



Northern
Virginia
Regional
Group



VALVE CLATTER



THE EARLY FORD V-8 CLUB OF AMERICA
Regional Group 96

Volume XXIII, No. 10

October 2000

Cliff Green, Editor

THE 2000 TOUR TO SOLOMONS ISLAND

by Barbara Westrate

This year's Lebkicker Tour was one of the best tours that the Club has sponsored. The weather was wonderful, the tour activities were fun and meaningful, and the company was top notch. We hope that those unable to go this year can join in next year. All of us were pleased to have **Merty Lebkicker** join us gain this year on the tour. Her presence is always a pleasure and she inspires us to maintain and improve the Club, as Dick would have wanted. Thanks Merty!

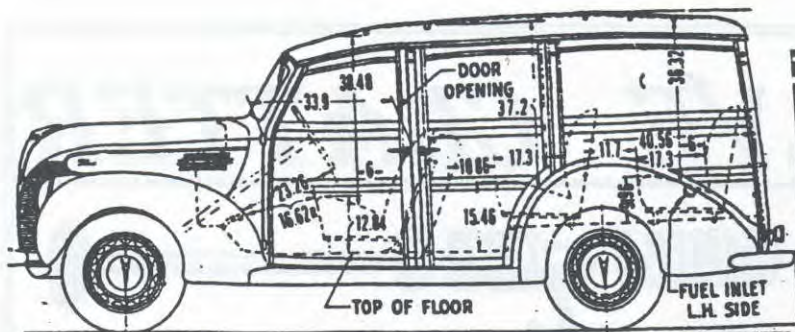
We all gathered at Fair Oaks Mall with lots of visiting going on and the usual drive-bys from the mall security officer. Don Lombard gave a first class briefing and handed out packets with all the details we would need for the two days, and we were off.

As we approached I-95, our leader and 'President for Life' **Don Lombard** said on the radio, "Turn right" and **Hank Amster** came on and said, "No, turn left".

Don prevailed and was "right" as everyone settled in. A VDOT litter patrol crew tried to scoop up a couple of cars as trash, but we escaped. The **Girmans** and **Westrates** were at the end of the pack and got hung up at almost every light. After a very long one, we missed a turn and wandered around lost for a while. We caught up with the tour as they arrived at our first stop only to realize that we had never been missed!

Our first stop was at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant where we toured the Visitor's Center and grounds. We learned that *(continued page 4)*





OCTOBER 2000

First, I just want to thank **Don Lombard** and **Ken Burns**, once again, for their hard work in putting together the Lebkicker Tour this year. This takes time and effort on their part, including a full day to do a dry run, and it is greatly appreciated. The details of the tour are covered in an article in this Valve Clatter, and I urge you all to check it out. Please thank Don and Ken next time you see them.

Congratulations to **Hank Dubois**, who is this year's winner of the Dick Lebkicker Award. Hank continues to make contributions to the club by serving on the Board of Directors and volunteers to help with tasks and events such as the Fairfax Car Show. He has also been very responsive to the individual needs of members and often shows up to help them work on their cars. He has a wide range of knowledge, especially on technical issues but, more importantly, he always has a smile and a kind word to say. I think that shows Cindy's influence on him. We are proud to have you both as club members and friends.

