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#### Natural Gas Racer Out To Break Mark

This car is a gas. It runs on gas, that is, just like the stuff the little woman cooks your dinner with, unless she or her kitchen in electrified.

The rocket-engined racer, "The Blue Flame," will attempt to break the present world land speed recrod of 600.601 m.p.h. in late August or September at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. Fuel for the gas industry's racer is liquified natural gas.

Liquefying natural gas to a temperature of 258 degrees below zero reduces its volume by a 600 to 1 ratio and the process permits storage of large quantities in compact spaces. Thus a tremendous amount of high-powered energy can be stored in a small space.

In the rocket engine of "The Blue Flame," natural gas will be oxidized by hydrogen peroxide in the burning process and the resultant thrust will presumably propel the vehicle across the salt flats at speeds unheard of for a land car. Wind-tunnel tests indicated that its pencil-shaped design would permit the vehicle to travel at more than 900 m.p.h.

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Gary Gabelich, a 29-year-old former test astronaut, will drive the racer in his attempt to become the fastest man on earth. Gabelich said his ten years experience with North American Rockwell convinced him that only a rocketengine vehicle could break the record set five years ago by Craig Breedlove's jet-engine racer.

"The rocket, fueled with a cryogenic fuel such as liquefied natural gas, is just about the purest form of energy available," he said.

The 38-foot aluminum rocket car is designed to deliver 22,000 lbs. of maximum thrust. It will be modified for this year's run to provide 13,000 lbs. of thrust. "The Blue Flame" must travel at 606.607 m.p.h. or more to break Breedlove's 1965 record by the one percent or more required by La Federation Internationale dL' Automobile.

by La Federation Internationaled L'Automobile.

The natural gas industry is sponsoring "The Blue Flame" to dramatize the versatility and potential of liquefied natural gas, according to John B. DuBoise, public relations director for Southwest Gas Corporation. LNG is currently under study as a potential fuel for supersonic aircraft and as an alternative to gasoline in automobiles because of its clean burning, smogfree combustion.

DuBoise said this year's attempt to set a new land speed record is just the beginning. Next year the industry hopes to break the sound barrier and the year after that perhaps 1,000 m.p.h.

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