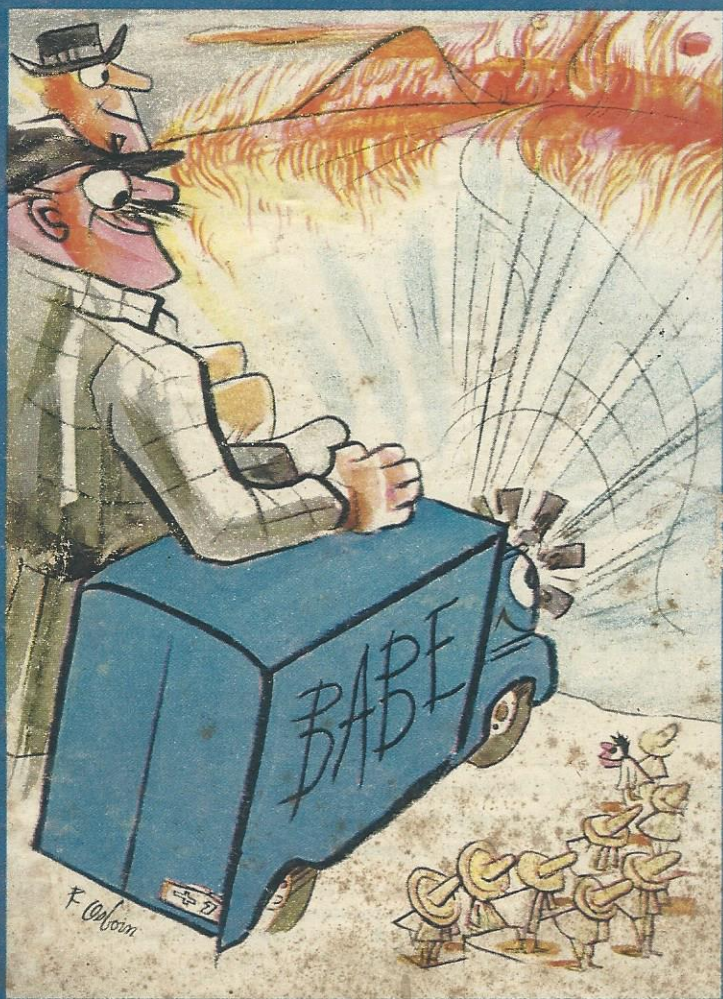


FORD TRUCK TIMES

november-december 1948



Paul Bunyan versus Fire and Water

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Contents

National Rodeo	1
JAY J. DUGAN	
Paul Bunyan Versus Fire and Water	7
WILLIAM HAZLETT UPSON	
World's Shortest Truck Route	11
Mechanic Removes Squeak	12
Curb Service Movies	14
C. M. MORRIS	
Winter Vacation Farmers	17
TED GRESS	
Rolling the Roads	22
DOD STODDARD	
Letters	25
Stories of the Road	26

Cartoons—5, 6, 10, 13, Bonus Built Girl-of-the-Month—21,
Games—27, Artist on Wheels—28.

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Grayson C. Thomas of Burlington, North Carolina, is the new tractor, semi-trailer truck driving champion of the country after piloting his big F-8 to a score of 342.7 out of a possible 400.

NATIONAL ROADEO

by Jay J. Dugan

photographs by G. Harry Hladky

LEADING the proverbial camel through the needle's eye seems fairly possible now to citizens of Washington, D. C., who last month saw the world's best drivers compete in the American Trucking Associations' eighth annual Roadeo.

On the streets, and later in the Capital's Armory, they watched the cream of the truck driver crop casually jockey their huge rigs through airtight spaces that would make the

average pleasure car driver turn in his keys and give up.

The drivers expertly jackknifed 45-foot vehicles with contrary rear ends that zig when the front zags, into spaces little more than a yardstick longer than their length. They ran full tilt between two lanes of tennis balls balanced on golf tees a miserly two inches farther apart than their blind rear wheels. They corkscrewed effortlessly backward like jointed steel worms among drums that most of us would have trouble negotiating in our children's toy autos.

