



## **THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...**

*By Ed Moran*

Howdy fellow Model T'ers! Last issue we talked about potential problems when touring in our T's. Before we leave that subject let's talk a little more about areas that may make our tours safer.

We mentioned Rocky Mountain brakes as a very desirable addition to any Model T that you plan to drive (and that includes them all! Right?) Seriously, RM Brakes can save your life and you don't have to go on long tours for that to be true! Only a few days after I had added them to my 12 Touring, a fella in modern iron came through a stop sign and right into the path of our T. We were going about 30 mph and I literally stomped on the brake pedal. The new RM brakes locked both rear wheels and we missed that guy by inches! We were only two blocks from home!

The RM brakes for the pre-large drum rear axles come with new 11 inch drums. These alone would increase the braking on small drum T but you also have the added feature of self energizing brake bands which really help the mechanical advantage you have when pressing the pedal.

Everytime I touch that brake pedal I am reminded of how nice those new brakes feel and how well they work. Drive a T with them and I promise you'll want a set! And... they take a lot of strain off the universal joint, drive shaft, differential and rear axles!

One thing you DO want to do though... You want to keep the old internal brake but adjust it to only work during the last inch or two of pedal travel. There are several reasons for keeping the old brakes operating. The RM self-energizing brake feature works great moving forward but it makes the RM's almost useless for driving in reverse. Backing off your trailer, for example!

The other reason for keeping the old band brake working is that the external RM's will NOT work when wet!! NOTE THAT or you're likely to find life interesting when you try to stop at an intersection after going through a big puddle of water <smile>!!

Many of us are driving on wooden spokes that are 80 years old. There's nothing wrong



with this IF the spokes are in good condition but if they aren't we are betting our lives and the lives of our families that they won't fail!

One of the common problems with the Model T wood spoke wheels is loose hub bolts. As the spokes swell and shrink, they can cause the hub bolts to loosen over time. Loose spokes will usually complain loudly to us if we simply listen to them. When driving at slow speeds, loose spokes will click with each revolution of the wheel. When you hear that very clear clicking, it's time to tighten the hub bolts and if that doesn't do it some shims may need to be installed between each spoke and the next one. Usually thightening the hub bolts will fix the problem.

If spokes are going to fail, they will almost always do it when turning, which puts a side strain on the front wheel spokes, or when you let a wheel drop off the pavement and onto the shoulder of the road. We yank the wheel to force the wheel back up onto the road and, when we do that, we are putting a tremendous side strain on the spokes! If you let a front or rear wheel drop off the road, slow down and gently bring the car back on the pavement. Don't yank the wheel sharply!

On one of our summer tours in the mountains a touring car lost BOTH back wheels. The spokes were new and I suspect the driver let one rear wheel drop off the edge! The strain caused the spokes to fail on that wheel and when the car dropped, the other rear wheel spokes failed as well. The car happened to be where the mountain went UP at the side of the road but we had driven past a number of places where the road dropped straight down. Picture what might have happened had it been at one of those. It's enough to make you check your own spokes!

In short... we put our safety on line with those four old wheels everytime we drive our T.

See you down the road☐