2019 MAFCA Literary Awards
Diagnosing Your Model A’s Misbehavior

Don’t just guess, be systematic.

By Howard Eckstein

During a day’s work in the middle of nowhere, we encountered a problem that’s not too uncommon: the engine was misbehaving. Before we can diagnose the issue, we need to understand the principles on which your car was engineered. Knowing these things can help us identify the source of the problem.

The symptoms were clear: a dull, low-revving engine. We suspected a problem with the distributor. The symptoms returned a while later, and we decided to investigate. After checking the distributor cap, we found that it was not in proper alignment with the breaker arm, but the gap was okay (Figure 2). We put it all back together and drove on.

At one point in Elko, I stopped and realized that the engine was running rough. We checked the spark plug wires, but everything seemed to be in order. We decided to investigate further and drive to Sparks to see if we could find any clues.

After a few minutes, we found the script and continued on our journey.

Figure 2. The distributor was not in proper alignment with the breaker arm.
A ‘Dusey’ of a Way To Set the Zenith Float Level

I copied Jack Dusenberry’s tester and made some improvements.

By Lynn Sondenaa

I was having carburetor problems, so I asked my good friend Jack Dusenberry to engineer a MAFCO carburetor tester. Jack and his wife, Pat, live in Vancouver, Washington, and belong to two local clubs: the Valley Air of Vancouver and the Bears of Portland, Oregon. Jack offered me his ‘Jack Dusenberry School of Carbsinclings,’ which contained about 18 hours of instruction on how to rebuild and adjust Zenith carburetors.

Jack is a genius on these pieces of cast iron, simple and to the point.

Lynn Sondenaa

Based on what he taught me, I copied his float-level tester and made some improvements to its function (Figure 1).

The float test stand is made of 1/4-inch plate steel, 6-inch steel by 32 inches long. Because it is heavy, it is stable and does not need clamping. Still, it is portable.

The vertical post, made from 3/8” by 1” rectangular tubing, also holds the clamp at the end for storage (Figure 2).

Having the necessary tools on the test stand makes it more convenient. I drilled holes and attached small screws to hold these items:

- 8-inch ruler
- three wrenches: 1/2, 9/16, 5/8
- extra float gasket (Figure 3)

I made the fuel tank from an old petrotherm can, but a small gas engine fuel tank could also be used. The tank is designated as the carburetor

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3
A new look at the 1929 Special Coupe, once owned by Fred Fischer.

I had known about the car, a 1929 Special Coupe, since I bought my own 1929 Special Coupe back in 95. The finish date is 6-3-29, and according to my buddy Steve Packer, the car was built in the Tiny Cities Plant in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Having no idea that there’s a story behind how to go about restoring a Model A, I joined the Bluc Mountain 4x and soon learned of a Special Coupe that belonged to Hope and Cecil Fischer, right here in Burnelton. I made several trips

Twenty-five-year-old Hope Fischer walked into my shop and took one look at the car Her grandfather had bought new in 1929. She opened the driver’s door and climbed in. As she looked it over, a small crowd took pictures and marveled at her resemblance. She pointed to the dash lamp and asked me, “Is this the choke?”

“No,” I said. “That’s the dash light.”

Then she turned the choke knob and said, “That’s it.”

New Hope for a Special Coupe

After some fifty years in storage, this one was rescued.

Jack Remillard
2019 Director’s Literary Award

Wes Hartley

According to Wes, the rugged beauty of the terrain, as well as Benita and his wife, attracted them to this country. On April 16th, they headed off from Christchurch to cover the rally, which was a wonderful opportunity for Benita and Wes to experience the beautiful landscapes of New Zealand. During the rally, Wes shared the excitement of driving his vintage car, as it became a central part of the event. The rally was a unique opportunity for him to reconnect with his passion for vintage vehicles and to meet other like-minded enthusiasts. The trip was not only enjoyable but also a chance to make memories that would last a lifetime. Wes Hartley’s experiences during the 2019 National Model A Rally have left a lasting impression on everyone who participated in the event.
One, Two, Dress Up My Shoe

By Sherry Winkinhofer

Women would buy a simple pair of pumps, then use shoe ornaments to change the looks.

Shoes in the early part of the 1950s were required to be comfortable and functional, but not necessarily attractive as they were not meant to be seen beneath long slacks. But in the 1950s, high heels began to climb higher, and shoe styles changed with them. Anklets were actually visible, and stylish shoes became more desirable.

An amazing variety of shoes were available in the Modest A years, with strap and buckle being popular design elements. But multiple pairs of shoes were expensive, so designers of the day decided to change the look. To do so, shoe clips were a must for many.

Shoe clips were a popular option. A plain pair of shoes could be shored up for evening wear by simply slipping on a pair of butterfly or shoe buckles.

But shoe buckles were not a popular choice, as they were too conspicuous, so some women used shoe ornaments for just a few cents in most of the department store catalogs. They were meant to be shifted onto the shoes. The shoe buckle (figure 2) appears to have been the most popular choice, as it was the most commonly pictured when thinking of shoe clips.

A secret (figure 3) was meant to be hidden. The buckle shown here was meant as a "shoe ornament," but was not.

A secret (figure 3) was meant to be hidden. The buckle shown here was meant as a "shoe ornament," but was not.

One thing that always puzzled me was how they attached the large buckle without damaging the shoes. In some of the older styles, ribbons or lace provided an object to hold the buckle on. But on the newer leather shoes, that was not an option.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

The local fashion writer with and without the clip attached.
2019 Jim Ryner Photograph Award

Dan Ewing