And they capped a spectacular exhibition of precision driving by slithering through a skin-tight alley of marker flags, one pair allowing only a pencil stub clearance. A gunshot signalled the end of their joust with time and tight places as they slammed to a full stop within six inches of a finish line.

Nearly 5,000 cheering, stamping spectators jammed the tiers of the flag-decked Armory for the finals. Military bands played. Famous radio sports announcers narrated as skilled truckmen whipped giant rigs around like playtoys. And the cavernous walls seemed to swell with the thunderous ovation when the 1948 National Trucking Champions strode up to receive their tall, gleaming trophies from ATA officials.

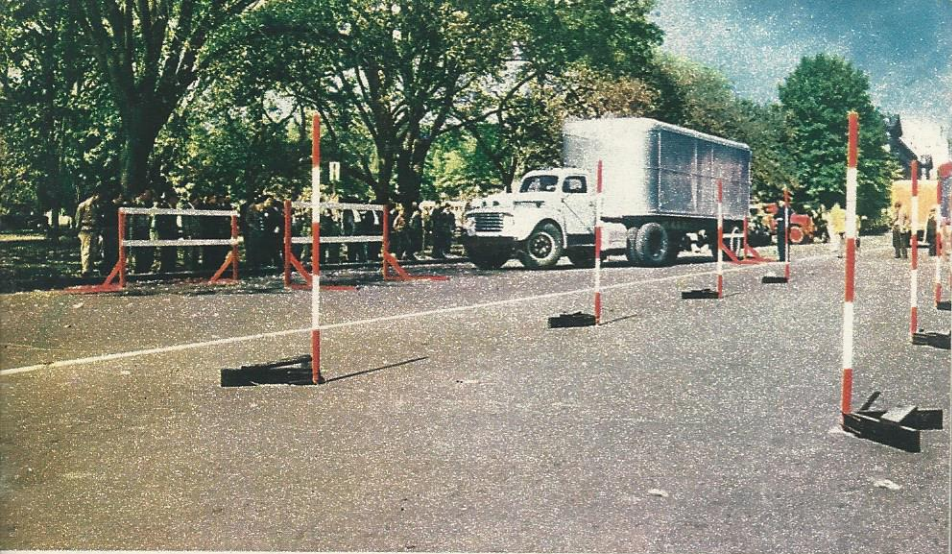
The winner in each class also received \$50 a month for the next year from the American Trucking Associations. Second place men got \$30 a month; third place was \$20 a month.

The road to the national championships is rugged. To be one of the 59 semi-finalists selected from the five million commercial vehicle drivers, a man must survive many elimination contests and, like a real champion, be "up" for each of them. This blue ribbon field at Washington had won successively their company, local, district and state championships.

The "best of show" trials began on a Friday with a board of experienced trucking men carefully grading each nattily uniformed driver for appearance and personality. A four-part written examination grades their fingertip knowledge of safe driving rules, first aid, fire fighting and the regulations of their industry.

This year's semi-final truck and tractor semi-trailer field tests were run the next day on a wide, roped-off street in the shadows of the Department of Commerce Building, where the laws governing their industry are administered.

The driver inspected his rig, chosen from a lineup, for mechanical and safety failings. Several of these booby traps



Contestant, above, maneuvers his tractor and semi-trailer into an offset alley. Obstacles in the form of standards, right foreground, spaced only inches from the sides of the truck, must not be brushed. Below, driver squeezes into a small opening.



had been planted by the judges who graded the contestant on his thoroughness in finding and correcting them.

The driver signalled his readiness, a gun went off, a stopwatch started and he was away on America's greatest test of commercial driving skill.

Straight truck entrants pushed 10,000 reluctant pounds through their paces. The glamour boys in the tractor semi-trailers were deftly shoehorning some 15 tons of vehicle and payload into spaces that would cost most of us at least one fender from the family car.

