

# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue

# The Ford Script



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November 2013

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Photo from 2<sup>nd</sup> annual car show and flea market at Jerry's Ford, May 4, 1975. Pictured left to right are: Bill Worsham, Wayne Parker, Doug Handy and Jack Willis



Dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Model A Fords for 50 years

# The Ford Script

Official publication of:  
George Washington Chapter, Inc.  
of the Model A Ford Club of America  
and the Mount Vernon Region  
of the Model A Restorers Club  
3903 Old Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Chapter meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at the American Legion Hall, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean, Virginia. Social meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. and the business meeting starts at 7:45. Members and guests are invited and encouraged to drive their antique cars to the meetings.

Chapter members are encouraged to belong to both MAFCA and MARC national clubs.  
The chapter Web page on the Internet may be accessed by:

[www.gwcmodeleda.org](http://www.gwcmodeleda.org)  
Web Master: Greg Shepherd

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## **A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

This Script edition was originally intended to be an enhancement of the club history that Chuck Zierdt put out in 1988 plus all we've done as a club since. However, I soon realized that, due to space limitations, that would not be possible. I also realized after a week of organizing club photographs that, due to the limitations of size on transmitting documents with many photos electronically, the 60 photos I'd assembled would overwhelm everyone's email box. Rather than pick and choose a limited number, thus disappointing or bewildering those folks left out, I opted to just limit myself to photos that would go with the written content of this Script.

So kindly view this issue as hitting the high points of our club's illustrious history. We can save the local tours, Cherry Blossom and other parades, the Clint Eastwood movie, our caravans to national MARC and MAFCA meets, and whatever else for a thorough club history booklet sometime in the future. For now, just use this Script to enhance your knowledge of our early years and as a reminder of recent history.

Bill Sims

## **A BRIEF CLUB HISTORY**

As far back as 1949 when Willard Kidd was driving his 1931 Roadster to his job as bridge tender at the Memorial Bridge, (that car is now owned by Bill Benedict) he, Jack Knowles and others decided to form a club devoted to the Model A. The club was known as the Model A Club of America or (MACA).

Model A Restorers Club (MARC) formed in 1952. Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA) in 1956.

MACA became the Potomac Chapter of the Model A Ford Club of America in 1958.

Mount Vernon Region of MARC chartered in 1962. Several members of both clubs decided to form a MAFCA chapter in the Mount Vernon area of Virginia.

The George Washington Chapter was chartered by MAFCA on May 11, 1963, with a 17-member limit.

Member Mac Spears proposed the 17-member rule be repealed and on November 23, 1973, the motion was passed and the club membership was opened to anyone who had an interest in the Model A.

New Board of Directors elected November 23, 1973, with Joe Thoma, President, Bill Worsham, Vice President, Bill Condon Sr., Secretary, and Andy Jaeger, Treasurer.

Regular monthly newsletter published by Bill Condon Sr. began on January 17, 1974. (Later published monthly by John and Jenny Dingle)

First car show held at Jerry's Ford on May 9, 1974 with Andy Jaeger and Bill Condon Jr. as co-chairman and 75 cars on display.

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## **A BRIEF CLUB HISTORY (Cont.)**

Second car show held at Jerry's Ford on May 8, 1975 with over 150 cars on display. With room only for 100 cars, a new location had to be found.

First car show held at Sully Plantation on June 13, 1976, with Bill Worsham as Chairman.

George Washington Chapter assumed the Mount Vernon Region MARC charter on February 2, 1978, and became a dual MAFCA/MARC club.

The George Washington Chapter hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> annual MAFCA meet on June 28, 1978, at the Thomas Jefferson Center in Arlington with John Dingle as chairman.

The first post-Sully Pancake Breakfast and Picnic was held at Andy and Ellen Jaeger's Potomac River-front property circa 1978, initially to use up all the surplus food from Sully the week before, and has been held there almost every year since.

First issue of *The Script* published September 1980 by Dave Meyersburg.  
(First Electronic publication of *The Script* January 2011)

Club celebrated its 25th anniversary in August 1988 with a huge pig picking. The pig picking is still an annual picnic event today.

Other annual events have evolved such as, Train day at the Clements, Small Parts Day, Indoor/Outdoor Flea Markets, Christmas Party, Woody's tours and Janet Merkel's Shenandoah weekends.

The club has awarded \$23,500 in scholarships since 2009.

