



SWAP MEET
August 19th, 2023
8 A.M TO 5 P.M.
Downtown Maple Lake



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12 YEARS

GEAR-HEAD

GAZETTE

Est. 2011

EVENT MAP INSIDE SEE PAGE 15

The Official Publication of the Gear-Head Get Together

A FREE Maple Lake Chamber Event



Saturday, August 19, 2023

Maple Lake is a gear head's dream

2023 Special Guest: Powerhouse Mobil Dyno

By Brenda Erdahl

Maple Lake will be a gear head's dream this weekend as 1,400 plus shiny hot rods, collector cars, rusty re-models and motorcycles of all eras roll into town for the annual Gear-Head Get Together and a highlight of this year's event is the Powerhouse Mobil Dyno.

Find out if your vehicle is the biggest and the fastest with a pull on the portable dynamometer or "dyno" for short. Two pulls for \$70 will measure the torque and RPM of your vehicle, plus you'll get a printout of your car's performance.

"It will be a huge draw," Gear Head Organizer Scott Chantland predicted.

The Dyno can run at 200 mph, 2,000 horsepower all day long, which means it can handle big cars and a lot of them. That's fortunate because the Dyno will be available at Gear Head all day long. In between pulls, owners are allowed to make quick adjustments to get their most out of their engines, Chantland said. Individuals can schedule their time slots directly with the Dyno operators on site.

Admired for its no plaques, no trophies philosophy the Get Together is all about the basics, namely the cars and the gear heads who can stand around all day and talk about them. It's become so popular in its 12 years, the tiny little town of Maple Lake has started to look a bit like the state fair every third Saturday in August. Organizers said Gear Head could be the biggest one-day car show in the state.

"People fly in from other states just to be here. It's kind of become like a big



THE 12TH ANNUAL GEAR-HEAD GET TOGETHER IS HERE. This years special guest is Powerhouse Mobil Dyno. Schedule your time slot with Dyno operators on site and find out the torque and RPM of your vehicle. Two pulls will cost \$70, a print out of your car's performance is included.

reunion for people too. I'm always hearing stories about how someone ran into someone they hadn't seen in years," Chantland said.

Despite the crowds, Gear Head is able to run like a well-oiled machine thanks to volunteers, namely the Knights of Columbus who arrive to direct traffic. To keep the congestion to a minimum downtown, this year a shuttle service will be available to

spectators. The buses will pick up in the public-school parking lot on Highway 55 and drop off at Star Street in the heart of the festival. The local M&M Bus Service will provide two buses and one will be handicapped accessible. The idea, Chantland said, is to assist people so they don't have to walk so far from where they park to the festivities.

- Continued on page 14 -

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Music All Day on the Main Stage

The Star Chiefs

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The Star Chiefs are new to the Gear-Head stage this year. They play traditional rockabilly music heavily influenced by all-time greats like Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Carl Perkins, Stray Cats, Johnny Cash and more. They have been playing this authentic American music around the Twin Cities since 2010. They have been called family friendly yet rockin' and rebellious – a good time for all.



Pullstart Diesel

2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Pullstart Diesel is no stranger to the Gear-Head Get Together. They have graced the main stage with their music for multiple years. This local country rock band plays a mix of original and cover bands and always provides the perfect soundtrack for an afternoon at the car show.

Visit us online at www.ci.maple-lake.mn.us



City Council Meetings held on the first and third Tuesday of the month
*** ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AS NEEDED ***

| | |
|---|--|
| City Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garbage pick-up: every Tuesday• Recycling pick-up: every other Tues.• Water & Sewer: Contact City Hall | Utilities <p>Electricity Wright-Hennepin Co-op (320) 963-3131 Xcel Energy (800) 895-4999</p> <p>Telephone - Cable: Charter (800) 581-0081 Windstream (320) 274-8201</p> <p>Gas: CenterPoint Energy (800) 245-2377</p> |
| Maple Lake Wine & Spirits <p>Municipally Owned (320) 963-3715 - 901 State Hwy. 55 E <i>Where profits pour back into the community!</i></p> | Parking Restrictions <p>Nov. 1st to April 1st No Parking on streets between 1 a.m. and 7 a.m., or until street is plowed from curb to curb.</p> |



