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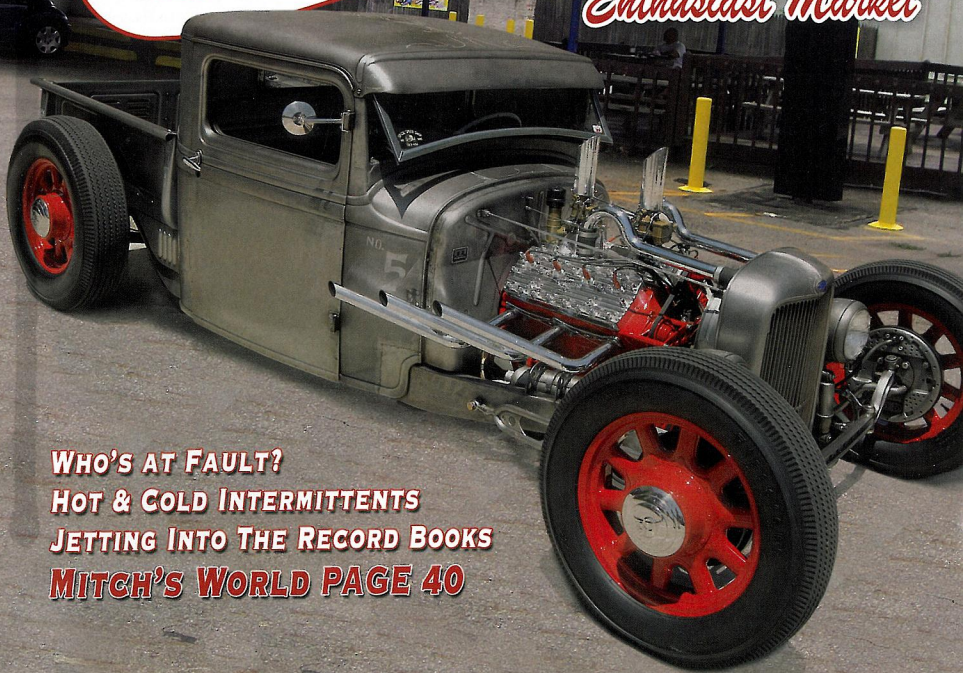
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# UNDERHOOD SERVICE

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**WHO'S AT FAULT?**  
**HOT & COLD INTERMITTENTS**  
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# JET-SETTING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

By Ed Sunkin, Editor

## **Arfons Family Continues Racing Involvement**

*On a visit to Akron, OH, you may get a glimpse of the leisurely traveling, faint-humming Goodyear blimp hovering overhead as it floats gracefully over the Rubber City. And just miles away from where the Goodyear blimp rests, you may hear the thundering roar of a jet-powered turbine screaming to life. Yes, that's right, the city is also home to the jet-setting Arfons family of jetcar racers, mechanics and engineers.*

In a little shop on Pickle Road on the southeastern side of Akron, where, for three decades beginning in the 1950s, racing history was made — or at least built — you'll find “Turbo” Tim Arfons, 51, assembling, tuning and firing up another of his latest jet propulsion systems.

“Turbo” Tim, whom you may recognize as the son of three-time land speed record holder **Art Arfons**, the man famous for his line of “Green Monster” jet vehicles, continues the family tradition of lighting up powerful jet machines at various tracks. But it's not always for record-setting performances. Arfons owns and operates **Akron Turbine Group**, a leader in the racetrack drying industry.

Track dryers built by Arfons are used worldwide, and can be found at NASCAR, Champ Car and other recognized motorsport group race tracks, as well as corporate test facilities around the world including the Motegi Twin Ring in Japan and the Consumer Reports test center in East Haddam, CT.

In fact, when I visited Arfons at his shop recently, he was preparing to head up to Michigan to provide drying service at a corporate track

on a *top-secret* project for one of the automakers.

“Basically these jet-powered dryers remove wetness, moisture and debris on a track in minutes, getting a race or event going before track operators lose money, time or fans,” Arfons explained. “An unexpected rain or accident clean-up can postpone a race, causing more than just

*A peek into the family's speed shop from the early days (right). Art Arfons' jet car at the Goodyear grounds in Akron (below).*





a scheduling dilemma. Financial implications of a delay, or worse, a cancellation, coupled with disgruntled teams, fans and corporate sponsors are the kind of problem every track owner wants to avoid. So our jet dryers are an economical and reliable way to remedy this type of situation," he said.

