

BATTERY POST



POSITIVELY GROUNDED IN THE OLD CAR HOBBY

May 2020

A Note from the President



I hope this Battery Post finds you well and happy. Its been a trying time for everyone the past several weeks as we all deal with the COVID situation. The stories are different with each person, but the commonality is each has an undertone of hope

and a bright outlook. There is the notion that things may be different ahead but that new normal might actually be good. It's that positivity and drive for a better tomorrow that has made this nation great.

As the Board and I look forward, our number one concern is the safety and health of our members. You'll see in this Battery Post our events are cancelled to June 28. At this point the June 28 ice cream social is still planned, but we will keep you posted. In the meantime, jump in those antiques and take them for a drive. Tonya and I took an evening drive through Runnells and to the town of Swan. It was relaxing to get out into the countryside and enjoy the sunset.

For this month's story, I'm going to write about Ralph Teetor. He was a sight limited person that invented a speed control unit that would become cruise control. Born in 1890 in Hagerstown, Indiana, Ralph lost his sight at about five years old as a result of playing with a knife. His family owned manufacturing businesses that evolved from building bicycles to building automobile engines, so he had a good sense for engineering. With his disability, getting into college was difficult. But his cousin who was a graduate student at the Univ. of Pennsylvania convinced the dean of engineering to admit Ralph to the mechanical engineering program. After graduation, Ralph had many accomplishments. For example, he devised a process for dynamically

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2020 Event Calendar

Sunday, June 28: Ice cream social at the Olmsted-Urban House (Urbandale) with the Cadillac/LaSalle Club from 1:30-4 pm.

Saturday, July 4th: Our annual picnic will be held at Brent & Julie's or Scott & Tonya's place (both located in Altoona). There will be a country drive (asphalt, low speed roads; loop includes Ivy, south Mitchellville, and Altoona). We will again have a food truck. More details to come!

Sunday, September 13th: The Des Moines Concours d'Elegance in downtown Des Moines at the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden. Applications for the invitation only event are now available online at:

<https://desmoinesconcours.com/exhibiting>

The following dates are tentative and subject to change. Watch for details!

Sunday, July 25th: Tentative date for our get together with the AACA Tall Corn Club in Luther.

Saturday, August 1st: Tentative date for the Calvin Community Car Show.

Saturday, August 8th: Des Moines Art Center lunch and tour. More details to come.

Sunday, August 23rd: Tentative date for our Annual BBQ at Saylorville.

Mission Statement

The Des Moines Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America is an organization whose members have an interest in antique vehicles 25 years or older that are devoted to the preservation and restoration of original condition of all makes of their antique vehicles.

President's Message

continued from the previous page

balancing steam turbines on U.S. Navy warships. He also would become lead engineer and later president of the family's business that produced piston rings under the Perfect Circle brand. The Perfect Circle brand can be found on the internet today.



Ralph Teetor (right), cruise control in hand, with William Prossner, president of Perfect Circle, in 1957. (Automotive Hall of Fame)

The first "Speedostat" comprised a dashboard speed selector (speed set by the driver) connected to an engine compartment mechanism that ran off the drive shaft. As the car neared

the set speed, a governor mechanism activated a vacuum-driven piston capable of pushing back against the gas pedal (see diagram).

A patent for the speed control device was issued on August 22, 1950. Chrysler was the first to offer the Speedostat as a luxury model option in 1958. The following year, Chrysler offered it on all car models. Cadillac

would adopt the device, calling it "Cruise Control." Over the next several years, cruise control would continue as a convenience option until the oil embargo in 1973 when it would emerge as a gas-saving tool. Cruise control would grow in popularity to the point of being a standard option on today's cars. I had a 1974 Oldsmobile 98 with a vacuum controlled system. Vacuum leaks and changes in engine vacuum never

made the cruise control all that useful on the Olds. But with the introduction of electronic controls, cruise control is much better although there is still a problem of flooring the accelerator pedal on steeper hills.