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UP NORTH WITH

LEROI

BY FRANK HAGGERTY



Weird and antiquated driving laws

- It is a criminal offense to drive a dirty car in Russia.
- In Denmark, you must check for people under your car before setting off.
- In Pennsylvania while driving a country road at night you must stop every mile, send up a flare and wait 10 minutes for livestock to be cleared from the road.
- An antiquated law in Memphis and New Orleans states a man with flag must walk in front of women drivers.
- In Alabama it is illegal to drive while blindfolded.
- In Alaska it is illegal to tie a dog to the roof of a vehicle.
- In Tennessee it's unlawful to shoot an animal from your car unless it is a whale.
- In California it is illegal to jump from cars travelling over 65 mph.
- In Little Rock, Arkansas it is illegal to honk your car horn anywhere that serves cold drinks or sandwiches after 9 p.m.
- In California it is illegal for women to drive in a housecoat.
- In Denver, Colorado it is illegal to drive a black car on a Sunday.
- In Florida you must feed the parking meter if you tie an elephant, goat or alligator to it.
- In Georgia it is illegal to drive through a playground.
- In Illinois it is illegal to drive a car without a steering wheel.
- In Massachusetts you cannot drive with a gorilla in the backseat.
- In Rockville, it is against the law to swear from a vehicle.
- In New Hampshire it is illegal to inhale bus fumes with the intent of "inducing euphoria."
- In North Carolina it is illegal to drive through a cemetery if you are not there to dig a grave or bury someone.





Summer 2023
A Supplement to
Maple Lake Messenger &
Annandale Advocate

The Production Team:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Gear-Head Gazette 218 Division Street West PO Box 817 Maple Lake MN 55358 320-963-3813 | Michele Pawlenty Don Dittberner Brenda Erdahl Amanda Menden Nick Pawlenty | Publisher/Copy Editor Project Editor Copy Editor/Staff Writer Copy Editor Ad Sales |
|---|---|--|

Minnesota has a lot to offer Gear-Heads!

By Brenda Erdahl

Summer is wrapping up but there are still opportunities to take in a car show in Minnesota. Whether you are looking for something close by or are willing to travel, there is plenty for you gear-heads.

Classics by the Lake

Takes place Sept. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Buffalo. Wheels roll in from all over the state to this scenic event on the shores of Buffalo Lake. Come for the classic and tricked out cars and stay for the food and beverages.

Heart of the Lakes Cruise

The second Friday of the month through September in downtown Annandale. Bring your favorite classic and cruise the city streets. The last cruise of the year is Sept. 8 from 5 to 8 p.m. This is a free event, but a donation to the local food shelf is appreciated.

Cruise, Brews & 'Que Fundraiser

August 26 at the Buffalo Community & Arts Center from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hayes Public House presents this third annual event that includes craft beer, award winning BBQ, live rockabilly music, dancing, and pinup contest. There is a \$10 registration for the car show. Cars, trucks, and cycles built before 1978 are welcome. This event is free to attend.

Pantowners Car Show & Swap Meet

Aug. 20, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Benton County Fairgrounds in Sauk Rapids. One of Minnesota's largest one day shows, see the Pan automobile that was built in St. Cloud from 1917 to 1924. See classics, customs, motorcycles and more. The event also features a swap meet, indoor arts and crafts, a used car corral, food vendors, indoor displays of Pan Cars, Calendar Cars, and live music by Robby Vee.

Historic Hastings Car Show

Show takes place the third Sunday of every month through September from 11 a.m. to 4

CAR SHOW ANYONE?



The Larson Brothers Rat Rods can be seen cruising the Lakes country area from Perham to Detroit Lakes. You may catch them on the second Wednesday of the month through September at the Detroit Lakes Cruise DL Nights.

p.m. for classic cars, piped in music and great food. Upcoming events are as follows: Sunday, Aug. 20, Sunday, Sept. 17 and Sunday, Oct. 8. The show is limited to classic cars and trucks from 1985 and older, motorcycles are not allowed at this time. Gates open for display cars at 10 a.m.

Cars and Caves Car Show

Shows held the last Saturday of the month through September from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Chanhassen AutoPlex. Cars and Caves invite all exotic, classic, and collector car owners to drive in and show their cars. Upcoming dates: August 26th- British - MG, Mini, Aston, Jag, McLaren; September 30th - German - Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Porsche, VW.

The Henderson Classic Car Roll-in

This show draws more than 150 classic cars and motorcycles every Tuesday night from mid-May to late September. The event takes place downtown Henderson where there are also food vendors and a farmers' market.

North Country Hillbillys Car and Truck Show

Saturday, Sept. 9 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Heidelberg Farm Equipment LLC on Highway 70 in Pine City. Enjoy a Valve Cover Race, Burnout Contest, Muffler Rap Contest, and Kids' Tent. Entry is free but participants and spectators are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item for the local food shelf.

