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"Dem spooks" pilot car for you backing uphill

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



"DEM SPOOKS" PILOT CAR FOR YOU BACKING UPHILL

By: HAMPTON DUNN

LAKE WALES --- Throughout Florida, it's against the law to back a car more than 30 feet on a public street.

But in this lovely Polk County Community the townspeople and officials encourage visiting motorists to back up on Fifth Avenue, as much as 75 to 100 feet. Other cars on the street "stack up" behind you and their occupants gleefully watch as your car goes backward up a steep hill -- without your motor running.

If this sounds bewitching, it's because your're visiting Spook Hill. The way it works is this: Drive your car to the bottom of the hill, turn off your engine, release the brakes and clutch, and watch the Mystery of Spook Hill work for you. The car backs as much as 100 feet up the hill.

Your explanation of this phenomenon is as good as anyone's. The spiel which goes with this amusing experience is that an old Negro once parked his car at this spot so he could go fishing in nearby North Lake Wales. He looked back as he started for the lake and the smile froze on his face. His old jalopy was slowly moving -back up the hill with the motor not running. "Dem Spooks!" cried the old man and fainted. This is how Spook Hill supposedly got its name.

It's free. Come find out for yourself.