Alert judges, veteran truckers themselves with thousands of ton-miles behind them, officiated at each maneuver.

Straight truck competitors were racing an eight-minute limit for the course; semi-trailer men were allowed 10.

Lessons hard learned during thousands of hours ferrying chickens and chicory; furniture and ferns; nitrogen and nitre, through all weather, all seasons, over all roads, came to the fore. Steering wheels were feeling the sure touch of hands that for upwards of 20 years of day and night driving had logged more than a million accident-free miles. ■

Thomas, a driver for Associated Transport, Inc., Burlington, North Carolina, receives trophy from E. J. Buhner, outgoing president of ATA. Organization's new president is Thomas' boss, H. D. Horton.





*"Oh dear! and I slapped his face when he told
me I was built like a truck!"*





Illustrations by R. Osborn

Paul Bunyan

versus

Fire and Water

by William Hazlett Upson

ONE OF Paul Bunyan's most interesting jobs was his handling of the great hot-water flood in Mexico.

The conditions were most unusual. Torrential rains in the Chili Mountains of Southern Chihuahua had raised the head waters of the Tamale River to dangerous heights. At the same time there had been a long period of drought and hot weather in the low lands downstream. Finally the dried grass and corn caught fire, and caused so much heat that the waters of the flooded river, as they passed through the burning fields, were raised to the boiling point. The cities farther down were threatened with the most disastrous flood of history. About half of the inhabitants—the ones who could not swim—seemed doomed to be drowned. The other half—those who could swim—would apparently be boiled alive.

Following an appeal by the President of Mexico, Paul Bunyan came speeding to the scene of the disaster in his big new blue truck which he had named "Babe" after his lost blue ox. He brought his mechanic, Ford Fordsen, to help.

When they arrived on the bank of the Tamale River just below the area of the big grass and corn-field fire, Paul parked his truck at a bend where he could look upstream for several miles. Ford Fordsen took off the fan and mounted it in reverse in front of the radiator so that it sent a blast of air up the river. Paul took a pair of tweezers and dropped a few invisible particles into the gasoline supply. The President of Mexico wanted to know what he was doing.

Paul explained: "These little things are uranium atoms. I have been doctoring them up to the point where they are just about ready to split. When they do they will increase the power several hundred thousand times. The fan out in front there will make such a terrific wind that it will blow most of the water right out of the river here and spread it all over these burning fields in the form of a fine spray. In one operation I am going to remove the flood danger from the cities down stream, and put out the fire upstream.

Paul started his motor. The fan whirled. The whole river was blown back for a half a mile. But the water did not spread out as spray. It piled up into a wall and then froze into a solid dam of ice. The terrific wind had caused such rapid evaporation that the temperature of the water had promptly dropped below the freezing point.



For a few minutes it looked as if Paul was licked. He had stopped the flood, but the fire was still raging. Then Ford Fordsen suggested that he had a warehouse full of anti-freeze mixture in Detroit. They leaped in the truck. Paul drove. Because of the uranium additive in the fuel they traveled at supersonic speed and got back in less than an hour.

The ice dam had just melted. They dumped the anti-freeze in the river, turned the truck around and started the fan.

This time there was no freezing. The river was sprayed all over the landscape for miles around. The fire was extinguished. The flood was ended.

But the most interesting result of the affair came later when it was discovered that the flood had washed down great quantities of the chili plant from the Chili Mountains. These plants were pounded to powder on the rocks and mixed with a lot of corn and a few farm animals which had been cooked in the great grass and corn-field fire. The thrifty inhabitants gathered up this material, wrapped it in corn husks, named it after the hot Tamale River, and started selling it to Americans.

