



## Model A Fashion Enthusiasts

Congratulations, so your club is interested in era fashions. Here is a packet of ideas and articles which we hope will inspire you and your club members. How to “Spark” an Interest in Model A Fashion, is a basic outline to get your club started in era fashion. Articles that are included can be used in your newsletter or for reference. The articles can be edited to exclude mention of specific clubs and people. Good luck and if you have any questions go to the MAFCA website and email the Era Fashion Committee (EFC) Chairperson.

MAFCA

Era Fashion Committee 2008

# How to “Spark” an Interest in Model A Fashion

By Anne Neely-Beck, MAFCA Era Fashion Committee, 2005-2009

1. Call a meeting of all the interested people in your club. If you already meet regularly then make it a special meeting such as a luncheon or tea at a restaurant. If you do not meet regularly then have a designated person call everyone to invite them to lunch or tea at a given restaurant. The club will probably budget the money for this purpose, if you ask.

2. Set a goal. Example: You may take a certain tour every year, so make it a goal for everyone to be dressed in era looking clothing for the trip.

3. Study pictures from the Model A Era. Good sources are;

- *MAFCA Fashion Guidelines*
- *MAFCA A Book of Fashion Facts*
- *The Restorer*
- Vintage magazines from 1928-1931
- Vintage catalogs from the era
- Internet
- Reproduction catalogs
- Books about vintage fashion
- Dated vintage photos from your family or other sources
- Vintage patterns

Be “true” to your car and pick the style that matches your year of car.

4. Decide whether you are going to look for originals, fun fashions, reproductions, or a combination of two or three to give you that Model A Era Image look.

5. A question to consider is, do I want to be judged at a MAFCA meet. Complete instructions can be found in the *Fashion Guidelines*.

6. “SHOP TILL YOU DROP” Plan a day “field trip” and shop for your special look.

Some suggested shopping places

- Antique stores
- Thrift stores
- Goodwill
- Salvation Army
- Vintage clothing stores
- Department stores
- Ross
- T. J. Maxx
- Marshall's
- Stein Mart
- J. C. Penney
- Kohl's

For the “shop-a-holic” in your club, they might be the one who could be on the look out for vintage, fun, and reproduction items for everyone in your club.

- Catalogs
- Newport News
- J. C. Penney

Internet (buyer beware) Ebay and other sites are not always what they seem when it comes to the description of clothing items. Many of the items listed do not have the correct date.

7. Issues with Originals

Caring  
Storing  
Wearing

8. Making Reproduction from Patterns

Fabric store patterns  
Internet patterns  
MAFCA patterns  
MARC patterns

If you want to be judged in reproduction then you will have to follow MAFCA *Fashion Guidelines* using fabric found in the Model A era to make your garment. If going for Model A Era Image, modern day fabric content is okay.

9. Getting Your Man Interested in Model A Era Fashion

Bribe!! Example: Your club is asked to drive beauty queens in a parade, have the men dress in white shirts, bow ties, and a driving cap or hat.

Threaten (only if you must!)

Kill with kindness (this works well)

Use all three, bribe, threaten, and kindness.

10. Keep that “spark,” don’t retard it!!



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# General Guidelines for Major Garments of the Model A Era

Anne Neely-Beck

MAFCA gives some general guidelines for the Major Garment category from 1928 to 1931. As like today, what made a dress appropriate for the occasion was its fabric, style, and the accessories chosen to complement the outfit. Different times of the day and different occasions require different outfits.

Examples:

- Morning and at home wear
- Casual and street wear
- Sports and spectator wear
- Formal luncheon and afternoon tea wear (dresses)
- Evening wear
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If you are to be judged in a MAFCA event, you are judged by your major garment which receives the most points, then you are judged on the rest of your items that make up the outfit for the balance of the points awarded.

