Wisconsin Capital Model T Ford Club
Chapter-Model T Ford Club of America
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Three-Pedal Press

Wisc Capital Model T Ford Club officers

Wisconsin Capital Model T Ford Club, a region of the Model T Ford Club of America, is a not-for-profit group, dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of all Ford Model Ts. Three-Pedal Press is the official publication, and is printed quarterly. Dues are $15 per year, and are due Oct 1.

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*Cover photo: That's **Daryl Lund** behind the wheel of his 1917 Model T touring, giving rides to residents of Oakwood East, Madison, WI. There were many more folks than are shown here. See more photos of the day on pg 6.*

*Photo at right: **Adam Doleshal** brings **Larry Lichte's** 1916 Model T touring to life, after a 20-year slumber. Adam sorted the ignition system, fabricated a wiring harness, rebuilt the carb and provided the expertise to get it going again. It runs great, too! One of the best things about the Cap T Club are days like this: guys helping each other.*

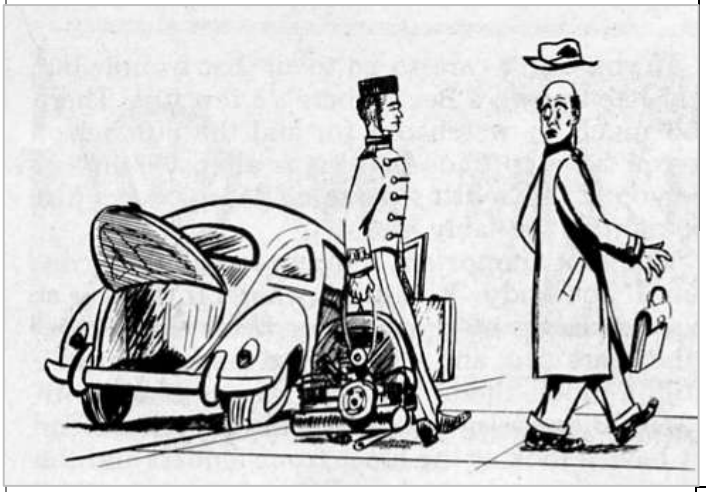
From the editor…

Upcoming special events: Our biggest event of the year, the **32nd annual Hill and Valley** show, will be **Sept 19**. It's the primary fundraiser to pay for printing the *Three-Pedal Press*, and keep the Capital T Club going for the next year. Please register your car(s) using the enclosed form. Copy as needed and give to old-car friends, too. We need your support, and always need volunteers to help the day of the show. Mark your calendar now-don't miss it!

Ole and his 3 golf buddies were getting ready to putt the #5 green, when a funeral procession began to drive by. As the hearse passed, Ole laid down his putter, took off his hat, and placed it over his heart. One of his buddies commented, "Wow, Ole. That's beautiful, probably the most respectful thing I've ever seen you do!" Ole replied, "Well, after all, we *were* married for over 40 years."

Celebrity birthdays: Claudette Colbert, 13 Sept (1905), Paris, France. Fresh-cheeked and big-eyed, Miss Colbert was often cast in sultry roles, but was at her best in comedy, her warm, purring laugh effortlessly conveying brittle sophistication. On set, she could be difficult, adamantly refusing any right-profile shots, but on screen she was enchanting. Paramount loaned her to Columbia to play the runaway heiress in Capra's comedy *It Happened One Night* (1934), carrying away the Best Actress award. Colbert stayed at the top for the next 10 years, and in 1938 was the highest paid Hollywood star, at a salary of $426,944 (over $5 million in today's dollars). She was a close friend of Ronald and Nancy Reagan, and during retirement split her time between NYC and Barbados, where she died in 1996.

Sidebar: Summer fun: the Model T straddlers are Viola LaLonde and Elizabeth Van Tuyl. Washington, D.C, Jun 1922. (From National Photo Co.)



Ed. notes of credit: "They Don't Make 'em Like They Used To" from Feb 1964 *Car Life;* "Henry and the Buzz-bomb" from Jun 1989 *SIA*, courtesy HMN.

See you Sept 19 at the big show!

– K Henry

Quaker Steak special gathering

photos by the editor

On May 28 the Capital T Club converged on Quaker Steak and Lube restaurant, Middleton, WI, for a special fundraising night, organized by **Steve Roudebush**. Attendees who drove were:

Doc Bryan	1926 Model T sedan
Jim Heiman	1926 Model T coupe
Warren Knaub	1919 Model T touring *(on the far right in photo above)*
Larry Lichte	1928 and 1931 Model A's
Steve Roudebush	1937 Chevy pickup
Gary Splitter	1930 Chevy pickup

Photo below: **Steve and Kayla Roudebush** with their 1937 Chevy pickup. *(more photos next page)*

Top photo: **Larry Lichte**, sitting, chats with spectators interested in his two Ford Model A's. He's owned the '31 since 1959, long before your editor was born.

