

THE LONGSHIP



2nd Anniversary

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THE LONGSHIP

VOLUME II., NO. 5

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VIKINGS, M. C.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



"HIGH UP IN THE NORTH IN THE LAND CALLED SVITHJOD THERE STANDS A ROCK.
IT IS A HUNDRED MILES HIGH AND A HUNDRED MILES WIDE. ONCE EVERY THOUSAND
YEARS A LITTLE BIRD COMES TO THIS ROCK TO SHARPEN ITS BEAK.

WHEN THE ROCK HAS THUS BEEN WORN AWAY, THEN A SINGLE DAY OF ETERNITY
WILL HAVE GONE BY."

(On the opening page of The Story of Mankind, Hendrik Willem Van Loen
has given to us this awesome message.)

VOICES OF THE VIKINGS

HARK, THE SOUND OF DISTANT THUNDER
ROLLS ACROSS THE RESTLESS SEA.
THROUGH THAT VAST AND STORMY OCEAN
SAILS A PROUD SHIP STEADFASTLY.
MEN ON BOARD THE MIGHTY LONGSHIP
PLYING OARS IN HARMONY -
BROTHERS CLASPING HANDS OF BROTHERS
FEARING NOT THE TREACH'ROUS SEA.

HEAR THE VOICES OF THE VIKINGS
HAILING FRIENDS BEYOND THE SEA!
WELCOME ALL, ABOARD THE LONGSHIP
LOVE ABOUNDS, ETERNALLY!

HARK, THE SOUND OF DISTANT THUNDER
ROLLS BEYOND THE WOODED HILLS.
THROUGH THE CALM AND PEACEFUL VALLEY
VIKING HEARTS WITH JOYS ARE FILLED.
WELCOME FRIENDS, OH COME, AND JOIN US -
SING OUR SONGS ON LAND OR SEA.
WELCOME TOO, YE FOES OF VIKINGS,
LOVE WILL SURELY CONQUER THEE.

HEAR THE VOICES OF THE VIKINGS
HAILING FRIENDS BEYOND THE SEA!
WELCOME ALL, ABOARD THE LONGSHIP
LOVE ABOUNDS, ETERNALLY.

(THE OFFICIAL ANTHEM OF THE VIKINGS, M. C., BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS:
FIRST SUNG PUBLICLY ON MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY, 1971: WRITTEN UPON
THE DAY FOLLOWING LEIF ERIKSON, 1970, ADOPTED BY THE VIKINGS, M.C.
JANUARY, 1971, AND SET TO MUSIC BY THE MEMBER WHO WROTE IT.)

VOICES OF THE VIKINGS - COMPOSED BY GEORGE (GDIN)

Hand, the sound of dis-tant thun-der
 Ralls a- cross the rest-less sea.
 Through that vast & stor-my o-cean
 sails a proud ship head-fast-ly
 men on board the mi-cety long-ship
 Ply-ing oars in har-mo-ny -
 Bro-thers clos-ing hands of bro-thers
 Fear-ing not the treach-erous sea.
 Hear the VOI-CES OF the VI-KINGS
 Hail-ing friends be-yond the SEA
 Wel-come all a-board the Long-ship
 HOPE a-bounds & - ter - wal - ly!

The official Anthem of the Vikings, N.C.
 Boston, Massachusetts written upon the Day
 followed with Erickson, 1920, adopted by the Vikings, N.C.
 January 1921, & set to music by the member who wrote it.
 First sung publicly on Monday, 15 February, 1921 -

BO2-2271 HAS LONG COME AND GONE, AND IN ITS WAKE THERE WERE MANY EXHAUSTED VIKINGS. I HAVE SAID IT BEFORE, BUT I MUST SAY IT AGAIN, YOU FELLOWS REALLY MADE A GUY 5' 9" FEEL 10' TALL. THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR THE GREAT EFFORT EXPENDED. I WITNESSED MUCH BROTHERHOOD DURING OUR ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND, AND IT IS MY STRONGEST HOPE THAT THIS SPIRIT CONTINUES TO PREVAIL DURING OUR THIRD YEAR AS A CLUB. MANY OF OUR OLD FRIENDS WERE HERE AND WE ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MANY NEW ONES. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY GREAT AS WE REMEMBER THAT THE VIKINGS DO NOT HAVE A CEILING LIMIT ON HOW MANY FRIENDS WE CAN DEVELOP.

THE FIRST YEAR OF OUR CLUB WAS TRULY A FORMATION YEAR; THE SECON E WAS DEDICATED TO SURVIVAL. WHAT IS THE THIRD TO BE? IN THE UP-COMING YEAR, YOU WILL DETERMINE THAT. THE VIKINGS HAVE NEVER POSSESSED THE INTELLIGENCE OR THE STABILITY WHICH THE CLUB NOW HAS. THEREFORE, I CAN ONLY BE OPTOMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF OUR NEXT YEAR. THERE IS ONE THING HOWEVER, WHICH I FEEL OBLIGATED TO CAUTION ABOUT. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE COHESIVENESS OF OUR GREAT GROUP, WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE WITH THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WHICH EXIST WITHIN THE CLUB. LIKE ALL GROUPS, WE HAVE RADICALS, "RIGHTS", AND "LEFTS", BUT WE MUST HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE MAJORITY TO SEEK THE MIDDLE GROUND, OR "MODERATE" APPROACH TO THE ISSUES WE WILL FACE. WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPRESSING OUR OPINIONS CONCERNING THE DIRECTION OF THE CLUB, I ONLY ASK THAT YOU GIVE AS MUCH ATTENTION TO LISTENING TO THE IDEAS OF OTHERS AS YOU DO TO THE FORMULATION OF YOUR OWN IDEAS.

EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT MANY OF YOU ARE EAGER TO GET INTO THE PLANNING OF OUR LEIF ERICSON RUN, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT THERE ARE MANY UPCOMING EVENTS WHICH PRECEED IT AND ARE WORTHY OF YOUR ATTENTION. ALTHOUGH WE PRIDE OURSELVES IN BEING GOOD HOSTS FOR OUR EVENTS, IT IS EQUALLY IMPPTANT FOR US TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING GOOD GUESTS. THERE ARE MANY EXCITING EVENTS COMING UP, WHEELS W-3, AND CYCLE'S (FIRE ISLAND), BEING THE MOST CURRENT. WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT GOOD VIKING PARTICIPATION AT THESE RUNS WILL HELP TO INSURE GOOD ATTENDANCE AT ALL OF OUR FUTURE EVENTS. OUR ROAD CAPTAIN HAS BEEN IN THE PROCESS OF ARRANGING FOR GROUP TRANSPORTATION TO THE ABOVE EVENTS.