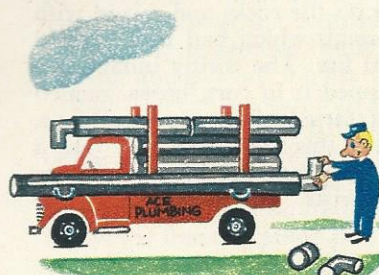
Anyone who doubts any part of this story need only take a trip to Mexico, where he will find that the inhabitants are still selling hot tamales to the tourists. ■



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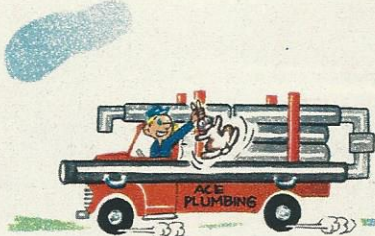


4



5

FILCHOCK



6



photograph by Falcon-fotos

World's Shortest Truck Route

LAKE VERMILLION and Trout Lake lie deep in the wilds of Northeastern Minnesota, miles from roads and civilization. They are separated by a narrow half-mile neck of land which presents a difficult portage for the sportsmen who want to fish both lakes. For many years now that problem has been solved by a Model A truck operating on what might well be the country's shortest truck route. The route and truck are owned by Clifford Morcom, and his driver is Kalevi Karesti. The procedure is to back the truck out on the sandy lake bottom and load the boat on rollers. When the other lake is reached the process is reversed. During his up to 20 trips daily, Karesti must slow down frequently for deer, bear, and porcupine that cross the route. With no roads near, it would seem a tough maneuver to get the truck to the portage. Actually it's simple: Karesti waits until winter and drives across the lake.—C. L. RUBENSTEIN ■



painting by Ralph Hulett

CURB-SERVICE MOVIES

by C. M. Morris

NAVY VETERAN K. R. Warfield of San Diego has turned a war surplus white elephant into a thriving business. At a sale of surplus equipment he spotted a

V8 tractor and a semi-trailer bus, formerly used to haul workers to an airplane factory. An idea came to Warfield as soon as he saw the equipment go under the hammer.



Experienced in recreation and education, he decided to convert the bus into a "traveling talkie" theater for children which would enable him to stay in his own field and yet vie with the Good Humor men for neighborhood nickels and dimes.

The bus' seating capacity was reduced from the original 50 to

35 to provide room for the movie equipment. A loudspeaker on top completed his mobile theater.

A place to start his business was no problem. The many housing projects built during the war to house civilian and military families were still highly populated and teeming with children of all sizes, eager for such fun.

Warfield's first showing was a total success. His booming loud-speaker voice had barely finished describing the wonders inside when the place was swarming with dime-toting children.

Operating under the slogan, "children should be seen and not hurt," he always drives slowly around the project first, loud-speaking the street where the program is to be shown, and what's to be seen. Then he parks in a spot well away from traffic and

shifts from driver-announcer to ticket seller-projectionist.

For their dime the kids get two cartoons, or one cartoon and an educational film. An added attraction that his customers literally "eat up" is the piece of bubble gum he gives with each admittance.

So successful was the venture that Warfield has added another truck-movie. Each theater makes about six showings a day to more than 200 eager young fans. ■





Winter Vacation Farmers

by Ted Gress

photographs by Paul Dorsey

BATTLING snow drifts and bitter winds in winter always has been considered the accepted fate of northern farmers. But on 20,000 acres of lush sub-tropical land 30

miles south of Miami, a small group of sun-tanned tillers of the soil each winter fish and swim under cerulean skies while raising a profitable second crop of

*Most winter farmers do all the work themselves until harvesting time arrives. Then they hire migratory workers. →
One operator hires an entire tribe of Seminole Indians.*

tomatoes, potatoes, squash, snap beans and early potatoes.

These winter vacation farmers owe their good fortune to the Florida land boom bubble which burst in 1925. It was then that James Sottile, a hotel man from Charleston, South Carolina, took a look at some land he owned near Homestead, Florida, and saw it not as a mass of tangled foliage and underbrush but as a lush farming area.

Sottile figured he could, by applying modern farming methods, turn this rich soil into a winter garden which would put luscious red tomatoes on northern dinner tables and important folding money in the pockets of farmers who wanted to take a working vacation under Florida's warm winter sun.