What I like about this story is the perseverance through difficulty. Ralph's life changed with the loss of his sight, yet he was able to thrive in a new environment and achieve what he may not have if there was not the change. As we look ahead, we may not be doing what we did yesterday, but instead something better.

Stay strong and healthy,

Scott

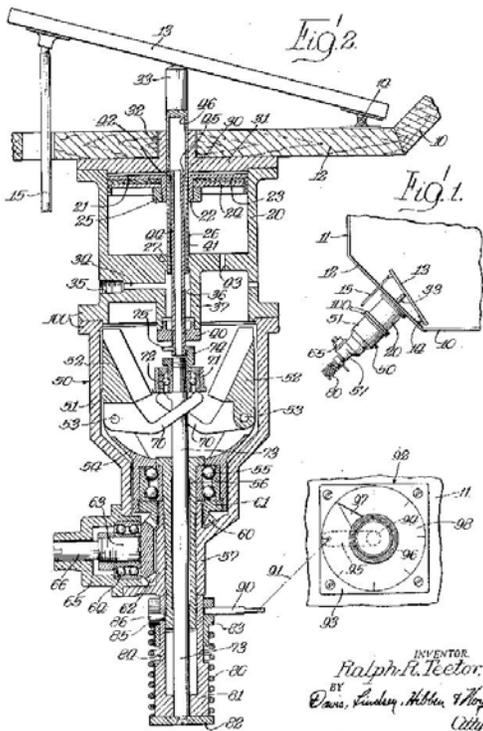
Story source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/sightless-visionary-who-invented-cruise-control-180968418/>

Aug. 22, 1950
Filed Aug. 11, 1948

R. R. TEETOR
SPEED CONTROL DEVICE FOR RESISTING
OPERATION OF THE ACCELERATOR

2,519,859

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



May Birthdays

- 5/3 - Koyla Baker
- 5/13 - Betty Bibler
- 5/18 - Tonya Diehn
- 5/19 - Wayne Brill
- 5/28 - Rick Hickman
- 5/30 - Bonnie Libby

May Anniversaries

- 5/19 - Bill & Judy Mally
- 5/24 - Jim & Karen Pittman
- 5/30 - Harvey & Koyla Baker

June Birthdays

- 6/14 - Harvey Baker
- 6/26 - Scott Diehn

June Anniversaries

- 6/1 - Scott & Tonya Diehn
- 6/16 - Don & Irene Newby

If you don't see your birthday or anniversary in the Battery Post, be sure to email Julie and let her know.

Member News

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news of the passing of club member Jack Wilhelm. He was a long time member and a good friend to everyone. He will be missed. Please keep JoLene and their family in your thoughts and prayers.

We also heard the news of former board member Gary Walker's passing on April 16th. He lived with his wife Ginny in Oskaloosa.

2020-2021 Board

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\$ Financials

As of 3/28/2020 - \$2,328.56

Are you on Facebook?
Be sure to "like" our page at **DesMoinesACA**

Website: aca-dsm.org
Email: aacadmregion@gmail.com

Our new website is LIVE!
Visit aca-dsm.org

Part I: The story of a Des Moines inventor who developed a turbine engine

Barney Christiansen, Des Moines inventor, father to Gerald (Chris) Christiansen and grandfather to Julie West-Ilsenberger, was a person who enjoyed tinkering. He had many projects over the years, pushing the envelope so much that his neighbors called him the "Crazy Norwegian". In May of 1928 the Des Moines Tribune-Capital, a newspaper that

printed from 1928-1931, published an article about Barney and one of his inventions. The article appears to describe a turbine engine. Means of traveling from one place to another fast inspired many people. The turbine engine (jet engines being a type of turbine engine) offered the potential to do just that. The entire article is transcribed on the next page.

DES MOINES, IOWA, FRIDAY, MAY 4, 1928.—THIRTY-TWO PAGES. PRICE IN DES MOINES TWO CENTS

NEW MOTOR EXPECTED TO SPEED UP AIRPLANES TREMENDOUSLY

BARNEY CHRISTIANSEN

PUBLIC INVITED TO POST REVIEW

Fort Des Moines Troops Plan for Two Special Days.

