

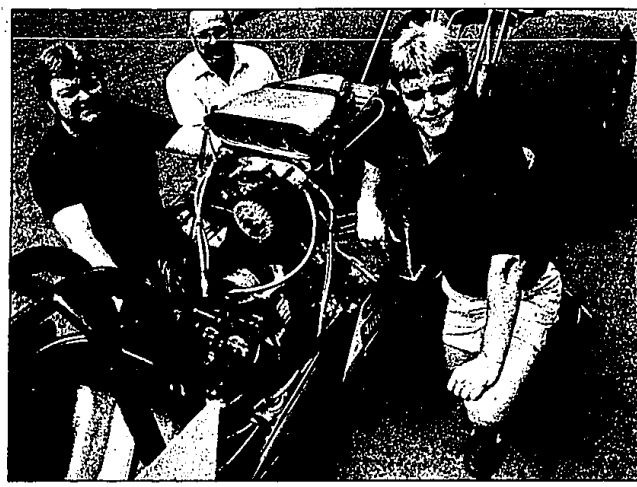
## Fast-paced art

They work with oils and a master of their trade, but their subjects aren't your typical bowls of fruit or serene landscape. These guys are into painting race cars of all shapes and sizes. See Page 6D.

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Members of the Race/QP Team include Dave Bleneman (from left), driver/mechanic; Jeff Neal, designer/crew member; and Bleneman's son Matt, crew member.

## Quarter mile quest: Doing it at 300 mph

By Bill Parker  
staff writer

Dave Bleneman and Jeffery Neal have been acquaintances for 15 years. They've been teammates for three. And now they're on a mission.

Their quest?

To do what no man has done before.

To reach 300 miles per hour in a dragster.

To break that magical barrier, the Race/QP Team, which includes Bleneman, driver/mechanic; his son Matt, crew member; Neal, designer/crew member; Ed Van Horn, crew chief; and Paul King, crew member, is redesigning its dragster.

The body of the vehicle will become longer and more streamlined. The engine will have more horsepower. These changes are geared to produce a new force in drag racing's premiere class, Top Fuel.

"They have tried to make changes in dragsters in the past, but haven't been able to adapt," explained Bleneman, who owns Transmission Specialists in Troy. "When you get into a specific type of racing, a lot of times you get stuck in that technology. We're using a variety of technology to make these changes."

MOST OF THE technical changes are designed by Neal, who has held both technical and managerial positions with General Motors, Bricklin, Ford Motor Co. and Triathlon Corp.

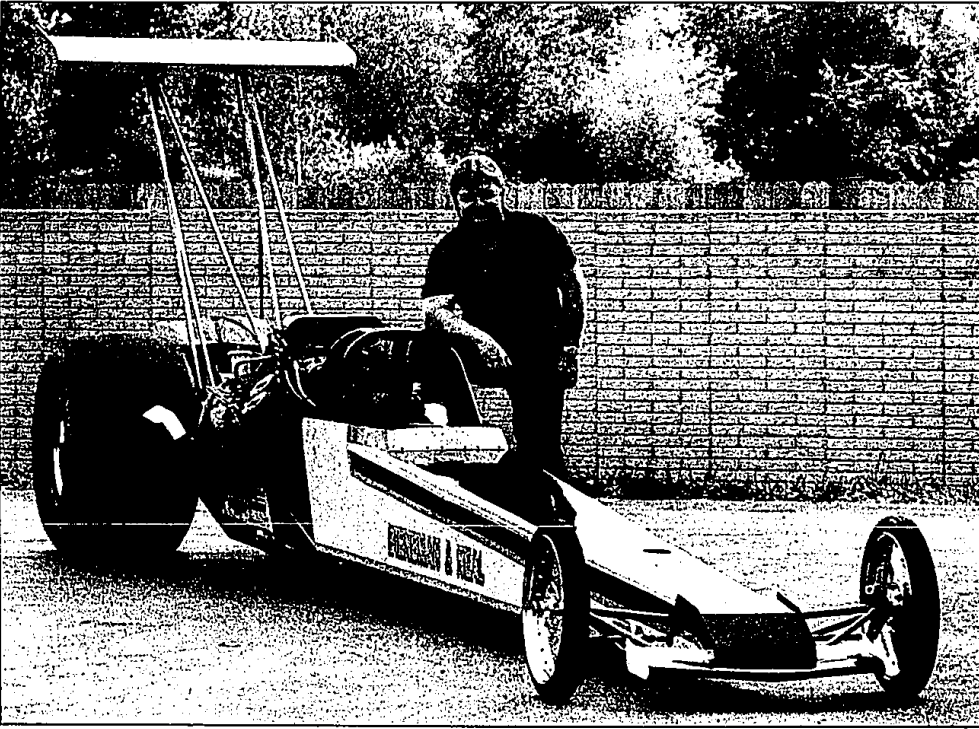
The new design will produce a car close to 50 inches longer than the standard dragster which has a 258-inch wheel base. The new body will be produced from a carbon fiber which is lighter and stronger than aluminum, the material from which most dragster bodies are currently made.

There also will be modifications to the wing at the rear of the car, which should help improve traction, and to "other body parts" as well as internal changes in the engine.

Race/QP is looking at the possibility of using a dual overhead cam engine — the same type of engine used in Indy and Formula 1 cars. This change would increase the power of the dragster from 3,500 horsepower to between 9,000 and 11,000 horsepower.

The new car should be ready for the track by January of 1989. The first goal of Race/QP will be to break the current quarter-mile dragster speed record of 288 miles per hour, set last spring by Eddie Hill of Texas. Then comes the task of breaking the 300 miles per hour barrier.

"We'd definitely like to be the first (to break the 300 miles per hour barrier)," said Bleneman. "But to do that you have to have everything perfect. The weather has to be perfect."



photos by DUANE BURLESON/staff photographer

Dave Bleneman shows off Race/QP team's new dragster that's close to 50 inches longer than the standard dragster which has a 258-inch wheel base.

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### R.U. Sirius

Karlos Barney



"Since we're here, what say we do a little Fallopian tubing?"

## Amelia, Biscayne: Islands to delight 'offbeat' traveler

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
contributing travel editor

Q: I want to go to Florida before high season raises the prices too much. I've seen both the Gulf coast and Orlando. I would like to spend a day touring Miami and a few days a little off the beaten track.

A: There are two interesting islands on the Atlantic side of Florida that you may not have thought about. Amelia Island, near Jacksonville, and Key Biscayne, an island just across the Rickenbacker Causeway from Miami.

Amelia Island is a place of marsh grass and shrimp boats, separated from the rest of the Golden Isles by the Georgia-Florida border. You can choose between two quite different vacation styles.

One resort — Amelia Island Plantation — dominates the island. It is reminiscent of

South Seas Plantation on Captiva Island, on the gulf coast — condominiums, golf courses, tennis courts and other resort facilities.

A new definition of luxury may be renting a pool villa at the Plantation, where you can skinny-dip quite privately in a full-sized pool at the foot of your bed.

From the pool you can look through a screened wall to the birds skimming across a green marsh and the boats going by a mile away on the Intracoastal waterway. Nobody can get close enough on that marsh to see you through the screen.

The secret to enjoying an island like this is to know what gives you the best kick as a traveler. If big resorts don't do it, stay in a motel, seaside apartment or tiny bed-and-breakfast inn near the historic town of Fernandina Beach at the other end of the small island.

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MICKY JONES

Sun, surf and sailboats abound along the resort beaches of Key Biscayne, Fla.