MOST RECENTLY, ALONG WITH OTHER VIKINGS, I ATTENDED THE DAYS OF EQUINOX RUN PRESENTED BY THE ENTRE NOUS OF BOSTON. WHAT A PLEASURE IT WAS TO ATTEND A RUN IN YOUR OWN CITY WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE AND DECISIONS OR TO DO ANY WORK. THE GUYS FROM ENTRE NOUS DESERVE A BIG HAND FOR A DELIGHTFUL WEEKEND. THE RUN WAS WELL-PLANNED AND CERTAINLY WELL-EXECUTED. AS WITH MANY GOOD RUNS IN THE PAST IT TOOK SEVERAL DAYS TO GET OVER IT.

MUCH GOOD-WILL HAS RECENTLY DEVELOPED WITHIN THIS CITY. AS VIKINGS, LET US ALL DO OUR PART TO SEE THAT IT CONTINUES. WITH THE BOSTON BIKE CLUB, AND THE ENTRE NOUS, THE VIKINGS CAN HELP PROVE TO THIS COUNTRY THAT A CITY CAN EXIST IN HARMONY WITH CLUBS NOT ALWAYS SHARING THE SAME POINT OF VIEW. FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK PUBLICLY, THE B. B. C. FOR THEIR BEAUTIFULLY ENGRAVED REVERE BOWL, AND ALSO THE ENTRE NOUS FOR THAT MAGNIFICENT VOLUME ON VIKING HISTORY. TO BOTH CLUBS WE EXTEND OUR HAND IN FRIENDSHIP, AND LOOK FORWARD TO A BEAUTIFUL 1971 FOR US ALL.

Thor

February 16, 1971

Vikings M. C.

Gentlemen:

Your B0-2-2271 Run was exemplary of what a group of men, working together, can achieve.

Every detail, from the selection of what activities would be offered through the execution of those activities was thoughtfully and meticulously attended.

Your schedule allowed a perfect balance of free time and planned activities.

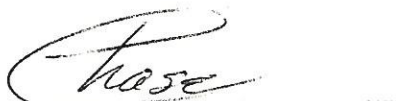
The food was excellent and the liquid refreshments were more than ample.

The "AMCC Coloring Book, Volume II", and "The Boston Massacre" were frosting on the cake.

As I didn't take the bus tour I cannot comment from personal experience, however, those I spoke to who got up that early were glad they had done so.

I would like to thank the entire membership of the Vikings M. C. for making me feel at home while in Boston, and to congratulate them on presenting the best run I have ever attended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chase", is written over a horizontal line.

Chase

MYTH OF THE MOTORCYCLE HOG

HAS any means of transport ever suffered a worse drubbing than the motorcycle? In the 17 years since Stanley Kramer put Marlon Brando astride a Triumph in *The Wild One*, big bikes and those who ride them have been made into apocalyptic images of aggression and revolt—Greasy Rider on an iron horse with 74-cu.-in. lungs and ape-hanger bars, booming down the freeway to rape John Doe's daughter behind the white clapboard bank: swastikas, burnt rubber, crab lice and filthy denim. It has long been obvious that the bike was heir to the cowboy's horse in movies; but if Trigger had been loaded with the sado-erotic symbolism that now, after dozens of exploitation flicks about Hell's Angels, clings to any Harley chopper, the poor nag could not have moved for groupies. As an object to provoke linked reactions of desire and outrage, the motorcycle has few equals—provided it is big enough.

When *Easy Rider* was released, it looked for a time as though public attitudes might soften. A lot of people were on the side of Captain America and his fringed partner Billy, shotgunning off their glittering, raked choppers on a Southern back road. But for every cinemagoer who vicariously rode with Fonda and Hopper in that movie, there were probably ten who went with their redneck killers in the pickup truck. The chorus from press and TV remains pretty well unchanged, resembling the bleat of Orwell's sheep in *Animal Farm*: "Four wheels good, two wheels bad!" The image of the biker as delinquent will take a long time to eradicate. "You meet the nicest people on a Honda," proclaims the Japanese firm that has cornered nearly 50% of the bike market in the U.S.; but the general belief is that you still meet the nastiest ones on a chopper.

To the public, the names of the outlaw or semi-outlaw motorcycle clubs is a litany of imps in the pit, from the Animals, and Axemen, through the Equalizers and Exterminators, the Marauders and Mongols, the Raiders, and Road Vultures, to the Warlocks and Wheels of Soul. The unsavory names with which these gangs have christened themselves are apt to make the public forget that their collective membership is probably no more than 3,000, the merest fraction of the 3,000,000 people who regularly ride bikes in the U.S. In fact, these "outlaws" on the road are infinitely less of a threat than the driver of a station wagon with two martinis under his seat belt.

The myth goes roaring on. Business, though, may kill it, for bikes are big business today. At the end of World War II there were fewer than 200,000 registered motorcycles in the U.S. Today there are nearly 2,500,000, most of them imports from Japan, Germany and Britain. The majority are small, almost civilized creatures, below 500 cc. in engine capacity. But the popularity of the big snorting monsters, which can go from a standstill to 60 m.p.h. in less than six seconds flat and cruise comfortably on freeways at 90 m.p.h., has also ascended. It has its perversities.

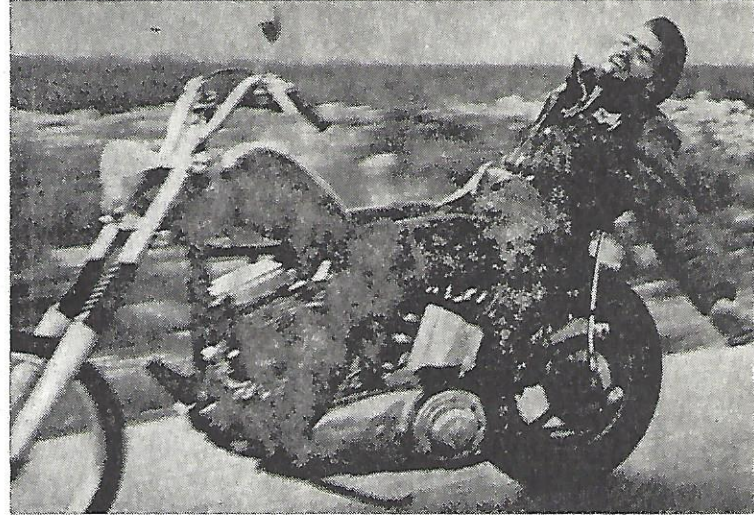
To the four-wheeled culture, there is something inexplicable about the very idea of owning such a bike. A big machine is expensive: a new Honda Four costs nearly as much as a Volkswagen; a big Harley, almost \$1,000 more. Choppers, the Fabergé Easter eggs of the bike world, are even worse. When all the stripping, chroming, raking, molding, metal flaking and polishing are done, a chopper, righteously gleaming from fishtail exhaust to brakeless front wheel, may have cost its owner \$5,000 in materials and labor. Insurance is heavy, since to many companies the fact of owning a bike is prima-facie evidence of irresponsibility. The risk of theft is high, especially in cities, where case-hardened steel chains and medieval-looking padlocks must tether the mount if one so much as stops for a hamburger.

