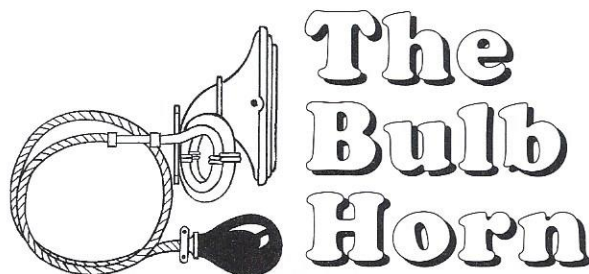


# The Bulb Horn



**VOLUME LV, NO. 4, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1994**  
**THE VETERAN MOTOR CAR CLUB OF AMERICA**





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October-December 1994

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*We would like to have photos of 1970 cars owned by members to illustrate the feature on the "new cars" in Class 21 to appear in the January-March 1995 issue. The best one will be used for the cover. The April-June issue will include some features on alternative fuel vehicles and original manuscripts and/or photos are welcome.*

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COVER PHOTO: Harold Mann's Model T Roadster near the Montana state line on the tour described in his story beginning on page 23. Print made from a 35mm negative provided by the author.  
BACK COVER: The Strupp Miller, which is the subject of a story on pages 26 and 27. Color print provided by the author.

**Bulb Horn Mailing Policy:** Due to increasing costs, we can no longer send your club magazine to different winter and summer addresses. Arrangements for this service should be made with your Post Office. We will only mail to your permanent mailing address and cannot forward *Bulb Horns* returned to us as "undeliverable." Replacement copies will be charged at the cover price plus \$1.50 postage and handling.



# Getting Old Is Not For Sissys

by Harold Mann, Las Vegas, Nevada,  
reprinted from Nuts and Bolts, the newsletter of the  
High Rollers Chapter, Western Region

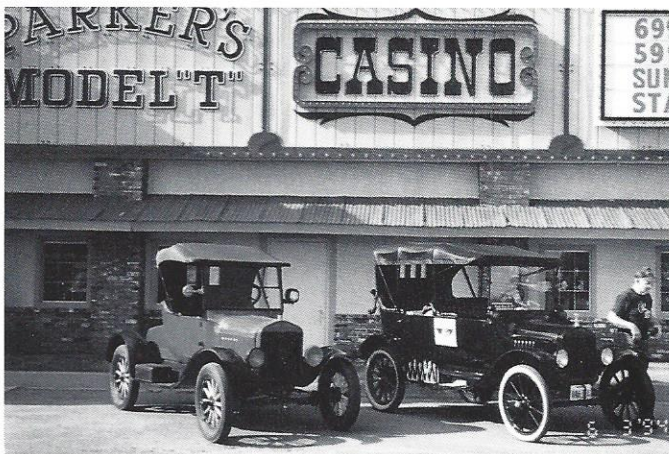
My friend Gary Cooper and I had talked about some sort of longer tour for some time, and it was brought up to go to Kennewick, Washington to see my son and his family. Gary wasn't too hot on that, but he has a brother living in Polson, Montana, and that was brought up and Gary agreed to the trip if we went through Lewiston, Idaho and north to Sand Point. So that's the way this tour was decided and the approximate time and date was determined. It was up to each of us to get our cars in "bulletproof" condition. Gary had been restoring a 1917 Model T Touring for some years, and it was in the final stages, with some short tours coming for a shake down. A Ruckstell differential was installed and Rocky Mountain Brakes, a must with any auxiliary drive train. I have a 1925 Model T Runabout with a fresh engine and lots of shake down tours. A Ruckstell and Rocky Mountain Brakes were added in the last days of preparation. Standard gears in both cars, 3.63 to 1, the low axle for mountain and hard pulls to stay out of low pedal.

**Day 1** – The day arrived for the departure and neither one of us would back out, so we went up (north) on 95 to Lathrop Wells for a stop and picture taking with the temperature hovering at about 100° F., engines tight, getting hot, and using water, both cars and the "dummies" driving them. What have I got myself into? Oh well, we made it this far, so on to Beatty for lunch. The people there were excited to see the old cars and more surprised to know where we were going. Well refreshed, and both cars and dummies fueled, we felt better about going on to Tonopah, Nevada where we knew it was going to be cooler. But we also knew there was some real uphill climbing needed to get us there. I was leading and had a little more uphill power so I got to Tonopah first, sweating, boiling, steaming and badly needing a rest stop. Cooling everything off and relieving the immediate situation, we joined up and found a good motel to rest all moving parts and bodies. Gary: "Let's go eat." Harold: "Let's work on the T's first and then eat." A difference of opinion came over to my point of view. Finding lots of loose nuts and bolts, greasing rear axle bearings, universal joints and shaft bearings, oil in the front end, checking front wheel bearings, rear wheel hubs to tight fit. Finally, not totally satisfied but confident enough to make the next day's drive, we went out to eat and see the town.

