



# the TRAVELER



Volume 26-12

December 2023

P.O. Box 812, Cantonment, FL 32533

## Ash & Elizabeth Witherington



We have both always loved the nostalgia of old things. We long for a time when the world was less chaotic. Ashley and I started dating in 2002. He made it official on January 23, 2003, by asking me to be his girlfriend. Exactly three

years later, he asked me to be his wife. We were married on January 23, 2007.

It was a rainy Tuesday evening. I was so excited that it was raining, rainy days are my favorite. By the end of the reception, the rain had cleared

and our get away car was waiting. We left our reception in a beautiful 1930 Tudor.

We got our own 1930 Model A Coupe in May of 2023. We bought the car from a nice couple in Grand Bay. We spent the first day

cleaning the car and went on our first drive around the neighborhood. Ashley did a little maintenance on the car which included changing the manifold gasket and the gas bulb cork. He also changed the oil, the transmission fluid, and the rear end oil.

Ashley takes care of all the maintenance and does most of the driving. I named the car Gertie. We call her Gertie from 1930.

Ashley drove Gertie to a park near our house so I could drive in the parking lot. Driving was so much fun. I drove all over the parking lot, then drove us home that day.

We like to drive Gertie down to Sonic and have a lemonade or an ice cream treat. It reminds us of simpler times and old fashioned dates.

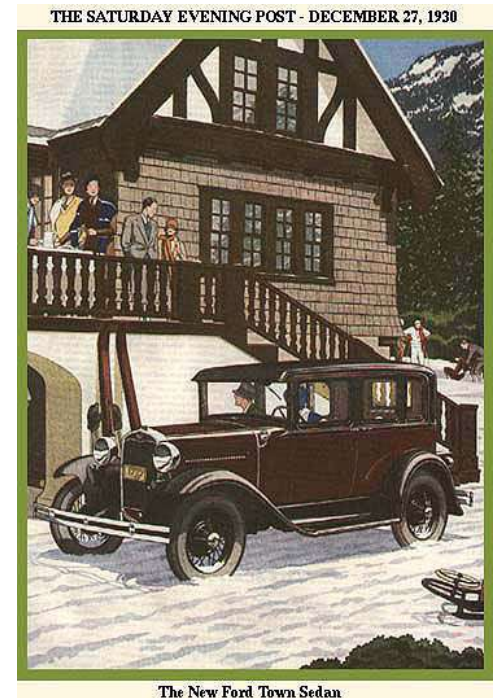
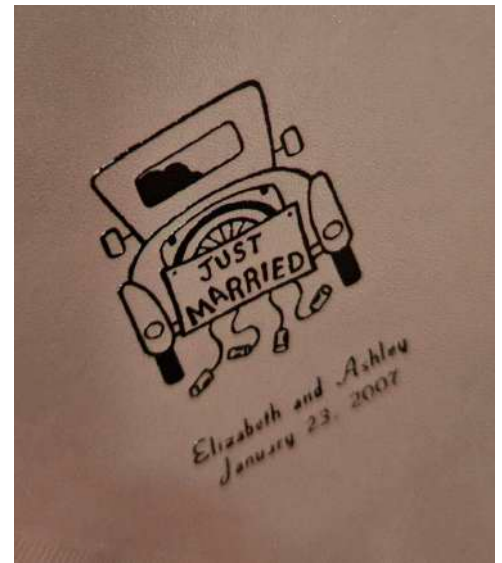
Quilting is something I absolutely love. I am making a picnic quilt to keep in the car. We plan on having a lot more old fashioned dates with



Gertie this fall.

Our first tour was mid September with the Gulf Coast Model A Club. We really enjoyed ourselves. Taking pictures of Gertie with the dinosaurs at Barber Marina made my day. We are looking forward to many more outings and getting to know everyone.

-Elizabeth Witherington



# THE TRAVELER

Monthly publication of the Gulf Coast Model 'A' Club - Southern Alabama to the Florida Panhandle



# Our Club



GCMAC Officers	Name	Phone	Email
President	Mike Fowler	303-524-4303	fowlest1@msn.com
Vice President	Martha Fuller	251-602-1931	waltmern@aol.com
Secretary	Charlotte Dahlenburg	256-783-2261	realracegril1@gmail.com
Treasurer	Becky Baisden	850-384-5717	beckyb0814@att.net
Newsletter Editor	Charlotte Dahlenburg	256-783-2261	realracegril1@gmail.com
National Rep	Allen Braddy	678-499-3370	alnbraddy@yahoo.com
Webmaster	Becky Baisden	850-384-5717	beckyb0814@att.net
Event Coordinator	Allen Braddy	678-499-3370	alnbraddy@yahoo.com

## December

### Birthdays

- 10 Alan Berzant
- 15 Charlie Marques
- 16 Rocky Lundy
- 17 Margret Hildreth
- 18 Robin Olsson



### Anniversaries

- 9 Mike & Debbie Fowler
- 16 Scott & Becky Baisden

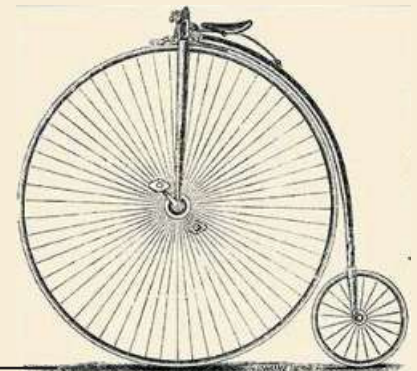
## Message from ...