Club hosted the first MARC National Tour in Charlottesville on September 17, 2009 with Woody Williams as chairman.

First lady President, Charlene Beckner,  
elected December 2, 2010.



Club held their 40<sup>th</sup> antique car show on June 16, 2013, at Sully Historic Site.

Club celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on July 21, 2013.

## THE GWC'S CLUB PRESIDENTS

At the June 1998 General Meeting, 12 former GWC Presidents were awarded special name tags by sitting President Clem Clement. They then sat for this photo. Seven Presidents who were still living at the time but were unable to attend the meeting were: Joe Thoma, Gordon Sanford, John Dingle, Tom Shaw, Walt Bratton, Richard Dove and Bobby Harrington.



Standing: Andy Pogan, Jerry Breedlove, Wayne Parker, Bill Worsham, John Howell,  
Millard Springer, and Clem Clement

Seated: Art Storer, Chuck Zierdt, Don Temple, Peyton Randolph, Jim Cartmill and Bob Wild

### GWC Club Presidents to Present

R.C. "Clem" Griffin	1964	Charles H. Zierdt	1986
Charles M. Moltz	1965	Richard Dove	1987
Robert Moore	1966	J. Peyton Randolph	1988
R.C. "Clem" Griffin	1967-1968	Robert Harrington	1989
Gerald Pendergrass	1969	John Howell	1990
Donald Pope	1970-1973	Jerry Breedlove	1991
Joseph Thoma	1974	Andy Pogan	1992-1993
William Worsham	1975	Jim Cartmill	1994-1995
Robert Wild	1976	Millard Springer	1996-1997
Arthur Richmond	1977	Clem Clement	1998-1999
Wayne Parker	1978	Chuck Manns	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2000
Gordon Sanford	1979	Stan Johnson	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 2000
John Dingle	1980	Jon Philips	2001-2003
Thomas Shaw	1981	Woody Williams	2004-2005
John Howell	1982	Paul Gauthier	2006
Arthur Storer	1983	Tom Quigley	2007-2010
Donald Temple	1984	Charlene Beckner	2011-2013
Walter Thomas Bratton	1985		

## LIFETIME MEMBERS

The criteria for Lifetime Honorary Membership are both qualitative and quantitative and may include any or all of the following:

- Outstanding and sustained service on behalf of the Club
- Sustained excellence in researching, restoring and maintaining the Model A Ford
- Outstanding and sustained contributions to the Model A hobby and to the Club
- Conspicuous, valuable and sustained helpfulness to other members

The following members and spouses met some or all of the criteria above and were awarded Lifetime Membership:

Clem and Sandy Clement  
Andrew and Ellen Jaeger  
Benny and Sharon Leonard  
Robert and Elsie Railey  
Peyton and Hellen Randolph  
Millard and Judy Springer  
Donald and Judy Temple  
Joseph and Lorraine Thoma  
Woody and Linda Williams  
Bill and Judy Worsham

## CARL PATRICK MEMORIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Carl Patrick was a member of this Club in the 1970s and '80s and set the standard for helping fellow club members in need. His philosophy became the guiding principles for bestowing this award. A Carl Patrick awardee should believe in the restoration and preservation of the Model A Ford "as Henry built it," be willing to share his knowledge of the Model A with his fellow members, give unselfishly of his time to help others restore and preserve the Model A Ford, and help promote the friendship and fellowship we all enjoy because of the Model A Ford. This award may only be given to one person a year. Those listed below met those criteria and were awarded the Carl Patrick Memorial Award:

Millard Springer	1985
Dick Lebkicker	1986
John Kandl	1987
Chuck Zierdt	1988
Bill Worsham	1990
Andy Pogan	1994
Don Temple	1997
Herschel Brummit	2000
Stan Johnson	2001
Tom Terko	2005

## **MY EXPERIENCE WITH MODEL A FORDS**

(Joe Thoma has been a member of the GWC for 43 years and is one of its past presidents. He now lives in Colorado and holds the status of Life Member. This article, originally published in 3 parts in the August, October and December 1996 issues of The Ford Script, contains an intriguing look into our Club's early years. In fact, it was this article that inspired the idea for a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Script. Our thanks to his wife Lorraine, who retyped and sent the article to us.)



One day in 1970 as I drove through Leesburg, VA, I saw a Model A for sale in a yard. As I walked toward this beauty, which was free of rust with nothing missing, I instantly acquired an acute fever. The owner was Bill Whitmore. The motor didn't run, which was of some concern to me, although I was unsuccessful at making it a major negotiating issue.