The Detroit Lakes Cruise DL Nights

Take place every second Wednesday of the month from June through September. More than 200 cars gather for a mile-long cruise along the famous West Lake Drive in Detroit Lakes. Stop by one of the lakeside restaurants for a bite to eat and enjoy the view of classic cars parked along the beach.

Heidelberg Community Day

Held the second Sunday in September in Heidelberg, which is just six miles southwest of New Prague.

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FLYING *the classics*

Local pilot keeps past alive with vintage airplanes

By Brenda Erdahl

Some people collect rocks, others colored glass, Jon Miller collects airplanes and not just any airplanes, vintage airplanes.

The history of modern aviation dates back to the Wright Brothers' first glider in the early 1900s and weaves through years of war that changed the face of the industry and had a hand in making it what it is today. That's a history Miller feels should be remembered and shared, and he does that through his airplanes.

Miller has been flying for 42 years. He was a pilot in the army where he flew both helicopters and airplanes for five years in Korea. He then spent 15 years as a member of the Army National Guard stationed in Georgia. Today he lives in rural Maple Lake and is a commercial pilot for a major airline.

He acquired his first vintage airplane five years ago, a 1945 Grumman Widgeon. In 2020 he added a 1949 Cessna 190 to his collection. Both have made appearances at the Maple Lake Gear-Head Get Together.

1945 Grumman Widgeon

Capacity: Generally, 5 including the pilot, but Miller's Widgeon has been modified to seat six. He never uses the fifth passenger space as it would put the plane over the weight limit of today's standards once filled with gas.

Engine: The geared engine provides instantaneous power to force it out of the water. It spins at over 3,200 RPM compared to today's standard engines that spin at around 2,000 RPMs.

Cruising speed: 150 mph

- Continued on page 6 -



This 1945 Grumman Widgeon owned by Jon Miller of rural Maple Lake stole the show at the 2018 Gear-Head Get Together when the 5,500-pound plane was hoisted high into the air by a crane where it hung all day overlooking the crowd. The rare amphibious plane, meaning it can land on both land and water is one of about 300 made and only 30 or so are flying today.



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FLYING

the classics

- Continued from page 5 -

Range: 1,000 miles non-stop. It holds 154 gallons of aviation fuel, which is much more than standard airplanes.

Size: 5,500 pounds, 40-feet wide.

Folks may remember this plane from the 2018 Gear-Head Get Together when it was hoisted by a crane to hang high above the crowd. It made a dramatic sight as you ventured down Birch Ave to Star Street, but it wasn't the first time this plane had been lifted into the air by something other than its own power. An amphibious plane that could land on both land and water, the Widgeon was made during WWII for the Coast Guard and was regularly hoisted out of the ocean to perform maintenance.

This particular plane was built during the war but finished after the war so certain modifications were added to make it more desirable for the civilian market, Miller said. As far

as Miller can tell, it was originally owned by Endicott Shoe Company in New York. Interesting fact, Endicott Shoes was a huge company and provider of shoes during the war, producing 52 million shoes a year and employing 20,000 people. Miller's Widgeon was used as an executive transport for one of the two owners of the company.

Because of its amphibious design, the Widgeon spent some time in Alaska as many of these planes did before winding up in Spokane Washington where it stayed for 50 years before Miller acquired it in 2017.

The Widgeon is unique in that it's equipped to land on both water and a runway. Only 300 were made and about 30 are still flying today, Miller said. Its uniqueness also makes it challenging to fly, or more specifically, to land. Landing an amphibious plane in the water goes against all a veteran pilot's instincts, Miller said. After years of landing on a runway, procedures, including putting the landing gear down, is burned into his brain and he must be very careful not to slip into that habit when he's landing on water. Putting the landing gear down in

the water is almost always fatal to the airplane and often the passengers inside.

Landing on water has other challenges as well. "I had 35 years of training when I started flying this, but those years did nothing for me. There is nothing in the water to stabilize you. It takes a whole new muscle language to keep it from proposing."

Landing on the water also shows you just how controlled a runway environment is in comparison. "When you taxi on a runway, that runway is all yours. There is rarely an obstruction that interferes. When you are on the water it's the wild west. You have boaters and jets skis and kayaks," he said.

Not knowing the danger, boaters often approach instead of clearing the way and

sometimes jet skis try to race the plane. They don't realize the props are spinning just a few feet off the water and the pilot can't stop

them. And once the engine is shut down, he is at the mercy of the wind.

