

Looking to the Future

It was about 5 years ago that I was asked to take on the position of Technical Director of the Santa Anita A's. The Technical Director has to have a good working knowledge of the Model A, the skills necessary to communicate clearly with our members, the ability to help with seminars and also be able to write articles for our newsletter on a regular basis. Having purchased my first Model A about 65 years ago and running a small Model A repair business while I was in college, I felt I knew a little about Model A's but it was the communication part of this position that I knew would challenge my abilities. Knowing a little something about a subject is one thing but being able to effectively share that knowledge with others is another.

Well here I am, more than 4 years later and I am writing another "From the Bench" article for our newsletter. In the past, I have tried to present subjects that are relevant and of interest to most of our readers. I have tried to not present a subject that is so technical in nature or so obscure that only a very few may find interesting. I try to write about subjects that relate to the owner with a basically "stock" Model A. These subjects will help with maintaining their car so it is always ready for a tour or outing. I like to keep things simple, just like the little cars we all enjoy. Keeping things simple is also the philosophy I have with my own Model A's. Henry did a fine job engineering a car that was rugged, reliable and simple to operate and repair. These cars were well constructed using quality materials and provided many miles and years of reliable service. Today, a Model A can still continue to provide good reliable service and offer a lot of fun and enjoyment.

In order to have a Model A that is reliable and safe, it is first necessary to have a Model A that is in good condition. We always have to keep in mind that these cars are now more than 90 years old and often they have been poorly maintained or incorrectly restored by previous owners. A Model A that is tired and all worn out is not going to offer the positive experience we all look forward to when we take our cars out for a drive. Owners who have the time, knowledge, and a good well equipped shop can completely restore a Model A to closely represent the car as it would have rolled off the assembly line. However, not every Model A owner is in this situation. Most owners have a Model A that has previously had extensive restoration work or one that is just a good old original, reasonably well maintained car. In any case, in order to expect your Model A to be reliable and ready to drive, it is necessary to insure it is properly maintained. My goal is for future "From the Bench" articles is to continue to provide information that will help the owner with maintenance and repairs.

Future articles will include an evaluation of the second generation LED headlight bulbs. I had previously written about the "new" LED headlight bulbs that became available and discussed the pros and cons. They definitely took less power and made more light but because they could not be focused correctly, they proved to be less than satisfactory. Purportedly, a second generation LED bulb has been developed that overcomes the focusing problem. I will be doing an evaluation and will bring you the results in the next few months.



Another topic I want to write about is the "New" Model A Engine. More than 14 years ago, Terry Burtz started a project to design and manufacture improved Model A engine components. These components, which include the cylinder block, crank shaft, connecting rods and flywheel, are now finally available. The block is designed to have the same external appearance as the original Model A engine and will accept all the other original Model A engine components. Once installed, this new Terry Burtz engine will be hard to detect from original.

The availability of this "new" engine will be a great improvement over having to try to save an old 90+ year old block that probably has already been rebuilt several times and may have old cracks or other faults that would have to be repaired. I currently have 2 of these engines in the shop and will be scheduling a seminar in the near future when one is completed and running.

I want to continue to provide information that is helpful and of interest to all Model A enthusiasts and am always looking for new topics. If you have a suggestion for a future article, please let me know. In the mean time, keep warm, stay dry and drive your Model A often.



Burtz Engine Block, Rod & Crank Assembly