A week after my wife and I towed our A home, I changed the oil and plugs, installed a battery, added water and gas. In so doing, I relearned where all the significant operating parts of a Model A were located and began to feel more comfortable around my new toy. The big moment came as I pressed the starter and pulled on the choke while trying to remember if I was doing this right. The darn thing popped and shuddered with dust all around and as it started to run, a wonderful feeling came over me--I realized I had done this all by myself. My confidence level was so high I felt there would be nothing I couldn't fix myself. The engine was working very hard though, and within 30 seconds it stopped.

With my ego deflated, I got out and stood looking at the engine. Everything appeared to be okay, so I decided to try starting it again. It started up nicely but quickly began gasping, and it popped again a couple of times as it quivered and shook, then suddenly roared to life as I had it on full throttle. I backed off the throttle and it purred away with that beautiful Model A sound. I was again on cloud nine. I got out to walk around the car and listen to it run and there behind the exhaust pipe, for a distance of some 20 feet, was a string of mouse nests, bones and dead meat. I wish to this day I'd taken a picture of it.

A few weeks later, a tall likable fellow by the name of Mack Spears stopped by. He had heard of my new toy and said he also had a Model A. He said there was a small G. W. Chapter of MAFCA in the area and mentioned I could join it. He proceeded to unintentionally impress me with his vast knowledge of various parts and functions of my car as he spoke of differences in Model A's. Much of the time I didn't fully understand all he said as I nodded my head. Much later, as he drove away, I realized we had become almost instant friends.

I joined the Club and the first meeting I attended had a total of 5 people: Club President Don Pope, Andy Jaeger, Mack Spears, Jim Van Ness, and myself. I forget what specific officer titles were held by Andy, Mack, and Jim but believe there were only 3 Club officers. I'm sure they served dual roles. Subsequent meetings were also attended by roughly a half dozen people. Don, Andy and Mack attended every meeting. Other attendees at varying times included Jim Cline, Roger McClanahan, Basil Meadows, Julio Rodrigues, Roy Nichols, Bill Bendall, Merle Phillips, Jerry Pendergrass, and Walt Kandetsky. These newly acquired acquaintances of mine all shared an enthusiastic and genuine interest in their own and others' Model A's.

## **MY EXPERIENCE WITH MODEL A FORDS (Cont.)**

Most of the meetings were held in members' homes or in a rented back room of the Bratwurst House in Springfield. During one of those meetings I was elected activities and membership chairman. I believe it was at this point that I decided to really apply myself in my new role and earn the respect and friendship extended by these very likeable and dedicated people.

I do not recall anyone talking about a Model A Restorer's Club in our area at that time. I suspect it was a matter of trying to keep the G W Chapter of MAFCA alive and not subjecting additional activities and demands on its members. The only people I know of who can knowledgeably speak of MARC of that time are Dick Lebkicker, Jim Weatherfield, and Van Lindsey. I know there are a couple of others; I'm sorry I don't remember who.

In a short while our club membership and activity began to grow. Eager in my new role, I suggested we should consider holding an antique auto show and maybe even have a small flea market with it. That comment evoked a bit of laughter among the club officer's as they choked and spilled some of their beer. Really! This was followed by some good natured joshing as they told me of previous unsuccessful attempts to organize such an ambitious event. I respected their comments, but I couldn't abandon the thought; I was convinced the potential was near.

Somewhere in this timeframe I got a call from a relatively new member I had brought into the club by the name of Bill Worsham. He said "they" were having a meeting to solicit nominations for a club president for 1974 and would I be interested? I chuckled a bit, said no because I didn't know anything about a Model A Ford and wouldn't know how to perform as president. Undaunted, he persisted until I agreed to think about it partly just to get him off the phone and give me time to think of how to gracefully decline. When I asked how long I had to think this over he said, "Oh, about 30 minutes." I shortly returned his call and said I would oblige if I could have Bill Worsham as my Vice President and an agreement to formally change the by-laws to delete the limited club membership clause. (The existing by-laws limited membership to 17 people and we were already well over that number. I also felt we would need more people for the antique auto show I would now plan). I learned later that I had already been "drafted" as the club president for 1974 and my acceptance as a nominee had merely confirmed my fate.