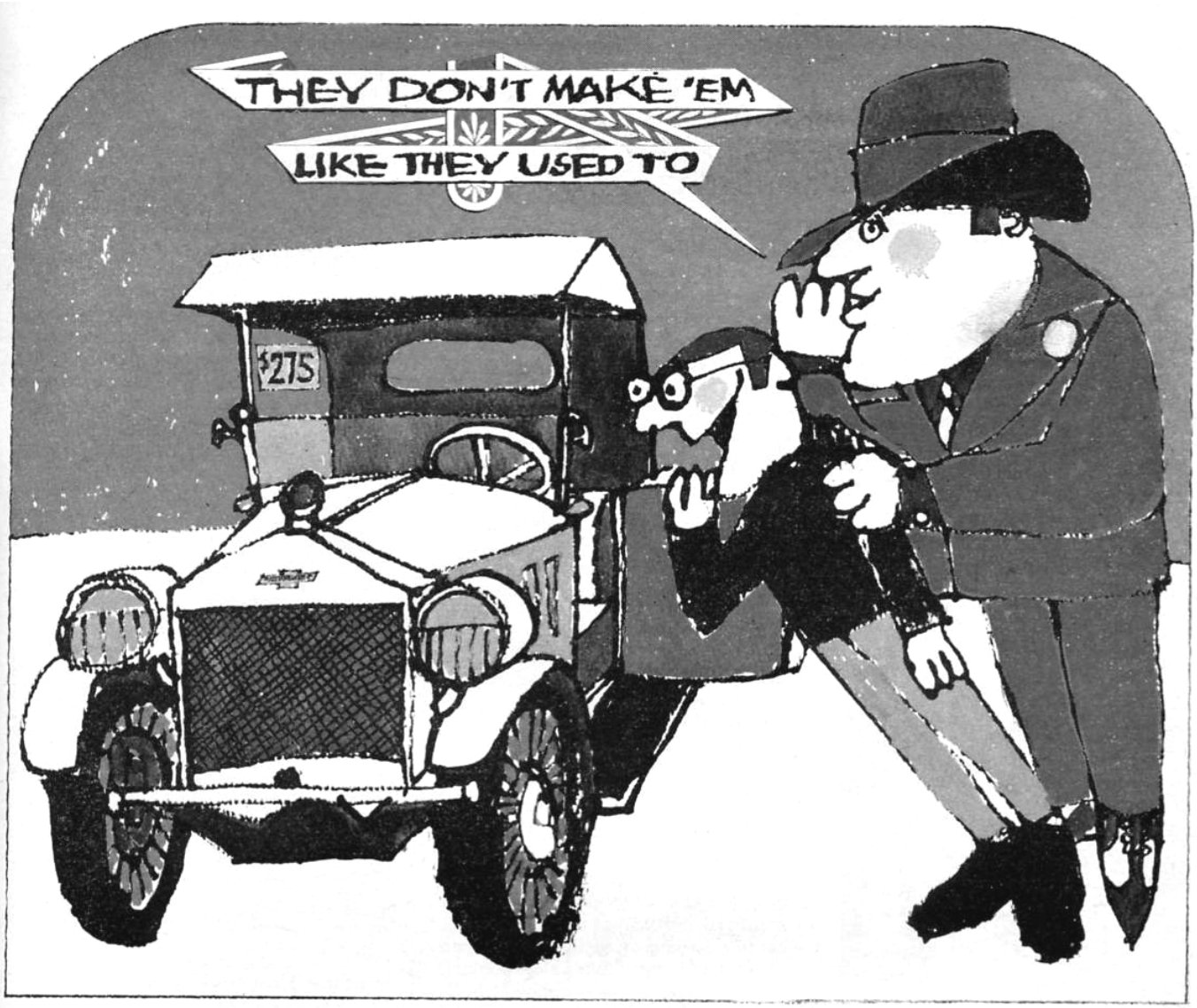
Lower: Left to right: Gary and Jackie Splitter, **Mark and Tracey Stuart**. Behind them is Gary's 1930 Chevy 6-cyl pickup. He has two of these! ✿

Oakwood East twenties day

Oakwood East Health Center, Madison, WI and our own **Ross Oestreich** organized a delightful Twenties Day, June 25. **Kurt Kniess, Daryl Lund** and Dave DeYoung gave the residents rides in their Model Ts, which was quite a thrill for them. They had lots of questions, and shared stories of Fords they'd had when they were young. The event was a real win-win, memorable for the residents and certainly enjoyable for the T owners. We'd like to do more of these!

