

crowd as a splendid commentary on the good sportsmanship of the automobile race spectator. It refuted most eloquently the all-too-common charge that the race throng is a morbid throng whose attendance is prompted primarily by gruesome anticipations. Not a voice I know of was raised in disapproval. Instead, the telephone in my hotel room rang almost incessantly until midnight, and over the wire I heard fifty or more unfamiliar voices speaking in flattering commendation.

From the drivers, however, there were no encomiums, and while they did not protest to me directly, their disgruntled mutterings eventually reached my ears. The consensus of opinion among them was that I was getting to be an old woman and overly cautious, and they were unanimous in their willingness to go out and drive a thousand miles on the Kansas City track just as it was, holes or no holes.

So is it any wonder that I'm convinced that a race driver will take a car of celluloid and pilot it through the fires of Hell?

Nor is this utter fearlessness a quality born only of the race, a smoldering characteristic that is fired into a flame by the heat of competition to die down when the checkered flag is furled. It is an every-day, every-hour trait that is manifested in the driver's most prosaic activity, and has its genesis, no doubt, in his insatiable hunger for a thrill. No matter what the situation may be, he will do his stuff dramatically.

Never in all my life have I ever heard a more eloquent exclamation of praise than that uttered by Gar Wood, the greatest of all speed boat pilots, at Miami, Fla., one winter.

Twelve of the leading auto race drivers were participating in a speed boat contest. They had traveled

the breadth of the continent, at the invitation of Carl G. Fisher, to try their skill in an alien field of competition, for none of them had ever piloted such a craft before. Several, I suspect, would take no laurels for swimming, while Harry Hartz told me, frankly, that he wouldn't know what to do with his hands and feet if he should fall into the water. Yet these rank amateurs gave an exhibition of speedboat racing that would do credit to the most experienced helmsman.

Apparently, they were just as much at home on the strange water as on the familiar boards of the speedway. They did everything that was in the book of speedboat racing, and threw in a few special and unprecedented stunts for good measure. And even above the roar of the giant aviation engines that powered their spray-dashing mounts, you could hear their shrieks of delight. They were like a crowd of boys at play, utterly fascinated by a new and novel game.

Gar Wood, who stood beside me on the deck of the official launch, was astounded by their daring. At first he was rendered mute by their exploits. And then he found voice to exclaim:

"Don't these men know the meaning of fear!"

In all of Noah Webster's mighty tome, he could not have found eight words more appropriate to the occasion.

These amazing fellows, at time, will do the most amazing things, both heroic and comical.

Yet, on the other hand, this same "fearlessness" lurks in the midst of the blood and thunder that is injected in this super-man sport. Death and frightful injuries so often happen to the devil-may-care drivers in addition to the destruction of their cockle shell crafts.

A never to be forgotten, unmerciful afternoon was