As we close out a very active year, I want to thank everyone for their support and participation in the many events.

A special thanks to Charlotte Dahlenburg for our outstanding newsletter. She is being honored this weekend at the National Awards Banquet for her efforts. I hope to present the award at our Christmas Dinner.

A reminder also that election and installation of club officers will also be conducted during the dinner. Anyone willing to serve, please contact Becky Baisden to be included in the election process.

*Mike Fowler*



# Club Happenings

## Mobile Breakfast

October 28 had a small crowd attend the breakfast. Conversation and laughter were not short! Join us each month and join the conversation!



## Fall Tour in the North Alabama Mountains

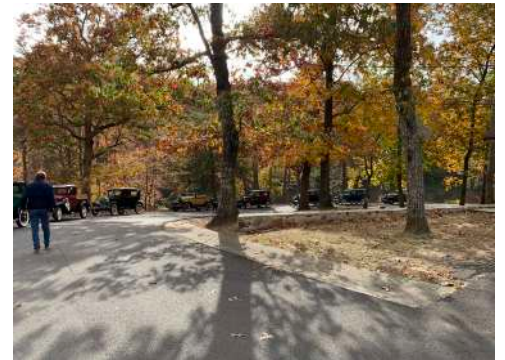
Yvonne and I had a great time hanging out with the group in Northern Alabama and touring the mountains with our car.

Day one, we drove through the mountains to Chatanooga to visit the Coker museum. Beautiful drive, perfect weather and the Model 'A's handled the twisty mountain roads well.

Day two, we had lunch on a beautiful lake and enjoyed the fall colors. We then visited some local antique shops. All in all, there were 30 Model 'A's and a great group of people.

Big, big thanks to the Model 'A' Touring Club of North Alabama.

- Jim Quinlan



# Trinitas Christian Schools Annual Daddy/Daughter

## Date Night

Big shout out for the group of folks from our club and the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club that showed up to participate in the Trinitas Christian Schools Annual Daddy/Daughter date night at the Imogene Theater in Milton. Just like last years, the girls loved the cars.

Bob Neidlinger, Donnie & Sue Carlile, Jim & Tammy Inbau-Byrer, Christine Fiveash and her husband.

- Allen Braddy



## Rotary Show

On November 4, we changed things up a bit by attending a car show for the Pensacola Rotary Club. We had six cars on display and the host staged us in a great location to help bring attention to the show from those driving by. Those who didn't bring their cars still dropped by for a visit. We were well received by visitors, and other car enthusiasts came over to see us. As always, pictures were taken by all ages enjoying our display. Thank you to our member who requested we take a chance by doing something different and to those who showed up to display their cars, enjoying the experience of a car show instead of going to breakfast like we always do.

- Allen Braddy





## Pensacola's Veterans Day Parade

On November 11 at 8 am, my dad and I lined up with the Gulf Coast Model A Club for the Pensacola Veteran's Day Parade. This year was my sixth time in this parade, and my second time driving.

My grandfather, who was a member of the same club, would always bring me along with him as he drove in the same parade. Carrying that torch and getting in line with all of the other Model A's made this event so much more special to me, even though it

wasn't new.

Seeing little kids and full-grown adults gawk and point at our cars, asking us to honk the horn and give them an 'AWOOOGA' was so much fun. My favorite thing about all of the Model A's is that, despite being the same car from similar years, they are all so different.

Each Model A is unique, whether it is the body style, the way it is decorated, the color it's painted, or even the sound of its horn. Hearing people on the parade route cheer and point

out their favorite Model A, as a symphony of 'AWOOOGA's rang out, was amazing.

Although the parade itself was great, the best part was the fascinating interactions with onlookers during the setup. While we waited in line, people on the street walked up to us and we just started talking about the cars. Younger people asked countless questions, discovering the vast differences between a Model A and a new car. Those who were older reminisced and told us fun stories about their experiences with a Model A.

One gentleman told me that he and his friends bought a Model A pickup for \$14 in the 1960's and drove it all the way from the Midwest to California, where they sold it for \$16. Stories like these are what make participating in my local MAFCA chapter so much fun.

Even when we enter events that have seemingly nothing to do with Model A's, the connections these old cars can generate with people are amazing, and there is so much to learn from them. Thank you to all of our veterans, it was an honor to celebrate you in this parade. - Nicolas Collins



# Veterans Parade

Thanks to our members that showed up to the Pensacola Veteran's Day Parade on November 11.

