

T-Rific T Tales



January, February, March 2019

Volume 4, Issue 1

Newsletter of the T-Rific T's Club of West Central Wisconsin

"My Happy New Year wish for you,
Is for your best year yet.
A year where life is peaceful,
And what you want, you get.
A year in which you cherish,
The past year's memories,
Full of bright expectancies.
I wish for you a holiday,
With happiness galore,
And when it's done, I wish you,
Happy New Year 2019, and many more."



<https://t-rificts.com>



GREETINGS FROM THE NEW CLUB OFFICERS:

We hope you have enjoyed receiving our club newsletter in 2018.

Members that pay their annual dues will continue to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail. If you have not yet paid the 2019 dues (very affordable at \$10 a person/couple), please fill out the membership form on the back page and mail it with your payment to

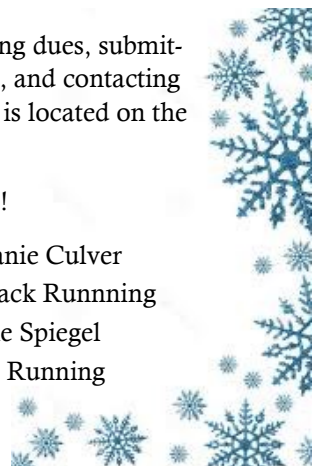
club treasurer Sheila Running by the end of February.

Any contributions to this newsletter would be very appreciated. Submissions include pictures, Model T "tips and tricks," upcoming events, jokes, stories, road trips, or any type of article on Model T's or vintage cars. (BIG THANKS to ALL who have contributed a spotlight story!!)

Information for paying dues, submitting newsletter items, and contacting the newsletter editor is located on the back page.

Thank you so much!!

- President Stephanie Culver
- Vice-President Jack Running
- Secretary Pauline Spiegel
- Treasurer Sheila Running



TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM

One purpose of the T-Rific T's is to get more Model T's restored and on the road. To help with this goal, members were asked to volunteer in their area of expertise so that when a fellow member needs help, he/she knows who to call:

- ◆ Bill Glass: 715-723-7202 or 715-210-5530
- ◆ Del Hanson: 715-234-7308 or 715-205-9024
- ◆ Dan Doughty: 715-835-0685
- ◆ Larry Hanson: 715-837-1578
- ◆ Brian Tourville: 715-664-8830
- ◆ Ernie Loga: 715-832-7302
- ◆ Denny Mickesh (electrical): 715-723-9719
- ◆ Stephanie Culver (fuel or ignition): 715-822-4015
- ◆ Bob Baker (body work): 715-834-2158



A family friend of Bob Baker is selling a 1923 TT truck; 600x20 rear tires; home built cab; red cab/white woodbox; in family for 60 years, always inside storage.

Make offer.

Call Burt Hamm at 715-642-1617
(Phone - Burt's wife)

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 21, 2018, T-RIFIC T'S CLUB MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Hanson.

Jack Running asked if the Chippewa Valley Chapter of SPAAMFAA (Old Firetruck Club) could add the T-Rific Ts website as a contact on their website and if they could be added to our website. He will get that info to Cindy Yardley so that can happen.

Pauline let everyone know that calendars will once again be available for \$20.00. You can pay her for them today if you are interested.

Linda gave the treasurer's report. 2019 dues of \$10.00 per family can be paid at any time.

Election of officers was held:

- ◆ Stephanie Culver - President
- ◆ Jack Running - Vice President
- ◆ Pauline Spiegel - Secretary and Newsletter
- ◆ Sheila Running - Treasurer

Bob Baker thanked previous officers for all their work for the club.

Also thanks to Mike Webb for hosting the fall fling today and providing a wonderful lunch.



Glen Garey said that he has missed many meetings because he is a snowbird and unable to make the April meeting because they are not back until the end of April. It was suggested that we might want to consider moving the spring meeting to sometime in May.

An auction was held after the meeting.

After the meeting, members took a short scenic drive to the Junction Restaurant in Elk Mound and enjoyed delicious ice cream and camaraderie. (See pictures on next page.)



CLUB MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MIKE TKACHUK

I grew up on a 120 acre dairy farm that was carved out of the northwoods by my immigrant grandparents in Taylor county WI, starting in 1913. The farm was 20 miles West of Medford, the county seat, on a gravel road that is now state highway 64. My father, second youngest of eight children, ended up taking over the farm from his parents.