• It is interesting to note that before WWII it was thought that the future of aviation would be centered around water. There were few runways, Miller explained, but miles of water within relatively easy access for most of the population. When the war started, the military began building runways and training pilots how to use them. Once the war ended, they realized building runways was a lot easier than the logistics of water landings and trying to maintain airplanes that had to be hoisted out of the water to be worked on.

The Widgeon isn't an easy plane to land on the ground either because of its tailwheel design. Today's nosewheel aircrafts want to go straight when they touchdown, where as a tailwheel craft is more like a shopping cart that always wants to veer in one direction or the other. Landing the Widgeon takes some practice and planning as strong winds can make landing even more challenging and dangerous.



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1949 Cessna 190

The Cessna 190 and its twin, the Cessna 195 were the company’s only postwar radial-engine aircraft. This plane was also the first Cessna constructed completely out of aluminum. Just over 1,000 were made and many of them are still flying today. They are a highly desired, collectable plane, Miller said, comparable in the car collector’s world to a 1957 Chevy or Corvette – everyone knows it when they see it.

It’s a roomy airplane, and back in the day was used mostly by executives who preferred to fly privately instead of commercially. Cessna even marketed them to that crowd, calling them the “Businessliner.” Unfortunately, the Businessliner was soon out-classed by the Beech Bonanza, a faster, more modern aircraft that is still made today, Miller said. The Businessliner had a relatively short production run, just seven years, from 1947 to 1954. Its engine, on the other hand, a Jacobs 300 horsepower radial was first produced in 1933 and continued to be made into the 1970s. The engine in Miller’s plane is almost 90 years old.

This particular Cessna was purchased in 1956 by the St. Cloud Flying Service and based at Whitney Memorial Airport in downtown St. Cloud for two years. The airport eventually moved to its current location and Whitney Air-

port became Whitney Park. Miller purchased the plane at the height of the COVID pandemic from a pilot in Eden Prairie. It had been completely restored in 2000. The owner had removed all the outer aluminum, rebuilt it and redid the entire interior so it was in pristine condition when Miller acquired it. Historically accurate



This 1949 Cessna 190 is also owned by Miller. This is Cessna’s first plane constructed completely out of aluminum. This is a highly desired, collectable plane, comparable in the car collector’s world to a 1957 Chevy or Corvette. Its mirror-like surface drew plenty of admiring glances from the crowd at the 2021 Gear-Head Get Together.

on the outside, the interior sports a modern radio plus leather seats.

One of the features that makes

1949 Cessna 190

Role: Light personal and business aircraft

Produced: 1947-1954

Capacity: 5 people

Engine: Jacobs 300 horsepower radial engine developed in 1933

Cruising speed: 150 mph

Range: Over 750 miles



this model so attractive to collectors is its aluminum exterior, that, when polished, shines like a

mirror. That exterior is also what makes it different from other aircraft.

Still in the air

Both of Miller’s planes are completely airworthy. In fact, he tries to get them up in the air at least two or three times a month. In the summer, he takes the Widgeon to local “splash ins” and area lakes with his family. He and his wife will fly the Cessna to visit their children who attend college out of state. The furthest Miller has flown the Cessna was to Sedona, Arizona to attend the 50th anniversary of the 195 Club. Thirty-seven airplanes and approximately 200 people attended.

Miller operates out of both the St. Cloud and Maple Lake airports. He enjoys the Maple Lake airport’s proximity to home and how well it’s maintained by the city. He called the Maple Lake Municipal Airport a great asset to the community and hopes it continues to inspire local appreciation for aviation.



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THE RAT ROD

KEVIN LEHSE (bottom left) is pictured with his custom-built Rat Rod Lincoln at an early Gear-Head Get Together. Lehse has been showing his rat rod in Maple Lake since the very first Get Together in 2011.

Kevin Lehse



By Brenda Erdahl

Kevin Lehse's Rat Rod Lincoln is hard to forget, even if you're not a gear-head. It might be the Minneapolis Journal mailbox bolted to the carburetor that serves as the air intake or the early 1960's era Chrysler AstroDome dash, complete with electroluminescence that sticks in the mind. Or maybe it's the fact that it's appeared at the same corner of Division and Birch every year since the very first Gear-Head Get Together in 2011.

"He thought Gear-Head was the best thing ever," said Kevin's brother Chris. "He was really proud of this car and every time he brought it to a car show, he won an award."

Strangely enough it was Gear-Head's very lack of trophies and awards that most appealed to Kevin.

"He enjoyed the show so much because of all the unique stuff, from planes to

snowmobiles to tractors. It wasn't just a car show, and my brother wasn't just into cars," Chris said.