**Day 2** – Very cool outside this morning, not to worry, we're still in Nevada where it is always hot. Right?

Wrong! We left Tonopah on Highway 6, heading east for 8 miles and then north towards Austin, Battle Mountain and Winnemucca. Strong cross winds and cold. Burrrrr! We got to Shoshone Valley and five million crickets. Crickets in cars, crickets in clothing, crickets down clothing, crickets everywhere. Gary was running in front and stirring up the crickets and I was catching them. Finally, our first mountain and low axle test. Up, up, up, AH-HA, the summit 7260 feet. Too cold to snow and still in Nevada. Then down, down, down to the town of Austin where we were able to stop for lunch with homemade soup. Very excited public almost everywhere we went, thumbs up and waves to almost every passing car or person and then on to Battle Mountain where the big decision was to be made on how to get to Winnemucca without getting on the freeway. Decision did not need to be made, as the freeway is the only way to get there. Getting on the freeway, we hoped our 38 mph did not interfere with or impair the traffic. After some hills, head winds and lots of courteous drivers, we came to Winnemucca, Nevada and finally found the Parker Model T Casino. After getting a room with senior discounts, we contacted a friend of a friend who comped us for dinner and breakfast while we were there. Thanks to Jack of Wimpy's Drive-In in Las Vegas. After picture taking was over, back to the motel. We worked on the cars and found more loose bolts. A baffle in my gas tank had broken loose. Seemed not to bother the car except for the last two gallons and up hills. Then it would sputter some. After we were both satisfied with the work we had done we had a good dinner. Although we were to meet some friends of Jack's we didn't hear from then until after we had bathed and cooled down for the evening. We did talk to them on the phone, and Gary went out to see them. I was already fast asleep. ZZZZZZZZZ.

**Day 3** – Up and going at 7:30 a.m. towards Burns, Oregon. Lots of miles, cold weather and rough roads. The most shocking thing to us was the highways under construction. No road crews working on Saturday, but lots of fast cars and trucks coming toward us throwing rocks. Sure gets scary. With the standard no shock system Model T's are famous for, it was hard to go down the road with four wheels on the road and straight. Finally, on to Burns Junction. Thought we were almost



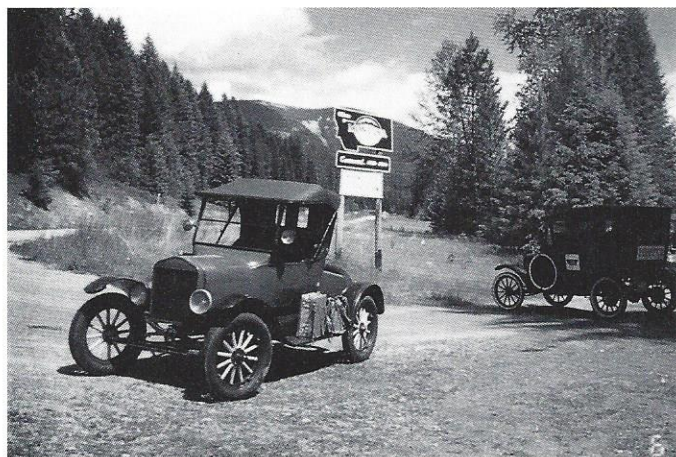
"We came to Winnemucca, Nevada and finally found the Parker Model T Casino."



there. Wrong again! Rough roads, wind, cold and bone-tired by now. What have I gotten myself into? The cars might make it, but what about these 60-year-old-plus bodies? Will they make it or just mentally collapse and call for the trailer and pickup we didn't want with us? AH HA! A bar, cafe, live people. We stopped and it turned out to be one of the best things we could have done. Some good ole boys told us of lots of old cars in Burns, and how to contact them. After many more stories of "when I was a kid, Grandpa had one of those cars" and "I remember, etc.," we made our way on to Burns, Oregon and fine hospitality we did not expect. Thanks to Mr. Tuning of Tuning's Arts & Crafts Store who showed us an Essex Touring, a 1924 4-door Buick Model A with 100,000 miles on it, and a 1926 Hudson 4-door being restored. A 1929 Chevy 4 cylinder truck for sale at \$3,900 ran so smooth you couldn't hear the engine run. Mr. Tuning let Gary change his oil in the back of his shop and he then took us around town to see other cars and car hobbyists, including a Frazer car, an Overland touring that runs, lots of tractors and gas engines. On to the motel and more preventative maintenance before we had our dinner. More loose bolts, loose rear hubs, more grease and fan squeaks, small stuff, huh?