Mike and Debbie Fowler, Bob Neidlinger & Family. Joe & Teresa Stephens, Nicholas and Terry Collins, my cousin and her husband, Warren and Cary Lewis, who came in from Sycamore, GA to participate.

- Allen Braddy



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# To Texas and back



On the first Saturday of November, there is a fundraiser in Dallas to support Children's Cancer Groups who helped my family during my grandson's fight with neuroblastoma. One of my goals was to drive our Model A to Dallas as a longer tour. I contacted the Dallas MAFCA club and asked them to bring their cars to join in a static display at the park where the fundraising event was held. Four A's joined my car and, as usually happens, the cars were a hit.

The trip started in Gulf Shores on October 30, where my brother, Don, and I hit the road. Two days later, Nancy and Don's wife, Denise, met us in Natchez. The ladies toured some antebellum homes the next day while Don and I drove to Joaquin, TX, for our longest segment of the trip, at 200 miles. The weather turned cold, so I had to partially block the radiator with cardboard

in order to keep the engine temperature up. While eating breakfast at a little diner in Joaquin, the other diners told us that Joaquin was a "Bonnie and Clyde friendly" town where their bank was never robbed but all those towns around them were victims of the gang.

All along the trip, people wanted to talk about our car

and their experiences about how a grandfather or father had a similar car. I'm sure that all of the members have similar stories. These A's are like magnets and our car was photographed at least 100 times during our journey.

The Samuel Allen Pampel Foundation 5k and Dinosaur Dash was held on November 5, and we were joined by four Dallas club members and their cars. It was great to talk with other owners and compare and talk about about our cars. A couple of the Texas A's had been set up for touring with 12 volt electrical systems, 16 inch wheels, overdrive, and air conditioning, high compression heads, and hydraulic brakes. They seemed to question my "bravery" for attempting a trip of my distance with my only modifications being a 5.5 head and an alternator. My answer is always that that these cars,







completely stock, have been driven coast to coast since they were introduced in 1928.

From Dallas, Nancy and I drove to Hico, Tx, where the Koffee Kup Cafe brags the

world's best pie. I think they may be right! On to Kerrville to stay with one of our "adopted" sons and his family, then to Corpus Christi to visit cousins, and took the Galveston ferry



to avoid going near Houston. On the drive back to Alabama, we were in the rain all of the way. Up to Corpus Christi, our weather had been sunny and cool, so we stopped frequently to see the attractions. Once the rain hit, we just drove straight to Gulf Shores and arrived on November 15.

We stayed off the interstates and drove mainly on two lane state roads or, occasionally, county roads. On the open roads, I kept the speed 45-47 mph, using a Waze app on my phone for accuracy. We averaged about 15 mpg and stopped around 1/2 a tank to top off one and drain another.

Overall, the car ran great. Other than normal maintenance items to take care of, I did have a carburetor float issue and a resonating vibration starting at 45mph that I need to track down. Totals were 16 days and 2027 miles driven and a trip to remember forever.

-Terry Pampel



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Mark your calendar

## Gulf Coast Model A Club

# Christmas Party

**December 10 at 2 pm**

**Paula Deen's Family Kitchen at OWA**

**203 North OWA Blvd., #203, Foley AL 36535**

**RSVP to Martha or Allen**

Contact Martha Fuller to provide donations for door prizes.

Email: [waltmern@aol.com](mailto:waltmern@aol.com) • Phone: 251-716-8680



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# Entertainment

Email to  
Joe Allen Braddy  
alnbraddy  
@yahoo.com

Submission  
date is the  
20th of each  
month

## Car Shows, Events, Cruise Ins & More

For a comprehensive list of car shows in our area, here's a link to the Gearjammers website with them listed: <https://bamagearjammers.com/events.html>

Scott Lunsford has created a private by invitation only Facebook group, Today's Model A. This is for members only to communicate within the group. Ask questions, make suggestions, or complain about how annoying your event coordinator is. So if you're interested in joining the group, Please contact Scott.

### Club Activities:

#### December

**Dec 2 – 8:30 am** Golden Corral, 2260 Langley Ave, Pensacola, FL

**Dec 10 – Christmas Party** Paula Deen's Family Kitchen 203 North OWA Blvd, Foley, AL.

**RSVP to Martha or Allen**

### Model A Activities:

#### January

**Jan 13** Shepherdsville, Kentucky - Model A Ford Winter Swap Meet

#### June 2024

**June 13-16 - Texas Tour** Nacogdoches, Texas

**June 23-29 - MAFCA 2024 National Model A Convention** Ruidoso, New Mexico

### Local and Regional, Activities:

**Dec 2 - 3rd Annual Revitalize DIP Festival & Car Show** 9am-1pm Gulfdale Promenade Gulfdale Dr. Mobile, AL

**Dec 9 Cops for Kids Toy Drive and Show & Shine** 1-5pm. Bring two unwrapped toys to participate. 7775 Tara Drive, Semmes, AL

**Dec 9 Beulah Bash**

### Christmas Car and Craft

**Show.** Eascambia County Equestrian Center, Pensacola  
**Dec 9 Lillian Christmas Parade.** 11 am line up, 1 pm start. Lillian Community Club, 34148 Widell Ave, Lillian, AL



## Help Wanted

**Car Shows? Car Events?**  
**Email to Allen Braddy**  
**alnbraddy@yahoo.com**



[https://youtu.be/xtPHVXGYCpg?si=RZmay4\\_0nBcj3kzG](https://youtu.be/xtPHVXGYCpg?si=RZmay4_0nBcj3kzG)  
Real Street Scenes of Vintage America—  
Colorized!