Top: **Kurt Kniess** and some happy passengers in his 1926 Model T.

Lower: Dave DeYoung's Model T is full. The requests for rides kept the three Ts busy for well over an hour.



ON A DISMAL November morning 17 years ago when I should have remained in bed but didn't, I strode purposefully into a used car lot operated by Earnest Ernie Rassendale and bought my first car. The date, unless I am mistaken, was Friday the 13th, and if this wasn't enough to cast a long shadow over the venture, the way Earnest Ernie twirled the ends of his mustache in villainous glee as I parted with my $275 should have been.

The car, I thought, was a beauty—a 1931 Chevrolet coupe with authentic wire wheels. It was, as Ernie put it, in mint condition. "Just needs a little paint." Despite my unveiled enthusiasm, I had to agree. It had a flat, dusty gray finish that came off when you rubbed it. And it had 75,000 miles showing on the odometer.

"But don't worry about that," Ernie counseled me. "These old cars were really put together. It ought to last for years. They don't make 'em like they used to."

Some 25,000 miles later, I had occasion to recall that remark, which, incidentally, has been echoed over the years by anyone who has ever owned a car fabricated in the pre-1940 era, often without foundation. In this case, at least, I humbly thank Detroit that they don't make 'em like they used to. If they did, I'd be driving a bicycle today. I had more misadventures and troubles in those 25,000 hard-fought miles than in any car I've owned since.

It was sprung like an old country gig. Every jolt and vibration was faithfully picked up by its rock-hard suspension. When under way, the vehicle had an unfortunate tendency to creak and shudder like an aged brigantine in a Cape Hatteras blowdown.

In those postwar years, the streets suffered from a certain amount of neglect, to say the least. This fact, coupled with the car's unique riding characteristics, gave a sensation like roller skating over cobblestones. The all-steel body had not yet been intro-

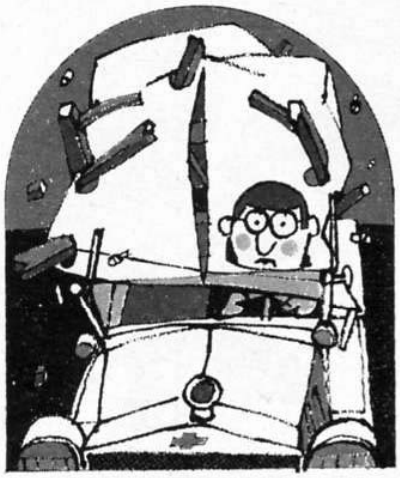
BY JERRY KLEIN

Illustrations: Howard Shoemaker

THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO

duced when my car was built and the roof was a complicated affair consisting of leatherette underlaid by a mortised and glued wooden framework.

I was completely unaware of the condition of the top until one afternoon when I happened to carrom into a particularly vicious crater in the



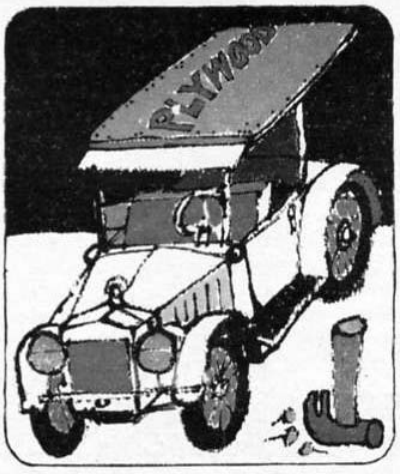
middle of a downtown street. In typical fashion, the car reacted as if someone had whanged it with a 200-lb. sledgehammer—springing into the air and rebounding with such a shock that the dry-rotted wooden roof framework simply disintegrated. As I fought for control, the wheels shimmying wildly, the interior upholstery sagged, then split asunder, showering me with dust, splinters and fragments of decayed wood. Then, with a crack that seemed to herald imminent total collapse, the leatherette top split like a drumhead.