Highway cops dislike bikers and are apt to assume that a Hell's Angel lurks slaving and Benzadrined inside every rider; they take a sour glee in plastering the riders with tickets for the slightest infraction. Worst of all, there are ac-

cidents. Big bikes are superb manifestations of engineering skill, but they are utterly vulnerable. There is no body shell, no padding, no safety belt—nothing to cushion the body that wrenched forward over the bars at 50 m.p.h. may be no more than a leaking bag of tissue and bone fragments when the concrete has finished with it. On any long trip, moreover, the biker stands to encounter at least one car-swaddled Milquetoast with blood in his eye whose hope is to run him off the road. Highways are the bullrings of American insecurity and every biker knows it, or ends up in a hospital.

So why ride? There are, of course, impeccable reasons. Bikes are easy to park, they save gas, they pollute the air less than cars. But the impeccable reasons are not always the real ones. Buying a bike, particularly a big motorcycle, is buying an experience that no other form of transport can give: a unique high that like pot has spun its own culture around itself. The name of the game is freedom. A biker, being more mobile, is on a different footing from a driver. The nightmares of traffic afflict him less. Instead of being trapped in a cumbersome pad-

BILL RAY—LIFE

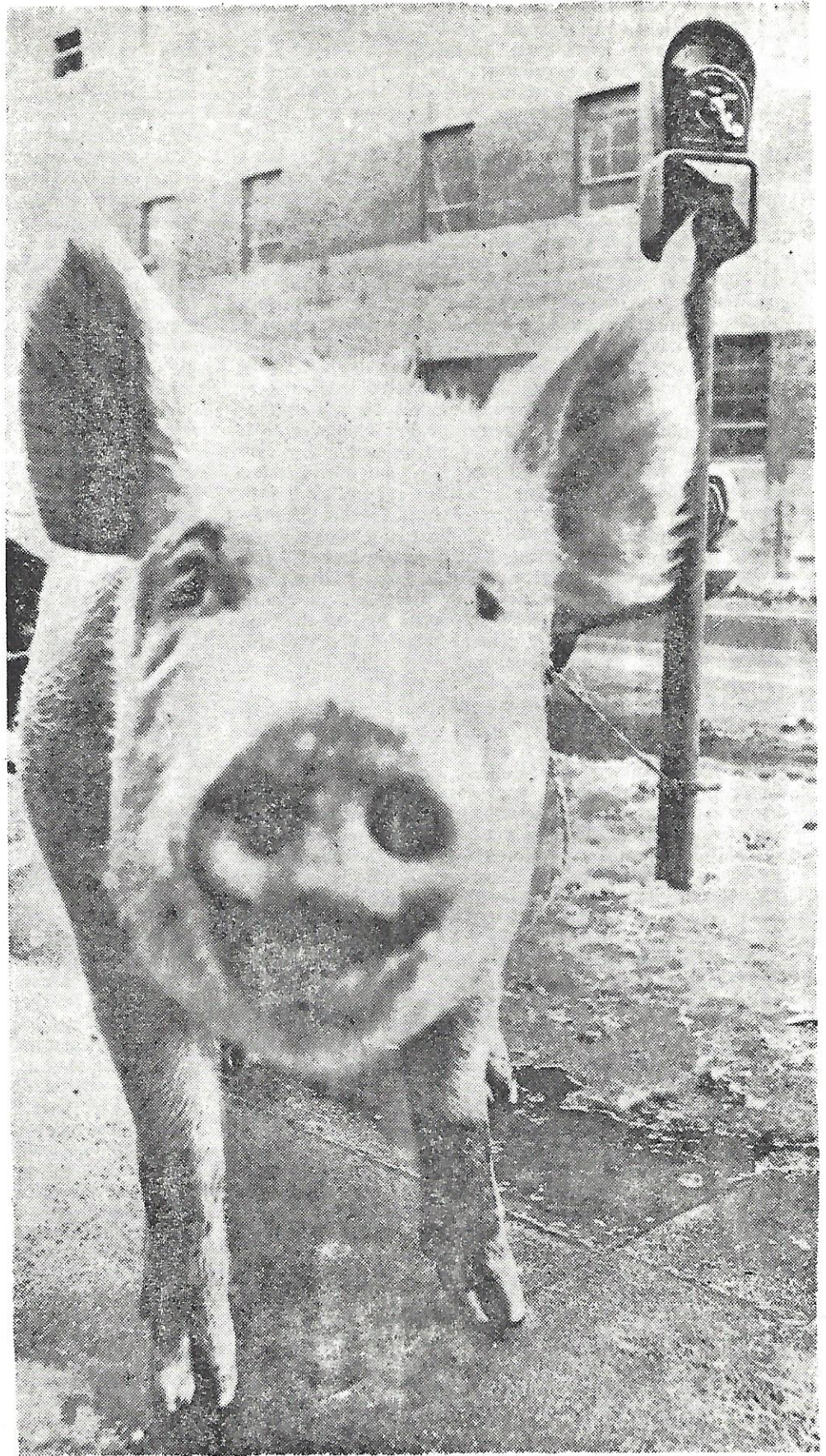


EASY RIDING IN CALIFORNIA

ded box, frozen into the glacier of unmoving steel and winking red taillights on the ribboned parking lots that expressways have become, he can slide through the spaces, take off, go . . . And the kick is prodigious.

Instead of insulating its owner like a car, a bike extends him into the environment, all senses alert. Everything that happens on the road and in the air, the inflections of road surface, the shuttle and weave of traffic, the opening and squeezing of space, the cold and heat, the stinks, perfumes, noises and silences—the biker flows into it in a state of heightened consciousness that no driver, with his windows and heater and radio, will ever know. It is this total experience, not the fustian clichés about symbolic penises and deficient father figures that every amateur Freudian trots out when motorcycles are mentioned, that creates bikers. Riding across San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge on his motorcycle, the biker is sensually receptive every yard of the way: to the bridge drumming under the tires, to the immense Pacific wind, to the cliff of icy blue space below.

