

# Life in the Fast Lane

Do you know who Million-Dollar Bill is? Perhaps his other, more commonly known, nickname may be familiar: Awesome Bill from Dawsonville.



Those monikers belong to Bill Elliott of Dawsonville, Ga., a now inactive driver and former champion of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. A member of the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America, Elliott won the 1988 NASCAR Winston Cup Series Championship. He had two Daytona 500 victories, and a record four consecutive wins at the Michigan International Speedway during 1985-86, and won NASCAR's Most Popular Driver Award 16 times, a record.

In 1987, at Talladega Motor Speedway, Elliott set the fastest recorded speed for a qualifying lap at 212.809 miles per hour, a record that still stands. The cars ran so fast that they literally began to lift off the speedway, creating a major safety issue.

Consequently, NASCAR implemented the restrictor plate. It is a device that limits the power output of the engine, therefore slowing the acceleration and the overall speed. Otherwise, the horsepower of these cars is phenomenal. In 2004, Rusty Wallace tested a car at Talladega, without a restrictor plate, and reached a top speed of 228 mph in the backstretch. Wallace would describe the experience as "out of control," and added that "there is no way that we could race at those speeds."

The restrictor plates have slowed the cars' speeds significantly, and they now average around 187 mph – still very fast for most of us.

But is it? We all seem to be going faster and faster, until we actually find out – as Wallace said – that we are out of control. Some of the things we are doing are no longer fun, and have become dangerous. We have become a society of "I want it now."

Looking back 25 to 30 years, the cell phone was straight out of Dick Tracy comics, and the Jetsons had TV phones to see the person on the other end. A computer was something that no one needed. But now the something that used to take up a city block will fit in your shirt pocket, and you can access the world from about anywhere at any time. The speed of things today is more than most of us can imagine.

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If there were a contest for the most popular virtue, *fast* would most likely beat *best*.

In health care, we cannot tolerate such a mindset. We must be circumspect about the service to be delivered in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. Fulfilling our responsibilities in a timely fashion is important, but ensuring the quality of every endeavor must always be paramount.

Our residents demand and deserve such commitment.

*Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty*  
(Proverbs 21:5 NLT).

– Beecher Hunter