I bailed out in panic and the car shivered to a halt in the middle of the intersection. When the dust settled and it became evident there would be no further disintegration, I returned to the car and, somewhat shakily, drove off. I considered it a tribute of sorts that the incident did not elicit a fanfaronade of horn-honking since I must have blocked the intersection for two or three minutes. But the entertainment value of the spectacle must have far outweighed the momentary inconvenience it caused.

For sometime thereafter, I possessed the only sunroof car in town, a distinction I was happy to forego when the rains came. Since there was nobody around in those days who could restore my top, I installed a piece of waterproof plywood over the roof hole; not very sporting or weathertight, perhaps, but serviceable.

During the dark years I owned this ancient machine, I was attending college on the GI Bill of Rights which, while generous enough, made no particular provision for maintaining an antique. Nevertheless, I decided the car had to be painted. The finish had gotten so bad that the car actually looked more presentable when it was dirty. For $1.98, I bought a can of special auto paint that could be applied with a powder puff. The idea, I gathered, was to pat on the paint to avoid brush marks.

The result was spectacular, although the car probably would have been improved if I had used house paint. I became so engrossed in transforming the drab old buggy into a sleek-looking maroon sportster with yellow wheels that I failed to notice a summer storm billowing out of the west. Just as I was putting the final touches on the turtleback, the first rain drops began to patter down. Before I could get the car under cover, the deluge came, thick and fast. What finally emerged was a decidedly custom job, even artistic in a sense, as it combined a



stippled effect where the paint had run with a pitted surface like that of the moon. But nobody could tell the difference from 30 feet away. And not many people ever ventured closer.

This was the first car I ever attempted to overhaul, and the experience should have taught me something. My top speed was around 45 and, as I was getting only 11 or 12 miles to the gallon, I reasoned the valves needed grinding. I did the job one Saturday, first taking off the fan so I could remove the head more con-

veniently. Then, working smoothly and precisely, I began to dismantle the thing, piling nuts, bolts, springs, pushrods and valve keepers in a tall can of solvent. Using a suction cup affair and the same motions the Indians used to start fires, I polished the valves to a mirror-smooth finish and began the reassembly job.

Things were going along nicely when I suddenly realized that the pushrods weren't all the same size. But as I had forgotten to mark them, I had no choice but to put them back in random fashion. Surprisingly enough, the car ran when I finished, although even at slow idle, it gave off a sound reminiscent of a herd of ponies galloping across a tin bridge.

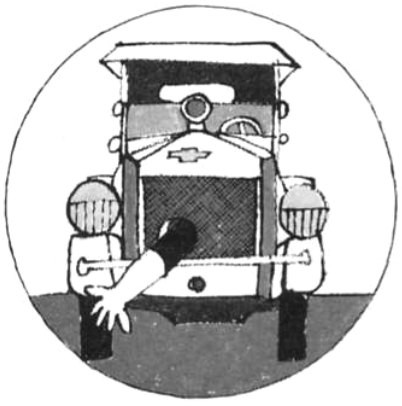
As it turned out, I didn't get the fan on the shaft properly and during my post-operative road test, with the engine clattering away violently, it worked itself loose, flew off and gouged a hole in the radiator large enough for me to stick my arm through. (I know it was that large because I stuck my arm through it.) For $2.50, I bought a used radiator, installed it and prepared to set off on a 100-mile trip the next day.

At the edge of town, the heat gauge

shot into the boiling range, indicating that the radiator was clogged. But I figured it probably would clean itself out on the way. It didn't. I made 17 stops for water, stopping approximately each 6.3 miles. During one watering stop, I slammed the door in frustration and the left front window splintered into countless fragments. I arrived six hours later in a state of frenzied exhaustion and as I staggered out of the car a rear tire went flat with a sound I could have sworn was a Bronx cheer. Had I made the journey in a Conestoga wagon drawn by oxen it no doubt would have been quicker and less eventful.

There was, however, a certain excitement in driving the old car. You never knew what was going to happen next. The training I received in meeting expected and unexpected emergencies has proved invaluable over the years. And I probably developed the most powerful set of leg muscles west of the Catskills from pushing the balky old heap, usually in sub-freezing weather. Many were the times when I lay gasping painfully against the cold steel of the fender from the exertion of propelling the car to the nearest hill. Then, bathed in perspiration, I would leap inside and chug away—only to freeze in the heaterless cab. It was bracing and vigorous, all right, like a Finnish steam bath. But it was impossible to drive for any distance in cold weather. Air leaked in around my plywood top, through the wooden floorboards and through the loose-fitting windows. Unless I stopped at regular intervals to warm myself, my feet became so leaden it was impossible to operate the clutch and brake pedals. I was forced to pile on so many clothes and blankets that sometimes I looked like a straggler in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.