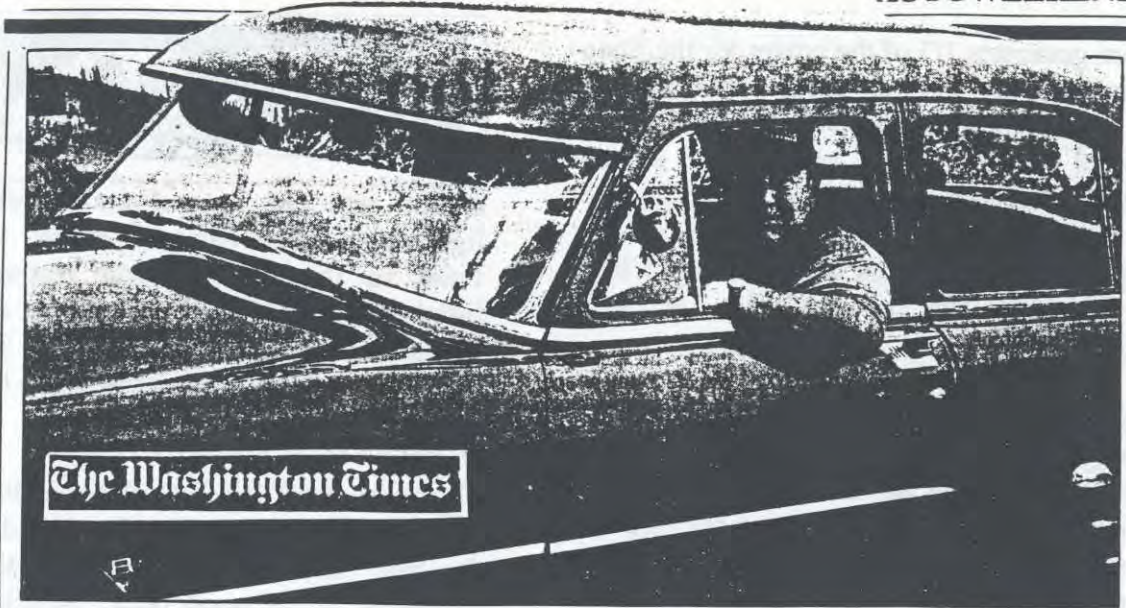
Your President has taken some heat in the past few days for poor research and inaccurate reporting. I mentioned last month that the Stewart's 46 and the Morrison's 35 were first owner cars. Well, wouldn't you know I missed the **Potter's 36** convertible sedan and **Mike Kozak's 39** coupe, which was his uncle's. By the way, Mike has been appointed as the U.S. Ambassador to Belarus, and we wish you and your family well on this assignment. Let us know if you see any old Fords over there! In my own defense, I point out that my statement was "I know of only one other car....". Well, now I know of two more, and who knows what else is out there. I have issued a formal censure to the Research Department of Valve Clatter; so, hopefully, we won't have these lapses in the future!

As if Hershey wasn't enough, we have a special program for you at the next meeting. **Von Hardesty** has arranged for a presentation by Pete Daniel, author of Lost Revolutions, the South in the 50s. He will talk to us about the history of the automobile in the 50s and NASCAR racing, among other things. Spouses are encouraged to attend this interesting event. Let's all show up for this one.

Lombard has got them!!!! Don advises that he has Entertainment Books for sale again this year, and the proceeds to the club treasury. These are great gifts that can save people a lot of loot! Buy an armful for your family and friends.

Have a great month, and remember, if we each do a little, together we can accomplish a

Dave



"You only feel it when you drive a flathead V-8 Ford," Gene Welch says, explaining that certain feeling. The Washington Times

OUT OF THE PAST / Vern Parker

1953 Ford Customline still stirring emotions

As Ford approached its 50th anniversary in 1953 a lot of folks expected a razzle-dazzle, spectacular, commemorative model.

When the motoring public received instead was a spruced-up version of the 1952 Ford and the most highly developed flathead V-8 engine since it was introduced in 1932. The flathead V-8 was replaced in 1954 with an overhead-valve Y-block V-8.

By far the most popular 1953 model Ford was the four-door Customline, with 374,487 such models being manufactured.

Each one of those cars weighed 3,154 pounds, cost \$1,628, base price, and rode on a 115-inch wheelbase supported by 6.70x15-inch tires.

One of those Fords was purchased and the original owner kept it in very good condition for 30 years. When his son took ownership, the car, even at that advanced age, became a reliable daily driver.

When the son was transferred to the Pacific Northwest in 1989, the 36-year-old Ford was one of the items deemed excess baggage.