It wasn't an easy job for Sottile, but he managed to obtain an RFC loan to finance saving of the good soil. His ambitious program of reclamation calls for 400 miles of 50-foot hard rock roads and over 50 miles of canals. Huge pumps were installed to route underground water into canals and to control the level of water in those canals.

The soil at South Dade Farms is a shallow layer of marl which occasionally reaches a depth of five feet, but more often is only a few inches deep. Marl is an earthy, crumbling deposit consisting chiefly of clay mixed with calcium carbonate. In thin spots the marl serves chiefly as a base for the fertilizer, which is required in amounts of about one ton to the acre.

Today more than 1,000 farmers rent land from Sottile. Rents range from \$25 to \$35 per acre from September 1 to May 1. Crops are cultivated from mid-October to March, the rest of the time being spent in clearing and preparing the land.

Herbert F. Weiss of the Growers Equipment Company, Homestead, Florida, assists the farmers in selecting equipment for their Ford tractors to meet requirements of the unusual terrain.

Sottile's firm, the South Dade Farms Corporation, doesn't engage in actual farming operations. Besides renting land to tenant farmers, Sottile and his two sons, James, Jr. and William, devote full time to maintaining the roads and canals and to reclaiming land.

*One farmer said of the Florida soil: "If a man can't raise 350 to 375 crates of tomatoes per acre in a good year, it's his own fault." →
One season potato production reached 519 bushels per acre.*



Plots are laid out in eighty-acre sections, although smaller tracts may be rented. One cooperative group, however, is planting 1,500 acres. All kinds of vegetables are grown, but tomatoes, squash, snap beans and early potatoes are the main crops.

As word spread of the comfortable profits to be made in this southern-most cultivated area of the Continental United States, more and more farmers loaded up their equipment in the fall and hit the trail for Miami. Soon Sottile's clients numbered shrewd, horny-handed experts from such far away states as New York, Maine, New Jersey, Connecticut, the Dakotas, Illinois, Indiana, Georgia, Michigan, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Sottile tries to discourage everyone except actual farmers, for he realizes that it requires plenty of farm "know how" to capitalize on the potentialities of his rough marl soil. But those who do savvy the specialized business have the double reward of good financial returns combined with an opportunity to fish, swim and do a

little sight-seeing on the side.

Some of the farmers claim that it is easier farming than up north. There are no weed troubles there although it does take more spraying.

Most of the farmers do all the work themselves except when it comes to harvesting. Then they hire migratory workers from a nearby camp operated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. One large operator hires an extra tribe of Seminole Indians.

All of these winter vacation farmers commute daily to their lush living quarters in Homestead, Florida City, or Miami, and, come spring, after their crops are harvested and they have enjoyed all the fishing and swimming they want, they dust their hands and head north for another busy season above the Mason-Dixon Line.

They enjoy the sights along the way, too, for while they do gamble a little on blight and pests, they figure it is a whole lot easier life and a more rewarding one than trying to pick the daily double at Hialeah.

And they get sun tan, too. ■



THE FORD TRUCK TIMES, its staff, its readers, and their friends and relatives will doubtlessly concur wholeheartedly with Warner Brothers in their nomination of starlet Barbara Bates as "Bonus Built Gal of the Year."





decorations by C. H. Roberts

Rolling the Roads

by Dod Stoddard

IT DOES you good to get into a light rig and pound it a few thousand miles cross-country.

In a way, trucking is like the army. All you hear about is the generals; but the old buck private is the guy who does most of the work. Somebody is always writing about a forty-ton load, a special and spectacular hunk of performance by big equipment.

However, sitting in the cab of a junior job for six weeks and watching for something your own size along the highway, you discover two things. First, the little half-tons, delivery jobs, one-ton panels and such make up most of the burden traffic. And, second, by far the most of the truck army is "privates"—farm trucks and fleets of one rattler each belonging to the guy you see bending it around the turns.