My first recollection of Model T Ford's was while growing up on the farm and becoming old enough to be out and about exploring the out buildings of the farm. The machine shed, as we called it, was a timber frame building. The walls were clad vertically with rough sawn boards from trees on the farm, so the light showed through the cracks between all the boards. That was a good thing, as there were no windows or electricity in the shed so it provided some dim well needed light. The airy construction also helped keep things dry inside; the roof was good, but the floor was dirt, heavy Wisconsin clay dirt!

So one day when I was about 4 to 5 years old, I was exploring the machine shed. Near one end was a fairly tall stickered lumber pile hiding the equipment storage space behind the two large hinged access doors at the very end. After navigating around the jagged end of the pile of varied length boards, there sat an old tall steel wheeled McCormick Deering grain drill with a plow beside it packed in directly behind the large doors. Behind the equipment, I discovered two old dusty cars sitting back in the dim Northwest corner of the shed. In the far corner was a 1926 T Coupe with one purple headlight lens and small wood pickup box installed in place of the missing trunk lid and lower deck panel. Otherwise, it was a complete original car other than its paint, a lovely forest green body and black fenders obviously applied with a poor quality brush many years ago.

Next to the 26 sat an unusual looking fenderless car parked on old scraps of slab wood under the tires that slowed the sinking of the wheels into the dirt floor. With the many years of dust, it was hard to tell the rust from the thin layer of faded red paint on the body. It was in poor condition and didn't look like much with its dented and stress cracked body on a rust colored frame looking back at you with headlights that didn't have any lenses or bulbs and tarnished dull reflectors. It made what my Dad called "The Racer" a pretty sad sight. Needless to say whenever there was more than two of us kids playing in the old cars "The Racer" was not the first choice because the green one had doors, a roof, glass in the windshield and of course a purple headlight lens. If any of us kids knew anything about Model T's and boat tail speedsters with high performance engine accessories, maybe it would have been our first choice like my Dad's when he was 21 years

old. Now, I will insert the story I heard many times over the years, about how he acquired "The Racer" and how it ended up the back of the machine shed. Around the year 2000, I convinced my Dad to document the story.

So here it is written in my Dad's own words:



"The year was 1936, jobs and money were scarce; I did get a job working in the woods but it didn't last long, only a little over a month. I earned \$30.00. So I was back helping at home on the farm (no pay). With the \$30.00 I bought some clothes and a pair of shoes so I had \$10.60 left.

I had a bad back problem so I went to the chiropractor which was 20 miles away, I hitched a ride with a truck that hauled cream to the creamery in Medford and that's where I saw this Speedster on a used car lot, I didn't stop to look at it but by the time I got home I decided that I would like to have it. I told my brother about it and told him I sure would like to own it, so the next time I hitched a ride to Medford the Speedster was no longer there but I stopped in and inquired about it and was told that they sold it to a kid in town. I asked what it sold for and they said, "\$10.00!" Boy, did I ever feel bad and disappointed because I wanted it so bad, I could taste it.

The next time I hitched a ride, as we came past the used car lot – there it was. As soon as I got done at the chiropractor I wasted no time to see if the Speedster was still for sale. It was and the dealer told me that the parents of the kid that bought it wouldn't let him keep it. So I bought it for \$10.00. I knew it was a Model T Ford but it had this strange looking head and this great big carburetor. I didn't know anything about that, all I was interested in was the car and that it ran. So I drove it home.

With the 60 cents I had left I bought 3 gallons of gas and got 3 cents change.

So there I was, I had the car but no money for gas or tires as one tire was very bad. But I did learn that I had a rare car with a Rajo head and underslung, rocky mountain brakes, etc. And with a beat up body and a radiator that leaked. We did run it a little but not much until the following year, my brother went to Chicago and got a job he sent me money for a license and a tire. In 1942, I drove to see a friend and had trouble with the points in the distributor. My friend pulled me home and we pushed it into a shed and there it stayed on blocks until 1961. That's when I got it going again and restored it to the best of my ability and it looked good and ran good. We drove it at several parades and took it to a steam and gas engine show and had fun driving it.

Since I've reached the age where I have to start parting with my toys and stuff, I gave the Speedster to my son, Michael.