It was parked on the family's front lawn in Round Hill, Va., with a "For Sale" sign in the window.

Gene Welch of White Post, Va., saw the car as he passed by, but his schedule prevented him from stopping. A couple of weeks later Mr. Welch innocently asked his wife, Jeanne, if she would like to take a rainy weekend drive.

She agreed, and he just happened to take a route that took them through Round Hill.

What a surprise. When he saw the Ford still there he had to stop and give it a rainy-day once-over. Impressed with the car,

he offered the owner a check, and in April 1989 the deal was done.

Mr. Welch got in, twisted the ignition key and, when the old flathead V-8 turned over, he said, "The hair on my arms stood up." He drove his prize home in the rain with Mrs. Welch close behind. The odometer showed a total of 70,000 miles.

Just before he left for home, the former owner relayed that the car had been in a movie — "The Diner," set in Baltimore. Because of this, the vehicle had been painted an inauthentic green.

Mr. Welch discovered that the 1953 Fords were available in 12 single colors or 14 two-tone combinations. He soon had the dent-free Ford repainted the original Hawthorn green.

After driving the car home with no trouble Mr. Welch reports, "It'll run 55 to 60 mph at ease." He inspected his new-old Ford, discovering that besides detailing it only needed tires. The original uphol-

stery, he concedes, "Isn't great, but it is original."

The car never had a heater, which was an extra-cost accessory in 1953. Mr. Welch usually refrains from driving his antique Ford in the winter if the roads have been chemically treated, so the absence of a heater proved to be a non-issue.

Happily, every other item on the car works beautifully.

Six interior color options were available in 1953. Although Mr. Welch will eventually have to reupholster the interior, he's going to put the task off as long as the original remains serviceable.

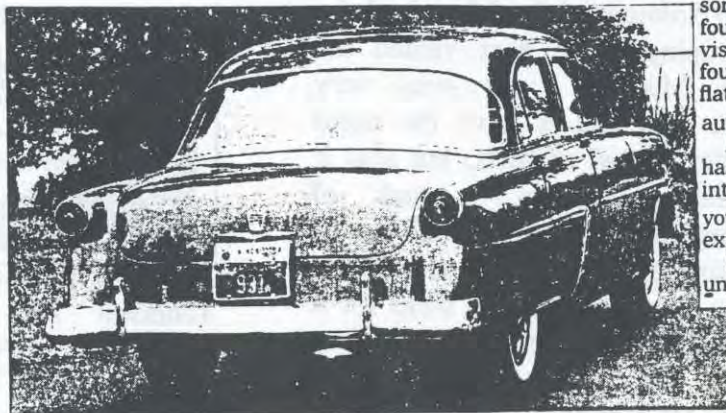
The original, untouched, 239.4-cubic-inch flathead V-8 in the 1953 Ford is the culmination of 21 years of improvement.

"My first car was a 1940 Ford standard," Mr. Welch said, "and when I hear this engine start, I have that certain feeling."

More than a decade has passed since Mr. Welch bought the handsome car with features no longer found on modern cars, such as a sun visor or wing-vent windows on all four doors. The familiar sound of a flathead Ford V-8 is deflected by an authentic Ford exhaust deflector.

After all these years Mr. Welch has difficulty describing that certain intangible. "You only feel it when you drive a flathead V-8 Ford," he explains.

If you have to ask you wouldn't understand.



the plant generates 1/3 of the power for the State of Maryland, as well as facts about nuclear waste management and containment buildings. We found out that lantern mantles and smoke detectors have radioactivity. The Center has the 1818 Wilson tobacco barn preserved in the facility and the rich history of the Calvert Cliffs area prior to the power plant is well documented.

A highlight was **Jane Wild's** wild ride on a stationary bike, which generated electricity. She cranked that baby up till it was lighting a 200-watt bulb. Her legs were flying around, and we were all proud of her. Now we know why Bob is so relaxed, as he knows that Jane can push the station wagon if it breaks down, no problem.



