

HOW TO CHOP A TOP

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Rod ACTION



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LOWER

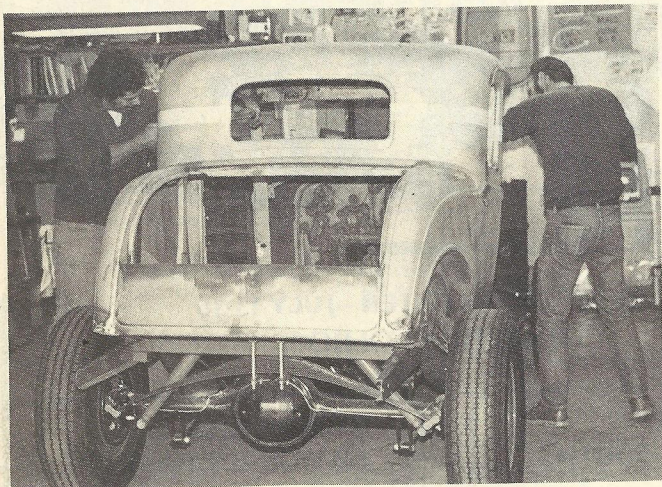
How to chop a '32 Ford 5-window coupe

When Dan Pimentel of Concord, California heard that the N.S.R.A. Western Street Rod Nationals would stage a Lowered Lid Nationals he decided right then and there to "Lower The Lid" on his pet project

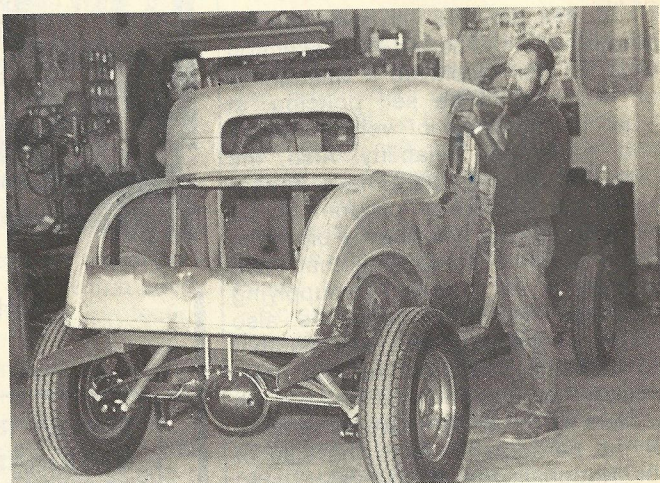
of the last year and a half, his 32 Ford 5 window coupe.

The chop job is a first for Dan but like most street rodders worth their salt he was determined that the job would be done by "HIS-SELF." Dan

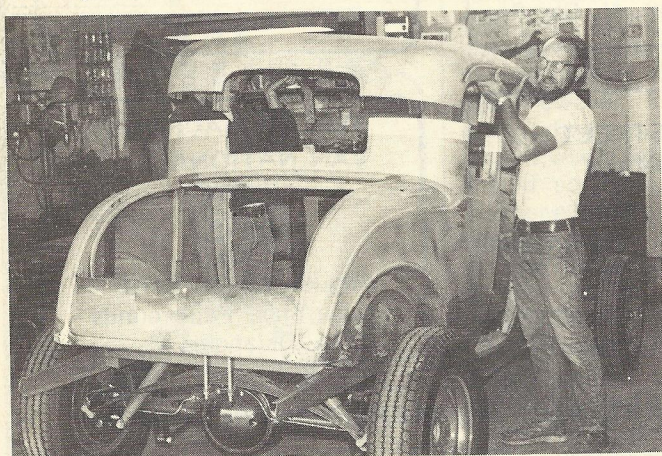
is no stranger to hot rodding, having owned and built gobs of 53-56 F100 pickups. He also spent some time running through the sand buggy stage, and way back when, motored around in rods such as a 34 coupe,



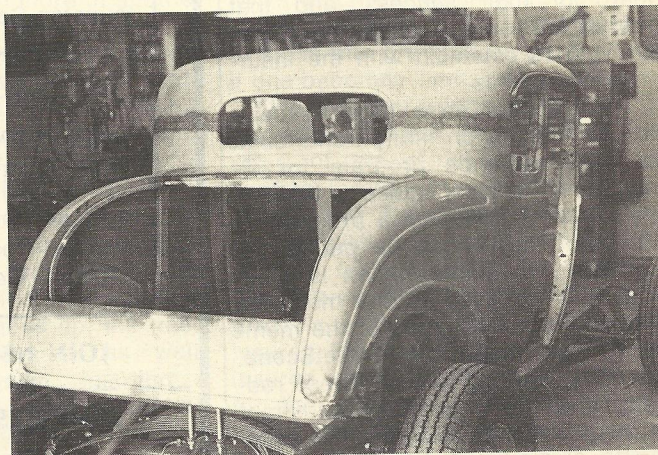
"Ain't nothing to this top chopping stuff." Famous last words from Big Dan. Like we said, you merely cut the top.



