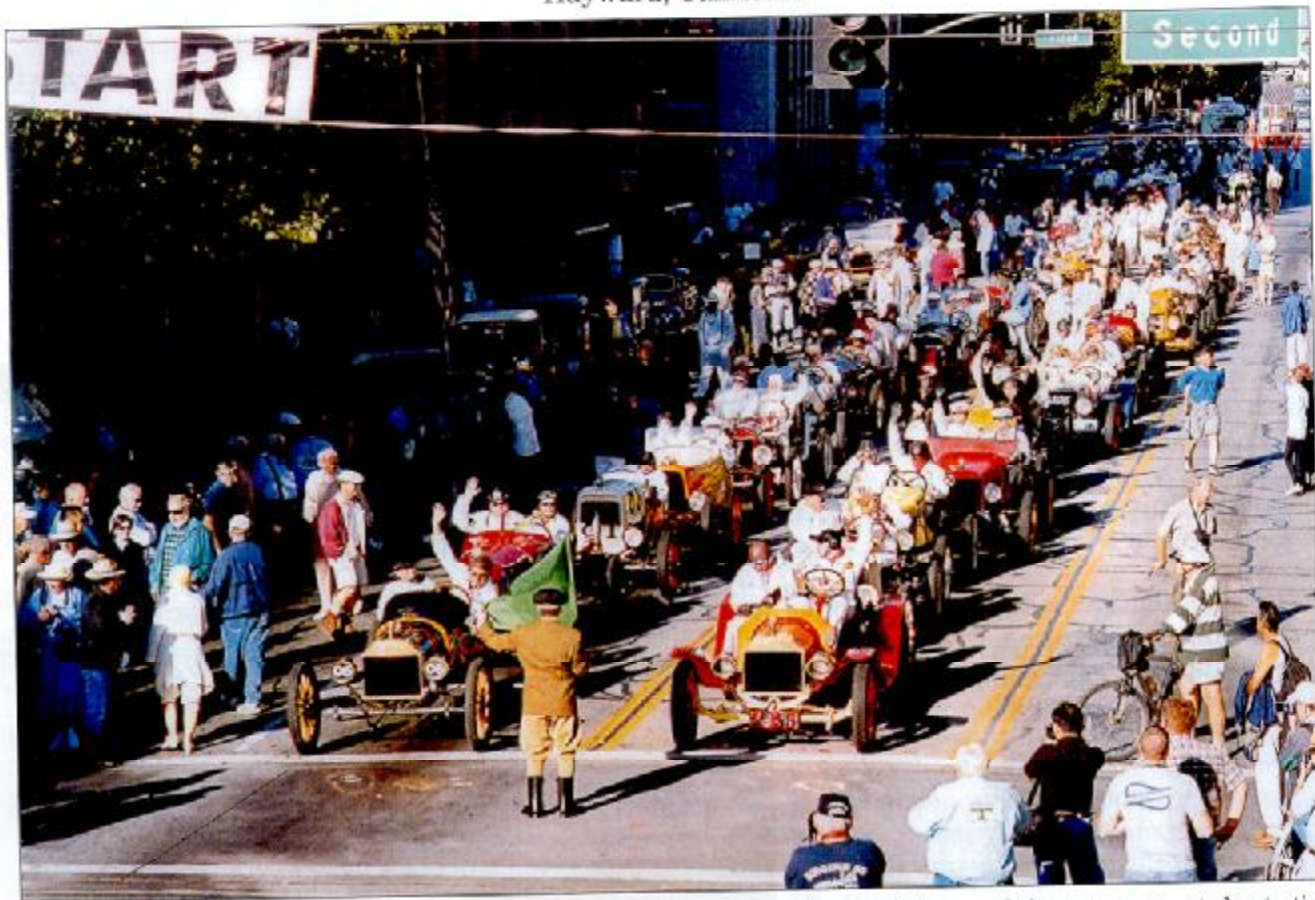


# GENTLEMEN, START YOUR MACHINES!

by Ed Archer  
Hayward, California



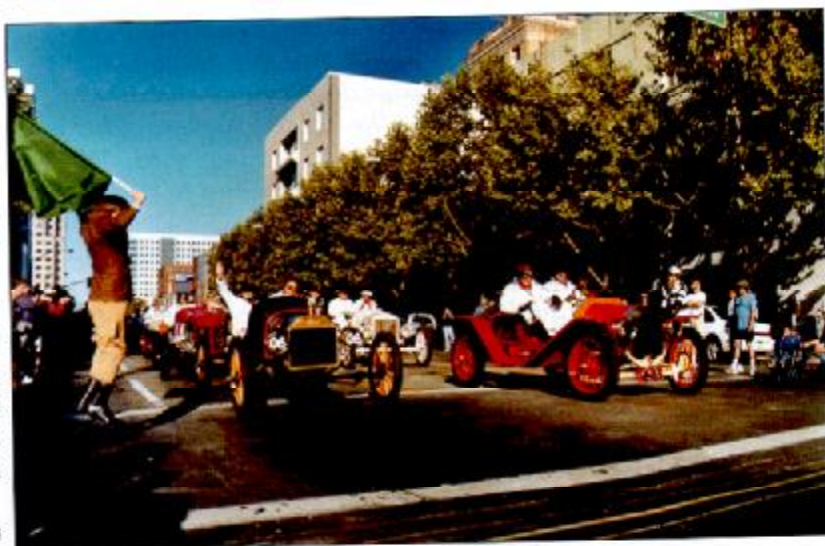
You want spectacular? We've got spectacular! That's the only way to describe the 35<sup>th</sup> annual 200-mile *Cross Country Endurance Run and Lowland Tour* produced by the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club on June 12 and 13, 2004. The *Reunion Run*, as it was titled, fielded some 62 entries from seven states, all geared up for the grueling 200-mile challenge over Mount Hamilton and beyond. As you might imagine, there was an overload of great speedsters and race cars in attendance, and with the reunion theme, many old friends came out of the woodwork, filling the air with tall tales recalling the old days.

For antique race cars and speedster enthusiasts the SCVMTFC *Endurance Run* and companion *Lowland Tour* is a dream come true. The two events complement each other, both serving a distinct purpose; without the other, each would be "just another old car event."

The *Endurance Run* is a strenuous 200-mile timed event with entry limited to all makes of speedsters and race cars 1927 and older. It is orchestrated as one might have been 90 or so years ago. Complete with a comprehensive technical inspection,

draw for positions, elaborate era style starting line, half-way and finish line ceremonies, and most important, fun...lots of it!

Saturday June 12, was speedster/race car check in, technical inspection, draw for poll



Gary "Pops" Hagen gets airborne with enthusiasm as the speedcars take off. Tim and Blondie Graber (1915 Ford) and Ray Fontaine and Bob Beaman (1914 Ford) were lucky enough to draw the poll positions and lead the pack towards Mt. Hamilton.





