

February 2018 A Frame
5351 Chestnut Street
New Orleans, LA 70115-3054

**Officers of New Orleans A's Chapter
Model A Ford Club of America**

President: Angelo Ricca

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Sunshine Lady: Toni Schaub

Directors: Carl Hunter, Dianne Hunter, Marie Nicolich, John Maiorana

Phone Committee: Carl Hunter, Anthony Nicolich, Bob Sappington

Newsletter: Mickey King

Monthly Meeting: February 28th at Randazzo's at 6:30 pm for dinner. The meeting begins around 7:15 pm. Check all **coming events** at **your** web site: www.nolamodelas.com

Coming Events:

March 17: Lunch at Frenier Landing & Oyster Bar. Meet at M.A. Green at 1130 and we will caravan to the restaurant.

March 28: Monthly meeting at Randazzo's at 6:30 pm for dinner and business meeting starts at 7:15 pm.

Parts: Wayne Maureau is gathering parts from his father's spare Model A parts. He will notify us when we can visit and see what we might buy.

Car Needed: A student in Barbara's family is looking for a vehicle for commuting to UNO. Price range \$3,000 - \$6,000. Prefers small SUV or wagon. If you know of such a or vehicle for sale, please call Carlos at 296-4359 or Hall at 889-2549.

Let's consider going to visit the PT boat located by Lakefront Airport at the east side of South Shore Harbor. Groups get a lecture about the boat as well as a tour of the boat. Rides are available on weekends but expensive.

In the Movies!

After a long break some of our cars will be used in “The Highwaymen”, a movie being made in the New Orleans area. The pay is very good, around \$500 per day of use! Below is a shot of Bill Pfaff being given instructions for a scene. You can see some more A’s in the distance. Sign up!



On the right is a rebuilt engine installed in the truck (a wrecker). Installation done by John Maiorana, John Troendle and Bill Pfaff. Not visible is the work area in John Troendle’s warehouse where it is possible to work on several cars at once in a nice, clean space out of the elements. Note the clean floor!

Lunch at Lakefront Airport

Saturday February 17 the club went to Lakefront airport to eat at Messina's Restaurant overlooking the runways. Adele Foles came along with Angelo Ricca, Rusty Schlievert, Lydia Maureau with her daughter Staci, Geoff Goodbye, Anthony and Marie Nicolich and Barbara and Hall Townsend. Only two members drove their A's, Angelo brought his newly acquired Phaeton and Hall & Barbara came in their original unrestored (Aunt Julia's) Model A. Now if we could only get a few more to drive their cars!

According to our food critic, the meal was good but on the expensive side. Soft drinks very pricey. This is the case at many restaurants.



Model A Ford Ignition Diagnostic

by Tom Endy

Ammeter "Jiggle":

Once upon a time I was rolling down the road in Miss Vic, my Model A Ford Victoria A-190, when out of the blue the engine quit. As I coasted to the side of the road I tried to contemplate what had gone wrong. The car is well maintained and therefore there was no reason for this outrage. The problem had to be a lack of spark or a lack of fuel. Nine times out of ten it's usually a lack of spark. Before I climbed out from behind the wheel, I decided to perform a diagnostic test. With the ignition still switched on, I cranked the engine over a few times, not expecting it to start, but intently watching the ammeter. The ammeter needle did a small rain dance, that is it "jiggled" from left to right a couple of notches in each direction as the engine turned over.

A wealth of knowledge:

This visual indication provided a wealth of information. I now knew that the battery was alive and well and still attached to the car and that the primary side of the ignition circuit was functional. Functional means that the ignition switch and pop-out cable was not shorted out or open-circuited, the points were opening and closing and were connected to the circuit, the condenser was not shorted out, the primary side of the coil had continuity and was still connected to the battery at one end and to the points at the other end, and Henry's wayward wire that connects the upper distributor plate to the lower distributor plate had not broken or shorted out. Without even getting out of the car, I had ascertained that the primary side of the ignition circuit was working properly.

Under the hood investigation:

But since the car wouldn't start, it was time to get out and look under the hood. The problem had to be in the secondary side of the ignition circuit, or it had to be a lack of fuel. When I looked under the hood I found that the high tension wire that plugs into the bottom of the coil had fallen out. I plugged it back in and the engine fired right up. The high tension wire is in the secondary side of the ignition circuit along with the secondary winding of the coil, the distributor cap, the rotor, the copper spark plug wires and the spark plugs themselves. Volumes have been written about the Model A Ford electrical system, and the Jiggling ammeter has been mentioned numerous times. But for those folks who aren't electrical types, much of the explanation is meaningless.

Jiggling explanation:

What the jiggling ammeter is all about, is that with a properly functioning ignition switched on and the engine turning over (but not running), the points will open

and close as the engine rotates. Each time the points close electric current flows through the ammeter causing the needle to move two notches to the left. Each time the points open the needle returns toward the center, but since the needle movement is undamped, it swings past center to about two notches to the right much like pendulum. As engine cranking continues, the ammeter needle appears to jiggle back and forth and it is telling you that all is well in the primary circuit of the ignition.

Catch 22:

There is a catch! Not all Model A Fords are wired so that the ammeter will jiggle. The early production cars up until November 1929 were wired such that the ignition primary circuit was not wired with the ammeter in the circuit. There was no jiggling! The later cars were wired with the ammeter in the circuit (Ford Service Bulletin, page 390), and this now provided the desired diagnostic Jiggling. All is not lost though; you can easily convert your non-jiggling Model A Ford to a jiggling version. All you have to do is move one wire.

Determination:

First determine which way your car is wired. To do this pull the high tension wire out of the bottom of the coil. Switch the ignition on and crank the engine over. Watch the ammeter needle. If it jiggles, your car is wired to the later configuration. If it does not jiggle, your car is wired to the early configuration. It is an easy matter to convert from the early wiring configuration to the later.

How to convert:

Remove the two broken-looking wing nuts on the front cover of the terminal box on the fire wall that a number of wires go to. Remove the cover and locate the small black wire that runs from the coil to the terminal box. On the non-jiggling cars it will be connected to the threaded post that is toward the right side of the car (right as in the passenger's side). Remove this wire and put it on the other threaded post. This one will be on the left side of the car (as in the driver's side). Before you do this, disconnect the battery, or better yet remove the fuse if you have one installed (look for it on the top of the starter). This will prevent an undesired rain of sparks. It's as simple as that; you now have a diagnostic Jiggling Model A Ford.

More information:

If you want to learn more about this diagnostic phenomenon, there is an excellent two-part article that appeared in the Restorer in the 1987 November-December and 1988 January-February publications. Both articles were written by the late Paul Moller of Evergreen Park, Illinois. The two articles were also reprinted in "How To Restore Your Model A", Volume 5 (1994).