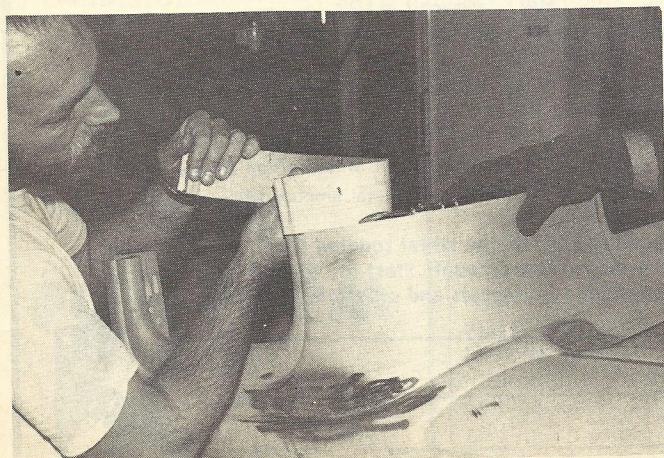
Put the top back on.



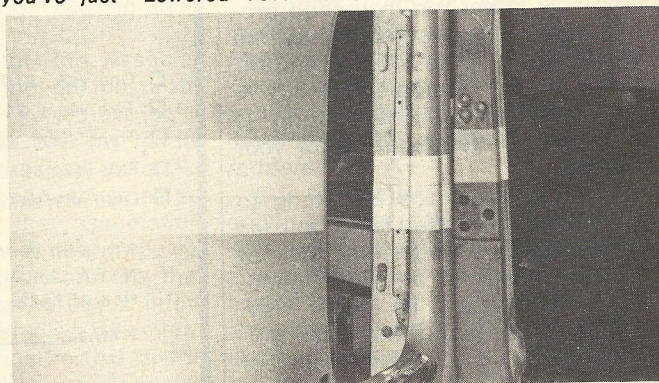
Take the top off.



Weld the top and bottom pieces back together and presto you've just "Lowered Your Lid."



Cut a section out.



Masking tape was used as guide for making the cut. Notice that front post cut was made between the door hinge plate and the windshield slide bracket brace. The pre-planning involved in lowering a lid is most crucial.

THE LID

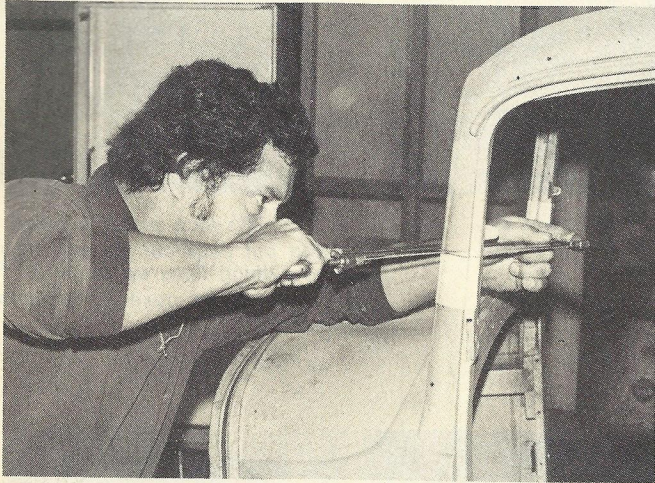
By Gary Goodguy & Deuce Bruce

a '40 Ford, and guess what—a '32 5 window coupe. The "32" Dan is now building is a ground up project with everything being built by the owner.

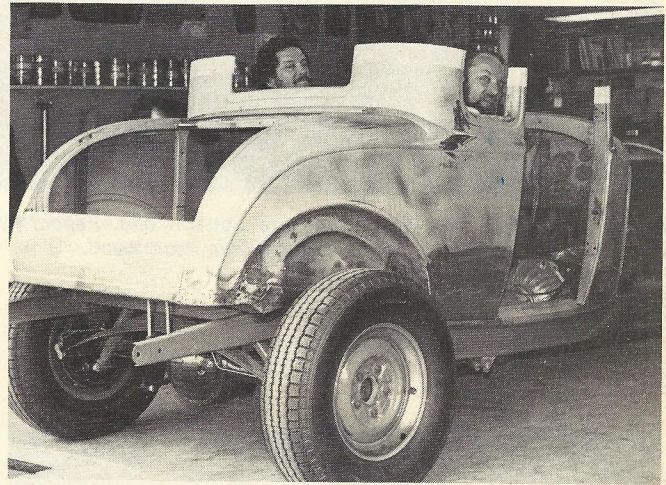
There are many different ways to

chop a top, probably about as many different ways as there are guys who've done 'em. The project must be thought out thoroughly in advance. Where to cut? What angle? What'll happen if this section is cut

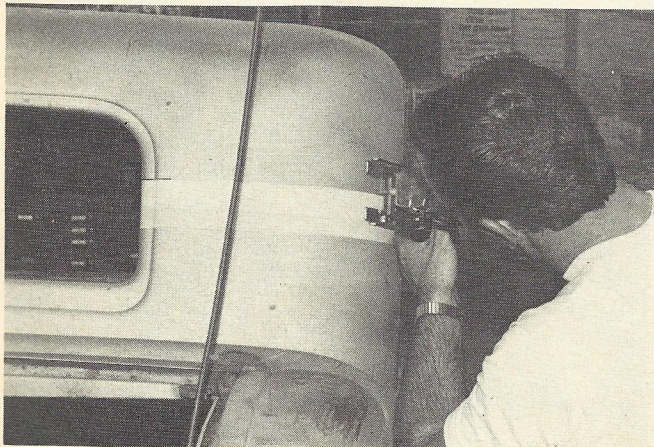
this way? Let's see now, if we cut this post here, it'll change the angle of that post. Right? Etc., etc. No matter how many ways you look at it and plan and think about it, it still takes lots of guts to cut a top off,



