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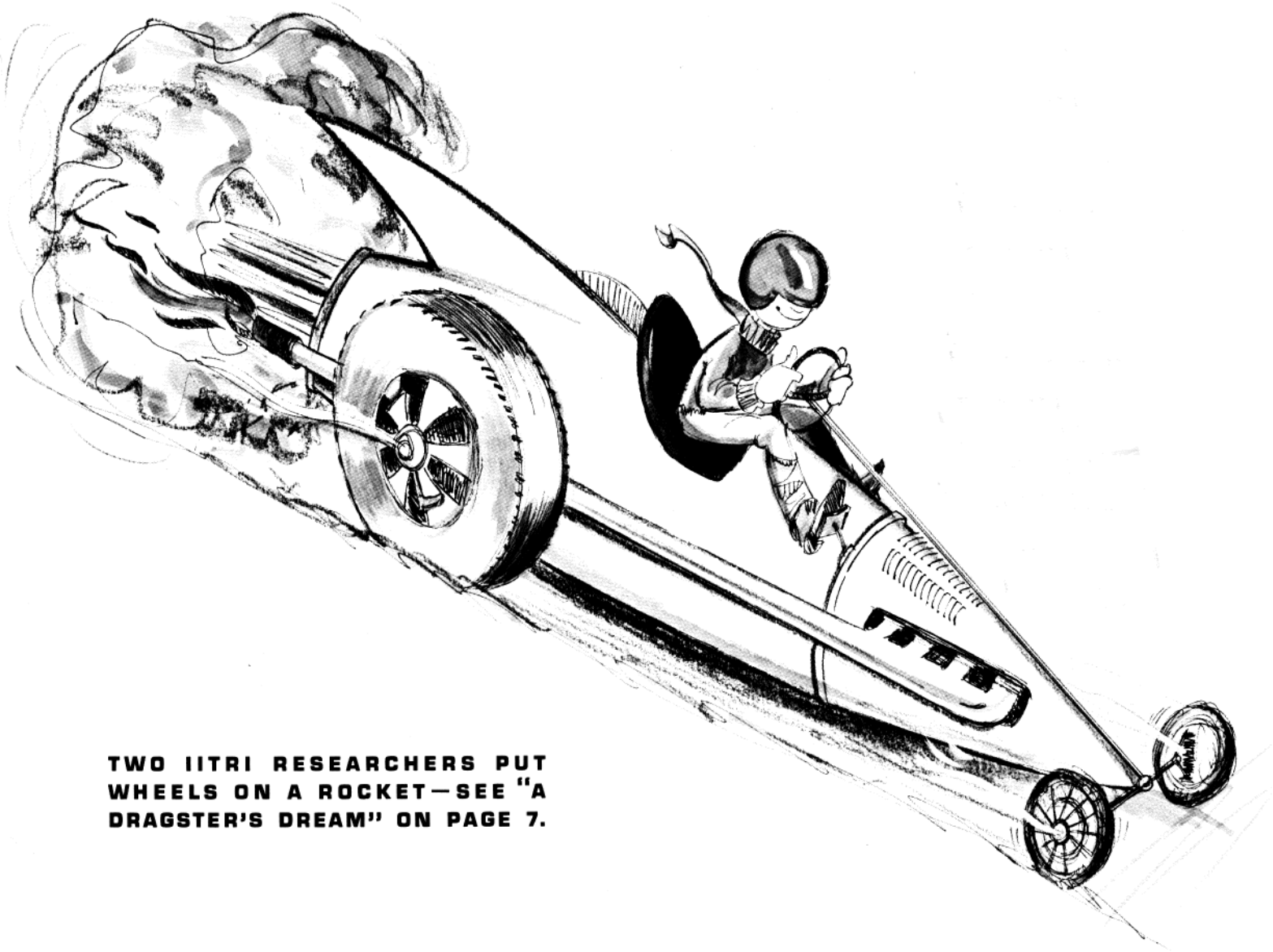

TWO IITRI RESEARCHERS PUT WHEELS ON A ROCKET—SEE "A DRAGSTER'S DREAM" ON PAGE 7.

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

A DRAGSTER'S DREAM

Blast Off

Richard Keller and Ray Dausman of Chemistry like to spend their leisure time driving—but not at a leisurely pace. Their aim is to swoosh along at 800 mph, thereby eclipsing the present land speed record of 536 mph.

Although rocket sleds that run in fixed tracks have broken the sound barrier, free-wheeled vehicles have yet to pass this natural demarcation. Keller and Dausman plan to rectify the situation with a rocket-powered car, which would use hydrogen peroxide for fuel. The use of rocket power is a departure from the usual jet turbine approach, and, according to Dick, has a number of advantages, particularly compactness and reliability.

Ray and Dick intend to produce their car according to a two-phase plan. The first phase, scheduled for completion in April, will see the construction of an experimental model with conventional tubular body for use on ordinary drag strips. This model should reach a terminal speed of 300 mph for one-quarter mile. Besides permitting vehicle behavior study and driver familiarization, the experimental model is expected to snare a good deal of prize money in drag race competition.

The second stage will produce the fully streamlined, prototype model with enclosed cockpit that will get the acid test on the salt at Bonneville, Utah.

Since the project is wholly a private undertaking, the two chemists are not refusing any help—financial or technical. The cost of the experimental model, for example, is estimated at about $5,000, and there are still aerodynamic problems to explore. For the impecunious and inept, one area remains open: the rocket car is as yet nameless. Suggestions are welcomed.

By the way, Ray and Dick assure us that no testing will be done on the Dan Ryan.

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