As the membership and activities continued to expand, so did the need for a larger and more suitable place to meet. We all looked around for something we could afford, which was nothing. I finally got Jerry's Ford a bit interested and talked Andy Jaeger into going with me to sell them on the idea of an added attraction. That turned out to be an easy sell for us. We were allowed to hold our meetings (at no cost) in the service department receiving area from around seven to nine o'clock on various evenings during a month. In exchange, we would park any Model A Fords in front of the building so people could look at them and maybe also some new Fords while they were there.

The by-laws were amended posthaste. As club president I again mentioned the possibility of our own antique auto show and nearly everyone appeared to be at least a little enthusiastic. Our Club had in a very short time expanded its membership considerably and all were very strong supporters. In addition to those I have mentioned earlier, there was Carl Patrick, Dave Henderson, Bill Wood, John Dingle, Gordon Sanford, Bill Condon Sr. and Bill Condon Jr., Bob

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## MY EXPERIENCE WITH MODEL A FORDS (Cont.)

Wild, Wayne Parker, Carl Cockerman, Dewey Burleigh, Doug Handy, Al Heine, Willard Jenkins, Joe Ramey, Ed Simpson, Jerry Snyder, Dick Wade, Dave Westenberger, Gordon White. Forgive me for those not mentioned; they all deserve to be.

I believe it was in mid March of 1974 when we decided to proceed with plans for our own antique car show. A site had to be chosen and Jerry's Ford seemed a logical location. Our relationship had been good, it would afford no mud problems, and all that remained was to sell the idea to Jerry's Ford. They liked the idea as a way to attract people and assured us a large area of their parking lot would be provided at no cost to the Club. A show on May 5th was mutually agreed upon. The Club planned for three categories of cars consisting of five classes. Model A's 1928 - 1929 open and closed, Model A's 1930 - 1931 open and closed, and all years - all cars.

Preparing for the show was the worst part. Time was relatively short, and we had few dollars to spend on advertising, trophies, concessions, and sanitary facilities. We didn't know how many antique cars to realistically expect nor how large the public attendance would be. Still we had to advertise to ensure some measure of success. Show announcements were hand-printed and placed wherever they were accepted. I personally attached more than a few in noticeable places, including the men's rooms at car flea markets and shows in Gaithersburg, Frederick, Winchester and any other events. Others in the club distributed them in similar ways. I don't know of even one person in our club who didn't volunteer a good bit of time and effort in one way or another. Many problems emerged during all this preparation but most were quickly resolved.



Seventy five antique cars and a pretty large crowd came to our show. We had no major problems and everyone was happy with the success. I don't recall how much money the club netted but it was sufficient for us to search for a more desirable meeting place.

While we were grateful to Jerry's Ford, there were some undesirable problems associated with the current arrangement. In addition to short-notice availability times, folding chairs had to be set up and returned to the storage room, we sat in a very open unattractive area, meetings were limited to an hour and a half, employees were always walking and talking between the showroom and service area, the temperature wasn't real comfortable, plus you had car (none Model A) and vending machine noises, no beer, etc. etc.

We arranged for monthly rental at the American Legion Hall in Springfield, Virginia. What a morale booster this was! We finally had a quite comfortable place on pre-scheduled evenings with no curfew; we also could sell drinks, etc. Most of the revenue came from the drinks we sold and the 50/50 drawing. The proceeds from our show were frugally spent on newsletters, postage, etc., with the remainder held back to help pay the rent. With about 85 members, we were breaking even at best.

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## **MY EXPERIENCE WITH MODEL A FORDS (Cont.)**

The Club continued to grow and what a fine group of people it was. The Club officers and I really felt great to see members having such a good time at our meetings. Once in a while there was some controversy on various issues under discussion. Issues were always settled in an amicable fashion. As the Club President, I always viewed disagreements as a healthy and positive sign that members really cared about issues at hand. I believe this helped strengthen and stabilize the Club.

Part of the fun of being Club President was that I always had a good excuse to drive my Model A. It had knobby tires on the rear and I made good use of them driving in rain, mud, and snow; it didn't matter to me as I was having a great time. Our first real caravan (17 cars) went to Culpeper. On the way home Doug Handy's car quit, and I towed it about 20 miles with my A.

There were interesting little incidents that I will never forget. Like when we established the 2nd Vice President position and Bob Wild was voted in. He asked, "Just exactly what all am I supposed to do?" Well, we hadn't had time to write a job description so I simply answered with "whatever is necessary." And believe me, he sure did just that. He was a tremendous asset to our early growth and was the Club President in 1976. He was also responsible for a beautifully decorated hall for our first Xmas dinner. A yellow Model A wheel was attractively used as a centerpiece.

