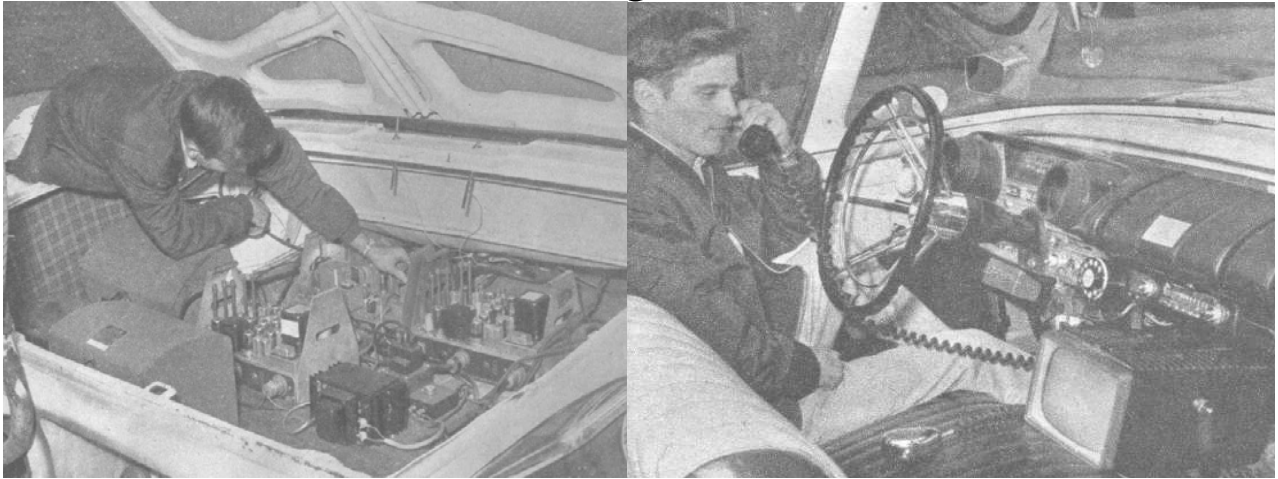


# Converting a Convertible



## This Hoosier may have set some Kind of a record for the number and kind of gadgets he installed in his car

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There are plenty of reasons for reproducing this article as I see it. After reading the article, see if you don't agree. Don, K9SOA (in the above pictures) now residing in Brooks, KY, was 20 years ahead of his time in electronics and gadgets. This article was originally written by William A. Allex of the Indianapolis Star Magazine on February 26, 1961.

Like "customized" cars? If you belong to the young crowd, you probably do. Girls may not understand a single thing about the mechanical gadgets, but they can always get the boyfriend to explain them. Good conversation opener. Fellows like to tinker with their cars and put on those gadgets which add class to a car, even a jalopy. On the other hand, if you adhere to an older group, more than likely you harbor a secret yen to add a gadget here and a thing-a-ma-bob to your auto if you just dared. Wouldn't it be fun?

Whichever group you belong to, read the story of 24 year-old Don Marquardt of Chesterton. Here's a fellow with a super-extra-special deluxe 1957 convertible. When he bought it in November, 1957, the salesman described it as a convertible cruiser. Don has added the extra special deluxe items. His trunk (left picture) is a roomy one; he still has a problem about what to do with baggage. There wasn't much room left when electronic equipment was installed

Here are a couple of the other extras that Don put on his new Mercury:

1. The top closes automatically if it starts to rain.
2. The parking lights turn on at dusk. The headlights come on at dark.
3. He can communicate with friends via a two-way, two-channel ham radio.
4. He monitors police calls over three receivers.
5. There's a public address loudspeaker behind the radiator grille.
6. A fluorescent light makes the interior of the car as light as an operating room.
7. A small television set.

Marquardt also has more plans for the car that will put it in the super duper extra special deluxe class. Marquardt now is working on the installation of a telephone. The voices will be beamed between the car and his home by ham radio. His radio at home will be connected to the phone on the Chesterton exchange. He also is ironing out the details of dialing from his car. After that, he plans to turn to a project that will enable him to start his car by remote control. Don works in the Gary steel mills and would like a warm car to get into when he gets off work. "It takes me about 20 minutes to walk from my job to the parking lot," he says. "I'm plenty cold in the winter by the time I get to the parking area. Then I have to wait for the car to warm up before I can thaw out."

He plans to carry a transistor transmitter about the size of a cigarette package on the job with him. As soon as he gets off work, a push of a button will activate controls on the car to start it in much the same manner electronically operated garage doors open.

"I've pretty much got it figured out in my head how it can be done," he says. He also plans eventually to add a record player. That, like the fluorescent light and the TV, will run off the 110 volt alternating current system in the car. Don says he started putting the extras on the car because he "just never was satisfied with the car." "I have fun doing stuff like that to the car," he explains. "I always want something the car dealers don't have so I have to make it myself." He says he usually has more ideas than money. Marquardt estimates that he has spent about \$1,200 for his gadgets. There are practical uses for the deluxe equipment. Marquardt uses the loudspeaker many times during the summer when he works part time at the Indiana Dunes State Park. He uses the police radio monitors as an auxiliary sheriff's deputy.

I've talked to Don and he says, to this day, that he still has ideas that the automobile manufacture's either haven't come up with yet or has not put into production. After reading this story, the whole timeline comes down not to the fact that the original article was written in 1961 but the automobile was a 1957. If this cost him \$1200 then, what would the cost be today?

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