"*Se tu sarai solo*," Leonardo da Vinci remarked five hundred years ago, "*tu sarai tutto tuo*" (If you are alone, you are your own man). Biking, like gliding, is one of the most delightful expressions of this fact. There is nothing second-hand or vicarious about the sense of freedom, which means possessing one's own and unique experiences, that a big bike well ridden confers. Anti-social? Indeed, yes. And being so, a means to sanity. The motorcycle is a charm against the Group Man.



THE ACTING SENSATION OF THE YEAR - SHE IS STILL MUCH TALKED ABOUT!

WOODY B ATTENDED, AND REPORTED ON.....

.....DAYS OF EQUINOX.....

LIKE GANG-BUSTERS THEY CAM THROUGH - THE ENTRE NOUS, THAT IS, ON THEIR VIRGIN RUN (IF YOU WILL EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION). IF THE WORTHWHILENESS (THERE MUST BE SUCH A WORD) OF LABOR CAN BE JUDGED BY RESULTS, THEN THE MEMBERS OF THE ENTRE NOUS CAN FEEL JUSTLY REWARDED.

IT ALL STARTED ON FRIDAY EVENING AT THE EDWARDIAN WITH LOTS OF WELCOME DRINKS AND A GENEROUS ASSORTMENT OF "GOOD-TO-SEE-YOU'S". AS IF WE HAD NOT DRUNK ENOUGH OF THE FOREVER AMBER, WE AMBLED ON TO AMBER MORE AT THE LATE PARTY. GUSTI WAS DULY INITIATED INTO THE RITUALS OF AFTER HOURS PARTIES; BUT IN HER OWN WONDERFUL WAY, SHE TOOK IT IN HER STRIDE - A GREAT GAL WHO ADDED MUCH TO THE ENTIRE WEEKEND SCENE.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SAW THE SAME FACES AND BODIES, APPEARING NONE THE WORSE FOR WEAR AT THE "1270" TO VIEW "ODDS AND ENDS". THE SHOW WAS APTLY NAMED AS THERE WAS A GENEROUS DISPLAY OF BOTH. TRUE TO FORM, YOU COULDN'T GET THE LADIES OUT OF THEIR COSTUMES, AND YOU COULDN'T KEEP THE GENTLEMEN IN THEIRS. SERIOUSLY, THE SHOW WAS GREAT FUN AND ALL THE PARTICIPANTS, ENTRE NOUS, AND GUESTS, DESERVE LOUD CLAPS, WHICH THEY GOT. CONGRATS ARE IN ORDER ALSO FOR THE VERY NICE PROGRAM.

THE PACE CONTINUED TO MOMENTUM AS THE SAME FACES AND BODIES (STILL LOOKING NONE THE WORSE FOR WEAR) GATHERED AT THE EDWARDIAN ONCE AGAIN FOR A DELICIOUS DINNER AND MORE ENTERTAINMENT. SOMEONE IN THE CROWD MUST HAVE BEEN DRINKING BECAUSE A VAST AMOUNT OF FIRE WATER LEFT THE EDWARDIAN INVENTORY. AGAIN, BEER CONTINUED TO FLOW AT, WOULD YOU BELIEVE, ANOTHER PARTY!

SUNDAY'S BRUNCH AT THE EDWARDIAN PROVIDED THE OCCASION FOR THE PRESENTATION OF AWARDS WHICH WERE CAPABLY HANDLED BY CAPTAIN CAIN. AS YOU ALL KNOW BY NOW, THE VIKINGS WERE PRESENTED WITH A BEAUTIFUL BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS. WE ALSO HAD THE DUBIOUS DISTINCTION OF BEING MADE THE TEMPORARY KEEPERS OF THE AMCC GOOF-UP (IF THAT IS WHAT IT IS CALLED) AWARD, GIVEN TO US FOR THE LATENESS OF OUR RUN FLYERS. CYCLE M. C. WON THE AWARD FOR THE LARGEST ATTENDANCE AND "WUNDERBAR" GUSTI TOOK HOME A LARGE THING FOR HAVING TRAVELLED THE GREATEST DISTANCE. I AM SURE THE TROPNY WILL HAVE A PLACE OF PROMINENCE AT HER BAR IN MUNICH. GOOD-BYES WERE SAD AS ALWAYS, 'SPECIALLY GUSTI'S. WHEN SHE BURST INTO TEARS, THE MALADY BECAME CONTAGIOUS, AND SOMEONE WAS HEARD TO SAY AS HE WIPED THE TEARS FROM HIS RED EYES, "THERE GOES OUR IMAGE!"

CONGRATULATIONS, ENTRE NOUS, ON A MOST SUCCESSFUL RUN, AND HERE'S TO MANY, MANY MORE!!!

POTPOURRI

&

SPARKING PLUGS

NUMBERS OF VIKINGS HAD BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN NUMEROUS PLACES, MANY OF THE PARTIES BEING COMPLETE SURPRISES:THOSE GET-TO-GETHERS, PURELY SOCIAL, WERE ALL ENJOYABLE. TOO, THEY AFFORDED OPPORTUNITY FOR CHORUS PRACTISE!

RIC T., ONE OF THE MOST LIKABLE PERSONS ANYONE COULD KNOW, A MEMBER OF WHEELS M. C. OF N. Y. C., WAS AWARDED THE BIGGEST AND BEST TROPHY AT B02-2271. IF WE ALL HAD HEARTS AS BIG AS RIC'S, WE WOULD ALL KNOW WHAT "SOUL" REALLY IS!

THE LION'S DEN HAS BEEN OPEN FOR SOME TIME, BEING ON THE TOP DECK OF TWELVE CARVER. THE VIKINGS M. C. WISH RICKIE-POOH AND CHRIS THE BEST OLD AND NEW LUCK, AND ALL OF IT GOOD, IN THEIR LATEST VENTURE.

BESIDES THE LION'S DEN, VIKINGS AND KINDRED SPIRITS,ALL MORE THAN WELCOME AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES, MAY NOW START DOING THE CIRCUIT:

- THE SHED
- TWELVE CARVER
- THE EDWARDIAN

THE VIKINGS M. C. HAVE BEEN MOST APPRECIATIVE TO THE MANAGERMENTS OF ALL OF THE MENTIONED WATERING PLACES, AND SINCERELY HOPE THAT OUR THANKS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE MANY EXTRAS AND HOSPITALITY extended DURING RUNS, AND SPECIAL PARTIES, IS MADE KNOWN TO THEM.

AT LAST!!!, A HAIR STYLIST WHO HAS PLEASSED MANY VIKINGS!!!& WHO WITH DEFTNESS AND GENTLEMANLY MANNER HAS SOLVED OUR VARIOUS AND MANY PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE HAIR:

MR. ROBERT

AT THE MID-TOWN MOTOR INN, HUNTINGTON AVENUE

BY APPOINTMENT, ONLY

SKIP C. HAS DONE SEVERAL EXCELLENT COVERS FOR THE LONGSHIP, HOWEVER, THE COVER FOR THIS ISSUE IS TRULY EXCELLENT. MANY THANKS SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO SKIP; MANY HOURS GO INTO THE CREATION OF SUCH WORKS.