Then there was the time I received a phone call from a lady in distress with her Model A somewhere on Route 50 near Middleburg. I summoned a couple of Club members, and we went to her rescue. Her name was Thursday Featherstone, and she was accompanied by her friend Kathy Wilaby, both from Yorba Linda, California. They sold ladies cosmetics under a well-known name and the Model A (a delivery) was packed with this stuff. They had driven this Model A all the way from California. It was a little hard to believe, but the A did have California plates on it, and she even further identified herself with her California driver's license. The generator had quit working, and it had numerous other ailments as well. It turned out that a lot of Club members pretty much rebuilt her car in about two weeks. The gals then left for New York City. As far as I know, no one ever heard from them again.

After 1974 I served on the Board of Directors for 5 years. Bill Worsham became the 1975 Club President, and he was as busy then as he is today in always promoting an improved car show for the next year. It was largely through his own perseverance that the Club secured Sully Plantation for our 1976 show. The Club had to have more money to hold this show and bought a 1929 Model A Tudor from Al Heine to raffle off. Bill asked me to chair the car raffle and although I forget our net gain, it was sufficient to provide the Club with enough money to pay off our first Sully show expenses. The raffle car was won by fellow Club member Alfred Black, who still owns and drives it.

There were a lot of humorous incidents that occurred in the mid-1970's and here is just one of them. One Saturday I was at home working on my limited A restoration trying to decide if I should take the body completely off or merely raise it up on one side at a time. A bunch of Club members returning from a show in La Plata, Md., stopped by to say hello. I offered them a beer (they weren't hungry) while I went in the house to quickly prepare a sandwich to eat with my beer. Once inside I was aware of a lot of laughs and commotion outdoors, which gave me a rich feeling to have such wonderful friends.

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## MY EXPERIENCE WITH MODEL A FORDS (Cont.)

When I stepped out the door, the body of my A was on the ground beside the chassis!! My "friends" got a mighty big laugh out of that one as they finished their beer and drove away. I also had to chuckle a little but mostly am still waiting to get even with them. Among them were Wayne Parker, Doug Handy, Robert Van Lindsey, Bill Worsham, Billy Condon, Bill Price, Gary Hubbard and Dewey Burleigh.

After our Club had held a few successful car shows, the possibility of our hosting the 1978 MAFCA National Meet was brought up. We had a fairly large and very stable and enthusiastic membership, which voted in favor of this ambitious project. Our Club happily accepted

volunteer John Dingle as the potential meet chairman, with Gordon Sanford as the co-chairman. On a trip to California, I presented our offer to MAFCA Headquarters for consideration. We were later accepted to hold the meet, and John and Gordon went to work. More than anyone else, these two members spent countless hours devoted to searching for a suitable place to hold the meet and do all the planning and other actions connected with it. The meet was held at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in



Arlington, which was the only place that offered enough inside floor space (around 60,000-plus square feet) for selected show cars. A large portion of the funds required for this great adventure were provided by way of another raffle car, which I again chaired. The raffle car was a 1928 Model A roadster purchased from the late Ed Rohr of Manassas. The winner of this raffle car was Clayton Ormsbee. I believe he some time later sold the car to club member Steve Forrester, who had sold him the winning ticket.

## THE 1978 NATIONAL MEET [35] YEARS AGO

(By Bill Worsham. Portions reprinted from the June and July 1988 Ford Scripts)

It doesn't seem possible that [35] years have gone by since we hosted the '78 MAFCA National Meet. Looking back, it seems like yesterday. The idea to host the National goes back to a Board Meeting at Wayne Parker's house in June of '76. The club was growing by leaps and bounds, and we had just held our first car show at Sully. We had a little extra money in the treasury; and we decided, why not bring the National Meet to the East for a change? I don't think any of us realized what we were getting into.

The Board appointed Andy Jaeger and myself to attend the '76 National Meet in Nashville and

It's a date - in '78

*"Golden Days with Golden A's"*



**JUNE 28, 29, 30, JULY 1, 1978**

WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

**Golden Anniversary**

International M.A.F.C.A. Meet & Convention

*Hosted by George Washington Chapter Inc.*

## **THE 1978 NATIONAL MEET (Cont.)**

make a proposal to the National Board. Our proposal consisted of some photos of the Sully show and some brochures of points of interest around the Washington area. The other proposal was from Hawaii, and we were elated when we were awarded the meet, especially when the Hawaiian proposal included hula girls.