Left: Reid Bertolotti's  
1919 Ford spider

Below: Dennis Varni's  
1924 Raceaway body.  
The engine is D.O. Fronty.

position and barbeque meal, held at the wonderful Bertolotti Garage the day before the big run.

Sunday, June 13, marked the entrance of the companion *Lowland Tour* made up of restored and original condition 1940 and older "stock" vehicles. At 7:00 a.m. the *Lowland Tour* began assembling at the starting line area in downtown San Jose, California. This set the stage so that when the group formation of speedcars arrived at the



starting line at 7:45 a.m. from their pre-grid area, they received a hearty welcome by the *Lowland Tour* participants along with spectators gathered at Second and Santa Clara streets.

Once the speedcars were in position, engines were shut down for the introduction of entries, National Anthem, and then... "Gentlemen, start your machines." Flagman "Pops" Gary Hagen looked over the grid, waiting to see that each riding mechanic had one hand raised, signifying that engines were fully operating. When all the cars were fired, he finally gave them the green flag. The roar of all those engines as the speedcars took off was indescribable!

After the speedcars headed off into the mountains, the 71-car *Lowland Tour* lined up behind leader Larry Johnson in his 1915 Ford roadster. Larry lead the tour participants on a flat-land route to the half way line in Livermore, California, arriving before the speedcars so the *Lowland Tour* participants could again cheer them in as they got the half checkered flag signifying the end of the first half of the run.







The bee sting tail of car No. 51. The engine sports an SR Fronty head.  
The car is owned by Mack Travis.

