

WAX FACTOR!!

-Pump'n Speedsters Gas Up Kent
Valley-



Kent, WA—The 19th Annual Northwest Vintage Speedster Run and Lowland Tour is history, but will long be remembered as a high quality event with surprising results. The Puget Sound Chapter of the Model T Ford Club of America hosted this years run with Gary and Joice Bueling at the controls. They guided a huge crew of volunteers that managed to pull off a most memorable event for the out of town visitors that hailed from Montana to California and all points in between. Forty-nine speedsters signed up for the run, with forty-six eventually making it to the starting line for the 205-mile trip. Six Lowland Tourers joined in on the festivities. Puget Sound Chapter members were well represented in the top ten finishing positions. The field was made up of veterans and rookies as well as some youngsters guaranteed to keep fresh interest alive in this by-gone era re-creation of “4-Banger” endurance fun. Six of the top ten finishers were Model T’s, the rest were Model A’s making it an all “Ford Sweep” waxing all other car marques. The Chevrolets, Buick and Dodge cars were confined to the bottom fifteen.

One year ago Gary Bueling made a commitment to “give back” something to the hobby by volunteering to ramrod this years event. And give he did. From the terrific tour bags full of goodies, that mirrored his theme of Petrolania and Speedsters, to the most excellent trophies bedecked with repro gas pumps that would look cool on anyone’s mantle. He also gave us the temporary use of all his extended family members that helped in so many ways with checkpoints and time keeping. Special mention should go to Gary’s wife Joice who counseled Gary with much needed feedback on the route, maps, and food selections. They made a great team. Randy and Maggie Murray organized the Lowland Tour to coincide with the speedster run. They coordinated their tour route to meet the speedsters for coffee and juice in the morning, and lunch in the afternoon. Once back at the hotel, they ushered the incoming speedsters to a hero’s welcome and some cold refreshments. Some of the out-of-towners arrived early on Friday to settle in and enjoy the Kent valley’s shopping opportunities and rest up for the next two days. Gary’s crew also arrived early to set up the parking areas at the Hawthorne Suites Inn and finalize the last minute details. A nearby warehouse parking area provided plenty of tow rig and trailer parking.

Saturday's weather was typical for a Western Washington Labor Day weekend. Rain showers mixed with periods of sun and partly cloudy with a chance of showers heavy at times. But, it was a warm rain. It did not however, dampen the spirits of this hearty bunch as trailer after trailer arrived to drop off one gleaming speedster after another. A Technical inspection of each competitor's car is a requirement for participation. There is an expectation, that the owner/driver/mechanic has already checked the vehicle prior to arriving. The inspectors look for items like missing cotter pins and loose front ends. One item of note was the number of cracked front hubs found on Model T's equipped with 1926-27 wire wheels. A plea was made by Tech inspection chief safety officer Paul Murray, for all to take a moment to thoroughly check, even a non-speedster Model T, for cracks along the exterior surface radius between the inner bearing carrier and the flange the hub bolts go through. Along with Tech inspection is the Registration and Hospitality loop that all look forward to. Joice and her crew put out some scrumptious morsels to chase away the most voracious appetites. The theme of the event even carried over to the food. Petrolania revolves around GAS, so Joice made a huge pot of chili guaranteeing the desired result. Icy cold beverages quenched any thirst, if the rainy downpour didn't get the job done



Dave Howie explains how he is going to win the event to John Gilmore and a disbelieving Frank Thompson. Howie and his most excellent navigator Jill lead the entire event and finish 1st overall.

Once the Tech and Registration duties were behind them, Gary hired Kent area locals Jim and Patti Cunningham to lead both the Lowlanders and Speedsters for a drive over to Ron Kipling's. At Ron's all enjoyed his superb Model T race car/speed equipment collection and BBQ. If the hospitality room didn't fill you up with "Ethyl" Ron and Shirley King offered robust gut busting BBQ'd burgers,