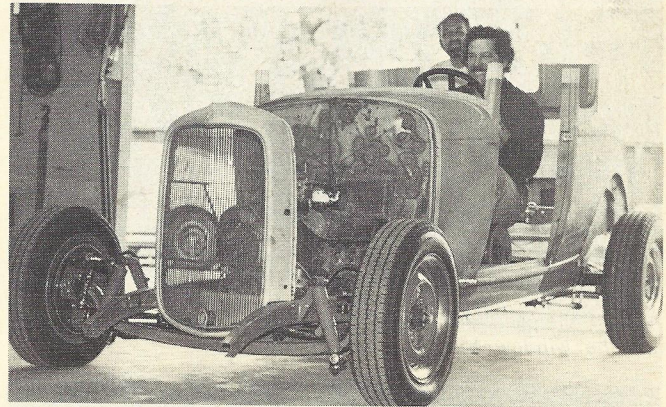
Good straight cuts with sharp hacksaw blades are necessary. Don't be surprised if you pop a few blades.



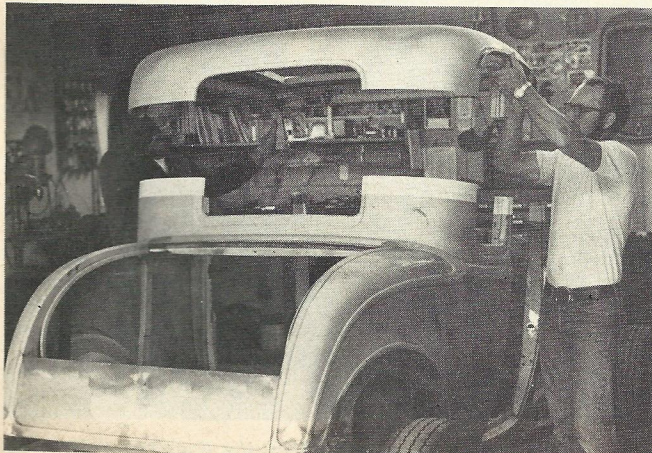
After the cut is made and top removed, it's break time. Time to think. Thoughts such as, "Maybe we oughta just cut some more off and make it a roadster" . . . "Heck with a 2½-inch chop, how 'bout making a 5½-inch cut" . . . "Oh, why'd I want to lower the lid . . . my arms ache already."



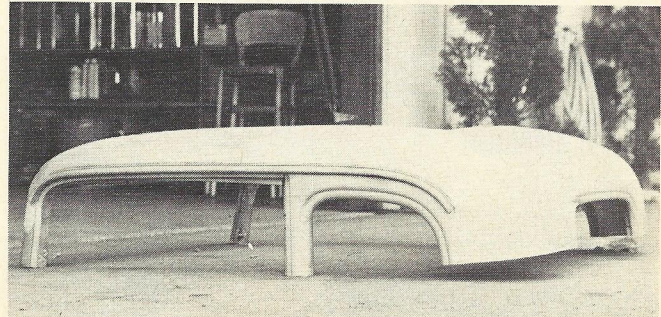
A jig saw works well on large areas such as this rear quarter panel.



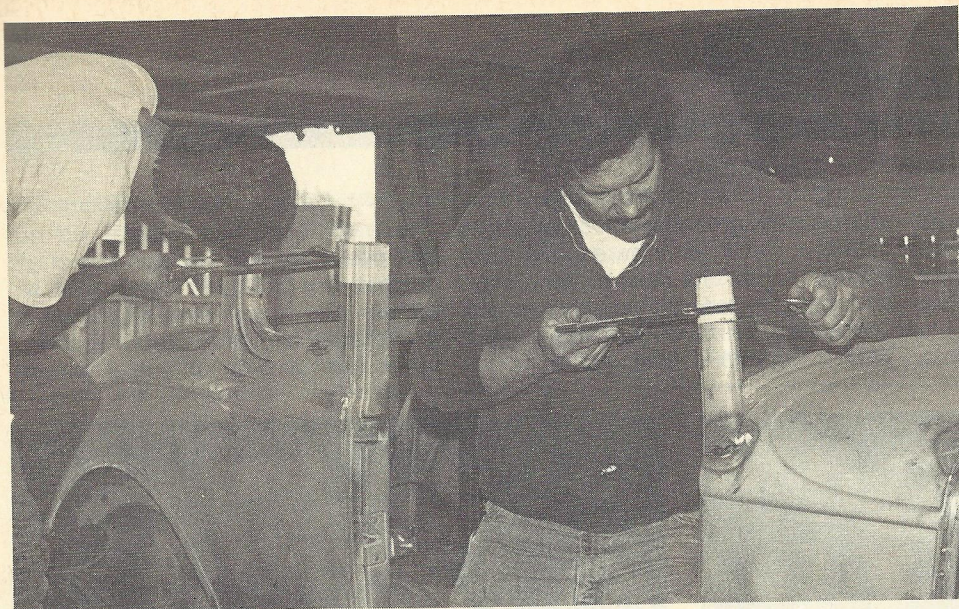
Rodunn . . . Rodunn . . . Boy I can hardly wait to "Motate To Merced" . . . Boy, the visibility is great back here in the rumble seat . . .