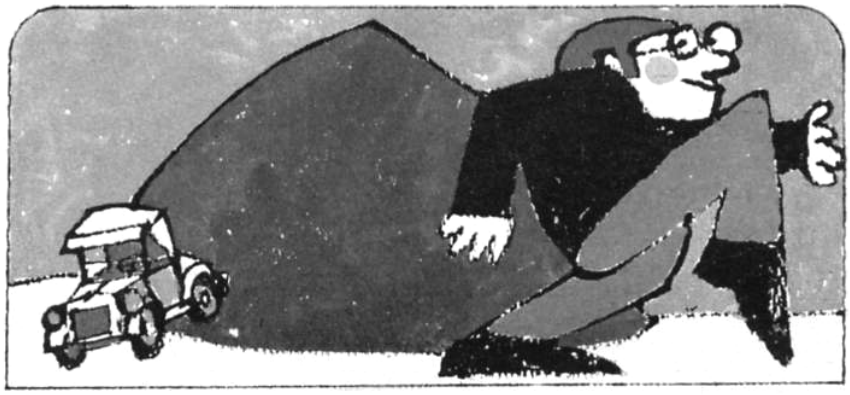
I was pleasantly warmed on one occasion, however, when the floorboards burst into flame. This crisis occurred as a result of having the battery mounted beneath the front seat. Over the years the action of the clutch pedal had worn the insulation off the battery cable, causing a violent short. I happened to be stopped for a red light in front of a second rate cafe when I noticed my feet becoming unaccountably warm and saw smoke billowing into the cab. Reacting coolly, I raced into the cafe, shouted for a glass of water and dashed out to successfully extinguish the blaze.



The old car finally came to a humiliating end in a hilly city park one cold afternoon when the starter drive failed to disengage. I hammered on the engine with a Stillson wrench and tried to rock the car, but it would not go forward. Finally, in desperation, I coasted backward down the hill and came to a dead stick landing near the park cinder pile, where I abandoned the machine temporarily.

Two days later, I received a call from the park office demanding that I retrieve my "piece of junk." I was stung by this derogatory allusion to my faithful old car and promptly retrieved it. A week later I sold it for $225.

In one sense, it was the cheapest car I ever owned. I had only paid $275 for it and you'd have to go a long way to beat 25,000 miles for $50. But while the depreciation on the car itself was hardly notable, my own was far more evident. I couldn't go through it again, and thank heaven I don't have to. They just don't make 'em like they used to. ■



His bristly chin

HENRY AND THE BUZZ-BOMB

Wherein a prominent pacifist and some colleagues invent a terror weapon decades before the Nazis

photo courtesy of the author

Buzz bombs were delivered in the form of a mini-biplane with 14-foot wingspan and Ford-designed V-4 aircraft engine.

by A. Stanley Kramer

WHEN Hitler's V1 "Buzz Bombs" began raining down on London in July 1944, the rest of the world was aghast. That any power should drop flying explosives indiscriminately on a civilian population was pure savagery, the work of a nation gone mad.

Yet Hitler's rockets had been anticipated 26 years before by the United States, whose four greatest mechanical geniuses collaborated on a flying bomb. Only the sheerest happenstance kept us from using them against Germany in World War I. We were all set to drop them on troops and military complexes deep within Germany.

Jay P. Spenser, assistant curator for aeronautics at the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, DC, provided a great deal of the background on one of this country's best kept military secrets. And, in 1961, 44 years after our bomb's invention, Harold Morehouse, a draftsman employed on the project, finally revealed the full story.

Henry Ford, "Boss" Kettering of GM, Elmer Sperry of gyroscope fame, and aviation pioneer Orville Wright worked together to design, develop and test the first true "cruise missile." In an era that had no rocketry, no electronics, including microchips or computers, it was a masterpiece of ingenuity, employing the most developed technologies of its day. The aerial torpedo they created was self-propelled, carried 200 pounds of high explosives, and could travel as far as 200 miles at altitudes of a mile and a half.

The device was variously referred to as "the flying torpedo," "the bug" or the "robot bomb." But "Kettering bug" was the name that stuck. For it was Kettering, six months after the US entered World War I on April 6, 1917, who brought the others together to build the revolutionary weapon. Also assigned to the top secret project was Childe Harold Wills, famous metallurgist and chief engineer for the Ford Motor Company (who later manufactured his own Wills Sainte Claire automobile) and Edward Deeds, who had joined Kettering ten years previously to form the company that later became the Delco Division of GM.