SEVERAL VIKINGS HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED, FEELING THE CUTTING OF BUDGETS, AND THE TIGHT-MONEY SCENE, THE RESULTS OF WHICH ARE NOT PLEASANT. JOB-HUNTING IS NOT TOO EASY AT THIS TIME. IF ANY FELLOW-VIKINGS HEAR OF JOBS SUITED TO THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED, ADVISING OF THE SAME WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATED.

During B02-2271, our Treasurer had the misfortune to have his car stolen from his regular parking spot in back of his apartment. Because Boston is one of the leaders in this unpleasantness, we include this article in The Longship.

Car Thefts: The Billion Dollar Headache

BY DAVID SKEDGELL

Profits are good, overhead is low and even an independent can make \$15,000 a week.

Ask anyone to name America's favorite outdoor sport and you'll get an answer like, "baseball," or "football." You probably wouldn't argue against that kind of reply, and one or the other might win you a rubber ducky on somebody's quiz show, but the *right* answer is something else. The statistics at hand say that America's number-one sport is a game of "now you see it, now you don't" played with automobiles. All that's needed to play is a touch of larceny in your heart, a dash of ingenuity in your thinking, and about as much physical effort as a third base coach expends. Nearly everyone who plays wins, and the prize is a car. Unhappily, the losers sometimes end up in jail and collect a record instead of \$200. But that doesn't happen very often—at least not often enough to discourage devotees of the sport.

The car theft problem is, of course, nothing new. It must have begun just about the time the tenth or twelfth car was built, and was merely an extension of the horse-thief and chariot-thief syndrome—and we must suppose that if Hannibal had turned his back on those elephants for more than a couple of minutes, one of them would have been spirited away into the alpine mists. However, today's thievery is more in the line of cars than elephants (else this magazine would be titled, "Howdah and Mahout") and the only elephantine thing about the situation is its size. In recent years the problem has grown by nearly 700%—much faster than the increase in either human or automobile population—and you'd have to say that this cancer-like increase has been fertilized by an ever greater than normal amount of bureaucratic ineptitude and cultivated by less than inspired countermeasures by auto manufacturers. The total result is, quite apart from pure aggravation, an annual economic loss to the American people of more than a *billion* dollars.

As illegal activities go, grand-theft, auto, is really the complete crime. It is all things to all people, so to speak: A cheap thrill and salable spare-tire for the joy-rider. A high-profit, low-risk endeavor for the pro-

fessional with even less chance of getting caught. (One study estimates that a car thief can expect to steal about a *million* dollars worth of merchandise before spending one year in jail.) And, most important of all, car theft is splendid training for a career in crime. Law enforcement officials claim that stealing cars is the best possible training program for kids bent on a lifetime outside the law. They say that once a kid steals a car, the chances are about nine to one that he'll become a career criminal.

Actually, it makes little difference to the average family *who* steals their car. Whether whisked away by a gimlet-eyed pro, or some sweaty-palmed beginner, they are still faced with the loss of their first or second largest investment—and they won't have to wait long to find out if the loss is permanent. If a car hasn't been found within six days, the chances are good that it never will be recovered. On the average, a stolen car costs its owner about \$1500—plus a sizable amount of out-of-pocket cash for attendant expenses: car rentals, public transportation, etc. These last expenses will, in many cases, not be recoverable even if the owner is insured against theft. And, even when a car is recovered somebody is going to be out a good chunk of

cash. Many of the cars that are recovered turn up looted of radio, engine, transmission and other salable major components—and very often the car will have been crashed. (Insurance company figures show that the repair costs on a car that has been stolen and *recovered* will average nearly \$400.)

Teenagers have traditionally been responsible for the bulk of automobile thefts. They account for nearly 60% of all missing automobiles. Stealing a car is, in some circles, a first-rate way to simultaneously thumb your nose at society, dazzle your friends, and get free use of a car for the evening, weekend, or whatever. In almost every instance, this kind of joyrider will be between 14 and 17 and live in a large metropolitan area. And in most instances, the teenager isn't particularly interested in permanent possession of the car he steals; he just wants the *use* of it. For this reason, and because even a "hanging" judge is inclined to go easy on some runty 15-year-old standing before him with stark panic on his face and tears of contrition in his eyes, youthful joyriders are usually charged (*if they are caught*) with a misdemeanor. "He's just a boy" society says, and the car-boosting kid gets a slap on the wrist, a stern "naughty, naughty" from the court, and goes forth convinced that getting nabbed by the fuzz isn't much to worry about.

It's those around him that can justifiably tremble. A strange transformation overcomes the classic "good kid" the instant he slides behind the wheel of the car he has decided to heist. At once, he becomes a curious combination of Bullitt and a grand prix driver. He becomes as speed-smitten as Craig Breedlove, but with the finesse and judgment of a demolition derby loser. Statistics can be hauled out to prove that, mile for mile, the joyrider is the most dangerous driver on the road. He will race anyone who looks even mildly interested (or interesting) and if he can't get any action from others he'll race himself. Things like wrinkled fenders, broken transmis-

sions and a rod out through the side of the block don't bother him—he's not going to get the bills. You will get those bills—and you may get a lot more if you make it too easy for the car thief by leaving your keys conveniently in the ignition lock. In many states, a controversial law holds *you* responsible for the thief's misdeeds if you have not taken "ordinary precautions" to prevent him from driving away in your car. So it is entirely possible to end up paying for the damage to your car . . . and the damage to other people's cars and their persons.

Studies also show that the joyrider makes a curious round trip with the car he steals—and it is usually a trip of little more than 25 miles. He almost always deposits the stolen vehicle very near the place he acquired it—probably seeing this as an act of kindness. And then, so the whole thing will not have been without tangible profit, he usually loots the glovebox and trunk.

But while the joyrider accounts for most of the cars stolen, it is the professional car thief who accounts for most of the total dollar damage—and is both cunning and resourceful enough to get away with your car even if you locked its doors and have the key in your pocket. As is the case with most major crime, the pro concentrates on large metropolitan areas—where the supply of cars is virtually endless, and where there are plenty of outlets for ill-gotten vehicles. The largest car-theft rings operate on the East Coast. Many Northeastern states still have no title laws, and the re-registration of stolen vehicles is relatively easy to accomplish. Title change operations also work in Texas, Louisiana, Florida and Georgia. On the West Coast, Los Angeles and the gambling areas of Nevada are the hub of operations thanks to availability of desirable cars plus the proximity of a high profit market in nearby Mexico.