John Dingle volunteered to be the meet chairman, and when we sat down and analyzed the situation, we realized we might have made a big mistake. The Washington area, as big a tourist area as it is, had very few areas which could accommodate the show. The only covered space which could house the cars was the National Guard Armory; and that was too expensive. There was no hotel in the area with over 500 rooms, and we needed housing for 2000 people. There were other problems such as security, advertising, banquet, entertainment, and many other loose ends which had to be worked out.

John began to work full time on the meet. We learned that the Thomas Jefferson Center in Arlington had a large amount of covered space. We visited the center and found it ideal for the show. There was room for a flea market, seminars, and parking. A brand new Sheraton Hotel was less than two miles away, which could be the headquarters hotel. Our problems were solved, or so we thought.

The idea of using a public facility for a car show did not set too well with some city fathers. This began a six-month series of meetings with supervisors, planners, chamber of commerce members and just about everyone else except maybe the local dog catcher. John, along with Gordon Sanford and Ned Thomas, attended most of these meetings; and it appeared we were fighting a losing battle. Finally, based on the tourism it would bring to Arlington County, we were allowed to lease the TJ Center.

Applications were beginning to pour in from all over the country. John and Jenny Dingle were working day and night handling applications and answering hundreds of telephone calls. There were still countless loose ends, and the list never seemed to stop growing. We had not yet made arrangements for things like security, shuttle buses, the parade, the banquet, etc. All of this was on top of normal show duties such as judging, parking and concessions. There were blue ribbons to buy, plaques and trophies to be made, and on and on. We were responsible for the Miss Model A contest, fashion show, teen pool party and technical seminars. There truly seemed to be no end in sight. With just six weeks to go, we were seriously wondering if we would be able to pull it off!!??

One week prior to the Meet, we learned that our trophy supplier would not have the trophies ready in time for the Meet. Bill Wood, our trophy chairman, quickly had to find a local supplier to make over 100 trophies in just one week!

The week of the Show ... the moment of reckoning arrived ..., and amazingly things started falling into place. It seemed that Club members were coming out of the woodwork to help. When one area was lacking in help, someone would always step forward to offer their assistance.

When the time actually came, it took us a while to fully appreciate that the Show went well. We

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## THE 1978 NATIONAL MEET (Cont.)

had 600+ cars registered and over 100 vendors in the flea market. We even put on car games. The parade through Washington was a real highlight for many of our out-of-town participants,

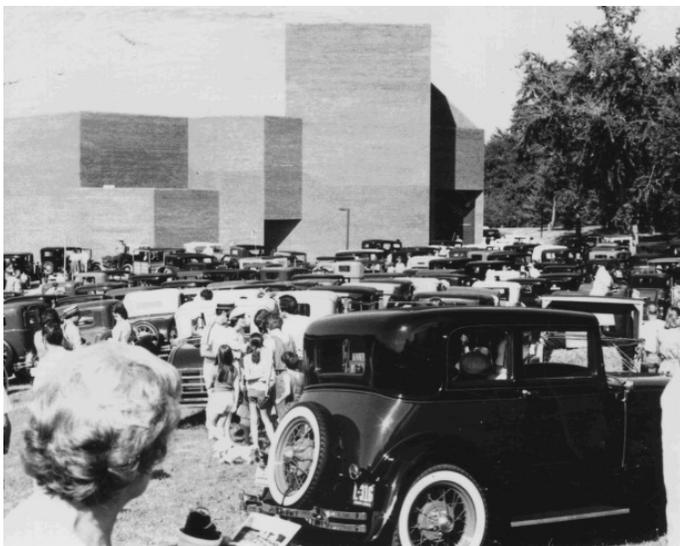


Mel Hodde (right), MAFCA vice-president, presents award plaques to Ginny and John Dingle, meet chairman.

(Photo reprinted from The Restorer, Sep-Oct 1978)

even if it did get separated. We had Model A's wandering all over the city. The Meet ended with a fine banquet, and we all could finally relax to the music of the Cimmerons.

When all was over and everything was added up, we soon realized that the Show was not going to be a financial success. But the spirit and fellowship it developed was certainly worth more than any dollar amount. The fact that everyone really pulled together to help run the Show said much about the strong character of our Club. It is a character that still exists today. That is what makes this Model A Ford Club such a continuing success!



