

Notes and Comment About Autos and Autoists

Draws Pictures Of Racing Days Of 15 Years Back

Fred Wagner, Veteran Starter, Tells of Changes and Improvements of Time in Speed Machines and Men

By Fred J. Wagner

Those who have been associated with automobile racing the last ten or fifteen years cannot fail to appreciate the changes that have taken place, not only in the cars but in the drivers. Automobile racing in fifteen years has influenced the engineering world to such an extent as to bring about the use of smaller engines, more valve-in-head engines, better lubrication and cooling, greater knowledge of spark plugs and ignition apparatus, engines of lighter weight, higher speed and more power for their weight and size.

The racing car designs have taught more about metals than most of us imagine. It is stated that vanadium steel springs owe their origin to racing. The wire wheel we all know got a running start in racing. The tires of to-day would not be much better than those of ten years ago if the tire makers did not get such experience as racing offered. Even to-day tests are still going on with racing cars as the experimental means.

The heavy, crudely designed, clumsy racing cars, with large slow speed engines, of ten and fifteen years ago have given way to small, low weight, refined mechanisms fitted with low displacement high-speed engines. The cars of the old Vanderbilts were practically all chain-driven; to-day shaft-drive with bevel gearing is used on all racing cars.

Perhaps the most striking change apparent to any one who has at all kept in touch with the sport is the exterior appearance of the cars. In the earlier days the driver sat on a bucket seat dangerously exposed, the exhaust led right out of the hood through the pipes, the hood was securely strapped down and, above all, there was little attempt at streamlining the cars.

When the driver learned that wind resistance was the most important factor in speed, attempts were made to reduce this by narrowing the front of the car, smoothing the sides and avoiding the construction that might cause air pockets.

It was not, however, until 1913 that the use of streamline tails, long exhaust pipes carried to the rear of the car, high sides and other schemes were put into effect generally. The cars of to-day are for the most part excellent examples of streamline jobs, and much of the added speed of which they are capable is attributed to this construction.

The engines of to-day are about one-third the cubic capacity of those of fifteen years ago. In modern races the 300-cubic inch engine is used, and, though there is no rule against smaller ones, some are considerably under this. Engines of 1,000 cubic inches or more were common in the old days. They were practically all four-cylinder cars, as they are to-day, but extremely high powered and heavy.

The idea in those days was that the more power you had the more speed you would get. It took some years for the designers to learn that streamlining and ease of engine speed, engine efficiency and car efficiency made it possible to get along with a smaller and lighter engine.

Many of the oldtime racegoers certainly remember the engine starting problem—how it was necessary for two men to swing a crank handle, for one car to tow another, or even for a team of horses to be brought into action to get the engine started. Happily, the high compressions in the large cylin-

ders, poor ignition and poor carburetion have passed, and the modern racing car engine can usually be started with a few quick turns of the crank. Where trouble might be encountered in starting, an electric starting system is installed.

To one who has been on the track and watched the cars closely the absence of smoky exhaust is noticeable. Volumes of smoke in the old times made it difficult to see the cars. To-day the average racer fits and fitted with an engine of less than one-third the size can easily drive away from the older ones. There is less noise, the job of driving is easier and there is no smoke.

Though racing speed has increased from something over seventy miles an hour to about 105 miles an hour, the hazards have been reduced almost to a like proportion. Of course, track conditions are different also, and this has been helpful in getting better speed. To-day we have banked, boarded tracks, as against dirt and concrete roads, winding in character.

The racing driver to-day is younger than his predecessor. He is a more scientific man and certainly more systematic. Above all, he himself is a good mechanic. In the old days many good drivers were nothing more.

Saleswomen Startle London Auto Buyers

American methods are new to Englishmen, but all admit great progress.

The motor car is undergoing a great change. At present it is all a flutter, says "The London Daily Express."

Saleswomen demonstrators are pushing themselves forward. They are going to prove themselves equal in selling capabilities to the young men who sit so nicely in the gorgeous motor cars temptingly displayed in beautiful showrooms.

The young men have little to say about the woman car seller. They smile, talk wisely about induction pipes, pump feeds and insulators, and continue smoking cigarettes. Women demonstrators? Absurd!

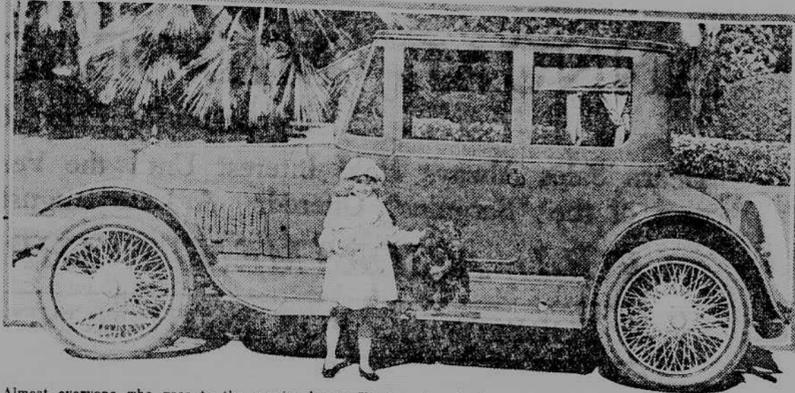
Nevertheless, the woman car demonstrator is a position which the young men will have to face. There is no reason why she should not sell a silver-mounted thousand-pound petrol palanquin to a popular actress—or a moneyed general happen to the limousine, the accident would not be left stranded.