The biggest difference in dresses from 1928-1931 was the moving waistline. In 1928 and 1929 the waist was at the widest part of the hipline. When the 1929 Fall/Winter catalogs came out the waistline had moved to the top of the hips or a little bit above. Paris fashions of 1929 showed a natural waistline but we were more conservative here in America, and we were about to enter the Depression.

A spring 1930 catalog showed the new waistline half way between the hipline and the natural waist. By the end of 1930 the natural waistline was shown. In 1931 the skirt of the dress was attached to the bodice at the natural waistline and belted. In 1928-1929 most hems were uneven but in 1930-1931 the hemline was straight except for some evening wear. A good way to remember is, before the Depression the waistlines were low and hems short and after the Depression the waistlines were higher and hems longer.

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# Wearing, Caring, and Storing Vintage Clothes

By Anne Neely-Beck

Finding vintage clothes to purchase and wear is a challenge. The web, thrift shops, antique stores, garage sales, and flea markets are all good choices. Some helpful hints for trying clothes on or determining whether vintage garments fit comes from Christine de Socarras. She states, “the best way to find out if sleeves of a dress or blouse fit is to put your arms in the sleeves prior to trying on the complete garment. If your arm fits the sleeve, then try on the dress. Over the years, this has proven to be an easy way to find out if dress sleeves will fit before trying on a garment. This is particularly helpful at a flea market, antique show, etc. where there are usually no facilities to try on vintage clothes.”

When wearing vintage clothes and pinning a brooch or flowers to the garment, make sure the pin’s thickness does not gouge the threads of the fabric. Vintage fabric can have the threads broken and start a hole that can never be repaired. If you have a long dress or one with a short train attached, practice wearing it and walking in it a few times. It is so easy to catch a heel in the vintage fabric and tear it beyond repair.

Caring for vintage clothes is time consuming. The fabric is so delicate and requires special care. After you wear one of your vintage garments, turn it inside out and drape it over a chair so the garment can dry out if it has any perspiration on it. In a perfect world, you should wash or dry clean the garment after you wear it. The less time you give odors and stains to set in, the more likely they will vanish during washing or dry cleaning.

Here a few tips on washing, dry cleaning, stain removal, and moth protection. Some I have used, and some are suggestions I found by doing research on caring for vintage clothes. I have used a product called Le Blanc linen wash ([www.linenwash.com](http://www.linenwash.com) or 1-800-814-9274) This is a great product for washing vintage linens and any cotton fabric, and I highly recommend it. Several articles I have read recommended using Ivory Snow for washing. Every article I have read says not to use Woolite on vintage fabric because it may damage the fabric. I always hand wash vintage fabric. I have read articles that say it is okay to use the washing machine. The dry cleaners can be a good source for cleaning vintage garments. You must have a good relationship with your dry cleaner. From personal experience, sometimes that doesn’t even work, as my favorite vintage silk dress was returned to me in shreds. Do talk to the dry cleaner before having a vintage garment cleaned. Most of the time they will take the extra precaution needed to clean a vintage item. Moths are not one of my favorite subjects. I think central Georgia must be the moth capital of the world. I have to use moth balls and endure the smell. I did read an interesting article that stated, put the garment in a pillow case and put it in the freezer. Keep it there for one week and this process should kill everything that eats the fabric. I think I will stick with moth balls and the smell. Here are some “off the wall tips” for getting stains out of vintage clothes. (Use with caution)

- Remove make up by rubbing stain with a slice of bread.
- Use cornstarch to blot onto any stains that occurs while wearing the garment (it will absorb the stain and minimize damage, as a stopgap measure before regular cleaning)
- Use toothpaste (non-gel, non colored, and no additives) to remove blood and protein stains.

Storing vintage clothes can be a challenge also. If you hang the garment, never use a metal hanger. Use a padded hanger, or better yet, roll the garment in a clean old white sheet (muslin, linen or 100% cotton) and put it in a container that breathes. This way of storing is great because when you unroll the garment the wrinkles will disappear in a short time. Do not use a plastic bag! A bag cannot breathe.