*He can now continue with the story - Mike Tkachuk
P.S. My parents paid for the chiropractor, which was \$1.00 per visit."*

I will continue with some more history of the '24 Model T Ford Speedster as I remember it. As my Dad said in his story, in 1961, he began bringing "The Racer" back to life. Now that I look back at this time of my Dad's life, he must have been planning this for some time and had a real passion for this old car. The only other substantial outbuilding on the farm besides the barn and machine shed was a 20ft by 36ft frame building. Half of this building was a two stall garage/shop with concrete floor and the other half was a large chicken coop with a wood frame floor built over a bed of field stone. The chicken side of the building had the interior walls covered with shiplap boards while the rest of the building was bare studs. Not being big in chicken farming like his parents, my Dad had started remodeling that half of the building a couple of years before 1961. He poured a new concrete floor in sections all by himself in his spare time, which wasn't easy to come by on the farm in the summer. He cut in a new overhead door, a real luxury compared to the two sets of heavy hinged double doors on the other side of the building. He built a double 55 gal drum wood stove and a new chimney to top of his new shop area. The story was he needed a place to put the pickup, as the other two spots on the other side of the building held the family car in



one spot and tools, welder, other equipment to maintain the farm equipment, and the Farmall A in the winter. My Dad did all his own repairs.

One day in the summer of '61, he opened up the two large hinged doors on the north end of the machine shed and pulled all the equipment out from in front of the old cars. I asked what he was doing. He said we're getting "The Racer" out of the shed. He hooked a chain to the front axle, told me to get in and steer, and pulled it out in front of the new shop. To me, being 8 years old, this was a big event that started many memories of bringing "The Racer" back to life.

I have memories of watching Dad trying to get it running for the first time in close to 20 years. This happened over a period of weeks as Racer time was scarce. First major issue was lack of compression. Problem solved when he discovered the Rajo overhead valve system made a very poor corn cracking machine. Mice had carried corn kernels up into the head through the exhaust manifold preventing some valves from closing completely. Some disassembly required.

Eventually one day I was in the house and heard a roaring sound I hadn't heard before. I ran outside and it was the Racer making all the noise. With no exhaust system beyond the exhaust manifold which emptied straight down, it was loud and blew all the loose gravel away making a bare circle in the driveway when revving it up while parked. It was really cool when over a grassy spot in the yard. It left a black charred spot (remember I was 8 years old). We went for a short half mile ride down county road F which ended at highway 64 directly across from our driveway. On the way back, the engine died as soon as we started to cross 64. It wouldn't start and we had to push it off the highway into the driveway because a car was coming. The car pulled over and stopped to check out the old car. It happened to be my third grade teacher. Her curiosity must have got the best of her seeing the unusual old car. She talked to my Dad awhile about the car and drove off in her '59 Chevy, two tone black with white top and trunk lid, and red interior. Funny what you remember when your 8.

The first couple of years the major mechanical faults were repaired. The Hayes 21" wire wheels were hand scraped and sanded and given a coat of brushed on yellow paint. They looked good but one was bent and two of the original Hayes split rims were missing. Ford rims could be forced on but all but one of the mounting tabs would seat properly on the rim. This caused the wheels to slightly wobble and shake at high speed. I found a rare picture from 1963 with the painted wire wheels, radiator

shell, but unrestored body. My cousins from Chicago were visiting like they did every summer, so that called for Racer rides for all the kids and a picture. My Dad's solution to the wheel problem was to paint up a set of 21" wood spoke wheels until the bent rim and missing Hayes split rims could be addressed later.



Sometime after 1963, a complete restoration was completed over approximately the next five years during my Dad's rare spare time. The mechanicals were no problem for my Dad. He and his three brothers were well versed in keeping at least one of two Model T's running as they were the family's only means of transportation before my Grandfather bought a new 1936 Ford pickup. Dad did a refresh/rebuild of the entire drive train himself. He put

new rings in the engine, I remember him putting me to work with emery cloth to deglaze the cylinder walls when I asked to help. I assume he followed up after me to do it right because it is still running today on that rebuild. I watched as he filed the bearing caps for the crankshaft and rods to snug up the worn Babbitt bearings.

Then some needed to be shimmed after a test fit if they were too tight.

The boat tail Speedster body must have originally been a kit of some sort consisting of the steel parts and patterns for the wood or someone had replaced some or most of the wood at one time. In either case, the wood was of poor quality and in bad shape when my Dad bought it. Some pieces had bark in places on the edges of the boards. My Dad completely removed the sheet metal and built a new wood frame for the body using the old boards for patterns.

The original radiator shell is of unknown origin (looks to me like it might be Kissel?) and had a crude sectioning job done to shorten it. It still was taller than the T radiator. The radiator cap was recessed down in a butchered hole in the shell. I still have the old hood parts.



I mocked up the assembly and included a picture. My Dad replaced radiator and shell with the taller 26-27 Ford style to give it back its T Ford identity. This meant he had to build a new hood top and sides. Using the sheet metal from my Mom's old scrapped out automatic clothes washer. He copied the style of the old hood, adjusting the dimensions to fit the Ford shell and improved the quality of the large louvers.



