

## THE STEERING COLUMN

BY GEOFF STUNKARD

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Let us know in a letter to: *Mopar Enthusiast Magazine*, Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 482, Sidney, OH 45365-0482 or in an e-mail to: [moeeditor@amosautomotive.com](mailto:moeeditor@amosautomotive.com)

# RAILING ON

About the cost of freedom

**C**ars revolutionized the American culture. I'm a train nut; I think

railroads are pretty cool technologically and my son Joel sometimes calls me a "train geek" because of the facts that roll out of my head about Big Boys, the Water Level Route, and Lima Super Power (if you're one of us, you know what I'm talking about). But I would never consider railroading to be an adequate substitute for the mobility and freedom of getting around on my own in a personal vehicle. The fact that those cars are as special and as cool as our Mopars makes this more than a simple convenience.

But there are forces at work who don't see the world as we do. In Europe and other places, the close proximity of cities and even nations makes rail travel a nice option, but that doesn't change the fact that once you get to your destination, you're at the mercy of other forms of public transport or willing friends to get where you want to go. Unless these lines are commuter runs that run every hour on the hour, you also have limited windows to leave. This scenario might fly on the Boston-Washington, D.C., corridor, and a few of the new proposed high-speed lines in Florida or California we are now buying, but not for most of us who call "fly-over" country home. And air travel is no alternative either, especially if you have cargo.

Cost is an issue as well. In fact, I just bought my son Joel a round-trip Amtrak ticket to ride from Wilmington, Delaware, to Alexandria, Virginia, a run of about 120 miles, to visit an aunt. I could probably do it on a tank of gas in a Neon, but I didn't have the time to go and forked out a whopping and probably misspent \$155

for the journey. And that's for a regular coach seat...

So why this rant here in *Mopar Enthusiast*? We live in a scary time, with an over-reaching group of progressive (they hate that word "liberal" these days) theorists dictating the future from think tanks in Georgetown and Berkeley. The new Beltway Boys warned us they would not let a crisis go to waste, and have been honest to a T in that regard; every problem that has confronted the nation in the last 18 months has seemingly given cause for ever-greater control of our lives. With oil gushing from a blown-out well in the Gulf of Mexico right now, the powers-that-be in D.C. have hamstrung any effort by the individual states to forestall the disaster. One department says "GO," and the one next door says "NO!" And the direct result of that incompetence – unrestricted oil floating in the marshlands across the south.

Apparently, other than Anderson Cooper on CNN (an ideologue who I can stomach only on this one issue), the very media that put our 44th president into office without double-checking the facts has been somewhat silent on a lot of this particular disaster. We are 80+ days into the crisis (mid-July), but the political winds are saying this opportunity will be the catalyst for energy "change," pointing out the wastefulness of people who get referred to at trendy caffeine-infused campus discussions as "greedy American capitalist pigs." That means you and me.

So I guess it is a rant. The group of people running the circus, working hand-in-hand with willing accomplices in the media, has worked overtime to vilify and slur any dissent to their programs.

Working from one side of the aisle in Congress or by executive fiat, shock and awe would be an honest term for the first year of this radical change, but it is being followed now by a subtle yet strongly hopeful response as people of all political stripes seem to be seeing how dangerous the current situation is at hand.

We should be glad that Chrysler was saved the ignominy of being liquidated after Stuttgart walked away and left the sharks in the water, but should keep in mind that the end game of many of the current political powerbrokers has little to do with being able to continue to drive yourself around, freely and without excessive or even unsustainable taxation. The only way to put us all in trains is to tax us out of our cars. If they pass their climate legislation, we are probably going to see an end to our affordable car culture. It's the end game.

I'm not a radical right wing zealot; there were and are problems that need to be fixed that Obama had nothing to do with. However, I'm a very concerned citizen who is witnessing a seismic shift in federal policy, right-to-work rules, taxation, and personal property. I'm a history buff cognizant of the socialist/utopian disasters of the past century; we called most of it genocide. I'm a Mopar guy who makes his living in the aftermarket, knowing that it would not take much to destroy my occupation, just as policy decisions from on high have destroyed others. And I'm an American who believes that hard work, honesty, and some humility should lead to success and happiness.

If you want your country back, don't just bitch. Vote ... ■

### WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN MOPAR ENTHUSIAST?

Put your requests and suggestions in an e-mail to [moeeditor@amosautomotive.com](mailto:moeeditor@amosautomotive.com) or mail them to *Mopar Enthusiast Magazine*, Suggestions, P.O. Box 482, Sidney, OH 45365. And don't forget to include a picture of your Mopar!