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## Putting Together An Era Looking Outfit

By Anne Neely-Beck

You can put together an era looking outfit with a little knowledge of the styles of the Model A period. This knowledge can be obtained from many sources such as the internet, (example; type in 1928-1931 vintage fashions in a search engine such as MSN, Google, or Yahoo and you will get many “hits”) *MAFCA Fashion Guidelines*, *MAFCA A Book of Fashion Facts*, *MARC-Model A Fashion Standards*, vintage fashion catalogs, and magazines of the era.

The most basic information you need to know to put together a man or woman’s outfit is just to know the difference of fashions from 1928 to 1931. The years 1928 and 1929 were very different from 1930 and 1931. The only thing that was constant in the Model A era was that zippers were not used on garments, just snaps, buttons, and hooks. Women’s fashions of 1928 and 1929 had a low waistline and hems to the knee or slightly below and a loose fit. From 1930 to 1931 the waistline moved up to the natural waist and the hemline went down below the knee to about mid-calf and the dress had a more fitted look that was usually cut on the bias. Men’s fashions in the 1928-1929 time frame consisted of loose-fitting pants and knickers in a variety of fabrics. Suits worn for daytime wear were worn with colored shirts such as peach, putty and blue-gray. In 1930 and 1931 generous cut pants were still in vogue and there was a rising popularity of the double-breasted suit.

Finding your vintage or vintage looking clothes can be done by shopping department stores, thrift shops, antique shops, Ebay and vintage clothing dealers on the web. (See web lists at end of article) Just keep in mind the style of the era and be creative. If the new clothing has a zipper, plan to wear a jacket, coat, or fur to camouflage it. There are also some great retro/vintage patterns available at the fabric store, on the internet and from MAFCA and MARC.

Set a goal and pick a parade or event to have your whole club dress in their vintage looking clothes. You will have a “ball” obtaining the LOOK!

Web sites: [www.ballyhoovintage.com](http://www.ballyhoovintage.com), [www.justsaywhen.com](http://www.justsaywhen.com), [www.vintagevixen.com](http://www.vintagevixen.com),  
[www.revampvintage.com](http://www.revampvintage.com), [www.rrnspace.com](http://www.rrnspace.com), [www.davenportandco.com](http://www.davenportandco.com).

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## Shoes and Accessories of the Model A Era

By Anne Neely-Beck

Development of affordable man-made materials and mass production during the 1920's made beautiful clothes and shoes available to everyone. The most popular shoe of the late 1920's for women was a single-bar pump with a pointed toe, high-waisted heel, and one button. Other popular styles included T-straps, high tongued, cutaway decorated, and crossovers. Shoe materials used in the 1920's included bight fabrics, dyed leather, and metallic. Also luxury materials such as satins, silks, velvets were used and they often were accented with over-stitching, embroidery, and beading. Heels were made of materials such as Wedgwood, Bakelite, Jasperware, and leather. In the late 1920's the two-toned spectator for men emerged. This looked great with knickers. The early 1930's were much the same as the late 1920's for shoe design. The Art Deco movement did influence shoe styles early in the 1930's decade with it's bold geometric look. By the early 1930's spectator shoes were clearly the style for men and boots were on their way out.

Handbags were much the same in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Beaded bags were prevalent as were enameled mesh bags and Art Deco design bags.

The most popular hats of the late 1920's were cloche hats. The early 1930's saw the cloche hat being replaced by hats with brims and berets. In the early 1930's it was common to see hats worn at an angle.

Coco Channel influenced the 1920's by using inexpensive jewelry and scarves to appeal to practical American women. Art Deco had its heyday during the late 1920's and early 1930's. The central theme of Art Deco was geometry and symmetry. Probably the most popular jewelry piece of the era was the pearl necklace. Another popular item was the double-clip brooch. Two identical clips would be attached together and worn as a single brooch. More often they were worn separately on the lapels or belt of a dress.

The Model A era was a time of change not only for fashion but for life in general, from prosperity to depression in a span of a few years.

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