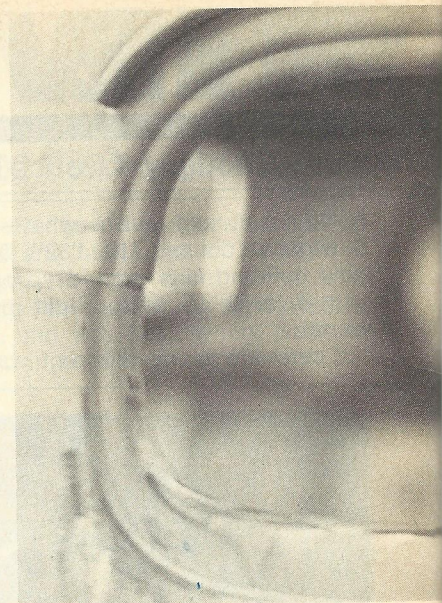
The easy part is done! Off comes the top.



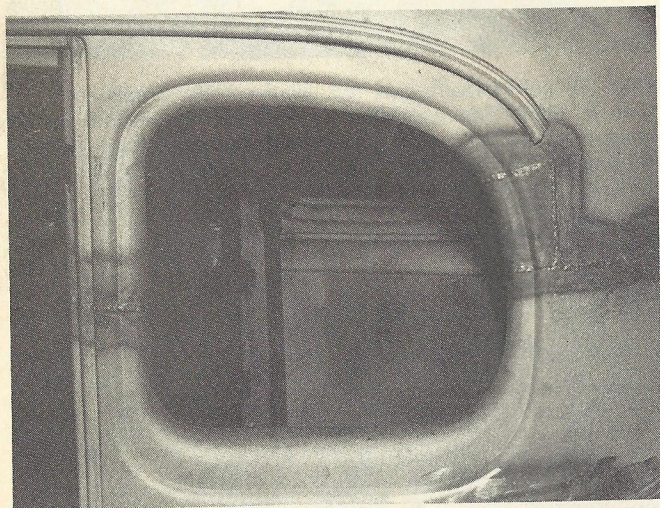
If a guy did want to make a roadster out of his '32 5-window coupe, he could always fill the top and make a really neat low rider style coffee table for the family room. Probably wouldn't live long after the first visit from a restorer though.



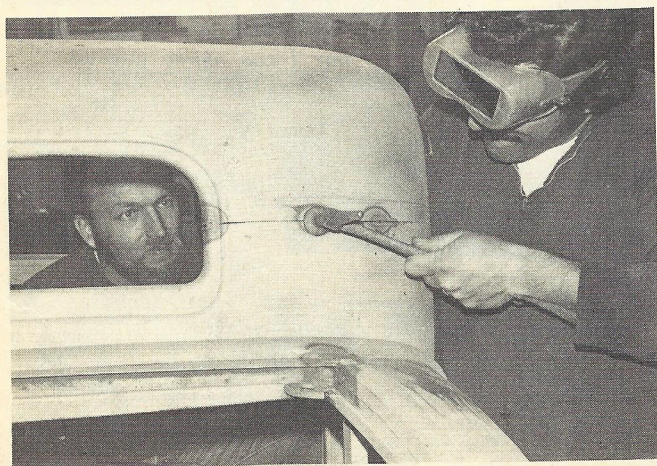
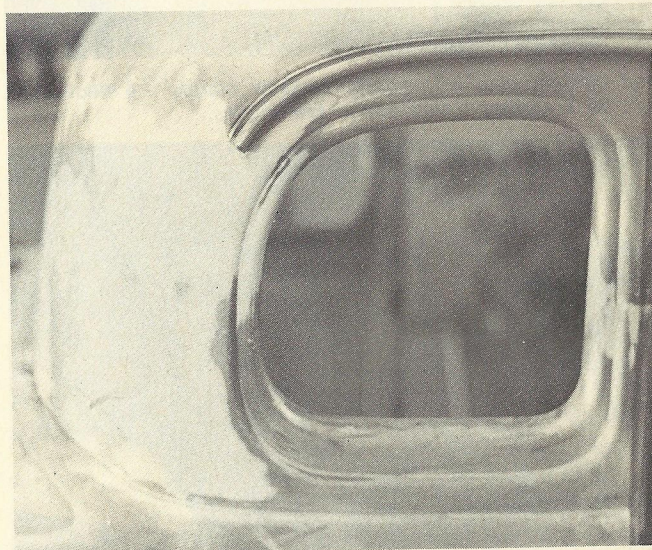
Here's living proof that two heads are better'n one. Especially when there's two strong arms attached to each head.



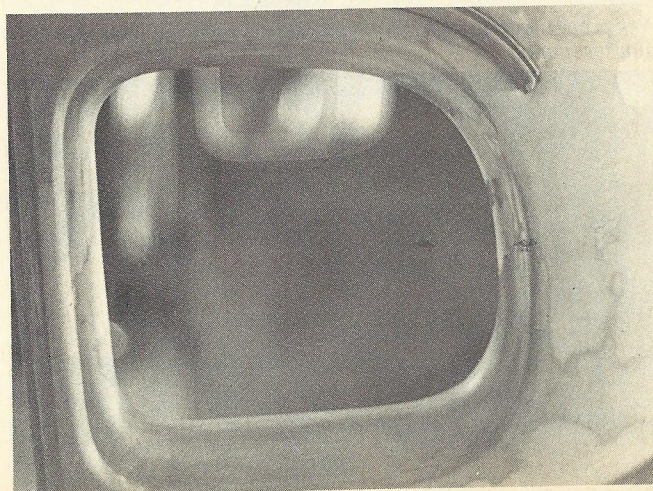
After the 2 1/2-inch piece is taken out and the top put back on, it's easy to see that not everything lines up properly. Rear quarter windows pose an alignment problem.