**Day 4** – Had breakfast with the boys at the local restaurant at the "Bull Table." Mr. Tuning invited us, so we showed up not knowing what to expect. We sat down at the round table and exchanged pleasantries with the few that were there, waiting for the waitress to bring coffee and take orders. Someone sitting at the table reached over and produced a sign "If you want coffee, get up and get it yourself." End of formalities and what a bull session! Also Mr. Watts of Watts clutches lives there although we did not see him on our way through. Well, on the road and into the National Forest. What beauty, what fresh air and so on towards Pendleton, Oregon. Decided to go on to Kennewick, Washington to see my son and his family.

Boy oh Boy! From Pendleton on back roads we had rain, bees and little gnats with white wings which powdered our windows. On to Kennewick with spit and sputter. My car made it until the first gas station we found where it stopped. What's this? A Tri-City Model T club member jumped us on why we didn't let someone know



"Welcome to Montana" sign encountered on the seventh day of the trip, close to Polson, the final destination of the tour.

we were coming so they could have planned on some sort of reception for us. Begging pardon and backing down, we made our way to the motel and worked on the cars, then called my son to have dinner.

**Day 5** – Rained all day, took the cars over to one of my son's friends where we repacked front wheels and made repairs to the cars most of the day.

**Day 6** – Met my son Herbert for breakfast and then on out of town towards Lewiston, Idaho. What beautiful scenery and more rain. Thanks to Rain-X window prep, we could see just fine. At Lewiston we stopped by to see Tony Copeland at his Ford/Lincoln-Mercury dealership. Also seeing some of his collectibles. Looked for the family eatery, and Gary "broke". . . rear wheel hub twisted loose. After taking it off, we decided it could be welded. Being only a block away from a good welder and a block away from the cafe, welding was done while we ate lunch and wheel was put back with very little wobble. So on towards Moscow, Idaho. Up, up, up 2700 feet of switchback and rain, low Ruckstell and all. Got to the top and it looked like we could spit and it would be downtown Lewiston. Some hill – on up the highway. Big trucks, fast cars and people going nowhere in a hurry. Got to Moscow and decided to stay all night. More work on the cars and I found a broken exhaust manifold nut. Put a water hose clamp on it which held it together until Thompson Falls, Montana where I think I burned the #3 exhaust valve.

**Day 7** – Onward north with cold, rain and wind the order of the day to Thompson Falls and stayed all night. More work on the cars – maybe a burnt exhaust valve. Exhaust nut broke in four pieces. Gary had a brass nut so I sawed my exhaust in two and put the brass nut on, straight pipe and all. The news editor of the local newspaper interviewed us and took pictures. Made the front page (if you open the paper backwards) in Thompson Falls, Montana.

**Day 8** – On our way again and Gary is getting slower all the time. Gary was born and went to school in his early years in this area so his apprehension abounds. Stopped in Hot Springs, Montana. Good cherry pie . . . ummm! On to Polson and to Don Cooper's house, Gary's brother. Pulled into the drive and what and who do we find? Ralph and Ann Cordell from Las Vegas, recent retirees of the school system who were going back east, HA! "And there I was 1400 miles from Las Vegas and was I scared? NO! Hello Don, Alice and Howard. After pictures, lies, stories, etc. Ralph and Ann boarded their 1912 torpedo Model T and we went up to Gary's nephew's Miracle of America Museum; a must see if you're in that area. Back to Don's to work on the cars.

**Day 9** – Renewed old friendships with Don and Alice, Gary's brother and his wife, and Ralph and Ann Cordell, and Howard, Don's son. At noon the three of us (Gary, Ralph and myself) borrowed a modern car and went to Helena for an auction on Saturday.

**Day 10** – Auction long and hot. Stuff went for nothing. Didn't buy anything. Most pieces and parts were mixed together such as A & T parts, etc. No fun for anyone except locals.



**Day 11** – A day to ourselves. Ralph and Ann left for Canada.

**Day 12** – Wait all day for parts from Spokane via UPS. Got there at 5:15 p.m. and we went ahead and put my car back in running condition.

