pulled together a very interested group of ladies in the motor sport world to share some stories on how they got to where they are now. They found a successful woman auto shop owner, a graduate from the Ben Franklin Institute of Technology, a motorcycle speed race, a motorcycle safety training instructor and jet powered dragster pilot.

The event was held in the 1888 Carriage House on the grounds of the Larz Anderson Transportation Museum. The central hall was set up with a small stage and a hundred plus chairs arranged in a semi circle. The soft lighting and the back ground of exotic sport cars in the timber framed bars created the perfect place for a night of telling the stories of life changing road trips, lessons behind the wheel and handlebar,s and surprising adventures. The audience grew to about three quarters of this group. Each of the ladies gave a talk on what they were doing and how they got there. Each working extra hard to overcome the invisible barriers of women in a man’s world. They didn’t need to be as good as their counterpart, they had to be better to succeed and they did. They all went on to be highly respected in their chosen field. Each had comments that drew agreements and laughter from the crowd and the questions at the end were quite revealing in the interest the ladies had created with the audience.

Out of the five women, I only knew of Jody Peretz, the Land Speed Racer, and I was glad to meet the rest of them. I believe I might have met Dawn Hayes at a winter motorcycle show promoting “Training Wheels”, a motorcycle riding training school, as she seemed familiar to me. She had a life changing moment after witnessing a horrible wreck while riding, she decided to continue to ride, and since then has trained over 2000 new motorcycle riders.

Jody Peretz gave an interesting talk on her land speed adventures, she spoke of how rough the ride was down the salt flats and how the motorcycle smoothed out a little even while she was on the 180 mph mark. She also spoke highly about the Vanson Leathers that were custom made for her. She showed a short video of her flying down the the salt flats on her super charged V-twin. It wasn’t the sight of her rocketing down the flat that impressed me, it was the sound of that motor wound out that filled the hall. The sound of that speed increased dramatically as she came closer to the camera, passing with a wicked roar and then slowly fading away as she disappeared in the distance. I almost asked her to play it again, but with more volume.

Last to speak was Louise Ann Noeth, aka Land Speed Louise. She has worn many hats and helmets in her long career, but that night she was wearing many hats of a different color.

Louise was a real lady with a real story to tell. She spoke of the early days of rocket powered land speed attempts, rubbing elbows with the likes of Don Vesco and Sir Richard Branson. She spoke of the history of speed advances and the deteriorating conditions of the salt flats. She went on to outline her journalistic career from her award winning articles and photography to her book, “The Bootlegger Salt Flats: The Faster Place on Earth”. Louise was a real “MOTORMOUTH” as late in the evening, Museum Director, Sheldon Steele had to flag her down to get her to wind up her talk. So he could bring the program to a close.

I really enjoyed my evening with this extremely fast and highly technically experienced women. They are just a small sample of the many great women that are successful in the motor sport world. The audience grew to about three quarters of this group. Each of the ladies gave a talk on what they were doing and how they got there. Each working extra hard to overcome the invisible barriers of women in a man’s world. They didn’t need to be as good as their counterpart, they had to be better to succeed and they did. They all went on to be highly respected in their chosen field. Each had comments that drew agreements and laughter from the crowd and the questions at the end were quite revealing in the interest the ladies had created with the audience.

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Dawn Hayes: Hayes is a television spokesperson, voice-artist actor and performer who spent more than a decade as the television spokesperson for the Massachusetts State Lottery and is instantly recognizable through millions of New Engladens. Looking for a new vehicle? You’ve probably seen her hosting Auto Trader’s new and used car reviews on YouTube. Hayes is the first African American female motorcyle sales instructor in the United States, and has taught more than 2,000 individuals a motorcycle safety training in West Maine. As part of its efforts to strengthen its fundraising and development efforts, DOVE, (Domestic Violence Endorsed) recently appointed Dawn as their new Director of Development & Communications.

Master Mechanic Sally Dawson is the owner of Foxy Auto in North Reading. Sally began working in her father’s automobile shop in her early teenage years; she spent years learning the trade and becoming familiar with the business. Now, she is the owner of one of the few female owned and operated auto repair shops in the country and represents one of the two percent of female mechanics in the country. She has been featured on the Today Show and more recently in the March 2017 issue of Motor Magazine. Her classes at the Lanz Anderson Auto Museum, the Fearless Females: Automotive Care Car Series, have educated the public on vehicle maintenance and empowered women to become more comfortable and knowledgeable about their cars.

Samantha Briddy is a recent graduate of Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology in Boston, MA who has quickly been promoted to a Service Advisor at one of the prominent car dealerships in Massachusetts. Briddy played an active role representing women at her college and is still enthusiastically involved today. Her college thesis, Women are Underrepresented in the Automotive Industry, highlighted the gender statistics and the challenges some women have faced, to prove women’s underrepresentation throughout the industry, while highlighting the importance of women in each aspect of the industry and why they are necessary. Briddy remains an active alumna of the Automotive Program at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology and often speaks to young women about the challenges, advantages, disadvantages, and life post-degree for women in the automotive field. Briddy was recently featured in the Boston Globe article, “Women Gearing Up for Careers in the Auto Industry.”

Jody Perewitz is “the fastest woman on an American Motorcycle.” In 2011, Perewitz set a world Speed Record at the Bonneville Salt Flats, becoming the fastest woman to ever ride an American-V-Twin powered motorcycle over 200 mph! In 2016, she established a new world record once again, becoming the fastest woman on an American Motorcycle, while also putting both her bikes in the 200 MPH Club. She has won an astonishing 15 Land Speed Records, 4 National #1 plates (AMA Records), and 1 World Record. She is also the Manager of Marketing for the national-owned and operated auto repair shops in the country and represents one of the two percent of women in the automotive field. As part of its efforts to strengthen its fundraising and development efforts, DOVE, (Domestic Violence Endorsed) recently appointed Dawn as their new Director of Development & Communications.

Louise Ann Noeth is one of the few women auto writers/racers in the United States. After several years of touring North America as a professional auto racer with a 250 MPH jet dragster, she turned to journalism and eventually founded Land Speed Productions in 1984. Her award-winning writing and photographic works have been published around the world. Her client list includes well-known names such as The New York Times, Sports Illustrated, and The Late Show with David Letterman. Noeth has appeared on several auto industry technical committees developing self-regulating guidelines in times, suspension, and emission controls, and has contributed to regulatory discussion with the Secretary of Energy, which has resulted in a shift in national policy. She is also an accomplished motorcyclist, licensed pilot and sailor. Her award-winning book, The Bonneville Salt Flats: The Fastest Place on Earth, is currently in its seventh printing.
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