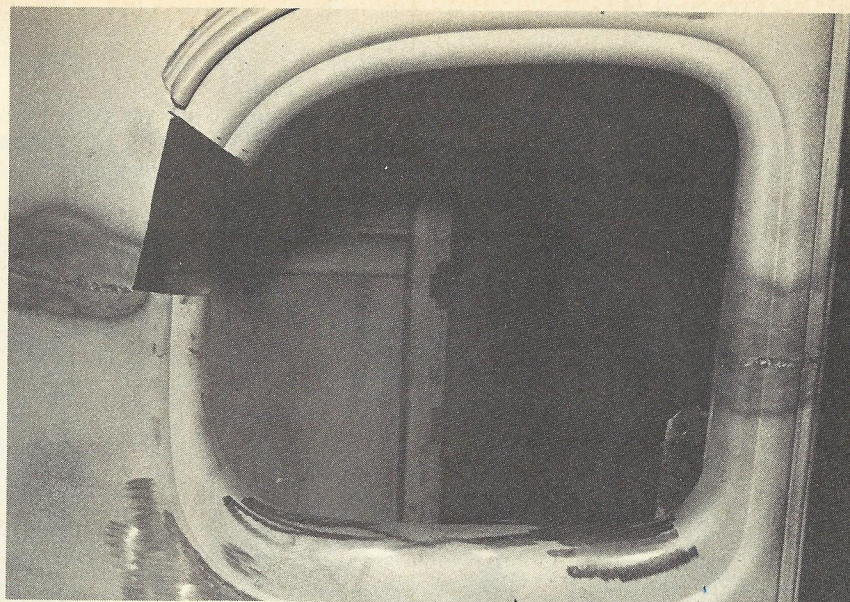
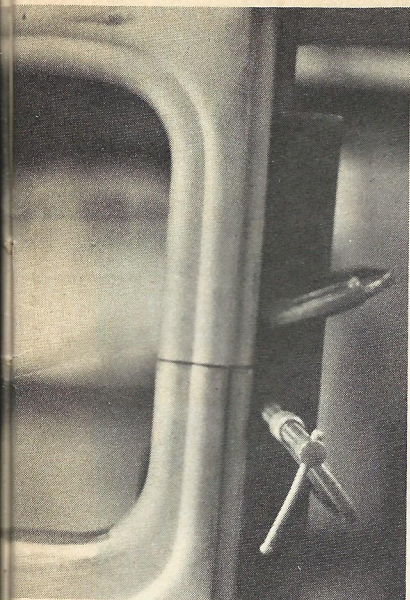
After trimming and shaping, the piece was welded back in and the window trim lines match up.



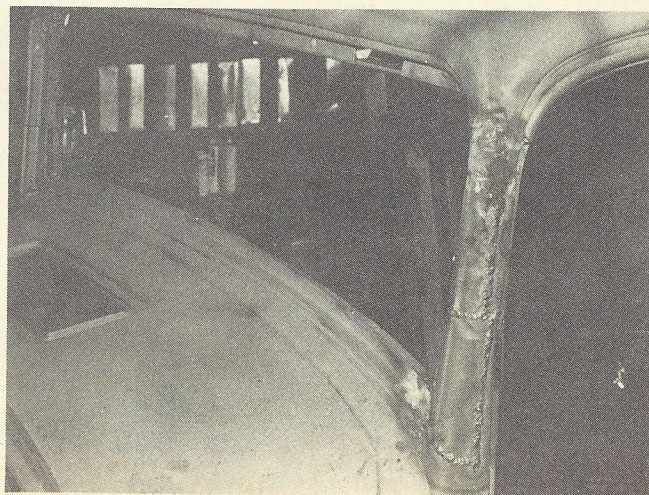
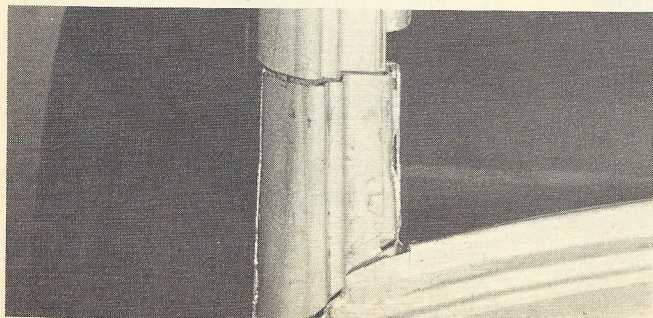
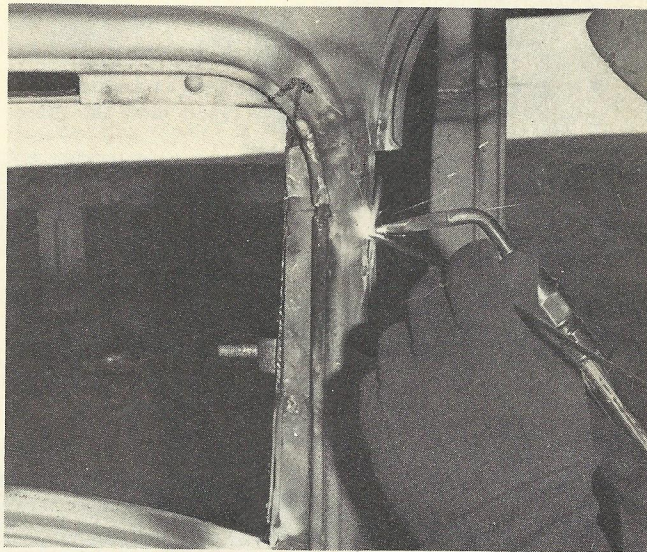
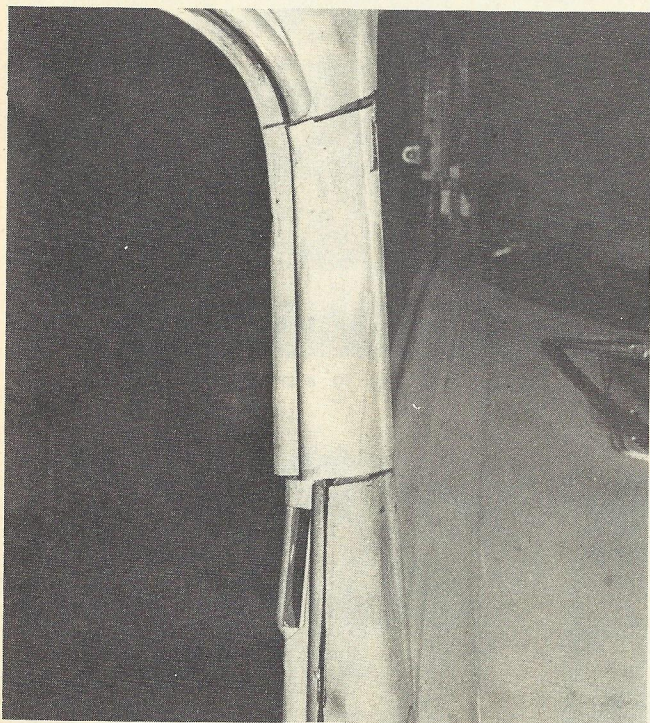
Hammer welding the top back together takes some skill and lots of patience. With low heat and some tender lovin' attention, warpage was almost non-existent.



