



May 2023

Spoken Wheels

THE NEXT MEETING

General Meeting

The next meeting will be on Friday, May 26, 7:00 pm, Church of the Good Shepherd, 400 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia.

MEETING PROGRAM



May is Model A Youth Month and appropriately our program will be a presentation by our youngest member. Ben Stone, grandson of Tom Endy, will tell us all about the restoration he did on his Model A. Grandpa Tom played a major role in this restoration, but Ben was involved every step of the way. Ben plans to bring the Model A to our meeting for our viewing pleasure.

Don't miss this exciting presentation of what one talented young man has done for our hobby.



Cars on the mountain park tour prior to the Monrovia Old Home tour, See page 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, little by little the Santa Anita A's are returning to pre-Covid activities with many members planning and participating in tours. We had a large member turnout who drove their 'A' to Santa Maria to participate in the CCRG Jamboree as well as the Orange County Pancake Breakfast. Also, we had a great member turnout for the Monrovia Home Tour. As the weather improves we will be having more tours. There are plans in the making for a "Model A Safety Inspection" and I advise you to not miss it.



Our Auction was a success after years of waiting for Covid to end. Our Pot-Luck Dinner was an epicurean feast with tons of delicious food and desserts. The last time we had a "Pot-Luck" was years ago when our club was meeting at the Arcadia Red Cross. Thanks to all the members who participated in our dinner and meeting/program featuring an interesting personal story by Patty and Bob Harbicht. Ladies' Day has been planned by Vicky Balmot and Carol Emanuelli. They have an excellent meal and entertainment in store for you. Look for the details in this Spoken Wheels edition.

We are making plans for our "MOM AND POPS NIGHT OUT", which was started years ago when we had much younger members. Back then our members would get a babysitter for the evening and we would gather for dinner and a show. Ah...Those were the days!

Last, BUT NOT LEAST: we have a wonderful program scheduled for this May meeting as part of "Model A Youth Month". Our own Ben Stone and Tom Endy will talk about the restoration of Ben's Model A.

Ahooga - Mickey Fruchter

CALENDAR OF TOURS & EVENTS

May

26 - General Meeting - 7:00 pm, Church of the Good Shepherd,
400 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia

June

3 - Clockers Corner, see page 4
12 - Ladies Brunch, Annia's, 11:00 am- San Gabriel Valley Airport
(Call Bea Fruchter to confirm your participation 626-797-2048).
15 - Men's Breakfast, 9:00 am- Annia's, San Gabriel Valley Airport
16 - Mount Baldy Tour, see page 5
30 - General Meeting - 7:00 pm, Church of the Good Shepherd

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

June Birthdays

2 - Dave Galassi
2 - Jay Munns
4 - Bob Harbicht
8 - Scott Doudrick
9 - Ken Mount
12 - Joe Guarrera
12 - Bea Fruchter
12 - Dan Paige
13 - Larry McKinney
13 - Dan Boardman
13 - Corky Gray
15 - Sharon Gray
20 - Patsy Harbicht
21 - Barbara Voors
24 - Phil Way
27 - Gail Boekenooen

June Anniversaries

3 - Nelson & Susie Stanford
4 - Steven & Sondra Kurtz
12 - Jay & Cheryl Munns
12 - Gary & Sheryl Hunter
16 - Dino & Gina Falabrino
17 - Dick & Norma Canzoneri
17 - Jerry & Marlys Cleland
24 - Don & Carolyn McBride
26 - LeRoy & Pam Kehret
28 - E.J. & Barb Callahan

NEW MEMBERS



Howard and Mitsuko Hays



Richard Anderson

909-923-4522
2738 Lassen Ave., Ontario, CA 91761
Richard.vbw@outlook.com
Joined January 2023 1930 Std. Coupe



Anderson, Rich & Melanie

626-825-8921
265 Stedman Place, Monrovia, CA 91016
rcamja1@aol.com
Re Joined January 2023 1929 Town Sedan.



Gus & Alice Chavarria

926-512-4080 cell
2477 Jackson Ave., Rosemead, CA 91770
Chavarriaalice@yahoo.com
Re Joined January 2023 1930 Tudor Dlx.