Outside, we gathered for a group photo in front of the four sturdy chimneys, which are all that is left of the old farmhouse. There also was a gorgeous view of the plant itself with the Chesapeake Bay as a backdrop. Don provided snacks for all, which was appreciated.

We pressed on to Solomons Island for check-in, lunch and regrouping. We next visited the Calvert Marine Museum. It was very interesting. Not only did it have the usual collection of water-related artifacts, but also it featured a Muskrat Habitat, a tank of experimental sturgeon, and a wonderful set of fish tanks with live exhibits of bay area water creatures. There was a restoration shop for a club that restores the watercraft used by the bay watermen over the years and there were several restored examples of these boats. A must see



exhibit was the Drum Point "screw bottom" lighthouse, which has been moved from Drum Point to the museum and restored. This lighthouse dates to 1883 and its center pole literally screwed into the bay bottom for stability. It once was one of forty lighthouses, and now there are only four left.

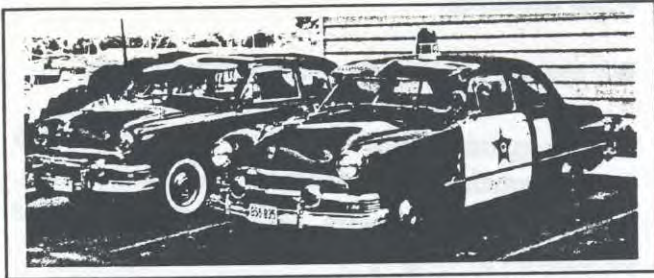
The "outhouse" for the lighthouse is positioned over the railing allowing deposits directly into the bay. It appeared to us to be the ultimate definition of the poop deck. It originally had four cisterns for catching fresh water. A 100-watt bulb replaced kerosene as the light source and through the prism it was visible for 13 miles. The watermen complained that the 100-watt bulb was too bright and hurt their eyes and wanted the kerosene source back.

The lighthouse had a bell for foggy conditions which ran on a clock mechanism and had an assigned frequency of two rings every 15 seconds. The next lighthouse up the line had three rings every 15 seconds, and so on.



The club sponsored our ride on the Wm. B. Tennison "Bug Eye" Bay Boat, which was magnificent. We sailed for an hour in the cool of the evening, as the sun was setting, amidst the moored vessels, the movement of waterfowl

and friendly conversation. It was relaxing and invigorating to say the least. This 101 year-old boat is a true woodie, as its bottom is made up of 9 logs laid in a shallow bowl shape and secured with wooden pins. It originally was powered by sail and is the oldest Coast Guard inspected vessel on the Bay. It is 60' x 17', and if cared for will last another 100 years.



Our guide pointed out all of the highlights along the way including the location where Navy and Marine personnel were trained for beach landings for D-Day in France and other campaigns in Africa and the Pacific during World War II. That was a sobering moment considering the sacrifices those brave Americans made after this training so we could, years later, continue to enjoy the dream.

Dinner followed where it was announced that **Hank Dubois** was this year's winner of the Dick Lebkicker Award. Hank certainly exceeds the criteria for this award, and we thank him and **Cindy** for their continued contributions to the Club and its members. Congratulations to both of you!

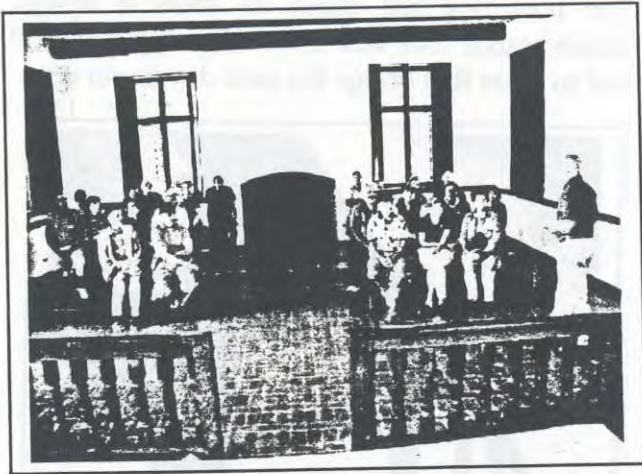


The boat ride had taken us under a bridge, which stands 140 feet above the Bay. We all had to cross that bridge the next day in our cars.