Obviously, it is the profit motive that has caused the auto theft business to boom in recent years—and the profit margin is very high as there is little overhead even for the best-equipped of professionals and the risk of apprehension is comfortably low. Given the right circumstances, even a small independent operator can clear \$15,000 a week disposing of no more than ten to fifteen cars. Larger, more completely organized networks with interstate connections and parts outlets overseas (especially lucrative in South America and Puerto Rico) pull in \$60,000 to \$75,000 per week.

Without question, mecca for the automotive miscreant is New York City, the car theft capital of the world. Less than 50% of the cars stolen there are ever recovered, a figure well below the national

rate of about 70%. In Fun City, organizations of thieves hide behind a well concealed network of small body and repair shops. Hot parts outlets are as numerous as adults-only peep shows and about as easy to find. Even a sizable number of new and used car dealers have a finger in the pie somewhere. The large outfits employ as many as 50 full-time personnel—experienced mechanics, forgers, spotters, look-outs and thieves. The function each performs fits together in a way that would rival the best Mission Impossible planning, and the penchant for detail is staggering. All jobs interlace perfectly, but rarely does an individual ever know more than his specialty.

Usually a spotter finds a desirable car in a more or less safe location and contacts the pick-up man. The robbery is performed deftly and quickly as most pros won't waste more than a few minutes on a car. Once on the road, the thief brings the stolen vehicle to a body shop or garage where any number of operations are performed on it depending on what the ultimate destination of the car is. The mechanic may change VIN (vehicle identification number) plates so the car can be equipped with forged registration papers and sold legitimately off a used car lot, or if there's reason to suspect that the heat is on and it's unwise to keep the car intact, it will be cut up and all traceable numbers destroyed with the parts either sold immediately or put into inventory awaiting a customer.

The quickness with which the pro operates is what makes him hard to trap. He spends little time on the open road, and sometimes puts a set of "cold" or legally registered plates on the auto to avoid detection from police "hot" plate lists.

The pro is a creature of the early evening. He steals mostly from the street (66%) in the wealthier suburban neighborhoods between 6 and 10 p.m. Adding insult to injury, he takes almost 50% of the cars he steals from in front of the owner's home or driveway. Public parking lots and garages are next on his preferred list of places to operate.

Recovery of a professionally stolen car is an improbability. Should the hapless victim get lucky, it has to be within three days or so—after that the chances that he'll even see a bumper from his car slide downhill quickly. Oddly enough, some owners hit the jackpot and have their cars returned in better shape than before they were stolen. Their cars were washed and waxed, even painted, and small items that needed fixing were taken care of. In cases like this, police theorize that for one reason or another, the pros were unable to complete the sale or disposal of the car and

simply abandoned it.

The professional is not only sophisticated in his method of operation, he is downright choosy about the cars he steals. Cars manufactured by General Motors have always ranked high on his list. In most cases it is a two-year-old Chevrolet that is nabbed for resale with forged papers. Rings that export hot cars from the New York City docks prefer this kind of car for their Puerto Rican and South American markets and police estimate that about 15% of all unrecovered autos in New York wind up on the docks bound for South America.

If the professional is stealing for parts, he chooses the higher priced Cadillacs, Buicks and Oldsmobiles. These cars bring top dollar from the hot parts brokers as well as crooked repair shops. For an overseas market, the theft of a high priced car can bring a 300% profit. For example, a \$6,000 Cadillac commands approximately \$17,000 when sold as parts in South America. In the past few years, the "steal-to-order" rings have proliferated dramatically. With more choices than column B of a Chinese menu, these operations take orders for everything from teal blue seats for a 1957 Bel Air to a transmission for a TR-4A. Because the heist is specially ordered, the prices for the piece of wanted equipment are usually increased from 50 to 75% but still well below their legally bought counterparts.

In the past, auto thieves stole along the lines of the manufacturer's market penetration. That is still basically true in terms of the makes they prefer, but some interesting patterns have evolved: 35% of all cars stolen are Chevrolets, yet Chevy has only 28% of the market. Cadillac makes up 2% of the domestic market, but 6% of stolen autos are Caddys. And, while Ford products make up about 22% of car sales, only 7% of auto theft victims are Ford owners. Chrysler and American Motors products fall in next in terms of preference. Along with their rising American sales, Volkswagens are increasingly popular on the heist list.

Detroit's designers have been back to the drawing board more than once to try outwitting the professional thief. But no matter how much effort they expend or how much care the owner takes in protecting his investment the pro has about a light year's jump in his techniques. One of the most common ways of obtaining a car with little or no risk is the service call. Usually a young lady calls and says that your new Eldorado has been recalled for some small check and that the service representative will be over right away to pick up the car. A man dressed in mechanic's smock ap-

pears shortly thereafter, gives you a receipt, takes your keys and your car.

The pros who operate crooked dealerships (or used car lots) have developed a two-for-one switch that puts some real cash in their pockets. The dealer obtains forged duplicates of the VIN plates of a legitimate car in his stock. He then has a similar car stolen. The VIN plates are switched on the stolen car, and the crook now has two cars, one hot and the other cold, and both undetectable. The hot car will be sold right off the dealer's lot, and any checks made by the police will prove out okay even down to the manufacturer's build order. One dealer sold over 200 cars this way before he was caught.

The cunning of the professional is so thorough and systematic that he is able to make money on stolen cars that don't even exist. This scheme is played on banks and insurance companies and the crook scores twice. It involves mountains of forged paperwork on mythical cars. The thief secures a loan on the car, the paperwork

goes through and later the car is reported stolen and, of course, is never found. A Midwest ring recently cleaned up on almost two dozen autos before an alert bank clerk caught an error in a registration number and brought everything to a clanking halt.

Some theft operations in large cities will "steal-by-appointment" from a car owner so that the insurance on the vehicle can be collected. The system is simple: The crook uses a duplicate key to pick up a car from a pre-designated spot where the owner has parked it and destroys it—usually by dumping it in a lake or in the case of New York City, the Hudson River. The owner collects his insurance money for the car, which is never found.

Although it is the pro who causes the most dollar damage and is the most difficult to catch, he is by no means the only part of the problem. In the last couple of years, a new breed of auto thief has surfaced—the college junky. In many large cities across the country the student finds

that auto theft is the quickest and safest way to make the kind of money needed to supply a daily habit.

