

Youngest Ever Sets Record At Bonneville



Each year, gearheads and speed freaks descend on the Bonneville Salt Flats, testing the coarse white sands of Utah to see just how fast they can go. And for years, the bikes had to run with the cars. But thanks to Denis Manning and the folks at BUB Enterprises, motorcyclists now have their own speed trials, held shortly after the automobile trials, usually in early

September (see www.SpeedTrialsByBUB.com for more information). The fifth edition of Speed Trials by BUB was a resounding success by all accounts. But for one rider in particular it was a groundbreaking event.

Fourteen-year-old Karlee Cobb, stepdaughter of Klock Werks Custom Cycles maestro Brian Klock, became the youngest competitor ever to set a record at Bonneville last September when she piloted a Buell Blast to a top speed of 110.724 mph in a modified 500cc production/pushrod gasoline-powered class. Not content to have merely one record, Karlee had the guys in the pits remove the Blast's fairing, and she set out again, this time

reaching an average speed of 107.391 mph for a record in a nonmodified class.

"You don't notice until you're out there what a rush it really is!" Karlee said of her record-setting day.

A freshman at Mitchell High School in Mitchell, South Dakota, a city of about 15,000 located 20 miles or so west of Sioux Falls, Karlee was able to run at Bonneville this year because of what some may consider a technicality: in South Dakota the minimum age to receive a driver's license — a prerequisite for running at the speed trials — is only 14. But still, it's hard not to be impressed by this ingénue with a need for speed. "I wasn't scared — more excited," she claims with a teenager's indifference.

Perhaps even more impressive is the fact that Karlee's sister, 17-year-old Erika, is the one who set the record last year at the BUB Trials on the same Blast. True, Karlee broke her big sister's record this year, but perhaps only because Erika decided she wanted to run a bigger bike on the salt this time around. Erika, a senior in high school, merely went out on a 1995 Buell S2 and set another record, reaching 130.392 mph in the P-PP 1350 class.

Still not impressed by Team Klock Werks? Then consider this: Karlee and Erika's mother, Laura, who already has a land-speed record on Klock Werks' World's Fastest Bagger, jumped on the WFB again, breaking her own record with a run of 153.906 mph. (For more on the World's Fastest Bagger, pick up the

May '07 issue of our sister publication *American Iron Magazine*). Furthermore, Michelle Mielke, wife of Klock Werks Service Manager, Joe Mielke, was also a record-setter at the speed trials on her V-Star 650. Yes, the ladies of Team Klock Werks stormed the Salt Flats this year, making Ladies' Day at Bonneville a reality.

"If you pause for just a moment and realize that you're the youngest person ever to get a record out there, and also that my mom, sister, and I are the first mother/daughter/daughter trio in history to ever have Land Speed records at the same time..." Karlee trails off as she remembers the day. "It kind of hits you like, 'Wow, we did it!'"

It's true: the Klock girls are the first mother/daughter/daughter trio in history to hold concurrent land-speed records at Bonneville, earning them a spot in the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum's First Ladies





of Motorcycling exhibit.

For the moment, Karlee is more interested in the Klock Werks goings-on than her big sister, although mom Laura is content to let Karlee find her own true calling. A solid student, she knows that she needs to keep those grades up if she wants to continue racing. As a sports nut whose favorite subject is PE, Karlee plays volleyball, softball, basketball, and track at Mitchell High. She also likes to ride the Buell to school, a fact that must make high schoolers all over the US extremely jealous.

As for Karlee's record-setting run, she remembers that morning vividly. "I felt so many things all put together. Probably the biggest challenge at first is just to get out there and do the first pass, because you don't really know what will happen. [They say] the first pass should never be your fastest, but I went over 100 mph on my first pass, and I was pretty excited about that!"

About the run itself, Karlee comments, "To me it felt slow. There's no trees or things going by you, just wide-open space, so you kind of lose your concept of speed."

When it was over, her folks tried to pull a fast one on her. "My mom and Brian acted all sad, trying to trick me, making it seem like I didn't make it," she remembers fondly. "Then they handed me the timing slip and the minute I looked at it, everyone just started jumping up and down and hugging me!"

Laura Klock couldn't be more proud of Karlee and Erika, "I feel, as a mom, that what they've learned out there and what they've learned with riding are skills that they will use throughout their lives. Challenging themselves, conquering fears, learning to be part of a team, supporting a competitor, encouraging other kids and women, trying new things, etc. It's not all about motorcycling. It's about the spirit of Bonneville. I'm really proud of them."

This year's Speed Trials By BUB take place August 30-September 3. —*Jon Langston*

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