There was much discussion about the fact that the **Hank Amster** could never make it over that bridge without downshifting and the Amstermobile's record would be shattered forever. We turned in with great anticipation and departed at 10am for St. Mary's City. Over the bridge the Amsters went, just flying in that old Ford. They went so fast that when they got to the other side they were in California (California, MD, that is). Hank swears he never left 3rd! Let it go guys, its not worth the fight.

Our last stop was a 2-½ hour tour of the exhibits depicting how Maryland was first colonized around 1634. This was fun and interesting too. Leonard Calvert arrived with his group in two boats to establish a "religiously neutral experiment". The Yaocomaco Indians welcomed them and offered them their "witchut" straw houses to live in in exchange for protection from rival tribes and metal implements from Europe. We toured a reconstructed village as it originally was, and heard from a period indentured servant as to what life was like. Then on to the Godiah Spray plantation, which depicted a 1660 working tobacco farm complete with house, gardens and tobacco barn as it would have been. They had the most unusual chickens there – beautiful.



Next, to the first Maryland State House (1676), complete with stocks for the bad boys. We listened to an informative lecture on the functions of the House and how different religions' faiths played a role in our early history. Our last stop was to visit a three-masted ship at the water's edge. This ship was the same as Calvert's smaller ship used in the crossing from England. How anybody could survive three months on this pile of planks is beyond imagination.

We learned how they navigated by "dead reckoning" (dead being a derivative of the word



deduced). A period sailor explained the use of a "Dutch Traverse Board" to plot the ship's course and a device to calculate "knots" of speed. Knots of speed were literally calculated by letting out a rope overboard with knots tied at intervals to determine the rate of travel. We finished up at the "Ordinary", which was a primitive motel where ordinary people stayed while traveling.

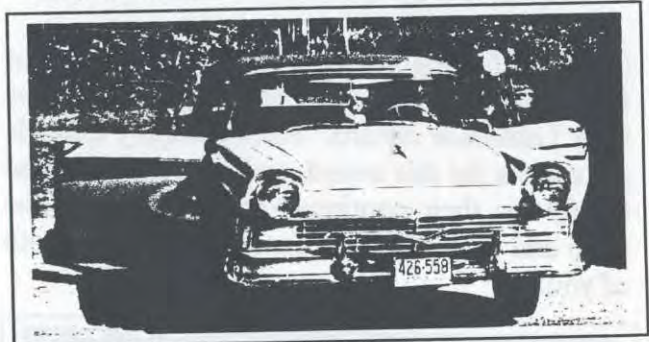
We headed home with a lunch stop in route.

Thanks again to **Don Lombard** and **Ken Burns** for organizing and leading this expedition. Thanks also to **Jim McDaniels** for his thoughtful photography.

Contributing Reporters: **John & Patty Girman**

Bob & Jane Wild
 Bill & Liz Simons
 David & Norma Blum
 Bill & Sylvia Tindel
 Frank & Larrie Martin
 Don Lombard
 Merty Lebkicker

Dave & Barbara Westrate
 Paul & Elsa Chase
 Von & Pat Hardesty
 Jim & Char McDaniels
 John & Patty Girman
 Ken & Helen Blurns
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GENUINE FORD ACCESSORIES

Ford Radio
Luggage Carrier • Seat Covers
Electric Glove-compartment Clock
Dual Windshield Wiper
Cigar Lighter • Vanity Mirror
License Frames
Locking Gasoline Cap
Wheel Bands
Temperature Indicator
Oil and Fuel Gauge
Side Mirror • Spot Light
Windshield Wings
Governor • Ash Receivers
Bulb Kit
Polish • Wax • Paints
Cleaners

FORD CARS are built with one purpose in mind—to give best possible service to Ford owners. That's why it is very important that replacements be made with Genuine Ford Parts—and it is the reason why only Genuine Ford Accessories should be sold to Ford users.

