



THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...

By Ed Melon

Howdy, fellow Model Ters! Summer is about here and, some of us will be touring on some beautiful mountain roads in our Ts. The upcoming Horseless Carriage Club of America's Atlanta Region "Great Smokey Mountain Tour" is one of many mountain tours planned by various clubs this summer and is a great chance to try our driving skills and cars. Driving in the mountains can be a lot of fun and the cooler temperatures and spectacular scenery can make it a trip to remember. But to make sure we have a trouble free trip, there are some things we can do to make our mountain driving safer and more enjoyable.

Mountain driving can be a challenge to any antique automobile but it is especially so for our two-speed Model Ts. This is one place where a second gear would be a great help! But equally important is the ability to slow down or stop completely on steep mountain grades. So, our bands must be in good condition and adjusted properly if we are to enjoy a safe ride. Careful use of the pedals will also help the bands maintain their ability to work reliably.

Our wood spoke wheels also experience additional strain in mountain driving as does the cooling system. All these things are important but with a little care and preparation we can have a trouble-free trip.

The cooling system should be clean and filled with water and a good anti-corrosion additive or a 50/50 mixture of antifreeze. Cooling is slightly more efficient with water than antifreeze. If you have a water pump, check the packing for leaks and inspect the fan belt. If the belt is good, check the tension. It will need to be higher for a water pump but you don't want it any tighter than necessary to turn the fan and pump. The spark lever also affects cooling. Run your spark at the point where the engine has the most power without knocking. If you encounter a steep grade, retarding the spark can help the engine pull more easily.

Check your wood spokes!! If they are loose, you are inviting a disaster! Wood wheels should never click or groan! If they do, find out why. Would you like to have a wheel collapse as you go around a sharp mountain turn with a drop of hundreds of feet right at the edge of the road? I have seen it happen! Check your wood spokes!!

Check your tire pressures. Not less than 50 pounds in 30 inch clinchers and 35 pounds in 21 inch balloon tires. Less than 50 in a clincher will invite a blowout or at least a severed valve stem!

Inspect your bands and replace if worn. I suggest either Kevlar or wood. Kevlar is easier to install but both give good service. Don't wait till the trip to adjust a new set of bands. Install them. Set them loosely, run them till they seat and then adjust once more. Kevlar and wood will then give long life if used properly. Setting them too tight will cause rapid wear and possible drum failure!

Getting long life out of bands is not hard. It just requires a little thought. The enemy of all bands is heat! We depend on the oil in the transmission to cool the bands. Heat is also generated when bands slip! If you must use low gear on a steep grade, press the pedal all the way down FIRMLY. Don't let your foot relax and the low band slip! Try to anticipate when low will be needed and don't wait until the engine is lugging and in danger of stalling! That's a good way to break a crankshaft in a T! If you do stall and your brakes won't hold the car, cut your wheels IF THERE IS ROOM and let the car turn sideways in the road BEFORE it begins to pick up speed backwards. You do NOT want to be rolling backwards down a steep



grade with cars behind you!

When slowing or stopping, press the brake pedal a couple of seconds and then release for a couple of seconds to allow oil to get in the band and cool it. Continue this on/off action as long as you are using the brake. The mountains are a great place to have Rocky Mountain Brakes! The same on/off action works with them as well. We want to allow the brake bands a time to cool.

Enjoy the mountain scenery and I ☐ II

See you down the road ☐