2023 OFFICERS, BOARD & CHAIRS

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Vacant
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Eric Sandberg 818-330-9311

PUBLIC NOTICES

Sunshine Report - Sue Chandler - Miss Sunshine

- Steve Kurtz -get well card wishing him a speedy recovery after surgery.
- Jim Kroeger- get well card hoping that he feels better soon- he is recovering from Covid.
- Our SPOKEN WHEELS editor Joe Wilson has an upcoming back surgery and we wish him all the best.
- Sue Chandler has a broken left foot and is healing.

Cookie Bringers -

Unknown

Photo Contributors -

Chris Wickersham, Janet Beggs, Bob Moore, Joe Wilson, etc.

PONDER THIS

I know you think you understand what you thought I said but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.



New Members

by Bob Moore

Howard and Mitsuko Hays joined the club in April. They have lived in Sierra Madre for 25 years and have in their garage, a 1929 Model A Phaeton that runs (most of the time). Howard grew up in Seattle and graduated High School in 1971. He bought his first Model A at age 15 ½ for \$250. Having seen the picture, I agreed that it needed a lot of work.



Howard did the chassis. His father bought him a rebuilt engine as his high school graduation gift. While the car began its life as a 1929 soft-back fordor sedan, his father found a phaeton body that they installed. The phaeton started his father's excitement for old cars and soon after Howard had his Phaeton, his father purchased a 1930 Model A sedan, a 1931 Roadster, and a 1929 CC Pickup.

Howard, his brother, and his father all spent considerable time together working on the cars. Years later when Howard would return home, the three of them would have fun with the cars.

After college, Howard moved to San Francisco where a friend had started a business. After two years, he moved to the Los Angeles area. One day in Pasadena, he met his wife and soon happily realized that they both had a love of old music, old movies and old cars. They have been married for 36 years and moved to Sierra Madre 25 years ago.

The phaeton stayed in Seattle until recently when Howard had it moved to his home in Sierra Madre. Other cars were moved as well: a 1956 T-Bird for Mitsuko and a 1950 Cadillac for their son.

With regard to the Phaeton, Howard says "It's a car with a fifty-year-old restoration that's just been sitting for twenty years, with who-knows-what's happened to it.

Over the past few weeks, I've been reminded of stories I've read of amnesia victims where memories will come back upon encountering something familiar from long ago. I replaced the battery, wiring, new Zenith carburetor, coil, spark plugs, distributor body and cap, re-timed and re-set points (wasn't familiar with this new top plate in the distributor with a condenser on top), and got it to run – at least enough to drive it to DMV to complete re-registration for California. And then as I was about to turn into my driveway, it simply died."

Howard turned to Mickey Fruchter for some help from the Low-End Boys and to Richard Anderson at Valley Brake and Wheel. The fixes are still being applied. Welcome to the club.

CCRG

April 20-23

by Joe Wilson

The Central California Regional Group holds a Jamboree every year sponsored by one of the clubs in the region on a rotating basis. This year the jamboree was held in Santa Maria. In addition to the local chapter members, this event attracts participants from clubs outside the region. The event was attended by club members Chris Wickersham, The Davies, Fruchters and Johnsons.



Saturday lunch at the home of John Humann



Visiting private collection of Coin operated music boxes and arcade games

Orange County Pancake Breakfast

April 3

by Joe Wilson

Water in the ditch caused the March Orange County pancake breakfast to be postponed. It was moved to a dry day and all went well. A sizable group of SAA club members were there, some meeting early and touring together to the park. As usual it was a good show of Model A's.



PAST TOURS & EVENTS

Monrovia Home Tour

Sunday May 7th

by Joe Wilson

The Monrovia old home tour has been one of our traditional springtime touring events. Absent for a few years due to Covid it was good to see the tour back on schedule.



The first home tour by MOHPG was held March 7, 1982, and included five homes and the Anderson House Museum (plus five "drive by" houses). The tour was only for the Santa Anita Model A Club and the Foothill Division of the Vintage Chevrolet club; it had between 75-80 people in attendance and netted the group \$118. The next year the tour was held on May 22, 1983, in conjunction with the Monrovia Days activities. It was co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Conservancy, and the proceeds (\$1,888.27) were shared by MOHPG and the Conservancy. The first time the tour was on Mother's Day was in 1986, and it was held on that day for 30 years until it was changed to the week before.