Even after the auto theft victim gets over the initial shock of realizing that his car has been stolen and he's lost a hunk of cash in the process, he's in for a secondary jolt when he finds out that the dole has just begun. Once he calls his insurance broker he's in for some real eye-openers. He'll find that his policy will only partially reimburse him for the cost of a rental car and not until 48 hours after he reported the theft. In most instances, the maximum reimbursement is \$10 dollars a day. This is far short of the most frequently quoted car rental fee of \$12 a day and 12 cents a mile. All of which means that if a victim rents a car for a month and is reimbursed by his insurance company, he spends \$60 of his own money. If he travels 20 miles a day each way to and from work for 22 working days it costs him an extra \$105.00 just to begin earning the money for another car.

If the victim can't afford to rent, he is forced to use public transportation and the inconvenience can reach ridiculous proportions—his wife may have to take cabs to do daily shopping errands or take the kids to school. In addition, he'll probably find that a great part of his theft loss was not covered by his policy at all—a study in New York estimated that the average loss not covered by insurance was almost \$300 per incident.

Many big city car owners also find that comprehensive and theft insurance is very expensive and hard to obtain. For example, there are few, if any, insurance companies which will sell theft coverage in any way other than as part of an overall liability/collision package. Even then, for city dwellers, the underwriter may refuse to give full coverage, insisting on either a \$50 or \$100 deductible maximum, especially if the car is street parked or not garaged. In New York, for example, rates for comprehensive and theft run as high as \$180 a year and it's close to impossible to get coverage on a Corvette, which has less than a one-hour life expectancy parked on a city street according to the actuaries.

Preventing the theft by whatever means is the obvious answer. It also follows that automobile manufacturers will have to play the major role in making it happen. To date, though, Detroit engineers candidly admit to the sad fact that there ain't no way to stop the pros.

For example, Chrysler's vehicle security chief, Don Wolfslayer, allows that "thieves are cunning, stupid, brilliant, old, young, desperate and even dangerous. It's doubtful that the problem they create will ever

*Joy-riders may actually do most of the stealing
but it is the professional car thief who
pockets most of the one billion dollars a year
that the theft problem costs American Car owners.*



Confessions of an Auto Thief

• Back in the early Thirties, some bright young engineer at Ford decided that it would be a great idea to design a steering wheel that could be padlocked to stop the rising tide of automobile thefts. Enter the era of the bolt-cutter. Since then, other crime-stoppers and inventors have labored in their basements and garages and engineering labs to find the ultimate security system—the one that couldn't be beat. Thirty-five years and a few thousand discarded designs later, they're still at it—and as quickly as the thinkers screw together a new crook-stopper, the illegal underground finds a way to get around it.

We thought that the only way to evaluate many of the most popular anti-theft devices was to find a professional thief and ask him just how easy or hard it was for him to best them. New York City may not be good for much, but it is the automotive-heist mecca. After a few phone calls and four minutes of effort, we connected.

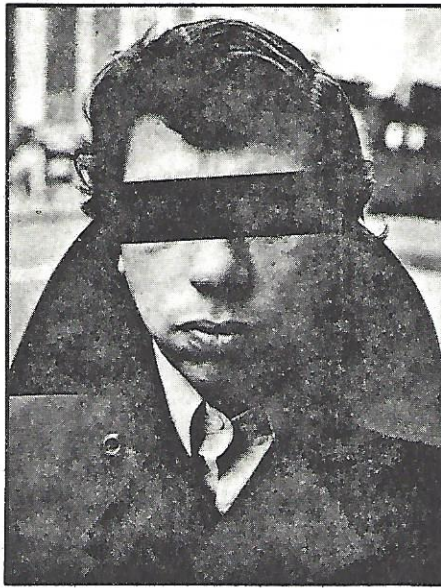
Having just returned from delivering an out-of-state shipment of Caddys, he was fresh from the wars and not the least bit hesitant about breaking the code and giving out the how's and why's of his trade.

Straightaway, our crook told us, "All the anti-theft designers fail to realize that I am totally experienced and come prepared for just about any problem that comes up." His little black bag is filled with saws, hammers, jump cables and extra alligator clips, three feet of distributor-coil wire, bolt cutters, key assemblies and enough sundries to keep a tank division going in the field for a month; he is one specialist who is not reluctant to make a house call.

Our first question was about the relatively new steering-column lock that has become standard on all new cars. Just how much of a problem do they present and how does he get around it? "No problem at all. Most of the guys have been using a slide-hammer and case-hardened screws to get the lock mechanism out. All you do is push in the screw, attach the slide hammer and out comes the entire unit. After that I reconnect the ignition wires to a lock assembly of my own, turn the key and off I go. The whole deal takes about two or three minutes."

"But," we said, naïvely, "many people equip their cars with add-on equipment such as burglar alarms, chrome plated canes that attach to the steering wheel and brake pedal, solid state systems that require a coded insert to activate the ignition, etc."

To our mild horror our thief told us that the professional can overcome even the



How it's done, and how to best stop it by a man who makes his living stealing cars.

most ingenious systems easily and quickly. Said our pro: "For example, the steel cane that some people use can be a real headache if you don't use your head. But the solution is easy. I leave the cane alone and attack the steering wheel. I just cut a small section from the wheel and the cane drops off. It's as simple as that."

"Burglar alarms can be tricky, particularly the factory installed system on the Corvette. But in most cases, I've had experience with them all. On systems that have outside key switches, I use the same basic system employed on the steering column lock—case-hardened screw and slide-hammer. I pull out the lock and short out the wires so the alarm won't sound. If that isn't possible I'll lift the hood, which sets off the alarm momentarily and then cut the hot lead from the battery to the starter. That kills the power and the alarm."

Solid state systems that require a coded plate are likewise easily had. "You simply run a wire directly from the battery to the coil and bypass the ignition system. This method runs the risk of burning out the points, but in most cases, you've got 50 miles or so before it happens. That's always enough to bring the car to a safe location, wire a resistor to the system (to prevent point disintegration) and deliver the car."

The recent adoption of ventless windows has made the pro's life a little harder, but by no means deters him from seeking the \$500 a heist he can get for a new Cadillac or Buick. On hardtops, the sealing rubber

is flexible and the door button can be pulled up easily just with a wire coat hanger. Sedan bodies present more of a problem, but a screw driver can usually be pushed through the door moulding and button lifted.

"The best and most used method of stealing a car is by use of the slide-hammer and screw. A few car manufacturers still place the key-code number on the inside of the door-lock mechanism. It's easiest to pull the mechanism, get the number and fashion an ignition key in 30 seconds using a key cutter."

Some import manufacturers use magnetic keys with drilled-in dimples as an added safety factor. But since the crook will usually pull the entire mechanism and substitute one of his own, they provide no deterrent.

"Pulling the coil wire out from the distributor is a trick that car owners have used for years, but it won't slow me down much since I always bring my own—just in case. Still it's a pain-in-the-neck and it's something you don't usually look for."

