

You Can't Steer a Parked Car

I'm not normally a big drag racing fan, but several years ago my friend Barry gave me tickets to the N.H.R.A. finals, and I decided to go. My wife, being ever so gracious, quickly bowed out and suggested I take the two kids.

I said, "Come on and go with us honey?"

She said, "No, really. You go." I now suspect she must've been hearing from God.

After a quick stop for ear plugs, we were on our way. The kids were so excited. I could tell we were in for a treat as soon as we arrived. The heavy smell of burning rubber charged our nostrils and the distant clamor of an anxious crowd spilled over from the silver bleachers lining the sweltering quarter mile straightaway. The colorful logo laden racing rigs were sprawled out before us in all their full regalia. I hurriedly drug the kids past the souvenir stands while simultaneously beating them off my wallet like an old pro.

Now I'm not normally paranoid, but as we were climbing the stands I'm almost positive I noticed people staring at my kids. Then they'd glare at me like I was a flaming idiot! It made me mad. But hey, I just figured they were delirious from being packed in there like sardines in that 95 degree heat. What do they know with their big goofy ear phones on anyway?

I wasn't going to let it affect me. If they don't care enough to bring their small children it's not my problem. Not one of them did, now that I think about it. Anyway, we were just in time. They were announcing the first race of the top fuel funny car finals!

Now I'm not normally a whimp, but when those first two cars roared past us at 314 mph with the super subsonic rumble of a shuttle launch, I fear I may have whimpered a little.

After I got my breath back I began to feel heavy, like I might fall over. Then I realized it was because both kids were hanging from me like treed possums. Worse, their ear plugs had rattled out and the next two cars were already on the starting line!

To be honest, from then on, I never knew who raced or who won, and didn't care. The next few minutes were purely a lesson in survival.

I finally screamed, "Let's get out of here."

Both kids just looked at me all wide eyed. Then they said, "What?" At least I think that's what they said. I wasn't sure. I'm pretty sure I heard somebody call me a flaming idiot.

Once we put a little distance between us and the track we began walking around checking out the different racing teams. That part was actually very interesting. You could walk right up to one of the cars and watch as the crews worked on them.

It was great until one of those hot shots decided to crank up one of those two zillion horse power jet engines not five feet from us. The kids took off. I've never seen them run so fast in all my life. When I looked back they were about to catch me!

Now I'm not normally a betting man, but I'd say the odds of this Johnny Bravo ever going back to that track are slim to none. Yet those same races made a completely different impression on my friend Barry's teenage son Christopher. It stirred his desire for working on cars. In fact, he decided that he wanted to join one of those racing teams when he graduated.

Instead of running him down to a shrink like I would have, Barry and his wife actually encouraged him. Christopher talked to some of those racing fellows and found out how to pursue the career. For three years he worked hard and followed their every suggestion. Then last month he beat all the odds, and at just twenty one years old he signed on with one of the top N.H.R.A. racing teams ever; John Force Racing. Wow!

Isn't it awesome how we are each made so unique? Some people dig chasing tornados or leaping from perfectly good airplanes. *Pray for em'*. I have a friend who told me with a gleam in her eye her secret desire is to learn to sew. We all have such different passions.

Some of you may have given up on your dreams. Maybe it's time for you to uncover it again and dust it off a little. I'm sure it's still there, right where you left it.

Just determine to steer clear of the fears and excuses that throw you off track and cause you to slam on the brakes. (*Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Psalms 37:4-5 KJV*)

But anyway- Let's get those engines started! We've run under "caution" too long. God's ready when you are. He can take you to the checkered flag, but as my Pastor always says, "You can't steer a parked car."

-Guy Sheffield 9-19-06