Join Us In the 21st Century

[www.gulfcoastmodelaclub.net](http://www.gulfcoastmodelaclub.net)

Gulf Coast Model A Club



# Tech Tips

## Repairing the 1930 - 31 Stoplight Switch

By Chuck Elderton

On the SCVC tour to Watsonville April 15, I noticed a fellow club member's stoplights were not working; a faulty switch was diagnosed. As it was a hydraulic pressure switch, no immediate solution was available. Upon arrival at the Fairgrounds another club member informed me that the stoplights on Charlotte were not working. Both original styles of Model "A" stoplight switches are mounted under the car and are far from moisture proof.

With the wet season, moisture leads to corrosion, and corrosion leads to failure. The 28-29 version mounts to the side of the transmission and is slightly better protected than the center cross member mounted 30-31 version.

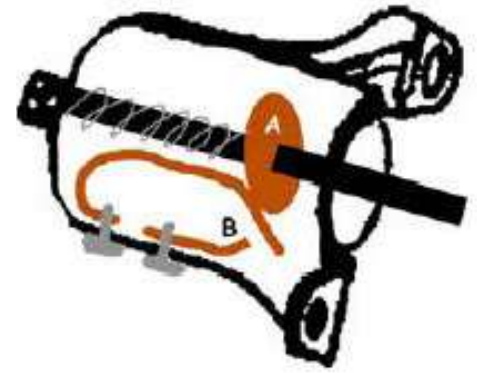
On the way home Nora asked if I had the parts needed to repair the stoplights. Although I had yet to check, I was sure that the problem was the switch. I told her that I would need to remove the new switch from our under-construction

1930 pickup and install it on Charlotte, as I did not think that I had a spare. Upon arrival home, I verified that the problem was indeed the switch and removed it from the car.

Although an inexpensive item, it is inconvenient to not have a critical part when it is needed. As Charlotte is my daily driver the need was immediate. Upon removal, I noticed that the switch appeared that it could be taken apart; so I decided to give it a try. What did I have to lose? Today we are programmed to only think of replacing parts when they stop functioning properly – this is actually a simple-to-repair part.

The repair procedure is straight forward and does not require special skills or special tools. I clamped the main body of the switch in my vice and gently pried up the four bent tabs that hold it together. Lift off the case half; it does not fly apart and self destruct like most switches. You will see a simple spring-loaded plunger and a very simple contact – no further disassembly is needed.

With the switch still in the vise, I dressed the tip of the contact and gently scraped the other part with a very small file. I sprayed the contacts with electrical cleaner, and slightly bent the stationary contact



upward a small amount to compensate for wear. I then coated the contacts and the plunger shaft with dielectric grease, and reassembled the case halves.

It worked like new or better. In about forty minutes total, I was able to diagnose (with a simple jumper wire across the switch terminals), remove, repair, and re-install the stoplight switch on our 1930 Phaeton. Although a new switch only costs \$5, just experiencing the concept of a repairable component was worth far more. Now, reinstall everything that attaches to the spindle, install the brakes, and maybe use, this as an opportunity to clean and repack the wheel bearings, then install the drums and the wheels. Grease all of the fittings well. Go for a test drive, enjoy the easier steering, and Have a Model A Day!

Tech Tips from Santa Clara Valley Chapters

# Era Fashions



## Take a Little Trip

Melanie G. Whittington  
 Traveling in a Model A is one of the highlights of our hobby. Combining an interest in Model A's, travel, and era fashion is about the best thing I can think of to experience all aspects of this hobby. Where are you going? Is it for the weekend? What's the weather forecast? A few things to ask yourself before beginning to plan your wardrobe and luggage requirements.

"Each year motoring becomes more and more a favorite pastime as weekends grow in popularity..." according to the June 1931 issue of Good Housekeeping. This sentiment is very similar to the short tours so many of our chapters take each year. Do you and a few Model A friends like to take day trips and pack a lunch? Have a little fun with it! One of my favorite trips involved the Southeastern



Figure 1; Picnic Set



Figure 2; Luncheon kit ad from June 1931, Good Housekeeping

Touring group and a trip onto the Blue Ridge Parkway. My husband and I packed a lunch and brought our picnic set along. Add some fried chicken, potato salad, and lemonade for a trip you won't soon forget. (Figure 1) These luncheon kits were suggested set for anyone "motoring much". This cobra-grained Fabrikoid kit was set up for six-place settings. (Figure 2) Kits like these were available during all years of the Model A era. They range from simple sets to more elaborate. I have seen kits with eight-place settings, multiple thermoses, tin, or enamel boxes to carry a variety of items, cups, and various other accessories. They are not the easiest to find at antique stores, but I have seen several in my travels. It may look like a suitcase if it is sitting on the floor closed. Look a little closer and you may find a treasure.