* * *

A mechanic with a missing front tooth gave me the name for the one-tonner I've been driving on this trip. I stopped to get a noisy fan belt quieted down.

"Nithe bathket of gearth," the dental fugitive complimented, when he looked over my outfit.

"Pretty sweet little set-up," I agree with him. "These new fat-man cabs are fitted up all foo-foo. You're as comfortable as a millionaire in a club window."

"Thome people have it thoft," my pal says. "You got a job that givth you a change of thenery all th' time?"

"Yep, I'm taking this one coast to coast—out through a lot of Canada and back through the South.

"But," I go on to say, "I'm sure starting out with a tight engine. So stiff I can't hardly start it."

"Don't worry," the mechanic reassures me. "Ith thtiff now. It'll get to be loother."

So I named the truck Luther right there. And it got to be "loother" all right. I put it over gravel roads and washboards and through chuckholes and ruts on wagon trails until I had Luther a lot looser. Luther and I have also worked over a scad of asphalt and had our share of city traffic—just about all the changes of scenery and varieties of driving anybody could ask for.



And, you know, it's a lot *different* in a small truck. Sitting way up in a C.O.E. tractor you feel isolated, alone. Sitting down nearly level with the sedan drivers and the other small traffic you have a lot more company.

Luther and I attract a lot of attention. He has an odd-shaped box and some guy with his mind on pin-ups must have figured out the curves and curlicues for the paint work, the chromium and the stripes. We're painted three shades of green.

One farmer, with the same model but having a conventional rack, stopped at a railroad siding to talk with me and look Luther over.

"That baby makes a noise standing still with the motor turned off, doesn't it?" he kidded me.

"Well, it's a little on the loud side," I had to admit. "But I could find it in a fog."

* * *

To pass the time I counted white horses for a few days. Then I switched to counting red headed women. Finally I settled down to checking and sorting traffic. You can tell the part of the country you are in by the equipment and body styles. In wet country, for instance, nearly everything has some sort of a cover over it. The pick-ups have canvas "covered wagon" effects, the stakes have tarps and tie-down ropes. The open-end boxes have canvas curtains.

Get into a warm, dry country and nearly everything is wide open except the vans and refrigeration jobs. When you're in a livestock area you get the impression that nearly every truck is designed to carry hogs, sheep, cows or whatever the produce is. In oil country the tankers show up. And funny thing, even the little light stuff seems to have tank or drums or shows signs of occupational adaptation.

* * *

Luther and I were parked in a small city out West and *three* paddy-wagons came by. I had flinched on the first two, but when the third one stopped, I told Luther not to give his right name—that we were in a trap—that the law had us surrounded and what kind of a town devoted itself entirely to hauling criminals?

The patrol wagon came alongside and a copper leaned out.

"Stranger," he said, "we like to be friendly to visitors, but you got our parkin' place. We been around the block three times hopin' you'd move—"

"Oh," I gulp, grating Luther's reverse and noticing for the first time that I've parked in front of headquarters. There's a neat sign on the sidewalk, "Reserved for police cars."

"Luther," I whisper. "Let's get out of here—we're in an occupational area—a little too highly specialized for us!" ■



Mail Truck

ACROBATIC F-7

Dear Sirs: I saw a Ford F-7 truck on a construction job headed back for another load of gravel. On the way it turned over twice, landing on its wheels. The accident didn't even bend a fender and the driver was unhurt. The driver started the truck, went on for his gravel, and has since been going about his business as usual.

JAMES CLIFFORD HOWARD
Lancing, Tenn.

FIREFIGHTING "T"



Dear Sirs: We have used it (Model T fire truck) since 1922. The engine has never been repaired in any way and has never given any trouble. We do plan to get a new fire engine sometime in the future, as the old Model T is slow in speed and does not have a booster pump.

ED MARLOW
FIRE CHIEF
Southport, N. C.

TEXAS SPEAKS UP

Dear Sirs: We of Texas resent the "slur" in the item entitled "Calendar Art" in the recent issue of your magazine which showed the map of Texas . . . You say "Grapefruit Time in the Santa Clara Valley."

