

Photo of the Week



Photo by Duncan Fowler

Dr. Jim and Zach Farbanish sledding on Woodstock Hill last Saturday at and Alpha Phi Omega rush event.

Poetry

I Never Asked

Rajiv Narula
Features Editor

I never asked for the sky,
But I kept a little window open in my room;
For my dreams to soar high and my soul to be free!
I never asked for the ocean,
But my eyes remain moist with tears;
In all my lives, I must have wept enough to fill one!

I never asked for heaven,
But I always gave Peace and Compassion a chance;
For who knows of a heaven after death, maybe we can
create one now!
I never asked for happiness,
But I tried to make the world I live in, a little more joyful;
Because I was taught that happiness multiplies if we share it!

I never asked for material wealth,
But I never had to ask;
The Universe provided me whatever I needed, always at the
right time!
I never asked for your Love,
But I have kept a special place in my heart just for You;
In the hope that someday You will realize, how much I
Love You!

Screaming Eagles: Caracciola and the "Rekordwagen"

Taylor Mextorf
Opinion Editor

The world of the 1930's was very different than it is today. The automobile was a far less common commodity, air travel was a relative novelty, and I would be writing this on a typewriter instead of a laptop. Globally, the world was largely still mired in the economic quagmire of the Great Depression; bloody and horrific wars raged in Spain and China, and an increasingly nationalist and aggressive Germany under Adolf Hitler and the Nazis sought to take its place at the forefront of culture, military power, and economic prosperity in Europe and the world as a whole. Not surprisingly, one of the many ways that the regime sought to do this was by building dominant race cars.

They came to be called Silberpfeil; Silver Arrows, because of their gleaming aluminum bodywork and breathtaking performance. Including such infamous race cars as the Auto Union Type-C and the achingly beautiful and brutally fast Mercedes-Benz W-series, they dominated Gran Prix racing. As impressive as these machines were (and still are), the very few prototypes they spawned were even more capable. The most significant of these one-offs made its mark on history on January 28th, 1938.

Sporting a twin-supercharged, 5577 cc V12 putting out 736 horsepower and a stupefying 737 foot pounds of torque, the modified Mercedes-Benz W125 was dubbed (rather un-creatively) the "Rekordwagen," (Record Vehicle). Even more dramatic than its power and torque figures, though, was its radically streamlined space age bodywork. The original W125 was an open-wheel racer,

and although it was rather sleek, it was too tall, and the exposed wheels created far too much drag and instability. Consequently, the engineers clad it in an incredibly futuristic teardrop-shaped swath of aluminum, which completely covered the internals of the car. In doing this, they were able to achieve an unthinkable drag coefficient of 0.157.

The only kink in the plan was the venue; at the time no tracks in Europe were suitable for the high-speed run. As a substitute (and also likely as another show of national prestige), a particularly long, flat section of the newly built Autobahn between Frankfurt and Darmstadt was chosen. And so, seventy-four years ago this past Sunday, with celebrated German racer Rudolf Caracciola behind the wheel, the Rekordwagen began its run to the record books.

Now it would be logical to assume that the speed attained wouldn't be that fast by today's standards. For instance, the plaque famously placed on the dash of Deuseberg SJ's of the period that certified the car "Had surpassed 100 mph" in testing is a feat completed by many 17-year-olds in their used Toyotas today. You'd be forgiven, then, for lowballing on the speed Caracciola and the Rekordwagen achieved. Anywhere from 150-180 mph would be a perfectly reasonable guess. Alas, though, you would be very, very wrong.

What was achieved on that cold January was anything but "reasonable." The landlocked missile, exhaust bellowing like a Wagnerian Opera, reached a terrifying maximum speed of 268.9 mph! Let's put that in perspective, shall we? The Bugatti Veyron Super Sport, the current record-holder for the world's fastest production car, was verified at 267.856 mph. The fastest speed ever achieved on the infa-

mously fast Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans; 251 mph, was achieved by a Welter Racing Peugeot P88 in 1989 (destroying its engine in the process). The fastest speed of travel recorded in nature, a diving Peregrine Falcon, only reaches about 200 mph. Even the vaunted Luftwaffe would have struggled to keep pace: the infamous Ju-87 Stuka dive bomber that was instrumental in early German successes in the war could only manage a paltry 242 mph. At the time, the W125 Rekordwagen was the fastest moving thing on planet Earth, except for a handful of the most modern aircraft, and a few purpose-built land-speed-record cars that sported massive aircraft engines and were essentially useless at anything other than straight line speed.

Astoundingly then, the Rekordwagen still holds the record for the maximum speed ever recorded on a public road. Taken more broadly, though, the vehicle offers an interesting glimpse into the world of the 1930's, and shows the amazing lengths that the Nazis went in attempting to prove to the world their contrived, nationalist superiority. The most incredible part of the story, though, is that the Rekordwagen was not actually an attempt at a long-standing record. That was supposed to be achieved by an even more potent prototype called the "T80," which sported a modified 3000 horsepower DB-603 V12 out of a Messerschmitt fighter plane, six axles, the most intimidating and otherworldly bodywork ever put on a car, and a projected top speed of 465 mph. However, the outbreak of war prevented the attempt. If it had taken place and succeeded, it would not only be the maximum public road speed, but the all-time fastest wheeled vehicle, and literally the fastest moving thing in the world in its day. Period. One can only imagine.

FML's of the Week

Today, my mom told me to clean the house up because she wants to make good impression on the cleaning lady. FML

Today, I had to Google how to find the area of a circle. I'm working on my PhD in engineering. FML

Today, I had to make a doctor's appointment for my daughter. Apparently she thought it would be better to wipe herself with Clorox tough scrub disinfecting wipes than tell me she'd caught an STD. FML

Today, while waiting outside a liquor store for my boyfriend, a drunk guy leaned over my shoulder, took a large bite out of my burger, and walked away. FML

Today, I was making breakfast. My microwave door was already open, but I couldn't figure that out so I kept pressing the button. According to Einstein, I'm now insane. FML

Today, I received a package from an unknown address. Inside were doll heads and cigarette butts. FML

Today, an intoxicated homeless man tried to chase me out of a McDonald's because he thought I was President Obama. I'm a 26-year-old white woman. FML

Today, school tuition has taken up so much of my paycheck that the only thing I had to eat for dinner was applesauce. FML



"Winter Winner, Chicken Dinner"

DINNER FOR 2
\$9.99

Includes a rotisserie chicken, one side and a salad

Located at the POD
Chickens are ready after 4pm





One stop shopping, you can also pick up milk, Carriage House Breads, Entrepreneur Coffee and a variety of desserts to make it a complete meal