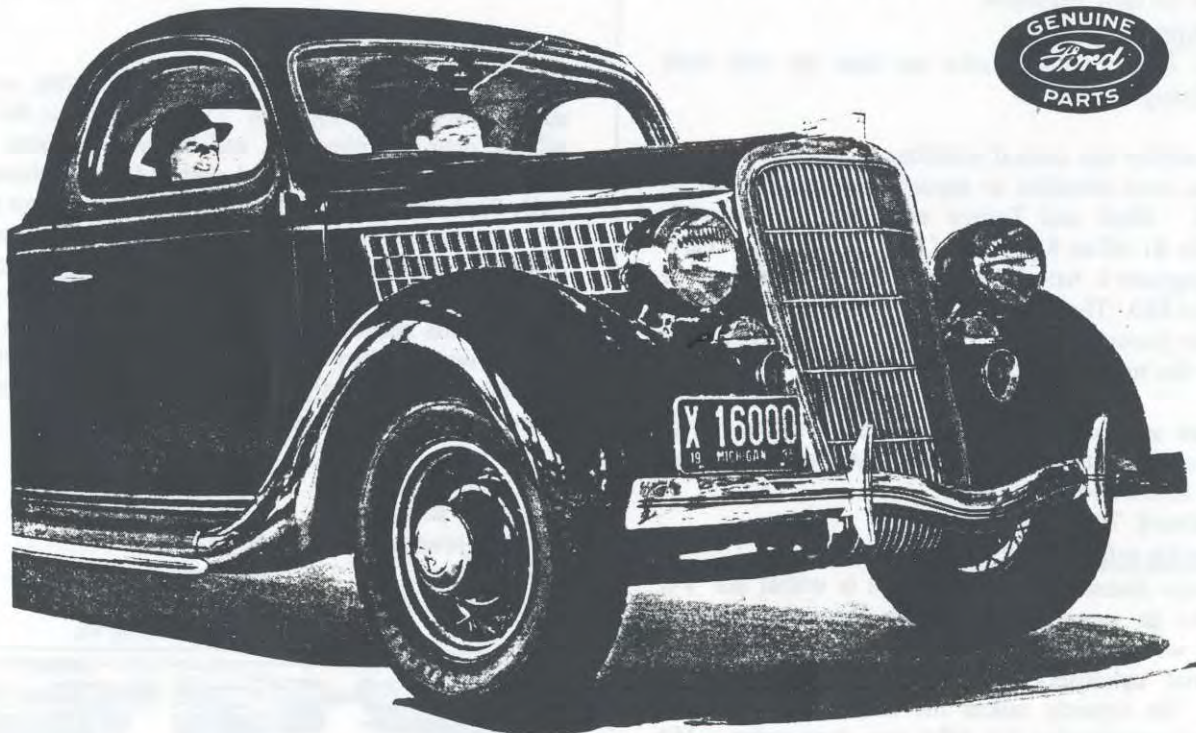
Genuine Ford Parts are engineered for the job. They are manufactured by the same machines as the original parts—and they are subjected to the same rigid inspection.

Genuine Ford Accessories, like the Ford car, are selected and built to give lasting service.

Owners are quick to realize that parts and accessories sold by the Ford Motor Company must be in keeping with the highest standards of Ford quality and economy.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN



Ford Dealer & Service Field for June, 1935

9

MYSTERY MEMBERS NEEDED

When my hard drive crashed I lost some photos of future Mystery Members. If you have not appeared, please resubmit – also, I need more old photos to keep this feature going.