Here, the drivers and riding mechanics were allowed a one-hour break for lunch, or to make adjustments or repairs, readying their cars for the second half of the run.

This year's half-way ceremonies, including lunch for all participants, was hosted by the Codioli Auto Group in Livermore and they couldn't have been more gracious hosts. They even called up one of their mechanics on a Sunday to come in and help find special grease for a selective gear transmission that had run dry. Thanks in part to their extra efforts, the car finished the run.

When the last speedcar departed for the second half of the *Endurance Run*, the *Lowland Tour* swung into action again, taking an easy route back to Santa Clara, California for the finish line. The loudest cheers of the day were heard as the speedcars began arriving and taking the checkered flag.

As crowds gathered around each of the finishing cars, stories of the exciting events of the day began to unfurl generally followed by heavy laughter. Finishing the run is a real accomplishment and everyone that finishes receives a very official certificate of completion document and goes home with lots of great stories to pass on.

The winner of the *Endurance Run* was Mike Hamilton and Pam Ortega of Oakley, California in car No. 48, a 1925 Ford race car, finishing just three seconds off the perfect time. Of the 62 speedcars entered in this year's run, five DNS (did not start), seven of the 57 that started DNF (did not finish), eight cars made repairs en route and finished. The

DNF problems ranged from a broken rear axle (Shirley Azevedo and Greg Lindon from Key Largo, Florida driving car No. 26, a 1926 Ford boat tail speedster), to sheered differential ring gear bolts on car No. 36 (Rich Moniz and Tim Williams from Castro Valley, California in a 1919 Ford speedster). Other DNFs had mainly fuel and ignition problems. The winner of the Hard Luck trophy "Most trouble but finished the run," was car No. 53, a 1926 Ford boat tail speedster driven by Art Basham with Grant Shellon as riding mechanic (both are from Los Gatos, California). Art lost his steering on the way up Mount Hamilton (the wheels



Above: George Azevedo, age 83, pilots his rare Faultless Raceabout. George also serves as a Technical Advisor.

Below: Peder Jorgensen's 1926 Ford, has the ultimate Ford disguise in the form of a Franklin front axle and half elliptic spring conversion. A few other visible items are 30x3-1/2 Hayes demountable wheels wire wheels and custom vee radiator.





## INTERESTING TAILS

Top: Narrow one-man racer

Center: Boat tail of finely crafted wood

Bottom: Unbleached muslin over a wood frame  
— just like a Stearman biplane



turned one way then the other a few times, but not the steering wheel!), taking them eventually across the road, rolling up the hillside to a stop. The modified steering set-up has a sleeve key/keyway and swivel/universal joint connecting the upper steering column shaft to the lower gearbox shaft. One of the sleeves on the swivel somehow loosened, slipped down the shaft and the key fell out. After some time searching, they found the key, re-installed it and Art continued on...without his riding mechanic, who was a reporter from the *Los Gatos Times*. The reporter jumped ship and rode the rest of the way in the trouble truck. Apparently, he had more excitement than he bargained for. Later, No. 53 had what he thought was magneto failure; turned out to be a short in his ignition switch. By connecting a wire, he was able to continue on and finish the run.

The youngest driver finishing the run in a 1919 Ford, was Kevin Pharis, age 21, from Folsom, California. The Best Restored was car No. 11, a beautiful 1926 Ford speedster, ably handled by co-drivers Peder and Hans Jorgensen of Los Gatos, California. The oldest driver finishing the run was George Azevedo, 83 years old, from Gilroy, California, driving his 1921 Faultless raceabout.

There were many other awards handed out, bringing to a close a very memorable event that few are likely to forget. The Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club's *Endurance Run* is the oldest and largest event of this kind. Many participants have already marked their calendars for the next Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club *Endurance Run* and *Lowland Tour* to be held on June 11-12, 2005. For information, contact Ed Archer, chairman, Phone 510-581-4911, e-mail: [karened2@juno.com](mailto:karened2@juno.com) or better yet, visit the club's web site at [www.scvmtc.org](http://www.scvmtc.org) □



The overall winners — Mike Hamilton and Pam Ortega from Oakley, California, driving car No. 48, a 1925 Ford boat tail racer, finished only seconds off the perfect time