He carved out a form in a white oak board, ground out the die from a thick piece of steal, and carefully hammered. The body work was his biggest challenge being it was his first attempt at this skill. With persistence, he finished all the body work and topped it off with several coats of Ming Red Hardware Hank's enamel. I think he fogged it on which resulted in a quite nice paint job with NO runs! A great first time achievement, which we were reminded of for years with many items in the shop having a red tinge to them from the over spray.

The next twenty years or so my Dad enjoyed "The Racer" and continue making more family memories. He also acquired another 1923 T Coupe that was in decent original condition and required little repair other than a new interior that he bought as a kit and installed himself. In the mid to late 80's my Dad passed the Racer on to me with instructions that it never leave the family if at all possible. My younger brother now has the 23 and 26 Coupes.

In 1993 I decided to restore the racer again. The past 20 years had taken its toll. My goal was to have it finished by September of 95 for my Dad's 80th birthday. I am an amateur body man as my Dad only I had the advantage of modern equipment, a couple of other projects under my belt, and an infinite source of information from a good friend, Bob Brinkman, who was very generous with sharing his knowledge and expertise. I didn't get it completed by his birthday, but the chassis was done with a shiny new coat of urethane enamel over epoxy primer. All the metal work on the body was complete and I surprised him on his birthday with the bare metal body setting on the completed chassis. He couldn't believe I had taken it all a part again, but I never did disassemble the engine and transmission assembly. Other than a cosmetic re-furbish and a tune up his original overhaul still runs great to this day.



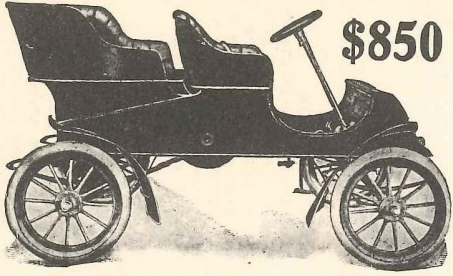
When I completed my restoration of "The Racer," I was able to attend several events with my Dad before he passed at the age of 95. We attended the Farmington Minnesota T club show, some local shows, Jump River Fourth of July parade, MSRA Back to the 50's and perhaps my Dad's favorite was Matt Joseph's Auto-Bratton. Some of you may remember Matt Joseph had a radio show called "All about cars" every Saturday on WPR years ago. My Dad always listened to his call in show with listeners questions about cars. After WPR canceled Matt's show, it came back for a few years on WTDY AM from Madison. They sponsored a live broadcast with a small car show at Cross Plains WI high school called Auto-Bratton. We attended the last three years 1998 thru 2000. On the last year Matt did a live interview with my Dad about his car. My Dad really enjoyed making another memory with his Racer at age 90.



MORE ON THIS STORY

This 1937 photo from Mike's story is a scan of a scanned picture so the quality is lacking. A little background on this picture. It's taken on the Farm I grew up on. The main subject is my grandfather and his new colt "Bosco." The car happens to be in the background. If you look close you can see it has 30x3 and 1/2 wood spoke wheels from one of the other older Ts the family had in the front and the rear wheels are the 21" Hayes wires. Dad didn't have money for tires so he made due with what was at hand, like most people during the depression.

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T-rific T's Dues & Newsletter Contact Information

- ◆ Send club registration form and \$10 dues payment to our new treasurer: **Sheila Running, 1975 North 60th Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54703**
- ◆ Send newsletter items to **Pauline Spiegel** by email: terrificclub@gmail.com or U.S. mail: **16874 210th Street, Jim Falls, WI 54748**
 - ◆ Home Phone: 715-382-4350
 - ◆ Cell Phone: 715-404-5774

**Possible DATES -
T-RIFIC T'S
SPRING FLING**

**Sunday, April 28 or May 5
Mike Webb's Warehouse
N5696 850th Street
Elk Mound, WI**

*Turn by the restaurant, / gas station,
drive past it , follow the road 1/4 mile
to the warehouse; enter on the back side.*



Members Who Have Paid 2019 Dues (according to treasurer info)

- Allen and Jane Brun
- Stephanie and Bill Culver
- Paul and Bernice Doughty
- Larry and Linda Hanson
- James and Georgiann Olson
- Jack and Sheila Running
- David and Patricia Schmid
- John and Pauline Spiegel
- Jim and Nita Thill
- Mike and Sue Tkachuk
- Brian and Gail Tourville
- George Uthall
- Harold and Judy Walters
- Mike Webb

T-RIFIC T'S OF WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

2019 Dues (\$10) are due by February 28, 2019

NAME: _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

VINTAGE/CLASSIC CAR INFORMATION (Year, Make, Model, etc.): (If new information or not previously provided)