Don't you know that the finest grapefruit in the world are the Red Blush fruit of Texas' Magic Valley, and that they grow nowhere else in the world (including Santa Clara Valley) . . .

In the Magic Valley we have a character . . . Magic Valley Jose. He rides a trained crow, "Big Beel," to enable him to survey his vast holdings. His wingspread is 768 feet. One of Jose's specialties is Red Blush Grapefruit. He has so developed this fruit that Ford had to build a special truck the length of two box cars to enable him to haul four of the fruit to market. When he gets an order for grapefruit juice he pushes a large water wagon under one of the riper grapefruit, spuds in a hole in the bottom, and collects the juice. One time the fruit he was juicing was so large that the tank overflowed and drowned six of the grove hands. Transportation of this fruit is a real job. Once the back fruit rolled off the truck and ruined the cement highway for 16 blocks before it could be stopped. These are facts!

HOWARD M. KUTZENBERGER
Harlingen, Texas

SCHOOL REQUESTS FORD TRUCK TIMES

Dear Sirs: We have a request for 25 copies of the July-August FORD TRUCK TIMES from our Board of Education to be given to all school bus drivers. Would it be possible to obtain these copies at this late date?

O. L. MULLINS
FORD DEALER
Madison, W. Va.

Stories of the Road

THE FORD TRUCK TIMES will pay \$25 each for true stories of humorous or unusual incidents you have observed while hauling about the country. The funnier the better, but we won't turn down tear jerkers. Keep your offering under 200 words and mail to: Editor, Ford Truck Times, Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan. If you want your story returned, you must enclose postage.



I was a helper on a brand new truck that was hauling a heavy load down a steep hill that led into Stafford Springs, Connecticut. At the bottom of this hill was a sharp turn into the center of town.

Suddenly, due to a mechanical defect, the driver was unable to hold the truck on the steep grade. We were confronted with a runaway truck. Then a Ford truck pulled alongside and its driver realized our predicament. With the bottom of the hill looming nearer and nearer, the other driver passed us and then slowed down slightly, allowing our front end to ease against his tailgate.

Even with his truck loaded he gradually applied enough brakes to allow both of us to make the turn safely. Boy, were we sweating! Needless to say, we shook hands all around and the coffee and doughnuts were on us.

—THOMAS T. J. MARCHANT, Everett, Massachusetts



I pulled out of North Carolina about 4 p.m. with six tons of string beans on the body of a straight ton and a half Ford truck. Rain started after I passed through Richmond headed north and the road started to get slick. My speedometer was reading 65 mph half way down the long hill just south of Quantico when a car suddenly pulled off the right shoulder in front of me.

I hit the brakes and the wheels locked. The truck started skidding. By then the car was out of danger but I was headed for the large concrete monument marking the entrance to Quantico. Within 20 feet of it I released the brake and stepped on the accelerator. The power under that hood pulled the load of beans straight, and I proceeded happily but more cautiously to New York.

—HUBERT L. OWENS, Fuquay Springs, North Carolina



MY AUNT HAZEL said it was too bad I wasn't a doctor instead of a delivery truck driver. Recently I stopped at a home to deliver some goods. The owner came running to me and asked if I would take his wife to the hospital quickly, as a new baby was just about to arrive.

I hurried into the house and brought out clothing and other necessities. The expectant father jumped in beside me and we raced to the nearest hospital. I knew there was no time to lose—every precious second counted.

In a few minutes we reached the hospital. I looked over at the father, who had all of a sudden turned white as a sheet. In a weak voice he said to me, "Oh, my gosh! I forgot my wife!"

—JOHN FRANK RITTEL, JR., Wolf Creek, Montana

GAMES

BEELINE

Could you draw a map of the United States? Well, before you start try this quiz and see how well you have learned the position of each state. Your starting point is the state in the left column and your destination is in the right column. All you have to do is to fill in the **ONE STATE** you must go through to reach your destination. Close your geography book and start. Answers below.