"Good morning, sir," the woman will say with a smile and a flash of her eyes. "Let me show you over this dear little 'Lamartine-Poupe!' Isn't it a duck? Such a lovely blue color, and the horn is so delightful for words."

"Carburetor?" Ours is just too sweet. Look at it. Why, this is just the car you've been waiting for years. See this doorhandle? Solid gold! Just try the spring cushions de luxe. Couldn't aren't they?"

Who will be able to resist her? She is pretty and well dressed, and she knows even so little about motor-cars. So there is no reason why the girl motor-knutt should not become an established fact.

A Little Girl and Her Great Big Car



Almost everyone who goes to the movies knows Virginia Lee Corbin. One of the privileges of being a movie star is to have a fine big car. Virginia has it. It's a Jordan brougham. And here they both are.

American Cars Praised By General Cronkhite

Army Leader Says His Motor Traveled Thousands of Miles Without Mishap

Authentic information is now coming out about the service rendered at the front by American motor cars. Major General Cronkhite, U. S. A., upon his return from abroad, writes the Winton Company:

"It may be a matter of satisfaction to you to know that I drove one of your closed cars throughout my period of service in the American area in France, with a mileage total of over 10,000 miles and that throughout this entire period I never suffered a moment's delay."

"The service rendered covered the rest areas as well as areas in advance, as far as a motor car could be utilized, and included as well, service in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Alsace and Lorraine."

Much was printed during the war about the work done by American trucks, but not much was said about the limousines which Uncle Sam provided for the men who directed the army operations on the other side. Limousines were supplied not only to insure rapid transportation and some degree of comfort, but also to serve as offices, housing maps, equipment and supplies that might be required at any moment. When possible, an open car followed the limousine, so that should an accident happen to the limousine, the general would not be left stranded.

Drastic Laws Hamper Motor Truck Trade

Lack of Uniformity Seen in Differing Limitations of Size and Increased Fees; Co-operation Is Urged

Several states have recently enacted new laws increasing registration fees for motor trucks and trailers and imposing new limitations of size, weight and speed. Similar bills are still pending in the legislatures of a few other states. These laws and bills reveal a lack of uniformity that is unfortunate when it is considered that trucks and trailers are used extensively in interstate commerce and are becoming an important factor in reducing the cost of haulage, thereby tending to keep down the rising cost of living.

Until legislators and the public in general become better informed regarding the economic effects of truck and trailer transportation, laws enacted for protection of the highways may be expected to be extreme. Eventually a balance will be struck that will protect the highways sufficiently without stifling the growth of the only means of relief to the consumer in the matter of prices.

Cost of transportation inevitably falls upon the consumer, and whatever lowers that cost injures to his benefit. The only way to reduce the cost is to build good roads and permit the operation of the largest motor trucks and trailer trains that can be used without undue wear and damage to the improved roads. The larger the quantity of commodities or goods hauled in one unit or at one time, the lower is the haulage cost per ton-mile. So it is for the public to decide who has it will pay higher taxes for better roads and their maintenance or pay the higher prices for everything consumed, made necessary by the excessive cost of hauling over bad roads by horse and wagon or by small and relatively uneconomical motor trucks.

With widely varying state laws in force, a truck or trailer that complies with the law in one state cannot be operated legally in another, and a truck owner in one state operates at a serious economic disadvantage against

Carelessness of Owners Invites Auto Stealing

Even Amateurs Have an Easy Time Taking Cars From Street Curbs

This is the particular season of the year when car stealing is at its height and owners will do well to observe every precaution. If they would display a small fraction of the ingenuity shown by the crooks, there would be a very material reduction of the evil. It is practically impossible to prevent stealing entirely, but there is no gainsaying the fact that drivers' and owners' carelessness makes it remarkably easy for even amateurs successfully to engage in car stealing.

Altogether too few of the cars stolen are recovered. A fairly high per cent is credited to the police of Detroit, who, of the 1,547 cars so far stolen this year, have recovered 1,149. Figures for some of the larger cities for last year, giving the number of cars stolen and recovered, are as follows: Boston, 886, 697; Chicago, 2,611, 1,954; Cincinnati, 348, 291; Cleveland, 2,076, 1,186; San Francisco, 1,122, 1,082.

Cars should never be left without some locking device or thief alarm net that any attempt to steal the car will immediately be recognized by the police. Most cities forbid the locking of a car so that it cannot be moved in case of fire or other emergency, so we would not advise chaining and locking a wire wheel to a lamp post, for instance. One owner who did that had only the wire wheel to show for his pains when he came out. Experience also shows that it is not sufficient to leave a boy in charge of the car for the owner's instructions to the boy may be overheard by some one who can pass himself off as the owner if he happens to be of the same build and description. Spare tires also should be locked, as some make a specialty of stealing these, as well as those in use.