Prior to the home tour we were escorted to the back roads in the hills above Monrovia which is normally only open to hikers. We then proceeded to visit the five homes that were open for the tour. We had preferential parking in front of each home.



Participating in the tour were: Randy & Ruth Harper, Jim & Jamie Frick, Chuck and Myriam Davies, Bob and Patsy Harbicht, Mickey & Bea Fruchter, Bob & Judy Moore, John Manifor, Joe Wilson with his grandson and wife.



COMING TOUR & EVENTS

Breakfast at Clocker's Corner

Saturday, June 3

by Bob Moore

Clocker's Corner is one of Arcadia's secret morning restaurants. Trip Advisor ranks Clocker's Corner #10 out of 109 restaurants in Arcadia. Located at the final turn of the Santa Anita Race Track, you can watch the handlers exercising the thoroughbred horses in a beautiful setting with the mountains as a backdrop, all while enjoying a great and reasonably priced breakfast. It's not white tablecloth, but is very adequate.



The San Gabriel MARC invited the Santa Anita A's to join them on the tour on Saturday, June 3. They plan to gather at Elaine and Marlin Perry's home at 8:00 AM and depart at 8:15 AM. If you would like to go, you can either start at Marlin's with the group or meet the group at Clocker's Corner at about 8:30 AM. Elaine and Marlin live at 5528 N. Lenore Avenue, Arcadia.

From Baldwin Avenue, turn toward the race track at Gate 8. (Same turn for JC Penney) Stay to the left. In a short distance, the road will curve to the left. There is a guard station. Tell them, you are going to Clocker's Corner. Drive ahead toward the race track. There is a parking lot adjacent to Clocker's Corner. It is a beautiful place to spend time on a Saturday morning.

COMING TOURS & EVENTS

The Rescheduled, Even Better Mt. Baldy Tour - Car Show, lunch, and DESSERT Friday, June 16, 2023 by Bob Moore

Bad weather caused us to cancel the originally scheduled date, May 4. We had rain and Mt. Baldy received 6" of snow. We have rescheduled the tour and added a stop on the way home after lunch. We missed the tour in 2021 because of Covid; in 2022, we missed the Mt. Baldy part and had lunch at Royal Oaks Manor.

This year we will be ordering off the menu since the Mt. Baldy Lodge no longer provides a private group buffet lunch. The food is very good.

One of our long-time club members, Art Moore, has not been out of the house due to health issues since last July. After lunch, we plan to stop by to say hi and have ice cream. Art and Olive live just off the route to and from Mt. Baldy so it is an easy detour. And there is ice cream waiting for you. Art loves to have visitors.

Our day will start at 8:50 am at Royal Oaks Manor at 1763 Royal Oaks Drive North, Bradbury. Our cars will be the centerpiece of a car show for the retirement center residents. Even though it is not the National Day of Prayer, the cars, drivers, and passengers will be blessed. Royal Oaks Manor will provide coffee and donuts.

At about 10:00 am we will depart for Mt. Baldy, a leisurely 26-mile drive. Once we turn onto North Mills Avenue in Claremont, there will be only one more traffic light to contend with. This is a great opportunity for new members to get their Model A's on the road and to meet other members. Many willing hands if your car has an issue. If you don't have a running Model A, drive a modern car.

On the return trip down the mountain, we will make a slight detour to stop at Art and Olive's home. The Club will provide the ice cream.

On previous tours to Mt. Baldy, we had 20-25 Model A's participating. We hope to match that number this year. Sign up at the May meeting of the Santa Anita A's. If you cannot attend the meeting and want to go, call Bob Moore at 626-305-2427. Bob needs a headcount for Royal Oaks Manor and the ice cream.



NEWS BITS

Celebrating Model A Youth Month

by Bob Moore

The goal of "May is Model A Youth Month" is for Model A Clubs across the country to schedule an activity in which youth are invited to learn about Model A's. Last year, we introduced our cars to the Foothill Boys and Girls Club of Monrovia. They were excited about the cars and especially one of the features, the rumble set.

This year, we share our love for the Model A with Arcadia Boy Scout Troop 111 with a hands-on introduction to our cars. The get-together is scheduled for Sunday, June 4 between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM. We will meet at the Scout's regular meeting place, the west side of Arcadia Park across the street from the newly named Keck Hospital. The Scouts are at the northernmost parking area. We should be able to park next to each other.