After some grinding, filing, and filling, the lines are right on and the top looks like it grew up with 2 1/2 inches missing.



To solve the misalignment problem, Dan cut out a wedge shaped piece from the rear of the quarter window panel.



Front windshield posts provide alignment ills. Cuts were made vertically as well as horizontally to match up the body lines.

After re-aligning and welding, the posts are ready for the grinding, shaping, and filling operation.

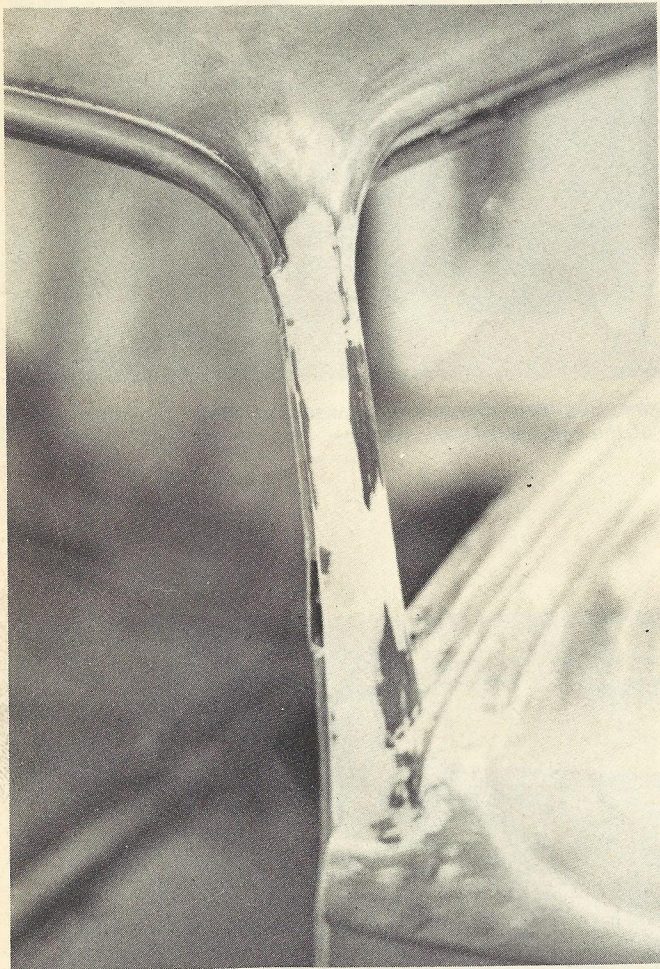
cut a section out, and weld the remains back together. Definitely not a task for the fainthearted.

Dan decided that a 2½" cut out of his 5 window would make the little "Deuce Coupe" look just right, as will the traditional buggy springs fore

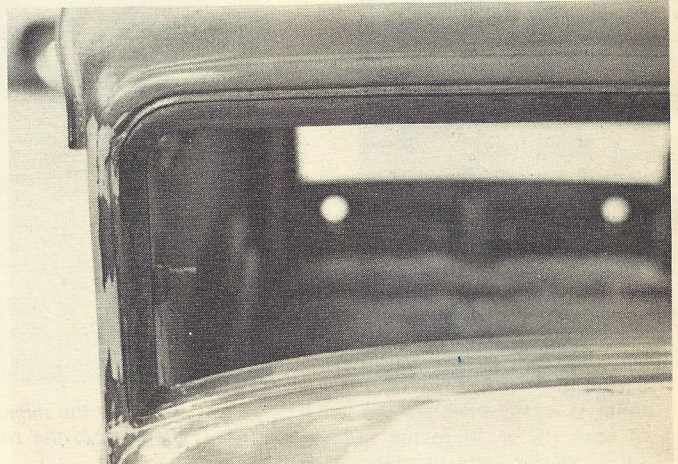
and aft. Solid steel wheels of contrasting color, and Ford hub caps and beauty rings will complete the old timey look.