"Talon Hookless Fasteners," "slide fasteners" or "Zip-O-Grips" were all names for what

we would call a zipper. These started showing up in luggage before the Model A era. Here is an ad from July 1927 in the York (PA) Daily Record. (Figure 3) The same ad, two months earlier, from Austin, TX did not mention the "new zippered cases" noted in the "For Long Trips" section.

Of other interest is the mention of short trips using "light luggage for feminine travelers". Not only were motoring trips becoming

## LUGGAGE

--that will go vacationing with smart travelers

**For Short Trips**  
 Light luggage for feminine travelers is not a luxury but a necessity. Custom built of the finest leathers, our hat boxes, week-end cases and suit cases are noted for durability.

**\$3.95 TO \$25.00**



**For Long Trips**  
 Whether your trip is by sea or land or a combination of both, our new zipper cases and guaranteed wardrobe trunks will withstand the rough usage of both European and American travel.

**\$15.00 TO \$100**



**Motoring Trips**  
 —are incomplete unless motoring luggage meets every necessity of the itinerant traveler. Trunks and cases are equipped to facilitate motor travel here and abroad.

**\$10.00 TO \$65.00**



The importance of correct luggage cannot be over-emphasized. See our selection at once.

**The Regal Company**  
 36 WEST MARKET STREET  
 Luggage the Acceptable Gift for Commencement.

Figure 3; York Daily Record, July 1927, "new zippered cases"



Figure 4; Luggage from June 1931, Good Housekeeping

commonplace, the ads were focusing on females and the needs of traveling with multiple dresses, shoes, and hats.

In our effort to reproduce an authentic trip in our Model A's, we may not be able to go into every aspect, but pick something you enjoy and try it! If you love hats, find a nice hat box and throw it in the back seat, trunk or rumble seat.

If you're lucky enough to have a truck, you have plenty of room for luggage. Be sure, if you're using originals, to keep them protected from the elements. They aren't making any more "Wheary Wardroettes of buffalo rawhide." (Figure 5)

"Brimmed hats having returned to fashion importance, a large hat box is required, as proved by the Mendel-Drucker

model, covered in Scotch tweed duck." Also shown, is the Oshkosh duffel bag of orange and red striped cord duck which is great for shoes. In the lady's hand you see a Zip-O-Grip handbag made of bright-colored goat skin. At her feet is the Revelation suitcase of black cobra-grained cowhide with locks and adjusts to 14 sizes. The Seward Aero-Pak suitcase, to the far left, included wardrobe conveniences.

Hanging over the Seward is a Snuggle Rug of English plaid woolen, which, on motor trips, is a "wise precaution". This rug is bag shaped and uses a Talon Hookless Fastener closing. (Figure 4)

The items in Figure 5 include the Oshkosh hat box, with cord duck to match the duffel bag mentioned earlier. Trunks were used for longer trips, usually rail or sea travel. Wardrobe trunks would keep your clothes organized and less wrinkled. Dresses of lace, such as Chantilly, were invaluable for travel as they don't show wrinkles as easily as silk.

Wool suits were also great for cool days and less prone to wrinkling. Bringing along wraps or "tiny jackets" which can be used with multiple outfits is also a smart idea. Those with light fabric such as chiffon or "transparent velvet," require almost no space at all."

This February 1930 ad from the Kansas City Star for Aerolite Bags specifically mentions they are "designed for air travel." It also featured a Zip-Lock fastener. (Figure 6)

Next time you travel in your Model A, think about your luggage and packing for the era. Many of these suitcases, duffels, and trunks can be found on eBay or in antique stores, for a decent price. Even if you only use it as a prop in your "A," or for your next trip down the runway at a fashion judging event, you'll be



Figure 5; Luggage from June 1931, Good Housekeeping

adding a little more authenticity to the occasion.

#####

HARTMANN TRUNKS AND LUGGAGE

**AEROLITE BAGS**

**Smart**  
Have that air of distinction the well dressed person requires.

**Light Weight**  
Designed for air travel—desired for general use—no heavy frame.

**Durable**  
Made entirely of solid fine quality hand-boarded leathers; Zip-Lock fastener, no stiffening.

**Not Expensive**  
14-in. Ladies' size. \$13.50  
18-in. Men's size. \$17.50  
Black or Brown

ORDER BY MAIL  
RETURN FOR REFUND  
IF NOT SUITABLE

Charge Accounts Invited

**Kansas City Trunk Co.**  
1120 WALNUT  
"Avenue of Fashion"  
EDISON RADIO

Victor 6094

Figure 6; February 1930 ad from Kansas City newspaper, Aerolite Bags featuring Zip-Lock fasteners

# Get Your Club Gear Here



Spoke with the shirt people. He'll provide a 50/50 Jersey polo shirt.