that were oh so good, with all the trimmings. Ron's garage was chuck full of so many "goodies" that some of the folks wanted a part or two with there burger hoping to make it a "Happy Meal" !! "Let's see, I'll take a 'Single Stick Fronty' with a side of 'Counter Balanced Crank' and follow that with a 'Winfield Downdraft' chaser." Everyone who wandered the garage were doing their best Dave Neihaus imitations loudly repeating over and over "MY OH MY!!" Ron has three legitimate Model T single seat race cars, one that is still perched on the back of a Model T truck that was used to haul it all over the western states to races in the twenties and thirties. It is a pure "priceless" representation of the era, and is indeed an equivalent to any major metropolitan museum piece. The most "salivated over" car was a lowered 1915 Model T Roadster equipped with a DOHC Gallivan racing engine, 20" wire wheels, and a Columbia 2-speed rear axle. He fired it up and instantly drool exploded from everyone's mouth within hearing distance. The car is dubbed the "Flying Dutchman" and for good reason. It is capable of speeds in excess of 100mph. Ron commented that it rides really great at freeway speeds. Kipling's place kept in "tune" with the theme of Petrolania and Speedsters...it was a GAS !!





Tom and Brenda Clark of Spokane are primed and ready for the start of the "Pumpin' Speedster" 200 mile endurance run.

Sunday, "Race Day" dawned with high cirrus cloud cover and temperatures near fifty degrees. As one four inch exhaust after another bellowed to life in the early morning mist, white coverall laden drivers and navigators scurried about running down mental checklists in preparation for the grueling event. Gary had them queued up in the neighboring parking lot, by starting number, and called for a driver meeting at 0730hrs. Last minute instructions and changes to the route maps were mentioned. Harold Hancock delivered a stirring rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" and when complete Gary called for the ladies and gentlemen to start their engines. Ten minutes later a collective roar from forty-seven four bangers reached ear splitting decibel levels as they were off in a cloud of black and blue smoke.



Tom Elliot of Portland puts on his Race Face while Lynn Elliot bundles up against the coming elements.

All the speedsters headed south past Algona and into Pierce County before heading east past beautiful Lake Tapps and turning north into Auburn. Jockeying for position improvement occurred whenever there was a four-lane road. Early testosterone checks were addressed once the bunch got on to Highway 18 in Auburn. With speeds in excess of sixty mph drivers pulled into the passing lane to see if their equipment was up to the challenge. Car #40 driven by Wayne Murray passed car #48 driven by Tom Elliot just before the exit to the Auburn-Black Diamond Rd. Later after the event Elliot couldn't believe he was passed by the "Flathead" equipped #40 and wanted to know the cars secret of speed. Murray quipped, "It's the 'Wax Factor'...I use Speed Shine," and for once Tom was speechless. The Elliot's would get the last laugh however placing higher than the Murray's would in the final standings.

After appropriately snaking past Seattle International Raceways, the route turned northward again towards Kent-Covington past Lake Meridian. The first checkpoint was almost in Renton, just off of Petrovitsky Rd on “Old” Petrovitsky Rd. This caught more than a few off guard, missing the turn and doubling back. Gary’s route returned to the Covington area for the morning rest stop at a terrific Petrolania display. An old gas station nicely provided a backdrop for the photos taken there. You knew it was an “old” gas station because one gas price was below thirty cents a gallon.



Paul Murray and Jeff Richardson get their tanks filled by the Easter Bunny

After tummies were full of treats, and coffee had jolted drivers with a new determination, navigators reminded the loitering drivers that there was still work to be done. The route turned decidedly southward with the main objective to get to lunch. Old “Sol” began to get brighter as the miles wore on. Stripping off early morning layers of clothing became the norm. Green Valley Rd along the Green River was a route highlight. It is a winding road past horse farms and large homes. It was quickly becoming a perfect morning. Whitney Hill Rd offered beautiful vistas of Mt. Rainier. Some took a few minutes out to snap some photos. It was that gorgeous.

Nolte State Park, east of Black Diamond, was the scene of the third/fourth checkpoint. Many drivers and navigators missed seeing the checkpoint sign tucked in at the park entrance and continued to drive almost into Eastern Washington. Disappointment shrouded many teams as they realized they might have missed checkpoint three. Emotionally drained drivers and navigators figured to just finish the route at that point. Gary had his checkpoint workers even play it up acting sad when they stamped checkpoint four. Turns out that it was just a ruse.