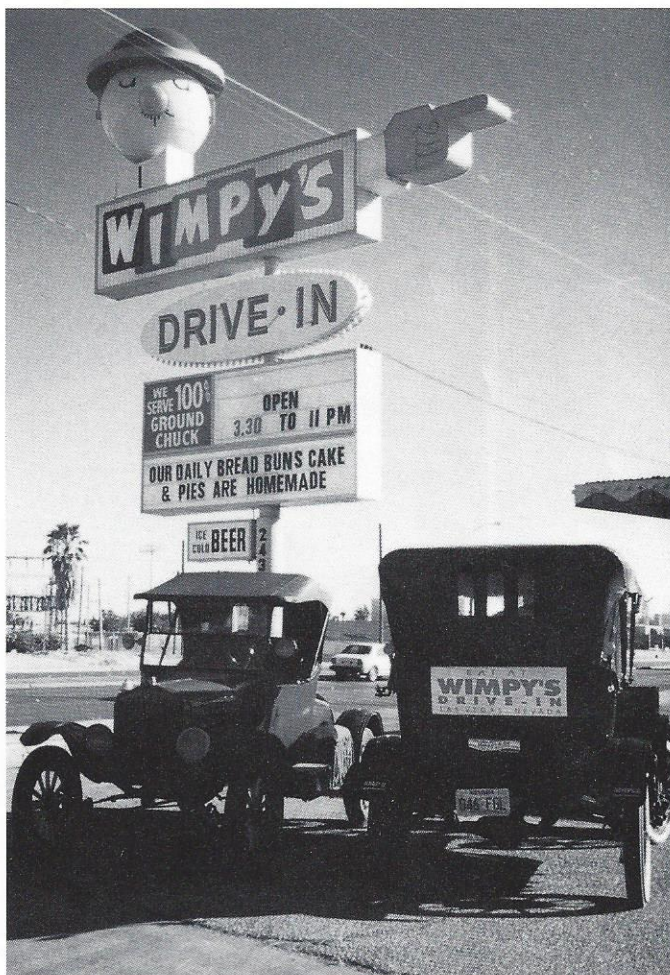
**Day 13** – Up early, still cold and rainy. Drove to Ronan, Gary's home town. Visited with Gary's nephew Dave and drove on to Missoula and saw Gary's other brother Bill, the Harley rider. On the road again up over the pass at 7,160 feet and snowing. Road repairs, time delays, and rough roads seemed to be part of the day's traveling to Salmon. Worked on cars, greasing, tightening bolts, checking, checking, checking, all OK.

**Day 14** – Ready to go and Gary unable to start. Hand crank goes round and round but engines does not turn over. Further examination and we find no pin in the fan pulley on the crankshaft. Where oh where? Oh wait, I think I threw one of those in the box. Sure enough, there it was. So began the process of putting it back in and pinning it without pulling the radiator. Good luck abounds, and we are finished and on our way again. Drove along cold rivers all day, ate good food and got to Shoshone. It's a small railroad town 23 miles from Twin Falls. We stayed the night, worked on our cars and heard more Model T stories. Ready to go for the next day.

**Day 15** – Had breakfast and almost everyone in town turned out to see the cars. On down the road, lots of headwind and cold weather. About 10 miles from Ely was the first warm weather we felt since leaving Las Vegas. AH HH, feels good. Stayed in Ely and worked on our cars. Just routine maintenance, no major items.

**Day 16** – Breakfast at the Copper Queen and on to Lund, Nevada where we read a sign saying the next gas was 105 miles ahead. Even with headwinds, uphill, maybe our gas guzzler Model T's can make it. Tired, windblown, car and truck harassed, we spot Alamo, Nevada. I used 8.7 gallons to fill the 10 gallon tank. Whew! Gary used 7.6 gallons for the same distance. Seems that was the basic difference between the 1917 touring cranker with the Stromberg carburetor versus the 1925 Runabout with electric start and Holley NH carburetor. So it was on to Las Vegas and a stop at Wimpy's Drive-In to see our friend Jack and the 100 plus degree temperatures. Where's the cold weather when we need it? AH HH, home at last and my own bed.

The moral of this story and trip is, "back out if you don't know about Model T's because its too late when you're out there." Routine maintenance was the single most important thing we did on the whole trip. Gary had 30 x 3" tires on the front and 30 x 3-1/2" on the rear. The right front wore severely and will have to be replaced. I had 4.50 x 21" front and rear with no apparent wear anywhere. In fact there wasn't a flat on the entire 2400 mile trip thanks to tube flaps. Lots of fun and if we get the OK to go to Alaska some day, who's gonna back out this time? ■



Above: "So it was on to Las Vegas and a stop at Wimpy's Drive-In to see our friend Jack." Below: "We went to see Gary's nephew's museum, a must-see if you're in the area." (Polson, Montana)