Polo shirt with club logo - S-XL \$23 each

2x add \$2

3x add \$4

T shirts are \$15

We would need a minimum of 8 shirts. Anything less will

make the set up cost go up. He will do different colors, but he said the Royal blue looks best with our logo. Caps are \$15 with a minimum purchase of 6.

If you're interested please email me so we can put in 1 order together.

Allen Braddy  
alnbraddy@yahoo.com  
678-499-3370

Gulf Coast Model A Club  
Event Coordinator

VP Martha Fuller has patches for sale as well. Contact Allen



Small \$10 4inch  
Large \$25 8inch

## The Model A Ford Club of America MAFCA

*Serving Model A Ford owners since 1955*



Our award winning magazine "The Restorer"

MAFCA is dedicated to the restoration, preservation and enjoyment of the Ford Model A and AA cars and trucks, as manufactured from 1928 through 1931. We are an active, family-friendly organization whose members share a passion for these historic vehicles, plus other aspects of life in that era, such as fashions.

MAFCA is a not-for-profit corporation with members and local affiliated chapters all over the globe. This makes us the largest car club in the world dedicated to one make of automobile. We hope you enjoy looking through our site, and we invite you to join us! Membership in Model A Ford Club of America is encouraged. MAFCA Dues are \$50.00 and should be mailed to: MAFCA Headquarters, 250 South Cypress, LaHabra, CA 90631-5586 For more info visit: <https://www.mafca.com/>



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Email  
Submissions to  
realracegrill  
@gmail.com

# Classifieds

Submission  
date is the  
20th of each  
month

## For Sale: 1930 Tudor \$19,000



**Model B Engine with Counterweighted Crank  
Built by Bob Bouldin of Bouldin & Bouldin Inc.  
41 Main St Box 496, Belfast, NY 14711**

Inserted engine (B. Model) 8-26-2000.....	\$3,500.00
4 Speed D Trans (Ford) Ft. Worth, Texas.....	\$3,685.00
Oil Filter Oil and Temp Gauges.....	\$319.75
Turn Signals.....	\$187.80
Hood Prop Kit.....	\$41.94
Car cover.....	\$159.00
Seat belts.....	\$53.50
Radiator Stone Guard.....	\$178.00
Spew Plates.....	\$44.95
Floor Mats and Rugs.....	\$1,200.00
16" Wheels.....	\$90.00
Wheels Painted.....	\$800.00
16" Hub Caps.....	\$50.55
High Comp Head (Snyder 6-1).....	\$379.95
Head Bolts.....	\$24.00
New Interstate Battery.....	\$139.50
Electric Distributor.....	\$375.00
12 Volt Starter (Synder).....	\$225.00
	<b>\$10,453.95</b>

This is an excellent driver. Motor rebuilt with insert bearings in 2000. Four speed synchromesh transmission. This is a tour car. David A. Black: Cell 256-339-3234, david\_black@model-a-man.com David Black was president of a Model 'A' Club north of us in Alabama for years and the club was known for all the tours they did with their Model 'A's. Located in Cullman, Alabama

- Block Cleaned Bored & Honed
- New Piston And Rings
- Insert Bearings - Mains - Rods
- Drilled Crank
- Pressurized Oil
- Cut Down Flywheel
- Computer Balanced
- Brick Valves & Stellite Seats on Exhaust
- Adjustable Lifters
  
- Windfield Grind Cam
- New Cam Gear
- New Crank Gear
- New Pulley
- Block & Head Decked
- Assembled & Test Run
  
- Used Engine Block Included at \$800.00
- Total \$3500.00

### Model A Parts

Message: I Have Lots of model a parts if someone wants them gens. starters fans etera they can have them just pick them up keeping a few for my A  
Joseph Nix  
Email: sultan43@yahoo.com  
Call 1-810-712-2241



FOR SALE: 1930/1931 Ford Model 'A' Sun Visors \$100.00 One set of new and one set of old sun visors for 1930-31 Model A Ford Murray body car. Brackets are included. \$100 for all. Call Eric Gould 251-765-2677





# “THE DAMNED THING WORKS!”

## Philo T. Farnsworth & the Invention of Television



Philo T. Farnsworth with early television camera, 1930s, courtesy of the J. Willard Marriott Digital Library, University of Utah.

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[blog.history.in.gov](http://blog.history.in.gov)

It is notable that in this age of celebrity worship, most people cannot name the inventor of the television. Even the meticulous Aaron Sorkin confused the details of Farnsworth's life in his stage

play. Woefully unrecognized, Farnsworth conceived of the idea for electronic television at the age of 14 and brought his conception to fruition in 1927 with his first electronic transmission.