I would like to have 6 or 7 Model A's for display. I would ask each owner to stay with their car to answer questions and point out things. If you don't have a running Model A and would like to participate, you are welcome.

If you can be part of "May is Model A Youth Month", and introduce your car to a group of potential future Model A owners, please let me know. My email is bobmoore1@aol.com. Email or call me if you have any questions.

Long Time Member Sally Baquet Passes

Sally Baquet passed away peacefully on March 26, at the age of 95, after a short time in a care facility. Sally moved to Los Angeles from Ohio as a teenager, and worked for the Federal Reserve in downtown L.A., after graduating from Fremont High School. She

and her husband Harold were married in 1947 and were married nearly 65 years when he passed away in 2013. They had four children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Sally enjoyed card-making, reading, the theater, and museums. Sally and Harold traveled extensively throughout the United States, visiting all but two states. They were long-time members of the Santa Anita A's. They always enjoyed club outings, and took several long trips with the group. Sally will be missed by many.



The Dangers of Using an Original Model A Fan

The subject of the dangers of running an original 2 blade Model A fan has been discussed many times in the past, so you may be wondering why once again it is being talked about. Well, it seems there are folks out there who are still driving their Model A's with an original 2 blade fan who have not gotten the message, so again this issue is being discussed.

Why Are We Again Talking about 2 Blade Fans?

One of the participant's was returning from the recent CCRG Convention in Santa Maria in his Model A when all the sudden there was a big bang and the car started to shake violently. The engine was shut off and after the hood was raised it was found that one blade of the 2 blade fan was missing and the fins on the whole backside of the radiator were mashed flat.

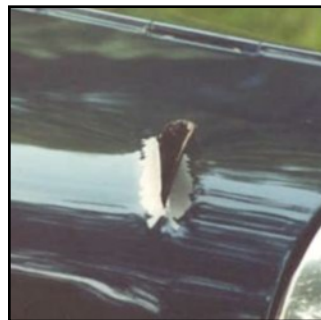


Original Model A fan that failed

Upon closer inspection, it was discovered that the fan was an original factory steel 2 blade fan that would have been installed on the car when it was new. Luckily, the missing blade did not go thru the hood or do additional damage. With all the past articles that have been written and all the many discussions about the dangers of continuing to use original fans, you would think that everyone would have gotten the word but I guess it is still necessary to periodically bring up the subject.

Why Do Original 2 Blade Fans Fail?

More than 60 years ago, when I first came into the Model A hobby, it was commonly known that the original 2 blade fan was subject to fatigue and cracking and it was not uncommon to hear about a fan blade breaking off and either going thru the hood or taking out the radiator.



What can happen when a blade breaks off

Ford even changed the design of the fan in late '31 to help prevent this from happening and after the end of Model A production, Ford offered a fan of a completely different design as a replacement part.

The main reason that the original fan blades fail is that they are made from 2 pieces of formed sheet metal that are welded together and then welded to a center hub and pulley. When completed, each blade is actually 2 thicknesses of sheet steel. Moisture will get between the 2 layers of steel and corrosion will set in. After time, the corrosion will weaken the blades where they attach to the hub and stress cracks will begin to appear. Eventually, these cracks will progress to the point where a blade will completely break off. This usually happens at higher engine speeds when the fan blades are under the most stress. If you are lucky, the blade will go down and get caught in the cross member behind the radiator but most often, the blade will either go thru the hood or severely damage the radiator.

How Do I Know If My Model A Has an Original 2 Blade Fan?

Original 2 blade fans are easy to detect. Raise the hood and see if you have a 2 blade fan which is shaped like a propeller, like the original design. If so, hold a magnet up to it and if the Magnet sticks to the fan it is made from steel and it is most likely an original fan. If the magnet will not stick, the fan most likely is a copy of the original 2 blade fan but made out of aluminum.



Original Model A fan

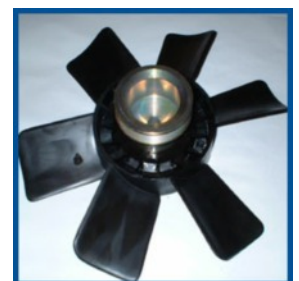
What Do I Replace an Original Fan With?

Currently, there are two options when choosing a new fan. The aluminum copy of the original fan is a popular choice. This fan has the same shape as the original and works very well. Many choose this fan because it has the same appearance as the original steel fan.

A second option is the multi blade plastic fan which also works well but some consider the appearance to be too "modern" for a Model A. Both fans are available from most of the better Model A parts suppliers and both will give good service.



Good quality replacement Aluminum 2 blade and Plastic multi-blade fans



New Fans to Look Out for

Currently on the market are both a 2 and 4 blade version of a fan with steel blades that are attached to an aluminum or steel hub with 4 bolts. The single thickness steel blades are not stiff and will flex, eventually fatigue and fail in the same manner as the original factory fans. These fans, while available new, should be avoided.



Poor quality replacement fans that use bolts to attach the blades to a steel or aluminum hub



Other Fans That May Be in Service

Ford also made 4 blade fans for the 32-34 Model B 4 cylinder engines. Thru the years, these were often used as a replacement for the original 2 blade fans and a lot of them are still in service. These fans should be periodically inspected for cracks in the blades and the rivets attaching the blades to the hubs becoming loose.



Original 32-34 Model B Ford

Under no circumstance should a fan with badly rusted or pitted blades be used. Fatigue cracks can develop which can lead to blade failure.

Summary

Having a blade separate from the rest of the fan can cause extensive damage. Do not use an original factory 2 blade fan. Do not use the poor quality 2 and 4 blade fans where the blades attach to the center hub with bolts. Do not use any fan where the blades are badly pitted or rusty. Periodically inspect the fan to be sure the fan is tight on the water pump shaft and the blades are all in good condition. Consider using either an aluminum 2 blade fan or a multi-blade plastic fan when purchasing a replacement fan.

Tech Tip

When installing an aluminum fan, use a flat washer under the nut. This will help keep the nut from digging into the aluminum and the fan becoming loose on the water pump shaft.

Protecting & Enhancing Your Car's Finish

by Bob Harbicht

Our Technical Director, Chris Wickersham, provides lots of valuable information on how to keep our cars in top running condition. Every member should pay careful attention to his words, because the man knows whereof he speaks!



In addition to the mechanical aspects of our cars, we want them to look good. So I thought I would look into various ways of protecting the finish of our cars, while making them as shiny as possible.

There are any number of commercial products available, many of which do a pretty good job. Meguiar's, Turtle Wax, Mother's, and others have a wide variety to choose from. I decided to test some of the offerings to see what I would recommend to Santa Anita Aers to keep their cars shiny and protected.

I also spent some time on the Internet searching for alternatives to these better-known names. Looking for that little-known trick that would give us a leg up on others. My time was rewarded when I came across a scientific-sounding article extolling the benefits of an unexpected alternative: bacon grease.

Now bacon grease is a little tricky to apply to your car's finish. You need a lot of it! But, that's also one of the benefits: it gives you an excuse to eat a lot of bacon. Now, some of us may have blood pressure that's a little high and bacon is one of the things our doctor has mandated that we steer clear of. But, after all, we do have a duty to take care of our favorite car. And sometimes we need to consider competing interests. I, for one, am willing to sacrifice for my trusty Model A. Besides, I like bacon!

You need to apply the bacon grease in an enclosed garage. Otherwise, you'll have every dog in the neighborhood crowded around your car, impeding your progress. The bacon grease should be warm. In fact, every 15 minutes or so you'll need to go back in the house and fry up two or three more strips of bacon. Bon appétit!

Apply the bacon grease with a brush, preferably a 2-inch, high quality paint brush. After applying a liberal dose, let it dry thoroughly. There is no need to buff it; it will naturally dry to a tough, very shiny finish. One caution, do not park your car for any length of time in direct sunlight! It tends to melt in heat, running down the sides of the car. Sometimes it drips on the brake drums and those mechanical brakes are even less effective with bacon grease on the drums.

I haven't actually had the opportunity to try this out on my car yet. Let me know how it works out for ya.

P.S. You might try adding a quart of wine to the mixture. Mix one pint with the bacon grease then consume the rest yourself; It makes the application a bit easier.

NEWS BITS

BLT Banner Day

by Tom Endy

Saturday May 6, 2023 was another banner day for the BLT Guys. A Mitchell overdrive was installed in a 1928 Sports Coupe owned by SAA member David Van Elgort, who lives in Canyon Country. The car was brought to the event on a trailer, and for that reason we started a little later at 10 AM. The task was complete and the car was road tested around 3 PM. The owner made a \$500 donation to the Model A Youth Restoration Award Program. The installation took place at my house in Westminster. The BLT Guys in attendance included members of the Santa Anita A's and the Orange County Model A Club.

There were no real show-stoppers, except for the fact the owner opted for a cable shift mechanism instead of a shift lever. We had done one only once before and the guy who orchestrated it was not here for this install. It was a learning process we had to figure out with the help of the Mitchell instructions.

Several minor problems were encountered that were easily overcome. We found both rear axle nuts were only finger tight and one of the large flat washers was missing. We replaced the washer and torqued the nuts to 100 ft. lbs. Several of the mounting bolts for the U-joint housing were incorrect and were replaced.

This installation was the 18th BLT Guys installation in the last few years of a Mitchell overdrive, several included a Mitchell synchro transmission, that was a fund raiser for the Model A Youth Restoration Award Program. The youth program provides financial assistance to young people between the age of 12 and 21 who own a Model A and are restoring it. The award is made every two years, The last awards were in 2022 and the award to each youth was \$3500 in purchase certificates for the various Model A suppliers. Typically there are about 12 youth recipients at each award event.



MEETING MINUTES

General Meeting April 28, 2023

The meeting was held at Church of The Good Shepherd, United Methodist Church, Arcadia, CA. At 6:00 prior to the meeting, members arrived to participate in a Potluck Dinner.

Announcements:

At 7:10 PM Mickey Fruchter brought the meeting to order and thanked the members present for participating in the Potluck Dinner. He asked Elaine Perry to conduct the salute to the flag.

The minutes to the March General meeting were approved.

Both Steve Kurtz & Don McBride were reported to have had open heart surgery and were doing well.

Randy Harper introduced new club member George Hotaling. He has a 1929 5 window coupe.

Bob Harbicht provided a brief outline of upcoming tours and events.

May 4th – Annual Mount Baldy Tour

May 7th – Monrovia Historic Home Tour

June 3rd – Breakfast with the MARC club at Clockers Corner.

June – East Fork Picnic - Date to be announced.

July – Wrigley Mansion Tour – Date to be announced.

August – San Antonio Winery - with the MARC club - Date to be announced.

September – Mount Wilson Tour - Date to be announced.

October – Richard Anderson's Father's Place - Date TBA

Bob Moore mentioned he was trying to organize 2 Model A Youth Month events with local chapters of the Scouts. Details TBA

Dino Falabrino reminded the members to attend the monthly Carcadia car show the last Sunday of each month.

Mickey reminded members attending the Orange County Model A Club's Pancake Breakfast that the group would meet at the Lower Azusa Road on ramp to the 605 at 6:30.

Mickey also encouraged lady club members to sign up for the Ladies Driving Day. A patch and free lunch would be provided to all participants.

Carol Emanuelli announced that the Ladies Day Out was being organized for the month of July, Possibly at The Derby in Arcadia.

Program:

Mickey introduced Patsy & Bob Harbicht who provided the evenings program on the life of war hero Lt. Col. [William Edwin Dyess](#) (1916–1943). On December 23, 1943. He was killed when the [Lockheed P-38G-10-LO Lightning](#), 42-13441, of the [337th Fighter Squadron](#), [329d Fighter Group](#) crashed near [Burbank, California](#). He refused to bail out over a populated area and died when his Lightning impacted in a vacant lot at 109 Myers St, Burbank, close to Patsy's childhood home, saving countless civilians on the ground. Dyess had been captured on [Bataan](#) in April 1942 by the Japanese, but escaped in April 1943 and fought with guerilla forces on [Mindanao](#) until evacuated by the submarine [USS Trout](#) in July 1943. [Abilene Air Force Base](#), Texas, is named after him on 1 December 1956. (With help from Wikipedia)

Club Drawings – Randy Harper – Drove a Model A – Club Clothing – Mickey Fruchter

Bob Harbicht announced next month's program – Model A Restoration presented by Ben Stone & Tom Endy.

Mickey thanked everyone present for participating in the pot luck dinner, and adjourned the meeting at 8:04 am.

Respectfully submitted.