From	Through	To
1. Pennsylvania	_____	Indiana
2. Tennessee	_____	Nebraska
3. Illinois	_____	Oklahoma
4. Arkansas	_____	Virginia
5. Oregon	_____	Arizona
6. Montana	_____	Iowa
7. California	_____	Colorado
8. Ohio	_____	New Jersey

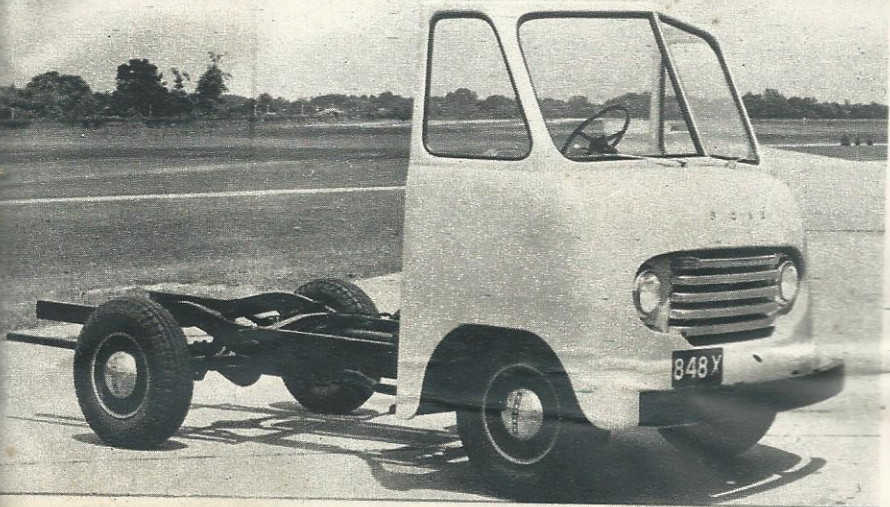
Answers to BEELINE

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Ohio | 5. Nevada |
| 2. Missouri | 6. South Dakota |
| 3. Missouri | 7. Arizona |
| 4. Tennessee | 8. Pennsylvania |



Artist on Wheels

THE GAILY-DECORATED old '32 Model A panel truck above is affectionately known as "Prunella" by her owner, Wallace Roland Stark, Hollywood muralist and naturalist. The truck serves Stark as a traveling billboard, bringing in commissions from block to block as he drives down the street. His brightly colored caricatures decorate night clubs, rumpus rooms, and children's nurseries from Washington State to Arizona. Once a casting director, in an urgent search for a caricaturist, spotted Prunella parked at a curb and took Stark's phone number from her side. The result was that the director signed him up to draw caricatures for a movie in which Claude Rains, cast as an artist, was supposed to draw. Stark sat behind the scenes drawing as Rains displayed them before a camera as his creations. So far Stark and Prunella have made five trips across the country.—F. LEWIS FRIEDMAN ■



TWO NEW PARCEL DELIVERIES

TWO NEW F-3s of the forward control, parcel delivery type have been announced, further increasing the growing line of Ford trucks.

The chassis, of 104 and 122-inch wheelbase lengths, are supplied as illustrated above, powered with the Rouge 226 six-cylinder engine of 95 hp. Both have a GVW rating of 7,800 pounds.

They will take bodies of from 250 to 400 cubic foot capacity, more than doubling the size of the average light duty panel truck. The new trucks are built to serve needs of retail stores, bakeries, dairies, laundries, cleaners, and many other house-to-house and store-to-store businesses. The wide-track front axle

permits high maneuverability, allowing a turning radius of $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet in the 104-inch model, and 21 feet in the 122-inch unit. Both have a heavy duty three-speed transmission and steering column gear shift as standard equipment. They have a full-floating rear axle of 5,000 pounds capacity, a four-pinion type differential, and a rear gear ratio of 4.86 to 1.

Body builders in most parts of the country will provide various types of bodies for the new units.



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