Like Apple founder Steve Jobs, Farnsworth nurtured a broad, idealistic vision of how

his invention would change the world, envisioning how television might increase literacy, facilitate the sharing of cultures and even prevent wars through global discourse. Farnsworth's greatest resource, much like Jobs', was unconventional thinking and an ability to assemble a small team of determined ingénues like himself. Farnsworth's wife, Elma "Pem" Farnsworth, attributed her husband's success to "intuitive thinking, logic, and hard work," as well as his ability to combine "seemingly unrelated elements into new instruments of amazing effectiveness."



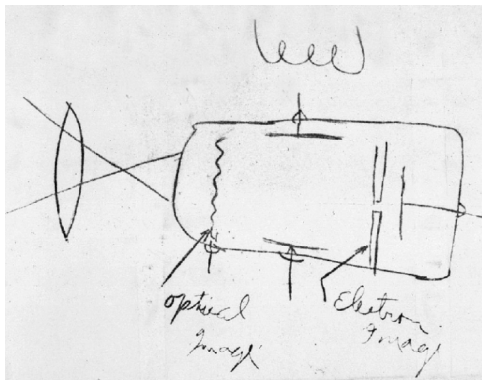
Farnsworth's childhood home in Indian Springs Utah, courtesy of The Philo T. Farnsworth Archives.

The inventor of television grew up in Utah prior to the existence of power lines, making his radical electronic concepts all the more remarkable. Farnsworth's family moved to a farm in Rigby, Idaho, where Farnsworth delighted at the sight of a Delco power system, immersed himself in scientific magazines and invented tools that facilitated household chores. While working on the farm, a teenaged Farnsworth



observed the straight rows created by the horses as he plowed, and abruptly thought "he could build the image like a page of print and paint the image line after line . . . with the speed of the electron, this could be done so rapidly the eye would view it as a solid picture."

According to Pem, Farnsworth reasoned that by using an image dissector tube, he could manipulate electrons to "change a visual image into a stream of electrical current, transmit that to another vacuum tube at the receiver, and on a fluorescent screen turn the current back into the visual image again." Farnsworth sketched his idea on the blackboard of his high school chemistry teacher, Justin Tolman, and presented him with a drawing of it, which would prove invaluable years later during a 1935 patent suit ruling.



Philo T. Farnsworth's sketch for teacher Justin Tolman, courtesy of philointhehall.com.

In 1923, Farnsworth moved to Provo, Utah and pursued formal education, enrolling at Brigham Young

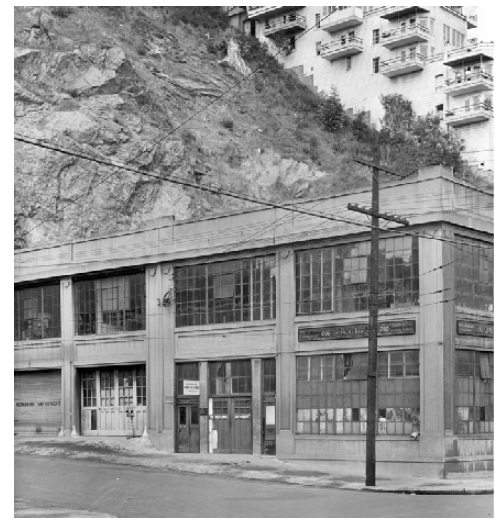
University (BYU) to study mathematics and physics, although, like Jobs, never graduated. Ironically, his lack of formal training contributed to his success, as fundraiser George Everson recalled that Farnsworth "attacked the whole assignment with no engineering experience and little engineering knowledge, but to compensate for these inadequacies he had courage and genius."

After leaving BYU, Farnsworth worked for Everson as an organizer at the Community Chest Campaign, who, along with fundraiser Leslie Gorrell, funded Farnsworth's electronic television idea.

With this financial backing, Farnsworth moved to California, eventually establishing a lab on Green Street in San Francisco and hand-picking a team of scientists and innovators.

In the team's early days, engineers shuffled in and out of the lab with various instruments, a "glittering array of crystals, prisms, and lenses." This activity attracted the attention of police in the Prohibition era and Pem stated "it's not hard to imagine how suspicious our operation must have looked to an outsider.

Strange packages were being brought in, and the curtains were drawn for demonstrating the light relay." Pem reassured two policemen, who came to investigate the lab, that she and her husband were not operating a still and continued their electronic experiments.



Farnsworth's 202 Green Street lab in San Francisco, courtesy of The Philo T. Farnsworth Archives.

Farnsworth focused on perfecting the image dissector tube with the help of Pem's glassblowing brother, Cliff Gardner. The scientific team constructed numerous models before developing a bulb that was delicate, yet strong enough to transmit an image electronically. After years of failed experiments and twelve hour work days, on September 27, 1927 Farnsworth transmitted the first "electronic television image." With Farnsworth and his staff at the receiver, Cliff inserted the slide into the Dissector and a small line materialized in the receiver room, ushering in the television age. Farnsworth wired Gorrell a simple message: "THE DAMNED THING WORKS!" and applied for his first television patent on January 7, 1927.

