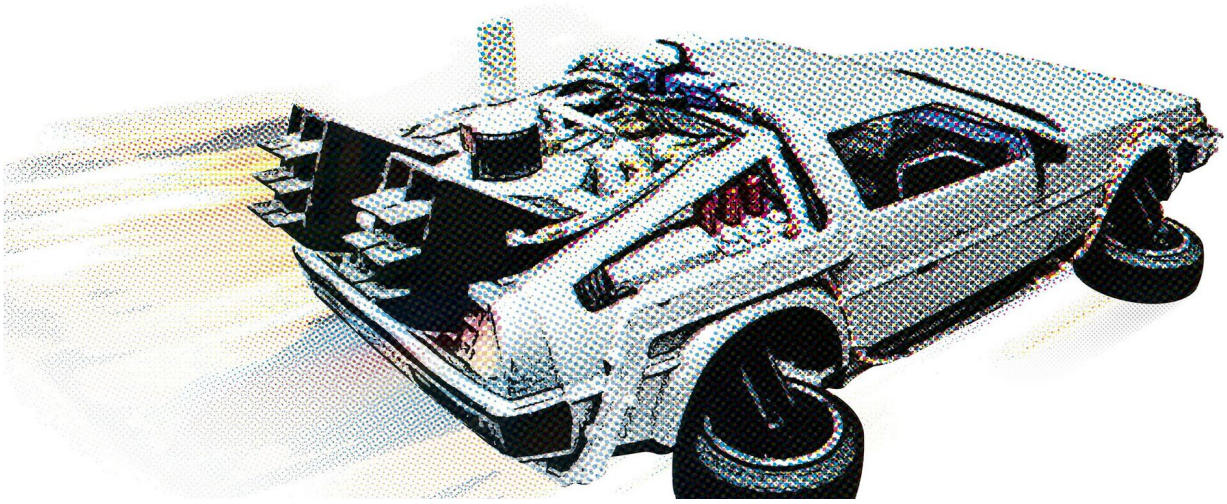

ATHANASSIOS KALIUDIS

Pop-Column: What Happened to the Flying DeLorean?

Doc Brown's biggest letdown

Approach for landing in Hill Valley, California! Faced with a traffic jam on the skyway, the flying DeLorean takes the exit and makes a smooth landing on Courthouse Square next to Cafe 80's. With its gull-wing doors and Maserati-style tail, the DeLorean clearly comes from a different era. Inside the car are Doc Brown and Marty McFly – and the date is October 21, 2015.

The science fiction blockbuster "Back to the Future Part II" gave us a tantalizing glimpse into the future when it was made in 1989. The time travel movie presented the year 2015 as a bewildering mix of hoverboards, self-drying jackets, voice-controlled household appliances, and, even more remarkably, flying cars. Well, it's 2015 – but where's the flying DeLorean?

I have to admit I'm very disappointed. Why is it that cars still can't fly? Why do they still stubbornly stick to the road? I mean, look at everything we've done to make them feather light! Car makers use carbon fiber, fiberglass, innovative plastics and aluminum alloys. They strive to eliminate flanges and shave off every inch of unnecessary weight. Lightweight construction is on everyone's lips, and it's a top priority in the auto industry.

Propellers for cars

Obviously I realize that weight isn't everything. Aircraft are not exactly the lightest of things. So clearly what we're missing is a means of propulsion specially designed for flying cars! How is it more realistic to have something delivered by drone than to equip a car with rotors and propellers? After all, the film-DeLorean's fold-out wheels even look a bit like the propellers we need! So I'd like to make a plea to all you automotive engineers out there: how long do I have to wait before I can buy a car with a hover drive? Or even just the hover drive to fit to the car I have now?!

Obviously we still need to clear up that whole issue of new traffic regulations and hovering signs in the stratosphere. I'm assuming the highway agency will start working on that soon. I think that speed restrictions and driving on the right side of the road will still work just fine on the skyway.

But if I could ask Doc Brown just one little favor: a flux capacitor that actually … fluxes would be a wonderful thing. Then we could finally start traveling through time in the real world, too!

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