AMSTERMOBILE SCORES

The world famous Amstermobile was voted one of the favorites at Vern Parker's "Out of the Past" car show/Revue last month! **Hank Amster** received a second runner up vote worth a very nice inscribed pewter serving dish! This popular car competed with 200 plus of the very best in the Washington area. Not only does it go, it shows!!

BUSRNS '41 STARTING PROBLEMS OVER!

After years of sluggish starting, **Ken Burns** attacked the problem with a vengeance. He cleaned all the contacts in the electrical system so that they were bright and shiny and voila, a 6 volt system can do it's thing!

TRUCK DONATED

Bob Wild donated his '50 Chevy truck to the local church because he is finally convinced that a Ford V8 is the only way to haul things. He inquired via email on an appraiser and was informed that our very own NVRG member **Gene Welch** has that title.

WOULDN'T START

Jason Javaras was perplexed with the inability to start his restored '40 standard coupe. He thought he had checked all connections, but all it took was another turn of the coil lead nut to solve the problem. Lesson – clean and tight for a good connection. If it is not, the connection will be hot because of the high resistance.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS

The 2001 Entertainment books are here for sale with proceeds going to the club.

The new edition has several additions which should make them even more attractive to anyone who drives a car or eats food. Shell and Texaco each have 12 monthly coupons for \$1 off on 8 gallons of fuel (any grade). That's \$24. Magruder's has 12 coupons for 10% off on a purchase of \$60. That another 12x6=\$72, for a total of \$96 for just the gas and food. AND, you haven't even started to scratch the surface and have fun yet!!

As is often said (or used to be), you can't afford not to have one of these books at \$35 each. If you want on or can sell some let me know...

Don Lombard 703-690-7971

SEPTEMBER NVRG MEETING

I am always amazed by the talent that is within our V-8 Club. As an example, during our September general meeting, we were treated to a thoroughly enjoyable, professional upholstery tech session by member **Bill Simons**. He expertly talked his audience through the process of upholstering his 1934 two door sedan. His thoroughly enjoyable lecture was supported by slides,

illustrations, and some of the original upholstery removed from his car.

Bill shared with us some of the frustrations as well as rewards of installing a Labor Bonny upholstery kit. Those of us who have already accomplished such a feat know how skimpy the instructions can be sometimes. The missing instructions are not always easy to figure out on your own. In some instances a call or two, or three, or four needs to be made to the home office seeking additional information in order to complete the project.

I was impressed with Bill's persistence in keeping his new seat upholstery and door panels just as the original ones were. How many amateur upholsterers would have struggled to maintain the seat cover tucks. Tying and threading the string through the back of the front seats to maintain the original tucks took a great deal of ingenuity and patience. We were all very impressed when Bill showed the slides of the completed job. The finished project should help encourage others to try an upholstery installation on their own. Thanks to Bill for the excellent tech session and also for the refreshments!

Tom Shaw

WANTED

1940 Ford Standard two door in good condition.
Gene Welch 540-869-7475

Transmission and linkage for '46 Ford.
Eric Sumner 703-709-4164

HINGE PINS

The driver's door of my woodie was sagging and the culprits were worn hinge pins. I was able to take the hinge off the door and the cowl and remove the pins. Roy Nesawitz was out of oversized pins so I sought them from Early Ford Parts – they did not have them either but posted my message on the V8 bulletin board. I received numerous responses on what to do including using VW pins turned down. C&G in Calif. had oversized pins – many emails requested how I solved the problem. The hinges were drilled out on a Bridgeport rather than reaming. Sooo, post your problems on the V8 bulletin board be surprised – it worked for me.