Each contributed according to his knowledge and specialty. Wright designed the missile's fuselage, Sperry developed the guidance system, and Ford had the assignment of providing the lightweight gasoline motor that would drive the bomb. There was a most important overall consideration not much insisted upon today: economy. When the weapon was mass-produced it was not to cost over $200!

Work began in October 1917 at a remote farmhouse not far from Dayton, Ohio. Later the group was enlarged to ten men, and moved a few miles to a well-guarded hangar at South Field, where Wright's original aircraft flown at Kitty Hawk 14 years before hung from the ceiling.

By the spring of 1918 the "bug" rapidly took shape. A very slim fuselage with a 14-foot wingspan, it was exceptionally light. The two wings and tail assembly were made of cardboard, a piece of spruce and oiled paper. The engine initially gave trouble. Ford and Wills designed a two-cylinder, but vibration was excessive and they had to go to a four. Despite that, the estimate for mass-producing it was under $50 each.

A unique power plant, it had no carburetor; the rate of fuel flow was predetermined and not adjustable. Kettering's means of guiding the missile to its target was a marvel of ingenuity. He invented a tiny mini-gyroscope that kept the bug on course despite wind variations. All that was required was to aim the missile at its target when it was launched. The designers first considered putting wheels on the bomb to launch it. But they were too heavy and offered air resistance. Next a catapult was tried and discarded. The final solu-

Buzz-bomb, continued

tion was a wheeled launching vehicle — a converted railroad handcar with a leather sling for the bomb, that ran down a strip of narrow gauge track.

A nearly insurmountable problem was how to rig the bomb so that it would stop flying and dive when it was over its target. Again Kettering's genius met the challenge. He and his men devised a special anemometer — a wind gauge — mounted on a strut between the biplane wings on the port side. Incredibly accurate calculations were made to determine the number of revolutions the miniature propeller on the anemometer would make by the time the weapon reached its target. A connected counter was pre-set so that when it reached the prescribed number of revolutions the ignition would cut out and kill the engine. The nose-heavy missile would then plunge downward, deadly and absolutely silent.

The bug's first successful test flight was made on August 18, 1918. Further testing was done at Pensacola, Florida and at Dorr Field, a pursuit training field east of Arcadia.

It was ready for action. In September, Colonel Henry "Hap" Arnold, who later became head of the US Air Force, was sent aboard ship to present the flying bomb, along with plans for its mass production and placement, to General John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Here fate stepped in. Aboard ship Arnold caught cold. It turned into influenza. He was so sick when the ship reached France that he was hospitalized for weeks. By the time he recovered, the Armistice had been signed.

The bug was immediately mothballed, and the government and Kettering prevailed upon everyone involved to keep the entire matter a secret. It was one of the best (and longest) -kept secrets of World War I.

Early in 1941, as World War II was brewing abroad, Arnold, now a general, recalled the bug and attempted to have the project reactivated. But higher authority overruled him. Robot bombing of cities was simply too inhuman to contemplate!

When Hitler's rocket-propelled buzz bombs began ravishing London, several who had worked on the Kettering Bug wondered if, somehow, the Germans had stolen the plans.

From today's point of view, with the hydrogen bomb threatening our planet's very existence, the Kettering Bug is a very small footnote to history indeed. However, it certainly throws a new light on Henry Ford Sr, who was such a militant pacifist during World War I — while he and his chief engineer were secretly designing and preparing to put into production the engine for the most deadly weapon devised up to that time. ✿

Upcoming events

Aug 25: Capital Model T Club monthly meeting, 7pm, American Legion Hall, Cross Plains, WI.

Sept 19: **32nd annual Hill & Valley show**, Baer Park, Cross Plains, WI. Contact: Don Chandler 608 513-8254.

Oct 27: Capital Model T Club monthly meeting, Larry Lichte's museum, Middleton, WI. Details to follow.

Classifieds

For sale: **1927 Model T** Roadster Pickup, beautiful condition. Age forces sale. Not inexpensive but a fine investment. Marlin Haase: 715 258-3750.	For sale: **1926 Model T**, good body and interior, original glass, no rust, good wood wheels; runs and drives good. Asking $9500 obo. Scott 608 354-3710.

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In this issue:

Quaker Steak special gathering
They Don't Make 'em Like They Used To
Oakwood East twenties day
Henry and the Buzz-bomb

Another shot from our night at Quaker Steak, here's **Jim Heiman** with his black 1926 Model T coupe.