Engine Overheats, Like Pedestrian, In Hot Weather

There Are Many Things Car Owner Should Know About Control of Motor, Says Y. M. C. A. School Director

By H. Clifford Brokaw
Technical Director West Side Y. M. C. A. Automobile School

It is about as bad for an engine to overheat in summer as for an individual to do this about as easily as the other. Both can overheat, too, with about equal disadvantage—too much motor fodder, you know, will produce engine indisposition, and high temperature follows. There are other reasons, of course, and the novice, particularly, ought to learn causes, results and cures.

While last winter was not especially cold, most drivers found a radiator cover needed, and some found that the fan belt was best removed. Then the trouble was to keep the motor warm enough to vaporize the gasoline, not the boiling point we can run the engine without actually turning the water into steam, the better it will run. Many engines do not develop full horsepower because they are kept too cool for efficiency; yet we hear plenty of complaints about overheating and boiling radiators. If the engines were being handled as the manufacturer intended, this would not be. Some of the trouble is due to retarded spark. In cold weather the driver who retards the spark too much uses up a lot of gas that gives no power, but the engine does not overheat. With the rise in the mercury comes the overheating, and the driver cannot figure it out; he is driving just the same.

It should be remembered that driving with retarded spark will produce overheating. Much manipulation of the spark lever is needed with present day battery ignition systems. Many drivers, when they find the engine knocking at low speed, retard the lever and fail to advance it again when running at higher speed.

With magneto ignition the spark control lever may be advanced about three-fourths of the full range and be left there for about all speeds except the very high. This is because the nature of the spark changes with the speed of the engine, equivalent to an automatic spark advance and retard. Not so with the battery system.

Another cause of chronic overheating may be traced to sediment in the radiator which prevents proper radiation. This is a deposit of mineral substance from the water. Examine an old teakettle and you will find in the bottom exactly the same sort of deposit. Usually this may be removed by running a saturated solution of washing soda through the cooling system. If you haven't cleaned the radiator this season drain off the water and replace it with the soda solution and run with this in for several hours. If there is a water pump disconnect the upper hose from the radiator and run the engine to pump out the solution, feeding water into the radiator from a hose, so that the system is thoroughly flushed before connecting the radiator hose again.

With a thermo-siphon system disconnect both upper and lower hose

Five Thousand Autos Stolen Since January 1

District Attorney Lewis Plans a Campaign Against Thieves

It has been estimated by District Attorney Lewis that five thousand automobiles have been stolen since January 1, and it is his intention to start a campaign in the near future against the strongly organized gang of thieves who have been working with apparent success, the radiator to be cut out the last of the sediment. Part of this sediment comes from sand and vegetable matter carried in solution and part from the heat and more readily separated from the water for deposit; likewise there is some rust from the water jacket.

Things have reached such a condition that Police Commissioner Enright has promised the fullest cooperation in combating this evil. In order for any campaign against automobile thievery to be a success, the automobile owner must personally be willing to do his utmost in safeguarding the car, because in a city the size of New York, where thousands of cars operate daily, it is well nigh impossible for police officers to detect any but flagrant attempts to steal an automobile.

If every owner will secure and install one of the recognized automobile locks it will greatly aid the Police Department in their work. Many automobile dealers have been advocating the use of locks for a long time, and the fact that practically all of the cars stolen are not equipped with a theft device is conclusive evidence that owners themselves are somewhat negligent.

Fred Stone's Autograph Adorns His Tires

Famous Comedian's Suggestion Adopted by Pennsylvania Rubber Company

The happy originality of Fred Stone, the famous comedian, is carried even beyond his work on the stage. Some time ago, during a visit at the plant of the Pennsylvania Rubber Company at Jeannette, he conceived the idea of having a set of these tires made bearing his autograph worked in rubber on the sides. His idea was so innovative that General Manager Seneca G. Lewis immediately set his experts to work on it, with the result that such tires were successfully evolved. On the Vacuum cup #2 red tires which he recently purchased the jet black tread and sidewalk make the unmistakable signature of the comedian, in bright red rubber, stands out if striking relief.

The tires, while designed primarily as a personal touch, prove even more. The name cannot be destroyed without mutilating the tire to a considerable extent, and thus proves an effective safeguard against theft.

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New Officers Elected By Automobile Club

Henry MacNair and Paul Archibald Are Named to Important Posts

At a recent meeting of the directors of the Automobile Club of New York Henry MacNair was elected chairman of the board and treasurer and Paul Archibald was elected secretary and chairman of the membership committee. It also was decided to increase the benefits to members by allowing them from 10 to 40 per cent on all purchases of supplies through the newly organized supply department.

The club will continue to cooperate with the legal department of the New York State Association.

Mr. MacNair has been in automobile work for more than a dozen years. Mr. Archibald brings to the club a wide knowledge of automobiles, accessories and insurance, and is looking after the interests of members in this regard.

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