And irony of ironies, we've heard reports that you can't always count on the police to nail the crook straightaway. Our consultant cited one legendary New York pro who always brings a wad of cash with him when headed for a busy day's filching. If his luck is bad or he isn't furtive enough, he tries to buy off the fuzz for a hundred and fifty bills or so. A newspaper report even claims evidence that the police who guard the New York City auto pounds are moonlight salesmen for unclaimed cars that should go to the city auctioneer. Some enterprising officers are pulling fast switches, substituting old hulks for newer autos which are then sold to hot car fences.

But take heart, car owners of America, there does seem to be a way to foil even the cream of the professionals. Says our thief: "It's simple, really. Find a way to cut off your engine's gas supply. I knew a guy in New York who owned a Corvette that was always being heisted by kids. So he installed a small gasoline cutoff valve inside the car which he flicked off each time he parked it. Whenever his car was stolen, there was enough fuel in the carburetor fuel pot and the line to run it for a couple of blocks before the engine would quit. Anyone stealing a car would immediately check his electrical connections in a case like this, and when they seem okay there's not much he can do except abandon the car. He's not far away from where the car was stolen and it's dangerous for him to raise the hood and play mechanic."

CAR THEFTS

(Continued from page 33)

be solved. Each time we come up with an answer to one part of the problem, they develop a new approach or a new gimmick. The unfortunate resourcefulness of the thief will continue to keep this whole thing going."

GM's top security engineer, Ted Johnstone, himself a master locksmith, says despairingly, that "a lock is only a time delay device. If we can keep a crook from driving away with a car for three or four minutes, there's a chance he may give up and try an easier hit."

The fact that no one in Detroit ever said that the recently developed steering column lock was the greatest thing since sliced bread hardly makes up for the fact that the professional crook can beat the system in a lightning 8 seconds flat. Using a common tool found in all bodywork shops, he removes the lock without damage, inserts a screw driver in the column, releases the mechanism and drives away.

There is one very bright beam of light cutting through this dark cloud, though. The steering column lock does seem to be preventing kids from joy-riding and that is no small victory.

One large problem that auto engineers face is how to make a car secure yet serviceable and safe. In most cases these goals do not go hand in hand. Wolfslayer says that "we can't afford to make equipment so secure from the thief that we make it inaccessible to the mechanic. So in considering design changes, there is a very thin line between security and serviceability. In making these decisions we try to take all factors into account and do what is most practical." Johnstone says "I can design a vault type locking system for car doors and build them like armored cars. But the cost of this operation would be ridiculously expensive and there's a safety factor involved. Suppose the car is involved in a serious accident. Would all this protection from thieves prevent the occupants from getting out quickly in a crash situation?"

There is a vicious circle to Detroit's apologetics however. They argue that cars are more theft-proof than ever. Yet there are more cars than ever being stolen, and the numbers take quantum leaps upward every year. Add to this the gloomy prediction that as cars are made more difficult to break into and steal, the thief will go after the individual with the key. Chrysler's Wolfslayer admits that "improved vehicle security can mean more chance of direct assault. That wasn't what we were thinking about when we developed the present steering column lock, but it is a real possi-

bility."

The *coup de grâce* to the automobile owner plagued with the theft of his possession is a non-Detroit problem. The greatest offender in this area is the fantastic intermix of paperwork and bureaucracy surrounding individual state registration laws. There is little doubt on the part of agencies involved in combating vehicle theft that strict title laws go a long way in hampering the efforts of the professional crook. And it is not at all surprising that the eight states which have no title laws have the highest theft rates. New York is a stellar example. It is the center and command post of large organized rings, the greatest exporter of stolen cars to foreign countries, and a paradise for crooks who know the system simply because registering a vehicle is as easy as signing up for the draft. The greatest official objections to the strict title laws are totally political: it would inconvenience the driver. Being able to sell a car simply by signing the back half of a registration, or obtaining plates by writing a bill of sale on some old toilet tissue is hardly the way to protect a citizen's major investment. In these days of politician's concern for consumerism, it seems as though someone missed a boat the size of the Forrester.

Also, it has only been very recently that law enforcement agencies, car makers and the states got together a uniform system of reporting auto thefts. Much information that previously languished in file cabinets is now whirring around on the magnetic tape reels of computers. Some of the results that have spilled out of these machines are eyeopeners. For example, as late as 1968, automakers were saying that figures showed that 40% of all stolen cars had the keys left in the ignition. That simply isn't the case. The real figure is probably less than 20%, but the inaccuracy of reporting thefts nationwide knocked the statistic way out of line.

All this intransigence on the part of manufacturers, insurance companies and state governments tends to make the whole situation look rather grey for the consumer. One answer might be (if you believe in such things) to write your favorite congressman, automaker, or precinct captain pleading that something be done. Another might be to chain your car to your bedpost at night. Or better yet, buy a car that no one would want badly enough to steal. Buy yourself a Humber Snipe, and if it is stolen you'll at least have the satisfaction of knowing that the deed was done by a raving lunatic—who will be properly punished for his crime if he just keeps the car. ●

EVENTS - UPCOMING

MAY

21 - 23 CYCLE, M. C. (FIRE ISLAND) SOLD OUT!

28 - 31 WHEELS, M. C. (W - 3)

JUNE

11 - 13 DRUIDS, M. C. (SUMMER SABBATH, WASHINGTON, D. C.)

18 - 20 VANGUARDS, M. C. (FLAG DAY AT BENTON)

27 CYCLE, M. C. ("LAS VEGAS RUN")

JULY

1 - 4 SPEARHEAD, M. C. OF TORONTO (INVASION OF N. Y. C.)

2 - 4 B. B. C. (INDEPENDENCE DAY)

23 - 25 SPARTANS, M. C. (MARATHON '71, IN MARYLAND)

IMPROPER BOSTONIAN

OVERHEARD: (BIG BUTCH V.M.C. MEMBER RELATING SCENE IN WHICH SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO START A BIKE) "A GUY COULD HURT HIS FOOT TRYING TO START ONE OF THOSE THINGS!"

OBSERVED: THERE APPEARS TO BE MORE THAN ONE VIKING WHO GETS MARRIED THREE TIMES A WEEK.

QUESTIONED: WHAT IS ALL THAT JAZZ ABOUT "AS THE STOMACH TUNS IN CONOAGA FALLS", AND IN SPANISH NO LESS?

NOTICED: ONE ANCIENT V.M.C. MEMBER WHO ALWAYS LIKED FLOWERS AND CANDLES CAN ACTUALLY BE SEEN WORKING AMONGST THEM!

HOPED FOR: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPROPER BOSTONIAN.