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They couldn't be truckers,  
could they?

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# They couldn't be truckers, could they

*It looked like any other gala evening at the Antique Automobile Club of America Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The men were dashing in their black tuxedos, the women elegant in their smart evening gowns. The couples danced the evening away, mingled with new friends and old acquaintances and saluted honored guests.*

*Was it a chamber of commerce dinner dance? No. A high-brow charity event? Wrong again.*

*It was the Truckers' Charity Ball attended by 80 company drivers, owner operators and their friends.*

*To find out more, we spoke with industrial psychologist and trucker radio host Sheryl Youngblood, Ph.D., who is the brainchild behind the **Truckers' Ball**.*





Dr. Sheryl Youngblood enjoys the evening. Listen to the “trucker doc” on Friday evenings from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. eastern time on shortwave radio station WWCR, 5.070, transmitter #3. The broadcast can be heard throughout the Americas, Europe and Africa. Or listen live on WWCR’s simultaneous webcast at [www.wwcr.com](http://www.wwcr.com), satellite #3. Archives of the shows are also available on podcast. Visit [www.truckerdoc.com](http://www.truckerdoc.com) to download a show.

**Why organize a formal ball?**

“There’s a bit of royalty in all of us. But sometimes, we need to be reminded that we’re noble and are incredibly deserving of the attention bestowed on us. Truckers are special people. They’re truly the Knights of the Road.”



**Is that why you named your radio program KnightTime?**

“Some of your readers may remember Arthur Godfrey’s radio show, ‘Knights of the Road’ where he read letters from motorists praising the actions of truck drivers.

“KnightTime is our way of acknowledging the professional drivers on the road today who use their skills to maintain safe and courteous highways.”

**Did your listeners give you the idea for the Truckers’ Ball?**

“It was a combination of several things. We organize an event called the International Highway Interdependence Day Celebration, which gives the four-wheeling public a chance to meet drivers and ride around the block in a semi-truck.

“In 2005, a young boy wanted a ride, but didn’t think it was possible because he was in a wheelchair. Thanks to a truck driver who made a special effort, he got his ride.

“When I saw that child’s beaming face, Red Sovine’s



**Tell us more about the Teddy Bear Fund.**

Teddy Bear song came to mind, and I decided the public needed to hear of the kindness and compassion exhibited by this truck driver.

“So I created the Teddy Bear Truckers’ Ball to honor truckers with kindness and professionalism. And at the same time, raise money for the Teddy Bear Fund.”

“It’s crisis money. Sometimes a hundred dollars averts a crisis until the disability check comes in. Or it’s a stopgap. Maybe they’ve raised 900 dollars, but need one thousand.

“Truckers are the greatest; they’re the first to open their wallets to help. Because they know their turn could come next.

“At the ball, we had a silent auction to raise money for the Fund. It’s funny, many of the truckers never heard of a silent auction and didn’t know how it worked. Once they realized what it was, they were very enthusiastic to get involved.”

**Were the truckers enthusiastic about dressing in black tie for the ball?**

“It gave them pause. Some thought they’d be uncomfortable, wearing an old monkey suit. But they were tickled at the thought of dressing up.

“Myself, I feel truckers are noble people and I want the public to start thinking the same. I knew a formal affair would break down old perceptions and improve the image of the drivers.”



*John Zimmerman and his wife, Anita, decide how much to bid to win an item in the silent auction. John is vice president of New Century, a transportation company that sponsored drivers to attend the ball and donated items for the silent auction.*





The highest honors of the evening were bestowed upon Tom Marucci and John Andrus as "Knights of the Road." As Dr. Youngblood describes, "Knights of the Road travel the roads in their rolling metal steeds with honor, valor, fervor and ardor. They use their prowess to deliver the goods, watch over the highways and aid the citizens of the land."

**Did you hear any reactions from the public?**

"As predicted, the public was surprised that truckers attend black-tie events.

"One story that sticks in my mind, at the beginning of the evening, we served hors d'oeuvres near a car display, and I struck up a conversation with a woman who was still touring the museum. She inquired about the event and I said it was the Truckers' Ball. 'But I'm afraid of truckers,' she said looking around rather alarmed. I told her, 'They're truckers,' pointing to the men in tuxedos and the women in ball gowns. She looked perplexed; I could tell her image of rabble-rousing, dangerous truckers didn't gel with the elegantly attired people she was seeing. It was great!"

**What about this year?**

"We're asking the trucking companies to get involved. These people are their drivers and owner operators.

"Some fleets are buying ball tickets and hotel rooms so they can reward hard-working drivers – especially their team drivers. We had several husband-and-wife teams that enjoyed the ball last year.

"We're also asking fleets and companies involved in the industry to donate items for the silent auction to benefit the Teddy Bear Fund."

**Or just send money, right!**

"I'll take cash or checks!"

**When and where is this year's ball?**

"The Truckers' Charity Ball will always be held Presidents' Day weekend because there are a lot of people who can take advantage of the three-day weekend.

"I received so many positive comments about the first ball, yet people wanted to extend the activities over the entire weekend. They really enjoyed socializing with other truckers.

"So this year we have a really terrific event planned. The Truckers' Charity Ball will be held at the Scranton Cultural Center at the beautiful Masonic Temple in downtown Scranton.

"We have a few surprises planned for the weekend, but I'll reveal one for you today. On Friday afternoon, the good people at Mack Truck will be giving us a tour of their Macungie Assembly Operations. I can hardly wait to see the truckers' faces as they watch a tractor being built ... then driven off the assembly line. It's a sight to see!"

**Let's go! How do I get tickets?**

"Order tickets online at [www.truckersball.org](http://www.truckersball.org)."



CDL holders step off the dance floor to pose for a picture while at the Truckers' Ball last February, which was held in the Museum of Bus Transportation at the Antique Automobile Club of America Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania.