

# QUIPS

April 1998

## The "Prez" sez:

Boy, what a month this has been! Now I know what they mean about March roaring in like a lion... this has been a great month. First, we have Ty Ray of KSBY at our General Meeting to speak with us and answer our Questions concerning TV new, sports, and reporting In general... not to mention all those things that drive us nuts like commercials, wrong weather reports, and Pete Thorps pet peeve - the TEASER!! (That one drives me nuts too, Pete.) A big thank you to our VP, John Saulsbury for arranging such great speakers for our meetings. I know you all enjoyed Don Kreiger back in February and we have Andrea Seastrand to look forward to in April. Way to go John!!! And, if all that wasn't enough, John also led us to Reedly for the CCRG! What a guy! For all of those that didn't attend, you really missed out on a great 3 days. The Blossom Trail A's did a tremendous job. The quilt seminar was just as great The tour to the Milt Janzen Racing museum and the Penner Broom factory were also interesting. Yes, I did say broom factory. Just ask any of the Crankers who attended the factory about it. It was a real experience seeing how a real corn stalk broom is made. (and yes, I did buy one and I love it!) The banquet was terrific and the Talent Show was a million laughs. A special thank you to Bev and John Saulsbury for their act as "Grandpa and Granddaughter" singing "Why Grandpa was a Crank." Also, thanks to Harold Lowe Norm Bulat, Jim Lowe, and Doug Ayers for their contribution for their version of a silent movie! Harold and Norm were dressed as a couple of Dandies and did their old soft shoe dance routine and I appeared as Flapper Fanny who they attempted to pick up. Much to their dismay, I stroll off on the arm of Henry Hunk portrayed by Jim Lowe. Doug was good enough to narrate our little comedy. Boy, our club is full of talent. Did you all know what a killer kazoo Pete can play? And Paul Lindbergh on Bass Wash Tub accompanied by his wife Carolyn on Kazoo... You had to be there!!! Thanks so much to all of you who participated on such a wonderful trip. For those of you who didn't make it, I hope you'll join us next year in Bakersfield. See ya at the April meeting!

Rosie

## **The First 200 Model A's**

**Taken from the book: The Model A, as Henry Built it.**

Production of the Model A started at the Rouge plant on November 1, 1927. However, due to the extensive retooling from Model T to Model A, start-up was very slow and production records show that the first 200 cars had a unique chassis. Not only did they have the open end bumpers, but they also had a slightly smaller frame, a different engine mount, and front and rear axle assemblies different than later production. And even though they had shock absorbers, the shock absorber link was different and fastened to the axle by means of a strap.

These early cars were primarily used for production tryout, testing, and advertising. But when the Model A introduction date arrived a month later, the Company had not produced enough cars to make one available for each of about 3000 dealers. Therefore, these early production cars were sent to branches that loaned them to select dealers for show and demonstration with specific instructions that the cars were not to be sold (letter at Ford Archives) but were to be eventually returned to the home branch (Dearborn), where they were to be reworked with later parts or scrapped. It is not recorded how many were scrapped. Since the original cars were not to be sold, no replacements of the unique parts were ever made for dealer service. Therefore, it is not possible to build one of these cars from dealer old stock parts.

If a Model A restorer insists that one of these cars may have been sold to the public, or somehow one has survived, then the restorer, in addition to the open end bumper, must show that his car also has the other features that were unique to the first 200 cars. The open end bumpers are easily visible, but some of the other components are not.

The reason for the bumper change was the result of engineering tests. It was discovered that on impact with another object, the two bumper bars flew apart. The remedy was the two bolts at the end of the bars and a redesigned bumper clamp.

The first chassis frame was 5 inches narrower at the rear cross member (35 1/4 as opposed to 40 inches after the first 200 cars). The front cross member and center cross member were carried over with minor changes.

Originally, the Model A was designed without shock absorbers, but when Henry Ford drove the first prototype he said, "Rides too hard. Put on Shock Absorbers." However, redesigning and retooling could not be accomplished before production start-up. Even though the shock absorbers were available and could be bolted to the frame, there was no means for attaching to the axles. The front spring perch on the first 200 cars did not have the ball for attaching the shock absorber link. The first shock links had a threaded stud on the lower end and were fastened to the axle by a clamp. Likewise, the rear axle tube did not have the rear spring perch ball, and there, also, the shock absorber link was attached by a clamp around the axle tube

There were other differences but these were the most visible. Regarding engine numbers, engine production was ahead of car assembly. Most of the first 200 cars would have had low engine numbers, but since the engines were not installed on the chassis in sequential order, some of these cars could have had engine numbers higher than 200 and some of the cars that were assembled after the first 200 could have had engines with numbers lower than 200.

It is doubtful if any of these cars survived.

## **Are Your Plans Made to Tour the Nethercutt Auto Collection?**

**When:** Saturday, May 23, 1998

**What:** Tour to the Nethercutt Auto Collection (sometimes known as the Merle Norman Building), in Sylmar.

**Arranged by:** Marilyn Lawson

**Details:** Silverado has reserved a bus for us and will pick us up at the Central Coast Mall in SLO and K-Mart in Arroyo Grande. The cost is only \$32 per person including transportation and the tour. There will be a lunch stop and probably a dinner stop on the way back. The cost is for a minimum of 35 people.

The Nethercutt Collection is located in Sylmar. It is not open to the public... only scheduled tour groups of with a maximum group size of 50 people. The building is 100,000 sq. ft housing over 200 antique and classic autos, an auto-restoration facility, and an automotive research library. This is a world class collection preserved through techniques and methods learned over more than 40 years of concours-winning in-house automotive restorations.

This is a 2-hour private guided tour, starting at 1:30pm. No children under the age of 12 admitted. No jeans, shorts, or T-shirts allowed.

A sign-up sheet was passed at the March General Meeting. For those who would like to go, but did not make it to the meeting, call Marilyn at (805) 489-4408. Also, if you have family or friends who are interested in going, notify Marilyn and she will be happy to include them on the list as well. We have a maximum limit of 44 people, so we should be able to accommodate guests on this tour.

We need a 50% deposit (\$32 per couple) to reserve your place and final payment is due by the April meeting.

Members that have seen this collection say it is well worth it.

## Mark Your Calendar!

### **April 6th - General Meeting**

First Monday of each month (7:30pm) at the PG&E Community Center - located off Hwy 101 at the Avila Beach Exit. Speaker for this month - Andrea Seastrand

### **April 20th - Board of Directors**

Meeting at Janet Andrews house - 7:30pm

### **April 26th - Tour - Luis Bonillas Village in the Cuyama Valley. Leave**

Basket Shell in Atascadero at 9:00am, Santa Rosa Park, SLO - 9:30am; and Arroyo Grande at 10:00am. Bring a lunch.

### **May 23rd - Nethercutt Collection**

See article - p.2

### **June 28-July 2 - 'A' Reno Date**

MAFCA National Convention. The largest gathering of Model A enthusiasts on the West Coast. Make your plans now.

## 1998 Membership Rosters Now Available!

The 1998 membership books have been completed and are ready for pickup/delivery. You may pick yours up at the General Meeting.

## Recommended Reading

I've recently purchased the book *The Ford Model A, As Henry Built It!* 4th ed. This book is loaded with photos and history including facts about color, upholstery and production of the

Model A. I highly recommend the book. My only suggestion for improvement would be for the pictures to be in color rather than B/W. It can be purchased from either a book store, or any Model A supply company. I purchased mine at Harry's Early Ford Parts (800-833-2500) for \$32.95.

## Birthdays!!

April 6th - Debbie Braly

*Note from the editor: I would like to announce additional birthdays and anniversaries here in the quips as well as any other "member news" Please let me know as none of this information is currently on record with the board.*

# TECH TIPS

## Shock Absorbers

**Fluid:** Do not use oil, kerosene or hydraulic jack fluid in Houdaille type shock absorbers. Use shock absorber fluid only because the others mentioned do not contain a rust inhibitor.

**Fluid Level:** The level of the fluid in the shocks should be approximately 1/4 inch below the opening. Check this level frequently or about every 1,000 miles.

**Internal Wear:** Observe the color on the inside surface of the filler plug, if it is black and some fluid leaks out of the filler hole, your chances are pretty good that the shock is restorable.

**How to Open Shock Absorbers:** It is almost impossible to open Houdaille type shock absorbers by using a regular wrench and table vise. The outside cover can be removed (most of the time) by using a friction type spanner wrench, about four feet long. The inside rotary ring shaft can sometimes be removed by a long socket headed wrench. The lock ring ("O" ring) can be removed with a lock ring (spanner) wrench. These are all special tools which require special mounting. Those tools with proper mounting surfaces do not always work. Some shock absorbers will never come apart.

## ***Rear end Bearing Preloading!***

by Ben Hadd, Orange County Model A Club

The rebuilding of the Model A differential requires that the four bearings in the rear end be adjusted to a proper preload. This is accomplished by selecting the quantity and placement of the proper thickness of banjo gaskets, and by adjusting the locking nuts on the pinion gear. All of the "how to" books describe how to correctly do the job. Proper preloading of the bearings is critical to good performance of the differential. The

preloading of a bearing is the amount of "side squeeze" that is placed on the bearing.

The preload procedure is a tedious and time consuming project. It always puzzled me how Ford could produce Model A's so fast with such a cumbersome assembly procedure. I have come to the conclusion that during Model A production Ford must have had a rigid control over his manufacturing tolerances and his bearing supplier such that the assembler only had to install a gasket of an established thickness to each side of the banjo and the preload was automatically established. I suspect that it is only in the modern era and using the replacement timkin bearings where the need for all the trial and error gasket shimming has come to be a necessity.

My own experience has been that it takes from .040 to .060 total thickness of banjo gaskets to obtain the proper preload of the two Timken bearings mounted on the ring gear carrier assembly. If you simply place a single .005 to .010 gasket on each side of the banjo the bearings will be way too tight and they will eventually become galled and ruined. The bearings will also probably spin on the carrier mount and ruin the carrier. I have taken several "restored" differentials apart that had new Timken bearings installed with a single gasket on each banjo side and found the bearings and races galled and damaged, and the bearings spun on the carrier mounting.

If you split a banjo apart for any reason, like to replace an axle, and you are not replacing bearings or going through the preload procedure, it would be prudent to install the same thickness of gaskets as you found in place when you disassembled it. This way you will retain the bearing preload

## ***MODEL A HIGHLIGHT - 1930-31 VICTORIA***

One of the last additions to the wide variety of Ford body types was the distinguished four-passenger Victoria. It marked a new degree of beauty and value in the Model "A" line.

The striking lines of the Ford Victoria were especially apparent in the graceful sweep of the straighter, lower top, the slanting windshield and the curving bustle back, with the spare wheel set at a new angle. In order to lower the roof line without sacrificing passenger head room, the rear floor was lowered by a step-down design. The Victoria's new bustle back, which provided a luggage space behind the rear seat, marked the beginning of a new trend in body design. In addition, not only was the front seat adjustable, but both seats folded back, permitting easy entrance to the rear seat from either side.

At introduction in November of 1930, the customer had a choice of five exterior color combinations: Ford Maroon, Brewster Green Medium, Kewanee Green, Chicle

Drab, and Black. Drown mohair or brown Bedford cord were available as interior trim. There was also a choke of two top treatments, artificial leather back and a steel back. The artificial leather back bodies were covered with a tan two-tone diagonal grain pyroxylin-coated material. These bodies were made by both Murray and Briggs.

Such items as cowl lights and inside sun visors were standard equipment on all Victorias.

There were no changes in body design between the 1930 and the 1931 models. However, in 1931 there was a new interior trim scheme, tan broadcloth. The upper radiator shell panel was painted body color in 1930 and 1931. The lower panel was to remain black, but there is evidence that many plants painted both the upper and the lower the same color.

In the area of interchangeability with other models, the Victoria door handles are interchangeable with the slant windshield Cabriolet, Fordor and A-400. The body front assembly (cowl) is similar to the slant window Fordors. On the other hand, the rear quarter and back panels are not interchangeable between the Briggs-built and the Murray-built Victorias.

Production figures show that 6,306 were built from November 1930 to January 1931. Production was 33,906 for 1931 making the total number of Vickies produced 40,212.

## Classified Ads

### Wanted to Buy:

Model A Fordor Sedan - '30 -'31 preferred, but considering all years. Must be in good condition. Please call:  
Chris or Nancy Rheinschild  
Los Olivos, CA (805) 688-6000  
or N. Van Newkirk at (805) 937-1120 (#)

*Classified Ads will be ran for 2 months. You will need to contact the editor or resubmit your ad if you would like it to run longer (to continue after the 2 months). At the end of each ad, you will see either a (\*) or a (#). The (\*) indicates this is the first issue in which this ad has appeared. These ads will automatically appear in next month's issue as well (unless you notify the editor to pull the ad). The (#) indicates that this is the 2nd issue for this ad and it will not reappear next month unless the editor is notified to continue the ad or it is resubmitted.*

## Editor's Commentss

**And to think that I thought the other months went by fast. Maybe**

**April will be a little slower (but I doubt it).**

**I hope you had the chance to attend some of the recent events. Unfortunately, I missed March's tour...but I am looking forward to April's events. I hope to see you there.**

**Some exciting things are in the works for the Crankers. I recently spoke to one of our members, Gary Reif and he mentioned that his son was looking for a project to design a Web Page. To make a long story short, we should have a Cuesta Cranker web site in the near future. (That's computer talk for a spot on the Internet where you can view previous Quips and share information with others interested in Model A's around the world.**

**As for me and my Model A...I'm still waiting for the restoration to be completed. It's almost done...if not by the April tour, certainly by the May tour (both fingers are crossed). I am looking forward to joining the tour in my A rather than my modern iron. Plus, it's been a year since my Victoria has been on the streets (the last tour it saw was 1997's CCRG meet in Visalia).**

**Until next month...and don't forget to send your letters, photos and ideas to me.**

**The Editor.**