Warwick Nethercoat, Secretary

The Tale of Two A's

The following story is an excerpt from an article written in Sep, 2014 by Forest Casey titled "Vault Stories: Model A vs Mode; A"



Above sits the first Cadillac. So, naturally, its name is basic: The Cadillac Runabout, later called the Model A. It was built over 110 years ago in Detroit. This Model A lives in the vault of the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles. Typically, these Brass Era cars are skip-overs on the automotive history tour; they're older than the oldest living human, so they can be difficult to relate to. Not this car — this car is famous. Its moniker has become metaphor: "The Cadillac of Minivans," "The Cadillac of Crab Cakes," etc.. Cadillac themselves have picked up on the game, declaring that their new car is the "Cadillac of Escalades."

And yet, if you were transported back in time to the Cadillac factory of 111 years ago, the company itself would have been difficult to recognize. For starters, you wouldn't see any sign of GM — no Billy Durant (the "General of General Motors"), no Alfred P. Sloan holding an organizational chart, either — corporate oversight didn't begin until 1908. In fact, the company wasn't even called "Cadillac." Its first name was the "Detroit Automobile Company," though that corporation disbanded when its financial backing dried up. Until 1902, the car company responsible for the Model A went by "The Henry Ford Company." If you were to park a 1903 Ford next to a 1903 Cadillac, aside from the oversized brass badges, it'd be nearly impossible to tell the two cars apart. Clearly, the original Cadillac has an unusual lineage.



1903 Ford "Model A" and 1903 Cadillac "Model A"

On tours through the Petersen's vault, I take great pleasure in revealing this curiosity to tourists — that the first Cadillac has Ford roots. The story I've been telling on the tour goes something like this: Henry Ford's stint at the wheel of The Henry Ford company was not long for this earth in part because of Ford's fiery temper. As I first heard the story, Henry Ford had some sort of disagreement with the man responsible for the motor in the Model A, a churchgoer and an experienced engineer named Henry Leland. Ford's board of directors were tired of Henry's procrastination and his obsession with racing—they were set to dismantle the company and hired Leland as a consultant to estimate its value. Leland arrived in the summer of 1902 to find a (mostly) functioning company staffed with workers who would hand-build parts and then grind them down to fit. He believed the enterprise could be salvaged, but not with Ford at the helm. Ford had recently cultivated a passion for racing, and spent a significant amount of company time building a 4-cylinder racing car. The two men got into such a heated argument that Leland approached William Murphy and Lemuel Bowen (the financial backers who initially hired him) and offered his resignation. "You are not going anywhere," was the response, "but Ford is."

So, Murphy and Bowen kicked Henry Ford out of the company bearing his name. They gave him a \$900 severance package and the plans for his prized race car. Ford had also been working on a more-austere runabout; he had to leave that car behind. That runabout, naturally, became the Model A and it meant Henry Ford had to find a new job (and new financial backing).

With Ford out of the picture, Henry Leland was due for a promotion. Leland's engine bolted directly into Ford's Model A body, allowing production to begin in October of 1902. The powerplant was instrumental in the success of the Model A; Murphy and Bowen were so thankful for Leland's help, they offered to name the whole company after Leland — the shiny SUV above would have been called a "Leland Escalade"—but Henry Leland was a modest man and requested instead that the company be named after the founder of the city of Detroit. That's why this car shares the same name as Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, the French explorer who "discovered" Detroit in 1701. The site where Cadillac landed three centuries ago is today referred to as the "Renaissance Center," GM's global headquarters.

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Spoken Wheels is the monthly publication of the Santa Anita A's based in Arcadia, California. The organization is dedicated to the restoration, preservation and enjoyment of the Model A Ford. It is a chapter of the national organization, MAFCA (Model A Ford Club of America). Meetings are held on the last Friday of most months at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 400 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia, California. Address: PO Box 660904, Arcadia., CA 91066. Website: www.santaanitaas.org



Read the newsletter and sign up for everything

Model A Ford Club of America

Santa Anita A's is a chartered member of the Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA). It is a California not-for-profit corporation and a national historical society dedicated to the restoration and preservation Of Model A Ford vehicle as manufactured from 1928 through 1931. We encourage our SAA members to also participate in the MAFCA organization. Check out their website. It contains a wide variety of information about the organization, activities, technical references and instructions on how to join the organization. (www.mafca.com)



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