### Financial Freedom

For the past 15 years, Turbo Tim has been building the track jet dryers, providing the speed enthusiast the chance to follow his true passion — racing down a track. "I've always wanted to be a racer," he said. "The dryer business is what pays the bills and allows me to do whatever I want."

Arfons, who has been driving and designing jet-powered vehicles for more than 35 years, began his own motorsports career on the drag strip before turning to pulling with his Green Monster Camaro and Starfire Corvette funny cars. Known worldwide for his unique jet-powered Quadracers, Arfons earned his reputation as a skilled stunt



Today, the Arfons shop is home to a business that designs and builds jet-powered track/road dryers that can be operated from a truck or pulled along with a trailer.



"Turbo" Tim Arfons on the "World's Fastest Barstool."

Photo courtesy of fastpixs.com

driver by catapulting himself over rows of cars in the Jet Jumper — a jet-powered, customized ATV. He has even designed and built the world's only jet-powered personal watercraft.

Still involved as a jet inspector for the National Tractor Pullers Association and a consultant for the European Tractor Pulling Committee on its turbine rules, Arfons is no stranger to the record books. He actually holds a record for "The World's Fastest Barstool" that he set traveling 40.21 mph at Norwalk Raceway Park, Norwalk, OH, on a jet-powered barstool that he designed.

### Hallowed Ground

These days, Arfons' two-building shop compound on Pickle Road has become a Mecca for speed freaks. For engine enthusiasts and speed lovers, the small shops and fenced area are littered with engine parts, equipment and turbines — making it

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Racing legend Art Arfons' Green Monster at Firestone grounds in Akron, (left) and at the Salt Flats in Utah (below).



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a performance playground. "About once a month I'll have someone stop by the shop and ask to get a picture in front of our sign," Arfons said. "Amazingly, a lot of them are from different countries."

Other times, Arfons said, he'll meet with 70- or 80-year-old visitors at the shop who shake his hand and claim, "I remember seeing you race in the '60s," obviously confusing him with his father and racing legend, Art, who was called by some "the Genius of Junk."

Inside, the small, musty-smelling, wood-paneled office of one of the shops hangs various photos showing some of the 27 Green Monsters built by Art, other racing machines, various racing legends and of course, family members. The black-and-white photos of various sizes on the walls and those filed in metal cabinets provide a glimpse into racing history. Hundreds of photos capture the machines being built and tested in the Akron area, as well as shots of the jet cars being raced in locations out West such as the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. "This is where it all began" Arfons said, motioning around the shop and explaining that his father was supposed to take over the family's horse and chicken feed business in the mill just up the road when he returned from serving in the Navy during World War II. Fortunately for the racing world, Destiny had a different plan for Art.

### Business with Pleasure

But it's not all business for Turbo Tim and his one-man shop. These days, he's also been building a new jet racer that will incorporate an improved design and

state-of-the-art safety technology. "Jet car mechanical operation and design has not changed in 40 years," he said, referring to his father's and competitors' contraptions. "This new technology I'm using is sort of a 'fly-by-wire' design," he said. "This will be one of the safest jet cars ever."

The frame and body of Arfons's new racer is lined with electrical wires of various colors. He said the basic structure of the vehicle is nearly completed, and an engine is expected to be dropped in later this year. But it's unknown if Tim will give the advanced jet car a new name, or keep the Green Monster theme.

Tim also continues to custom build jet engines and offer consultation to other speed freaks wanting to race their own jet cars. He recently built the engine for a jet-propelled Volkswagen Bug that was customized by a Stanford-trained (Ph.D.) engineer from California.

Arfons said his 35 years of jet engine experience and family history pretty much enables him to be able to power-up any vehicle a gearhead may get their hands on.

"This is a great business," he said. "I'm glad to be a part of it."

Note: We'll have an update on Arfons' "fly-by-wire" styled jet car in an upcoming issue of *Underhood Service*. 