Last year on August 9th, a little over a week before Gear-Head 2022, Kevin passed away after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Gear-Head organizers are honoring his memory by featuring his Rat Rod Lincoln on this year's official Gear-Head Get Together shirt.

"The Rat Rod Lincoln has been so well received by the public that it has been featured in Rat Rod Magazine several times including once on the cover"

Chris plans to keep his brother's Gear-Head tradition going by displaying the rat rod in its customary spot at this year's

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LINCOLN IS HARD TO FORGET

show on Saturday, August 19, in Maple Lake.

"This really means a lot to the family to have the car on the shirt. Kevin would be really proud," Chris said.

Kevin has been a talented artist and builder ever since he was a child. His first job after high school was at a body shop in Fairhaven where he grew up. He also worked at Truck Mate in Annandale for a time and a place in the Cities before landing at Koronis Parts in Paynesville where he worked in product development. He's restored his share of antique snowmobiles and built a trike out of an old Harley Sportster before attempting his own rat rod. For those non-gear-heads, a rat rod is a custom car with a deliberately worn-down unfinished appearance made from cast off and repurposed parts, like Kevin's signature air intake that is made out of an old Minneapolis Journal mailbox.

Chris said it took Kevin about five years to build his Rat Rod Lincoln, the first couple of which were spent searching for parts. He started with a body then built a custom frame to fit it. He was always on the hunt for unique parts, his brother said, like the car's Lincoln Y Block V8 engine. Produced from 1952 to 1963, the engine is a rare find, according to Chris. The rat rod also sports the hard-to-find Chrysler AstroDome dash-

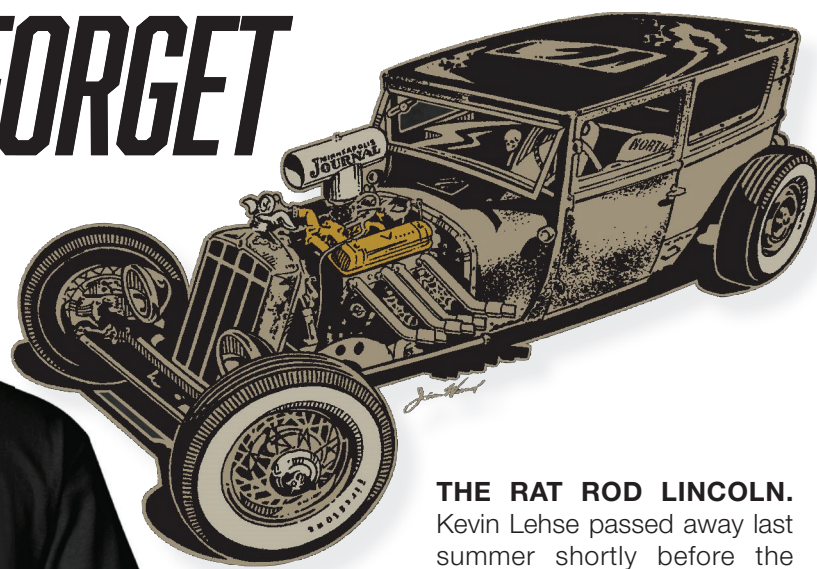
board. This futuristic instrument panel first appeared in 1960 and lights up blue at night for added effect. In keeping with the rustic, unfinished look, Kevin used Northland Seed bags as seat covers.

He would find parts through friends or at junk yards, Chris said. Every time he found something really cool or unique, he would put it on. But Kevin's Rat Rod isn't overdone like some.

"Everything he used has a purpose; it's all very tastefully done," Chris said.

The Rat Rod Lincoln has been so well received by the public that it has been featured in Rat Rod Magazine several times including once on the cover. But the Rat Rod Lincoln is more than just a pretty face. Kevin has driven it all over the area to local shows and as far as the State Fair Grounds for the Back to the 50s show.

"He's put quite a few miles on it," Chris



THE RAT ROD LINCOLN.

Kevin Lehse passed away last summer shortly before the 2022 Get Together. His Rat Rod Lincoln is featured on this year's official Gear-Head Get Together shirt in his honor.

said.

Kevin's mechanical artistry didn't end with the rod. Some of his other projects include mini-snowmobiles and the quarter-scale Flour City Tractor he built with a working Crosley engine. prairie tractor is known

This big for its huge rear wheels, and Kevin reduced it down to a working model about the size of a lawn tractor.

"He was really proud of that," Chris said. There was still some work to do on the drivetrain when Kevin passed away, and

Chris hopes to one day complete the project for his brother.