Fort Des Moines army post will take on the aspects of real military life Saturday morning at 9 o'clock when the entire body of troops will pitch camp after a garrison review before Col Julian Lindsey, post commandant. The public is invited to watch the boys "go into camp." Tents will be pitched on the post ground. Camp officials today announced the inauguration of "Old Home Folks" day to be held at the

At right, photo of turbine type of motor which Christiansen says would be used on airplanes.

SENATOR WALSH IS OUT OF RAGE

Speed of 500 Miles an Hour May Be Attained, Claims Barney Christiansen, Inventor

Register and Tribune Plane Hops for Home

Passes Tests, Gets Special Propeller and Leaves Curtis Field

of the Allegheny mountains, is regarded as the most arduous. The Register and Tribune's plane was given its final okay at the plant of the Fairchild com-

ROSS

Des Moines, Iowa – Friday, May 4, 1928

Headline:

New Motor Expected To Speed Up Airplanes Tremendously

Subhead:

Speed of 500 Miles an Hour May Be Attained, Claims Barney Christiansen, Inventor

Airplanes may hurtle through the air at 500 miles an hour in the next few years if a revolutionary type of power plant invented by Barney Christiansen, local inventor, continues to pass rigid tests being imposed upon it by the inventor.

Mr. Christiansen claims to have discovered an entirely new principle of power and to have worked fourteen years finding a method of using the tremendous force latent in the new device. He now believes he has reached a point where the motor apparatus is practical and refinement of design will lead to production.

For airplane usage, the motor used will be of the turbine type developing more than 200 horsepower with a weight of only 100 pounds. It will derive propelling from gas pressure forced into the engine at pressure as high as 1,000 pounds to the square inch. Under this volume of pressure the turbine will develop 48,000 revolutions per minute compared with the after high speed automobile motor of 3,000 revolutions per minute.

The gas pressure is stored in small but strong tanks while a special generator, probably the most important discovery made by the inventor, will continually build up this pressure at a rate needed to supply the turbine.

Problem Is Solved

When asked whether it would be possible to furnish the driving force for long periods of time, the inventor explained that this problem had been solve, but that for years it presented difficulties to the perfection of the device.

The combined weight of the apparatus will not be too much for efficient use in aircraft, as the saving of weight in gasoline needed to drive the generator combined with the terrific increase in horsepower derived from the turbine type of motor, will hurtle plans through the air at speeds never thought possible in the past, Mr. Christiansen explained.

Not only will the turbine form a power plant give from three to four times the horsepower developed by modern aviation motors of equal weight, but it will also give approximately six times the mileage now procured per gallon of gasoline in modern engines.

Would Have Helped Bremen

If the new device had been used in the Bremen and functioned correctly, the German plan would have needed but one-sixth the fuel carried on the long trans-oceanic flight and the flying time would be practically cut in half, Mr. Christiansen said.

As the turbine system involves very few moving parts, the hazard of motor trouble is greatly eliminated, the inventor explained.

Speaking of the greatly increased cruising range of planes which will be possible with the invention, Mr. Christiansen said that modern planes such as that's now holding the world's endurance record could remain in the air for 200 hours without landing for fuel against the slightly more than fifty-three hour mark now in force.

Has Double Acting Engine

For automobile usage the inventor has devised a single double-acting engine which will derive its power from the gas pressure generator and tanks. The automobile, which Mr. Christiansen expects to build this summer, will be engine controlled by a lever in the steering wheel. No gears are necessary due to the fact that the double acting type of motor will be used and will be driven direct.

Preliminary tests, with automobile apparatus, promise as high as 100 miles per gallon for medium sized cars and due to the extreme simplicity of the double-acting motor as much as 5,000 miles to a gallon of lubricating oil, the inventor said.

Part 2: Gerald's personal story about his experiences with his father and the car will be in the next Battery Post.