Outside the Thomas Jefferson Center



Fine-Point cars inside the Jefferson Center

## **WHAT'S TO BECOME OF US?**

(No history of the GWC Club would be complete without honoring our chief supplier, Walt Bratton, who has kept the club's cars on the road for over 25 years. This article was written by Joe Krafft, the Script editor at the time, and is reprinted from the May 1990 Ford Script.)

Long associated with affairs of both our National Clubs, current MARC Secretary Howard Minners reflected headquarters' concern for our fate. Who better to ask than a GWC member who stocks 10s, if not 100s, of \$K worth of Model A parts for his own antique auto parts business—Walt Bratton. Addressing our April (1990) membership meeting, Walt thought the obituary

premature: his Model A parts volume has expanded about 25% per year for the past two. He and Ed Hollins are too busy filling orders to worry about switching over to '57 Chevy parts.

How Walt became interested in the Model A and other things goes way back. His love affair with things Model A really began as a family affair. Just out of Chase City, Virginia, High School, the 17-year-old Walter and his father acquired a '29 Tudor in fair condition. Soon afterwards, at a cousin's home in North Carolina, an elder neighbor parted with his neglected '31 Tudor, in better shape, for \$200. By the next summer, the stripped and repainted '29 was sold for \$700 to finance restoration of the '31, including some Senior Bratton innovations like "juice" brakes and a Jeep engine/transmission package. So respectable an auto evolved that one of Mrs. Bratton's friends invited Walt to drive her granddaughter, Martha, to church one Sunday—and Walt's been doing that ever since: the Bratton's now boast three lovely rumble seat travelers—the twins, Dianne and Denise, 16, and Debbie, 12.

The parts business was sort of a spin-off of Model A mania. As a good husband and father, Walt supported his growing family with a "respectable" Government job—computer programmer at the Social Security Administration.—while he supported his hobby by restoring Model A stainless steel parts: head lamp and radiator shells, cowl-bands, etc. He displayed his work at the various area auto shows of the early 1980's, advertising also with a small catalog of Model A parts which he could supply. By 1984 he had accrued such a backlog of polishing orders that he stopped taking new ones; it took some two years to finish the 96 radiator shells and 180 head lamps on hand. But the parts business continued to grow—Walt offers instant credit and unlimited free advice and sympathy perks. So in 1986 he and Martha decided to go for broke—let the SSA do its own programming, keep its paid sick and annual leave and holidays, pension program, etc.—and do Bratton's Antique Ford Parts full bore!

And full bore it is indeed. From some 125 different suppliers, Walt stocks some 2,200 different Model A parts, all described in a now-90-page annual catalog (Ed. Note—the 2012 catalog was 175 pages.) Some components are manufactured to Bratton specification exclusively. Many parts have multiple sources so selection of the best one is possible—competition. About 90% of his parts are U.S. made—pretty high domestic content these days. Now this just doesn't sound like a dying industry, does it? No wonder Walt Bratton is bullish on the Model A. Perhaps it's the parts-supply infrastructure which saves us from extinction, or at least defers it. Yes, Howard, something really great is to become of us—pass on the word to MARC and MAFCA!



# MARC 2009 National Tour



## Driving Thrills Around Charlottesville *by Stan Johnson*

September 20-23, 2009  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

The inaugural MARC National Tour was truly a great success, with many driving thrills during tours originating in historic Charlottesville, Virginia. The concept behind the National Tour was for an annual gathering of MARC Model A's with the central theme being touring, rather than judging. This concept was the idea of George Merry and Frank Pollack, members of the MARC board, who in 2007 convinced the Mount Vernon Region (Washington, DC, area club) to develop and host the event, with help from other area clubs.

The tour was based out of five Charlottesville hotels with the Holiday Inn serving as the Host Hotel. Each day groups of Model A's headed out to see historic sites and natural sights, each one more satisfying than the last. With the homes of Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and James Madison close by, Civil War battlefields, Blue Ridge Mountains, Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley within reach, there was plenty to see.

Two hundred and forty-five cars were registered and most of the drivers and passengers took part in the Sunday night Ice Cream Social and the Wednesday night Region Shirt Dinner. In between there was lots of touring, a manifold cooking contest, Robert Mitchum running moonshine on the silver screen at the Fork Union Drive-In, and visits to a real moonshine distillery.