Kevin was a week away from his 57th birthday when he died. He had struggled much of his life with cancer starting when he was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma in his 20s. He beat that then was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia at the age of 50. The survival rate was low, but he overcame that as well. In April of 2022, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

August 15th is his birthday and the family plans on celebrating a special weekend that includes Gear-Head. It will be emotional, Chris said, but not sad.

"We want to remember the good times," he said.

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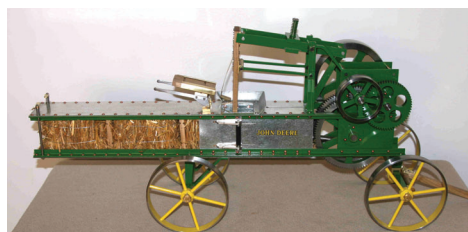
By Brenda Erdahl

Everybody needs a hobby and Mike Nepsund's is building 100 and some year-old miniature gasoline powered engines for fun.

Since 2006 he's built 16, 1/4 to 1/2-scale, working replicas of engines like the 1925 John Deer Hit & Miss and 1923 Case Bailer, machines that haven't been in production since before the depression.

He's shown his engines at the Gear-Head Get Together for almost as long as he's been building them and he never fails to draw a crowd.

"A lot of people have never seen engines like this before and they are interested," he said.



This is a replica of a 1925 John Deere Hit & Miss gasoline engine.

Part of the appeal of hit and miss engines is the unique popping sound the engine makes as it fires then coasts to maintain its speed. It's that speed control that inspired the name. The engine fires or "hits" when operating at or below its set speed then cycles without firing, "miss", when it exceeds that set speed.

The original engines weighed 300 to 500 pounds, said Nepsund who's done quite a bit of historical research on the subject (his replicas are small enough to transport easily, about 60 pounds) and were made from the 1890s to 1930. By the mid-1930s the lighter weight electric engines had mostly replaced the gas-powered hit and miss.

"Around 1900 there was a lot of drought and dust storms. Rivers and ponds dried up, even the windmills wouldn't blow to pump water, so farmers needed an engine to pump water from the ground to keep their livestock alive," Nepsund said.

There was such a need that nearly every larger town had its own foundry, and every-

one was trying to make a better engine. When someone invented something that had never been used before, they would patent it. The Us Patent Office Archives has many of the original patents and they are available to the public. It's from those original patents that Nepsund builds his engines.

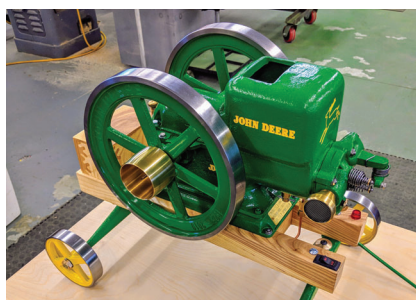
His oldest replica is of an engine originally built in 1895. It started as a steam engine and was retrofitted to run on gas by a machinist in California. To Nepsund's knowledge only two were ever built and they are still in existence.

His newest engine is a 1/2 scale replica of a 1 1/2 horsepower John Deere. His favorite engine in his collection was originally built in a foundry in Red Wing, MN. It's a replica of a 1912 hit and miss. The Red Wing foundry was only in business for a short time, and he doesn't know of any original engines in existence today.

Nepsund was a tool and die maker in St. Michael for 45 years before he retired in Park Rapids. It wasn't long after retirement that he started missing being in the shop, so when he came across a display of model hit and miss engines at the Rollag Steam Threshers Reunion in 2006, he thought this was just the thing he needed.

"I was a machinist, I had the skills to make these," he said.

Some of the parts for his engines he buys from other hobbyists like himself, but they are usually just the raw castings and in need of a lot of precision work. Other parts he makes himself. He used to carve his own wooden patterns, but now he uses a 3D printer which makes the work go a lot faster, he said. In all, it takes him about 200-man hours to build a typical hit and miss engine replica.



This is Nepsund's newest build, it's a 1/2 scale replica of a 1 1/2 horsepower John Deere hit and miss engine.



Mike Nepsund built this working model of a 1923 Case Baler. Above, he feeds straw into the baler to make 1/3 size bales of hay. He'll have the baler at Gear-Head this year and will be giving away the hay bales as souvenirs.