Stocked up with masking tape, hacksaw and sabre saw blades, welding rod, and tanks filled with

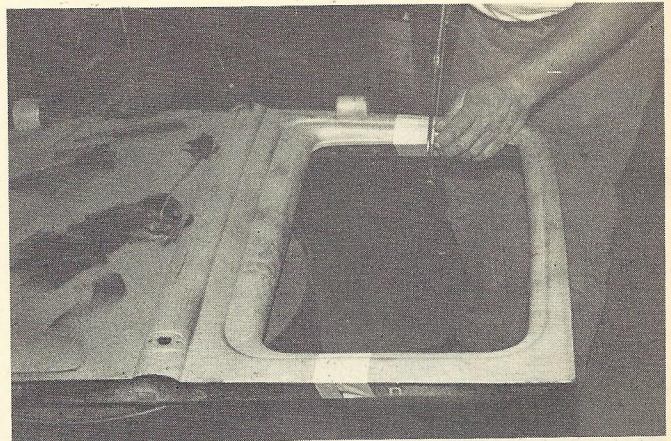
acetylene and oxygen, Dan and his side kick Roger Steele (the pair are sometimes known as P & P Engineering—Portagee and Polak) set to work. Let's follow along with the camera and take a look at one way to "Lower The Lid." ■



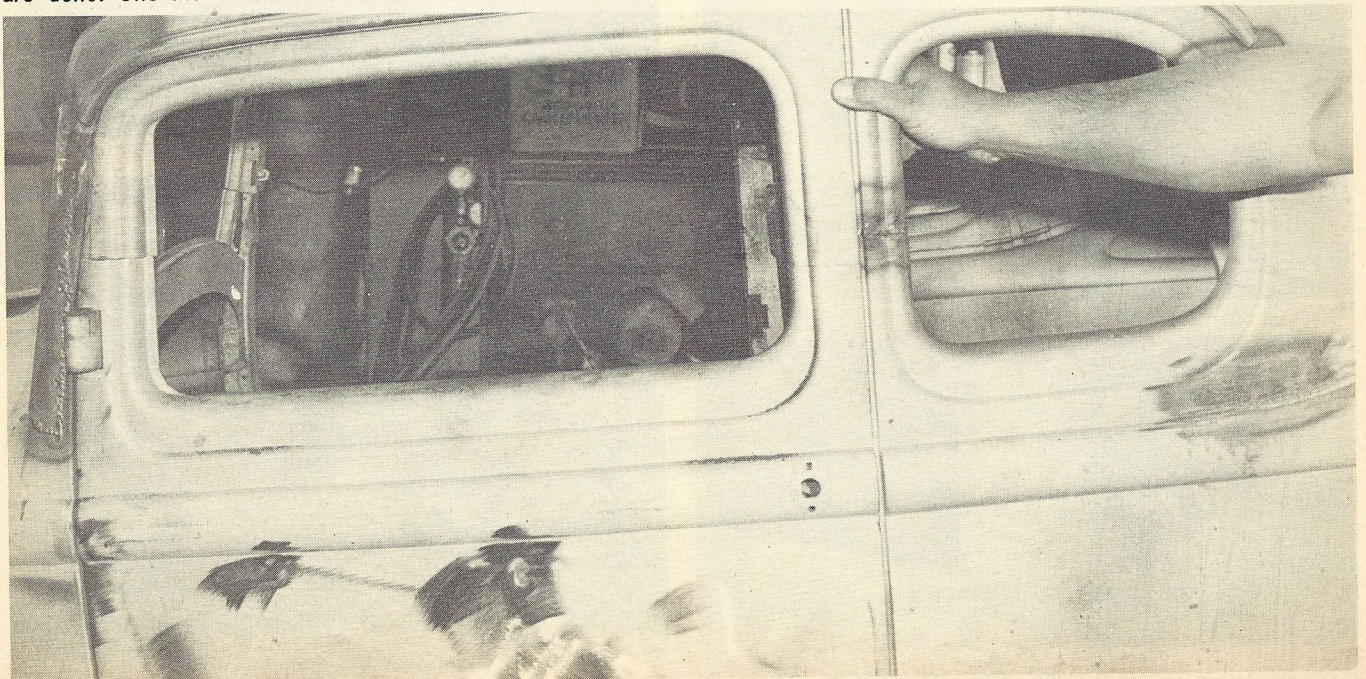
A little plastic filler here and there and the front door posts are done. One more obstacle bites the dust.