A major topic at lunch was whether there was a checkpoint three or not. Lunch was served in the park at Mud Mountain Dam, just off of Highway 410. A choice of sandwich meats, a “huge” cookie, chips, some fresh chopped veggies, and cold or hot refreshments filled appetites to the brim. A few adjustments and fluid checks and one by one the cars departed for the second half. Some would have possibly quit there to enjoy the sun and park. Perhaps take a nap and relax too, but the call of the road made all that impossible.

The afternoon route sped through small towns like Enumclaw, Buckley, Burnett, Wilkeson, South Prairie, Orting, and almost as far south as Eatonville. At that point in the event, it seemed like the route would never end. Almost like hitting the “wall” like how marathoners describe mile twenty in a twenty-six mile run. Another pass through Orting on into Sumner and back up the West Valley Rd to Kent and the Hawthorne Inn for the finish line. The pre-set finishing time was 3:44pm, but everyone was late. So as the cars came into the finish line determined their placement. The number ten spot with only 184 total points accumulated was car #1922 driven by Dr. Tim Cliney and navigated by Margaret Bird. Tim and Margaret seem to always place in the top ten. Ray Beale and a rookie navigator from the Kent area secured the #9 position in his Model A. Ted and Jackie Alkier from Spokane finished #8 in car #429 and were narrowly nipped by car #229, also a Model A, driven by Tom Clark and navigated by wife Brenda also from Spokane. Newlyweds Ford and Sonja Ostlund, from Edgewood, Washington, remained married due in part to a 6th place finish in Car #54. They were also the highest placing rookies. Fourth and fifth place went to the brothers Murray. Wayne and Rae’cing Murray took numbaa 40 to fifth overall. Paul and rookie navigator Jeff Richardson in car #94 started in 46th place and moved through the pack to finish 4th.



19-yr old Matt Ryan finished his first endurance run in his freshly built 1915 Model T Speedster. Ryan is from California.

Jim and Cathie Ransom, from Salem, Oregon, started in 36th with their Model A speedster. They quickly moved to one of the top positions prior to lunch, and powered their way to a 3rd place finish in car #99. At one point late in the event the eventual 1st and 2nd place finishers passed them. Tom and Lynn Elliot from Portland, Oregon in their 1921 Model T speedster started 6th and set a blistering early pace. There were seen leaving the lunch stop 4th and continued to keep the pressure on the front runners. Tom and Lynn have won this event before and were hoping to be a repeat winner. But, they eventually settled for 2nd place behind Dave and Jill Howie. The Puget Sound Chapter Howie's are veterans of many speedster events and know how to win or place very high. Their "Flathead" powered 1923 Model T speedster was one of six Model T's that finished in the top ten. They amassed a total of only 111 points. Dave and Jill were seen kissing the "huge" traveling trophy and caressing the "Pumpin' Speedsters" first place trophy. Their only problem now is to find room in the house for that "BIG" trophy.



The “Paddock” of fine pre-1934 4-cylinder race cars graze at the finish line.

The trouble trophy went to Stacey and Sharlene Hills from Forest Grove, Oregon who started but did not finish. They lost oil pressure after being passed by Paul Murray about one hour into the run. Sharlene, who is six months pregnant, assured everyone that being in the family way was not the reason for the early departure. There were two other DNF's and one DNS. NWVS President Steve and Peggy Weber, finished the run and even drove up to the awards banquet about five miles away despite a persistent knock in car #180. Harold Hancock not only can sing, he can drive a trouble truck, and did so for the Lowlanders. Steve Tomaso and Diane Kirk pulled one trouble truck for the speedster run along with Jim Amundson who pulled one too.

The annual “Vern Storey Memorial Trophy” was awarded to Mr. Ron Kipling of Kent, Washington. Ron most exemplified the outstanding qualities of the late Vern Storey and for that was picked by his peers to receive the award. Even more than winning a speedster run, this award is the annual events top prize. Congratulations to the Bueling's, Ron and Howie's for representing this chapter so well at this quality Northwest Vintage Speedster event. Rattler Olsen will be hosting the 20th Annual event, along with the Spokane Model T Club, in the Bitterroots of Montana. He promised a straight forward run with only one stoplight.