1915 Case Steam Engine

In 2012, Nepsund started what was probably his most challenging project yet, a 1/3 scale replica of a 1915, 65 horse-power, Case Steam Engine. Little did he know how complicated it would be, not just to build, but to operate. To operate a steam engine in Minnesota he had to get his Historical Boiler Operators License, which included 50 hours of training and a written test. He had to follow all state boiler codes when building it and going forward, his tractor must be inspected by a state boiler inspector every year, he said.

"I didn't realize when I started that I had to be certified, so I had the engine 90 percent built and I wasn't sure it was going to pass the test," he said.

Fortunately, some research revealed he was very close to the mark and with the help of an expert in the field and a boiler shop, he was able to finish his tractor by 2021.

The finished steam engine is over seven feet long, puts out four horsepower, weighs nearly 2,000 pounds and is big enough for him to sit on and drive around the yard, although he looks a little like an adult on a kid's Hot Wheels.

It didn't take Nepsund long to realize he couldn't have a working model of a Case Steam Engine and not have attachments to go with it. So, he built a replica of a 1923

Case Baler, that actually bales 1/3 size bales of hay, a hay rack, a mini buzz saw that cuts fire wood for his steam engine and a water wagon.

Nepsund travels all over the state and into Iowa showing his engines at threshing and antique tractor shows. While he won't bring his steam engine to Gear-Head he does plan on bringing his mini baler and hay rack. He'll be making bales of hay for visitors to bring home as souvenirs. He also plans on bringing his 1/2 scale of a 1925 1-1/2 horsepower engine and his 1924 1/6 scale mini-John Deere baler.



Nepsund's finished steam engine is over seven feet long, puts out four horsepower and weighs nearly 2,000 pounds. It can operate a miniature hay baler, buzz saw and pulls a miniature water wagon all built by Nepsund.

"Gear-Head is a fun day for me," he said. "It's the one show where I lose my voice because I talk all day."



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Mother the Car in Maple Lake?

By Bob Zimmerman

The story you are about to read is SO NOT TRUE. Its only connection to reality is that it was inspired by a 1965 TV show. The rest is 100% pure fiction; although, there might have been some magic in that old radiator cap that day. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's or someone else's imagination or are used fictitiously.

I was sitting in the office, finishing up some paperwork when the aah-ooo-gaa of a klaxon horn slammed into my hearing aids. It was the day before the Gear-Head Get Together, and Division Street was empty, except for one old classic car parked right outside the window making the racket. I stepped outside to find whoever owned the offending vehicle to tell them to turn off that stupid car alarm. Nobody was there, which did nothing to improve my disposition, and then I heard the voice. "Hey, young fella, come over here and hop in." Not being young, I checked to see if somebody had snuck up behind me, and I heard it again. "I'll be quiet if you just hop in the front seat." I like a good practical joke as much as the next guy, so I decided to play along, and in I climbed. The situation then went to the next level of weird as I decided to play "irritate the phone scammer" with whoever was messing with me and waste some of their time too. Allen Funt flashed through my mind, but I could detect no cameras, candid or otherwise.

The cacophony stopped, and I took the initiative. "Why did you call me young?" and heard back, "Well, I've been around since 1928 and just about everybody is younger than me." "Fair enough, so what's your name?" "I am originally from the Porter-Stanhope clan in Detroit, but my married name is Crabtree. Please call me Gladys, and by the way, I am a widow and mostly deceased myself." Did I mention weird? I should also mention I was a wee bit leery of getting into that mostly deceased business as I kept looking over my shoulder searching for the hidden camera. "Okaaay, so you are a car, and



A 1928 Porter Stanhope touring car like this one was the star of the 1965 TV show Mother the Car and local writer Bob Zimmerman's creative muse.

you talk. Could you maybe give me a few details about how that works?"

"Certainly! I use the radio for verbal interactions with those I choose to converse with, but you probably want to know more than that. Talking machines have been around since Thomas Edison's day, and in the middle of the last century I was an early prototype of a truly interactive model. I even had my own TV series for a year back in '65. You can google "My Mother the Car" to check it out. I was the star of the show, but of course back then we had to keep it unreal, so horses talked, nuns flew, and a three-hour boat tour could get you lost for three years. That whole Mr. Ed schtick was a pretty neigh-gative experience, but it kept the spotlight off me, which was the whole point. There's a reason I was on for just one year. My grandson KITT starred in Knight Rider in the 80's, and they gave him four seasons. His kids, Alexa and Siri, are becoming quite well known. I'm so proud of them, they are so smart. I use the mother reincarnated into a car ruse from the TV show because it is actually easier to understand, and most folks seem more comfortable talking to Gladys. What name would you like me to call you?" Did I mention really weird?

