

My Thoughts

And welcome to them

By **JOANNE SPAHR**
Associate Editor

My second cousin, Jenny, was always a cute kid, but she never could drive worth a darn. It was shameful--nine years old and the best she could do if you put her behind the wheel of a car was turn on the radio and roll down the windows--and she thought that was an accomplishment. I thought it was pitiful.

Being a farm child, I'd been burning a track of rubber out through the back lane and fields from the times I was strong enough (any my legs were long enough) to hold down the clutch on the "Fergie," as we called the Massey Ferguson.

I was particularly good at going from third to fourth gear--that's the one that took skill. You'd have to get the old blue-grey tractor revved up as fast as it could go in third gear then--crack--stand up and put all your weight on the clutch while you jerked the gear shift--back toward your body at the same time. And, off you'd go, hair streaming, face grinning, and body jiggling as you bounced up and down in the seat, hitting every single rock or gully imaginable in the gutted out back lane - as long as Dad didn't catch you, that is.

Then, of course when the time came, I graduated to driving the pick-up truck and learned the ins and outs of an automatic. But, my cousin, Jenny had never been fortunate enough to have these great experiences because she wasn't a farm kid. So, one day when she came to visit, I decided I would take it on myself to enlighten the young lady with my vast

store of knowledge.

I had the perfect vehicle for it--a 1956 Cadillac my dad was fixing up. It had been in an accident (along with several other members of my family), and the transmission was all messed up. Instead of going from first to second to third to fourth, as you might expect a car to do, it went from second to fourth in a might leap. It was 20 times better than going from third to fourth, and it was the closest I'd ever come to flying in my whole life.

So, the ever-so-intelligent 13-year-old that I was, I decided to start my cousin out in this flying machine, with near disasterous results.

(To be continued next week)

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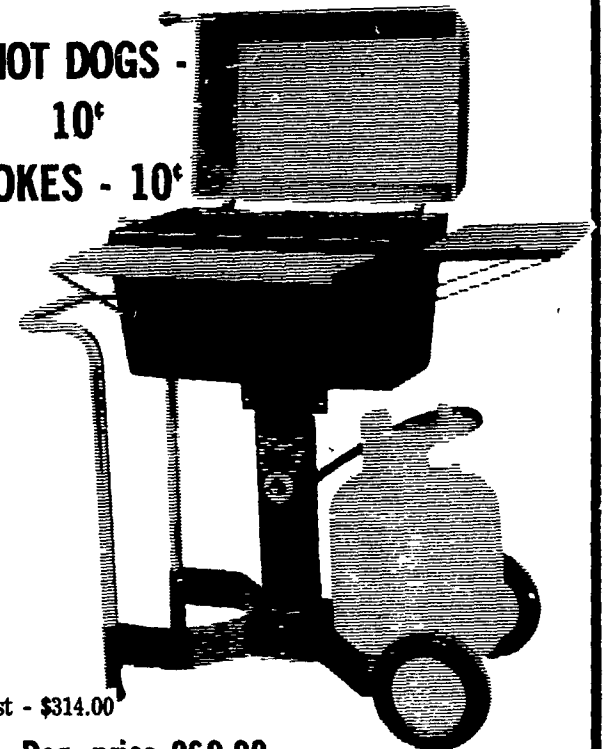
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