Farnsworth was "the first to form and manipulate an electron beam" and according to his biographer Paul Schatzkin "that accomplishment represents a quantum leap in

human knowledge that is still in use today.” Farnsworth’s ability to harness electrons negated the need for mechanical objects to transmit images and later contributed to breakthroughs in radar and electron microscopy.



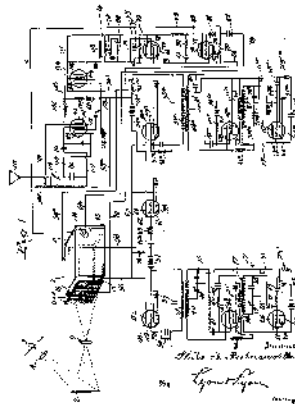
Farnsworth Television Model, 1936, courtesy of the J. Willard Marriott Digital Library at the University of Utah.

However, transforming his historic achievement into a commercial product involved years of financial and legal problems. Farnsworth struggled to maintain a balance between scientific experimentation and his financial backers’ desire for a return on investment. In 1928, Farnsworth met with impatient investors who demanded to see “some dollars” in his invention, and stunned them when an image of a dollar sign materialized in the screen before them. This presentation bought Farnsworth more time, but later that year the backers repealed their support, forcing Farnsworth to rally his team to

continue with the development of television.

In the period between his first transmission and first public demonstration of the television in 1934, Farnsworth continued to navigate around financial problems, company reorganization, and protests by radio and film actors fearing the new medium could jeopardize their jobs. The primary obstacle to commercialization was RCA’s lawsuit regarding his 1927 television system patent. Russian scientist Dr. Vladimir Zworykin attempted to devise an electronic television system and applied for a patent in 1923, despite lacking proof of its feasibility. Farnsworth invited Zworykin, a former employee of Westinghouse, to see his San Francisco lab in 1930 in hopes that Westinghouse might fund his invention. Unbeknownst to Farnsworth, Zworykin no longer worked for the company and his visit to the lab was motivated by personal objectives.

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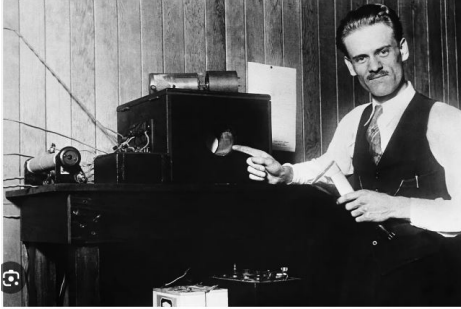
Farnsworth’s television system patent, contested over in the 1935 patent suit against RCA, accessed Google Patents.

Farnsworth demonstrated how to construct an Image Dissector for Zworykin, who later replicated the tube and presented it to RCA. Farnsworth’s refusal to sell his patents to RCA prompted the company to sue for priority of invention, so as to introduce commercial television to the public. The U.S. Patent Office settled the “David and Goliath confrontation,” as described by Farnsworth’s wife Pem, when it ruled in Farnsworth’s favor based on Justin Tolman’s presentation of Farnsworth’s high school Image Dissector sketch. For the first time in RCA’s history, the company had to pay patent royalties, rather than receive them. The ruling also established Farnsworth as the inventor of television, despite ongoing debate and distortions to the historical record like Aaron Sorkin’s stage play proclaiming RCA the victor of the suit. Schatzkin provides a superb synopsis of the debate about the inventor of television and errors punctuating the narrative in *The Boy Who Invented Television*.

Farnsworth continued to fight against RCA’s appeals and his refusal to bow to the corporation taxed his mental and physical health. While



struggling with depression, exhaustion and a dependence on liquor to cope with the stress, Farnsworth vowed to bring television from conception to commercialization. He aimed to get into broadcasting, but because the FCC would not yet allocate spectrum space for television, Farnsworth decided to enter into manufacturing, which would lead him to Fort Wayne, Indiana.



According to the J. Willard Marriott Digital Library at the University of Utah, in 1938 the Farnsworth television show was taken on a country wide tour and was very well received



## **ABOUT THE GULF COAST MODEL 'A' CLUB**

The Traveler newsletter is published for the membership and friends of the Gulf Coast Model 'A' Club. Outings are held monthly at various locations and times. Views expressed in the Traveler are not necessarily those of the Club Officers or MAFCA. Club membership is \$25.00 per year and can be mailed to Becky Baisden at:

GCMAC,  
PO Box 812

Cantonment, FL 32533

Club dues are \$25 per year for individuals or families. We currently have a membership of 40+ families. We believe in doing maintenance on the cars, educating ourselves on the Model 'A', fellowship with other members, showing the cars, driving the cars locally and on tours and having a great time seeing and driving Model 'A' Fords. We have fun and would welcome you as a member whether you own a Model A or not. Come join with us in a wonderful hobby that is historical and worthwhile. You will meet friendly people who are in love with the Model 'A' and love to drive, show and talk about these interesting cars.



## **THE TRAVELER**

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