Arriving guests were welcomed at the Hospitality and Registration Room at the Holiday Inn. The room featured a large number of great raffle prizes, including a rebuilt long block engine. As always, there was the Repair Tent, ably staffed by knowledge able members from several clubs.

Monday and Tuesday were touring days. There were 13 guided tours available, plus full directions for do-it-yourself tours. At the end of each day it was common to hear descriptions about each tour, mixed with an eagerness to go on some other tour described by another person.

A popular tour was to the moonshine distillery at Belmont Farms. A great description of the process was provided by the proprietor.

The tours included a Country Roads tour through horse country and up into the Blue Ridge foothills for a bountiful lunch at the Graves Mountain Lodge.

The South Side Tour featured visits to scenes from The Waltons, the old Palmyra jail, Fork Union Military Academy and the rarely seen Bremo estate with its stone barn, hunting lodge and mansion. The ancestors of the family which owns the estate were acquaintances of Thomas Jefferson.

The Shenandoah Valley tour included a stop at Luray Caverns. The tour to Staunton spent time at the Woodrow Wilson Library and Museum. Civil War battlefield tours included one to Chancellorsville and another to The Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House battlefields. The Skyline Drive tour followed the mountain-crest road to lunch at Big Meadows. The Richmond Tour featured a drive down Monument Avenue (statues of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis and others) and a visit to the Civil War Museum and Virginia Aviation Museum. The Fredericksburg Tour concentrated on the historic city and Washington's boyhood home.

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## MARC 2009 NATIONAL TOUR (Cont.)

Monday night all members of the tour were given the chance to go to a genuine outdoor drive-in movie theatre. The movie, Thunder Road, starred Robert Mitchum as a moonshine runner driving hopped-up Fords through the southeastern mountains. The night sky was spectacular and the drive home with all the Model A's in file with lights shining very nostalgic.

On Tuesday afternoon the manifold cooking contest featured a dozen contestants taking their entrees off their Model A manifolds and displaying them elegantly at a pavilion in a nearby park. Awards were given to several contestants for their equipment, presentation, entrée and dessert. The main reward was the good time enjoyed by all the participants and spectators.

Wednesday's treat was the Grand Drive to Montpelier, the home of James and Dolly Madison, where all the cars came together on the lawn in front of the mansion. James Madison himself (actually a superb re-enactor) was present to entertain the guests and give out American flags flown over the Capitol Building in Washington, DC.

Over 200 Model A's were parked on the Montpelier mansion lawn at one time and more that a third of the people wore at least some article of era clothing.

Visitors could look out the window from the office where Madison conceived the Constitution, past the columns, to see rows and rows of Model A's. There were tours of the mansion plus open exploring of the museum, grounds and the Visitors' Center where a box lunch was provided.

Apparel for the final dinner was each region's club shirt. A barbeque-style dinner was served by the Holiday Inn and entertainment was provided by a talented musical group led by Lisa Meadows, a country singer with Nashville experience. The band played during dinner and had the crowd tapping, swaying and even dancing as traditional and popular tunes were played. After dinner the tour committee presented awards for youngest and oldest driver (Frank Meredith, 87), a women's driver award, longest distance driven and our Road Warrior Award. A special Women's Driver Award was given to Pam Baxter, who has just received her 80,000-mile driving award. The dinner concluded with all of the raffle prizes being drawn and the notification to a MARC member in NY that he had won the top raffle prize, the rebuilt long-block engine from Schwalm's Babitted Bearings.

Thursday morning found the motel parking lots buzzing with activity as people packed up their Model A's and headed for home. The general feeling was that George Merry and Frank Pollack had produced a winning idea, and that the Mount Vernon Region had put on a role-model event for future MARC National Tours.

Stan Johnson



Andy Jaeger— The George Washington Chapter's longest serving member, since 1969, after the 17-member rule was abolished. In that time he has served as Treasurer for 4 or 5 years, an at-large member of the Board for 5 years, and Assistant Treasurer for 2 years. He later served as Activities Chairman for 2 years and has been on the Sully Committee since its inception. He won the MARC Service Award in 2009 and is a Lifetime Member of the George Washington Chapter. But his most lasting contribution to the club has been his Pancake Breakfast and Picnic, which the Jaegers launched after Sully one year as a way to eat up all the leftover food and it has been going strong ever since. His wife Ellen has been his stalwart

supporter and helpmate the entire time.