"Okaaay, you can call me Dave. So where have you been for the last fifty years?" "After my show ended, I parked in a rickety old garage in Pasadena next to a shiny red Super Stock Dodge. Boy, that kid was all gas and no class, but his human lady friend was of quite short stature and a bit older than me, so we struck up a friendship. She thought I should get out more and recommended joining a car club.

I had to keep a very low profile until driverless cars came along, and it was just last year that I started venturing out. My first meeting at the car club I joined was a bit tedious. Some Olds 88 kept babbling about some door being a jar, which is quite impossible; a door is a door, for crying in the soup. The club president told me the poor dear was suffering from carbon build up and a clogged fuel filter and it was best to just ignore her. A couple of meetings later a tech savvy Tesla helped me download a GPS navigation system, and I have been seeing the U.S.A. ever since."

By this time I was talking to myself and trying to figure out what to ask next when Gladys interrupted my jumbled thoughts. She said, "I can see you have more questions, and I know what they are." I haven't mentioned creepy yet,

but here it is. "How in the world can you know that?" Gladys quietly said, "Dave, I can read lips. My cousin HAL taught me back in 2001." "Okaaay, maybe a little over sharing there. So, tell me why you are here and what do you want?"

"I knew you would ask that. Of course, I will explain, but first I must tell you that I never get this chatty with a stranger. You must think I am a rather silly old woman stuck in a car. I shouldn't have stopped at that garage down the street this morning. I was feeling a bit off and thought I felt a vapor lock coming on. I can deal with a case of the vapors, but a lock is more serious. Anyway, they checked me over and settled the issue. They also were kind enough to top off my radiator with some 90 proof anti-freeze. I am not used to the hard stuff and that juice went right to my head gasket and really loosened up my muffler. I really hope I am not being too forward." "Trust me, Gladys. No worries, at least about that!"

"You were asking about my ulterior motives, and I do need to ask a favor of you. I just want to enjoy the Gear-Head Get Together. Some of the girls back at the club were tooting their horns about what a good event it is. Lots and lots of cars and friendly, non-judgmental folks enjoying such a wide variety of mechanical creations. I just have to see it for myself, but I need a faux chauffeur to pretend they are driving me. I really do need to maintain that low profile since there are not any driverless cars in your small town yet. And I admit to being a little lonely and maybe I can find a cute little T-Bird to crank my starter, if you catch my drift. Oh, my! That must be the alcohol talking. I'm sorry. Forgive me. I promise to sober up and be a perfect lady with the best roadside manners. Will you help me out, please? Pretty please?"

"Yes, I can help you out, on one condition. I want to have the exclusive rights to your story so I can write a book." "Why, of course, Dave. I have

- Continued on page 14-

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Mother the Car

(From Page 12)

already shared most of it with you and have little to add. However, you should consider that I have provided you no proof of my abilities, and I am very, very good at keeping my speakers off. If I am asked to verify anything, I shan't say a thing to anyone, but you may talk and write about me as much as you please. But it's going to be your word against that of a silent old bucket of bolts. You know, the strong silent type of car that has nothing to say. If you go ahead with your plan I would recommend a fictional account, so you don't get an all-expense paid trip to the funny farm. Do we have a deal? You have the rare opportunity to drive about town showing off a genuine 1928 Porter Stanhope touring car, and I promise to

pose with you for pictures. I get to see the sights, hear the sounds and smell the smells of the Gear-Head Get Together, and we end the affair at the end of the day. Seems like a win-win to me.”

“Gladys, you are such a sweet talker and a sharp cookie to boot. Yes, we have a deal. Why don't you park in my garage tonight so we can get an early start in the morning? Oh, before I forget, where are you off to next?” “Dave, I am going to Kentucky. I heard, I think from the Everly Brothers, that they have the prettiest little cars you have ever seen in Bowling Green, and Bowling Green folks treat you kind. They let you think your own mind. Sounds like a good place for me to visit and I plan to check out that Corvette Museum, too. Know anybody down there that can drive me around???”



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Gear-Head 2023

(From Page 1)

Besides machines to look at, gear-heads can shop at the event's annual swap meet where they'll find 100 plus vendors selling everything gear-head related, from car, motorcycle and snowmobile parts to entire cars and full motorcycles and everything in between. The swap meet takes place in the residential neighborhoods on the south side of the railroad tracks and never fails to have something interesting to see.

Back at the registration tent visitors can buy Gear-Head merchandise including the new official t-shirt featuring Kevin Lehse's Rat Rod Lincoln, bottle openers and other souvenirs.

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