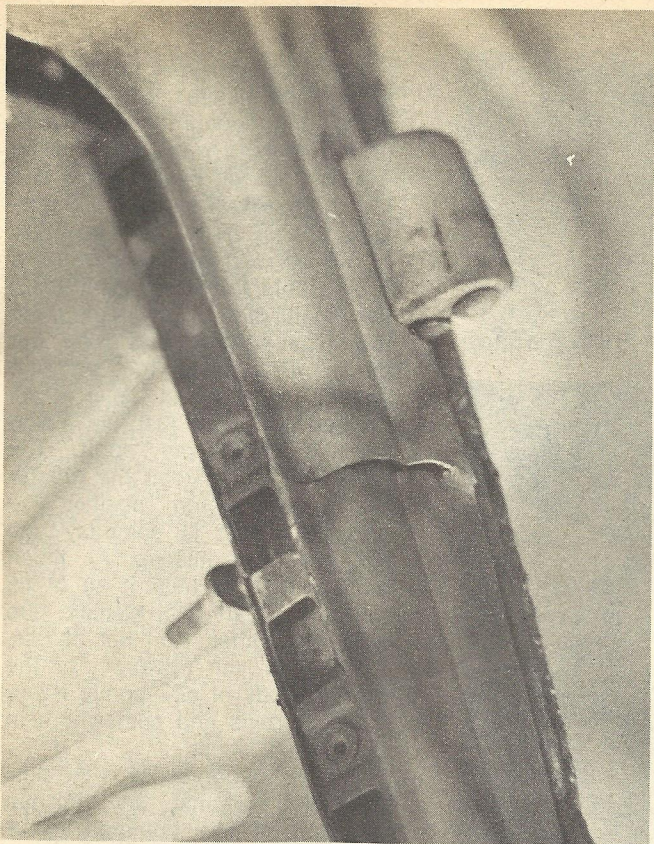
With windshield frame in place, it all looks and fits just right.



With top welded, it's time to start cutting the doors.



Same problem arises with doors—alignment. The front edges don't match up.



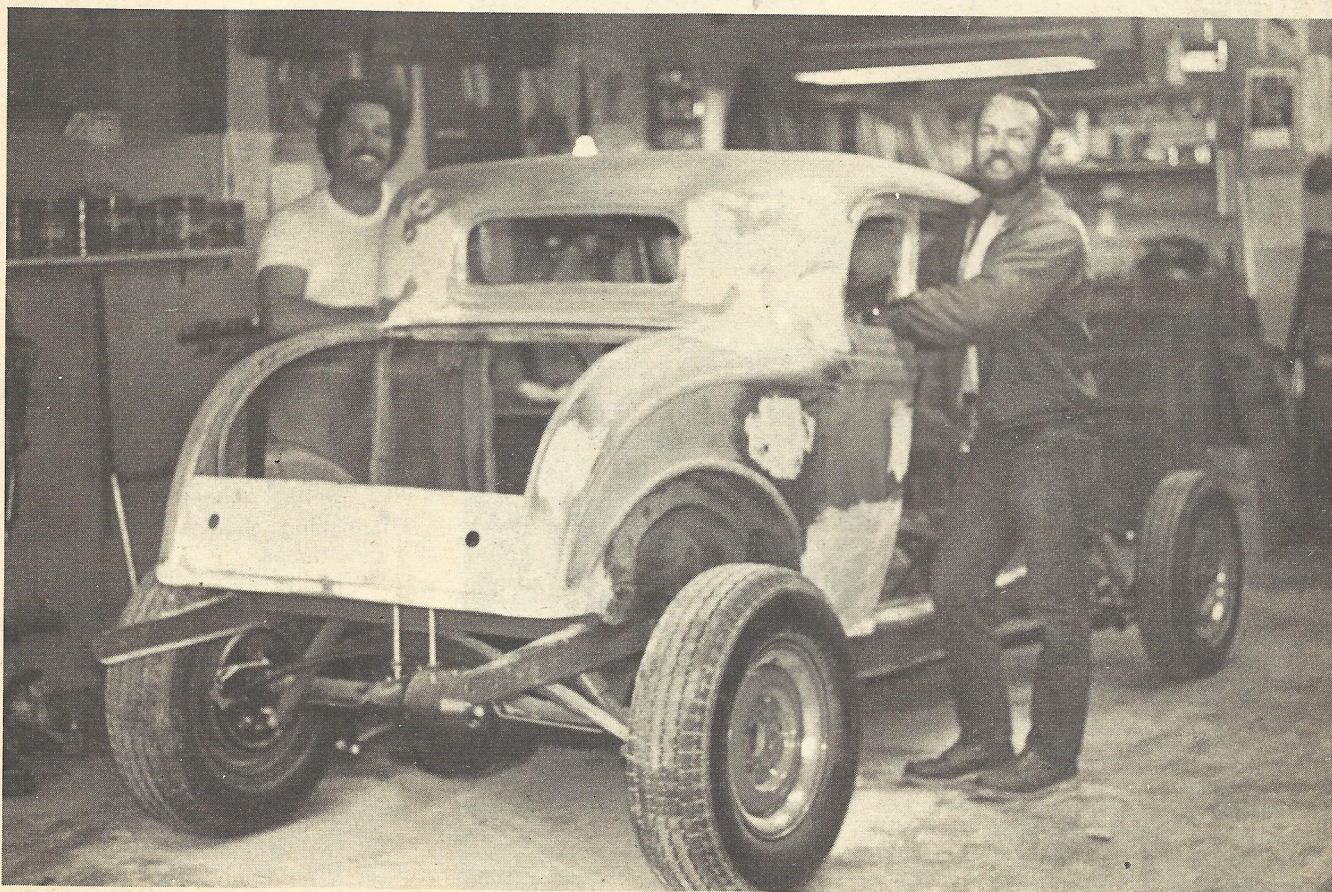
Another situation that comes about is the difference in door post thickness. Here again, plastic filler is a godsend and takes care of the problem nicely.



A cut is made along upper front corner and the door posts are aligned before welding.



Everything is aligned and welded. Doors and top are now ready for final body work.



Not quite ready for the street yet but it'll definitely be sneaking around the streets of California this summer. Two weekends of dedicated work, a couple cases of Coors,

some Band-Aids, and an overwhelming desire to "Lower The Lid" were required to transform the look of Dan's '32 from Resto Rod to genuine 50's Hot Rod.