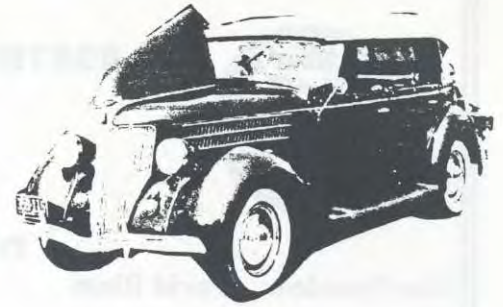
*Every day
We do our part
To make your face
A word of art
BURMA-SHAVE*

*The bearded lady
Tried a jar
She's now
A famous
Movie star
BURMA-SHAVE*





V8 CALENDAR NVRG



October

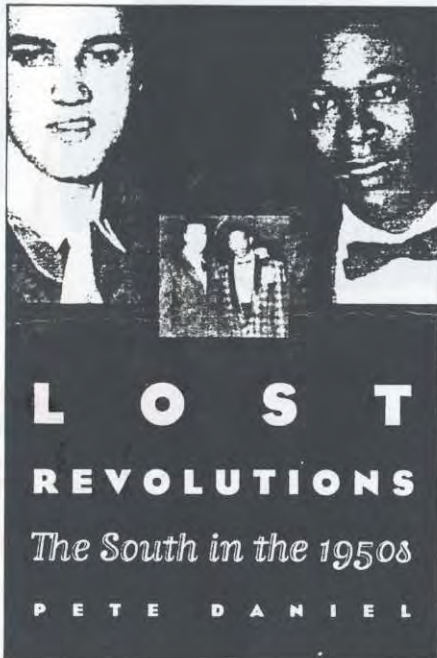
- 5-7 Hershey
- 10 NVRG Monthly Meeting, Program:
"Thunder Road in the '50's" – guest
speaker,*invite the wives. Refreshments:
Steve Pieper
- 14 Rockville
- 31 NVRG Board Meeting
- TBA NVRG Tour CIA museum

November

- 14 NVRG Monthly Meeting, Program:
Hershey review, Refreshments: Cliff
Green
- 28 NVRG Board Meeting
- TBA NVRG Tour

December

- 2 NVRG Christmas Party
- No membership of Board meetings in Dec.



Lost Revolutions

The South in the 1950s

BY PETE DANIEL

This sweeping work of cultural history explores a time of startling turbulence and change in the South, years that have often been dismissed as placid and dull. In the wake of World War II, southerners anticipated a peaceful and prosperous future, but as Pete Daniel demonstrates, the road into the 1950s took some unexpected turns.

Daniel chronicles the myriad forces that turned the world southerners had known upside down in the postwar period. In chapters that explore such subjects as the civil rights movement, segregation, and school integration; the breakdown of traditional agriculture and the ensuing rural-urban migration; gay and lesbian life; and the emergence of rock 'n' roll music and stock car racing, as well as the triumph of working-class culture, he reveals that the 1950s South was a place with the potential for revolutionary change.

In the end, however, the chance for significant transformation was squandered, Daniel argues. One can only imagine how different southern history might have been if politicians, the press, the clergy, and local leaders had supported democratic reforms that bestowed full citizenship on African Americans—and how little would have been accomplished if a handful of blacks and whites had not taken risks to bring about the changes that did come.

"This is a much needed book, written by the author most qualified to write it. Pete Daniel shows us a very different picture of the South in the 1950s than we have seen before. It will soon become 'must' reading for scholar and 'South-aholic' alike."—James C. Cobb, author of *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South*

Pete Daniel is a curator in the Division of the History of Technology at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

OCTOBER 10TH MEETING

Von Hardesty has made arrangements for Pete Daniel, curator at the National Museum of American History, to speak to the club about his book "Lost Revolutions". He will talk about the South in the 1950's and the cars of the times and what they were used for –stock car racing, booze running, and status. The ladies are invited to attend this different and most interesting program. Refreshments: Steve Pieper

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Monthly general membership meetings are usually held at 7:30, the *second Tuesday* of each month, in historic Hunter House, located adjacent to the tennis courts, Nottoway Park, Court House Road, Vienna, Virginia. Check the newsletter for occasional alternate sites. **SEE YOU THERE**



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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