



## POPCORN MAN!

Different members traditionally take turns bringing a snack to the Naper A's monthly Membership Meetings, but Alan Petrik truly raised the bar with memorable treats on August 6<sup>th</sup> . . . rolling out delicious sampler jars of assorted popcorn flavors and bags of cookies from The Popcorn Factory. Needless to say, leftovers were minimal and all who attended left well fed. His company is on-line at [www.thepopcornfactory.com](http://www.thepopcornfactory.com) for anyone needing refills or great gifts by mail.

## A Word From Gene Egert...

# THE PREZ SAYS...

Here we are, off and running with the first issue of "The 4-Banger." Hope you like it, and that we can keep it going with a lot more articles on our members, technical information, and news about club activities. To make this newsletter work, we really will need the support and involvement of all members, which is why you're also getting another questionnaire with this issue. Thanks much to the members who have already provided information and article material, which gives us a good start. But, of course, a publication needs to be fueled with content just like a Model A needs gasoline . . . so let's hear from you! What we need are (1) articles, (2) technical tips, (3) your personal experiences, and (4) little stories about how you got into Model A's in the first place. Send your stuff directly to Rich Volkmer at [rich.association@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rich.association@sbcglobal.net).

Along the same lines, I would really like to encourage all members to drive their cars more often and bring them to meetings . . . weather permitting. It's so much more fun with the cars around, and every car is like a rolling billboard telling the public that we're here. I can't think of a better way to interest the next generation in our favorite old cars than having them see us having fun and wanting to join in. This goes for the family, too . . . where opportunities abound to involve the kids and relatives.

In talking to Gordon Coleman, a great idea came up when he explained plans to build a barn on the property at his new home near downtown Naperville. When it's finished, he wants to host a meeting and/or tech session there . . . which may take a while to happen, but is a really great idea. Maybe we could make our monthly get-togethers more interesting by going off-campus on an alternating basis. Let's hold that thought, and talk it over at the next meeting.



A Prohibition-era photo, with a few jars of moonshine that didn't shatter. Is it a '30 Briggs-bodied Fordor?

# AACA Cantigny Car Show



## SEVERAL MODEL A's & ONE STANLEY CONVENE ON JUNE 28th

to explain all of its good features as well as its shortcomings. It had a floating oil gauge (located on top of the engine, where it bobs up and down with a pointer against a scale, instead of a dipstick) which was the most intriguing aspect of that car. It ended up winning the "Best of Display-only Cars" award, but unfortunately the owner had already gone home.

At the show, they conducted roving interviews with various car owners, which were piped through the area over a P/A system. That was where the Stanley Steamer guy really stood out. When they stopped by his car for a visit, he must have gone on for 45 minutes, virtually running a seminar on steam technology, and all dressed up in period duds, telling about everything you ever wanted to know about a Stanley. As the

interview went on, a crowd gathered to learn more, and to appreciate his fine car and humorous tales of steam transport.

As it happens, the week before, we had taken in the Pittsburgh Grand Prix (antique road races) on vacation, and visited the Frick museum in that city. The small collection has Frick family cars on display including another perfect Stanley with a brass hood. The informative docent suggested visiting [www.jaylenosgarage.com](http://www.jaylenosgarage.com) for a great video on Jay's hot rod Stanley. You should spend an hour watching that video, as Jay is even better than the guy at the Cantigny Car Show on explaining how Stanleys worked, he even takes you for a drive at high speed. Just go to his web site, and click on cars, then steam cars. You will find several additional installments of Jay Leno's Garage for viewing, and they are all worthwhile.

The AACA Cantigny Car Show was held on Sunday, July 28th . . . just a nice cool summer day, sunnier as it were on, with an eclectic variety of excellent cars and interesting car owners to visit with, including half a dozen or so Model A's from across the Chicagoland area.

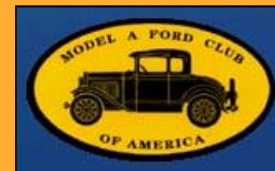
Spent a lot of time talking to a very friendly gent who brought his sleek 1940 Lincoln Zephyr . . . and was eager

# THE 4-BANGER

## VOICE OF THE NAPER A's

THE 4-BANGER VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 ★ FALL, 2013

## AFFILIATED WITH THE MODEL A FORD CLUB OF AMERICA



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The Naper A's were very well represented at the Illinois Railway Museum 23rd Vintage Transport Extravaganza on August 4<sup>th</sup> . . .



President:	Gene Egert
Vice President:	Tom Eklund
Treasurer:	Lindy Williams
Secretary:	Nick Mazzarella

## Our "4-Banger" Experiment...

We've been discussing the possibility of a new Naper A's club newsletter for the at recent meetings...at least on a trial basis for a year. So, here it goes!

Our first Editor will be Rich Volkmer, who has agreed to tackle the job for a year and during that time help train other members in desktop publishing.

The concept is to make the "4-Banger" a club project that will involve all of our members, because it takes a great

deal of input to keep a publication going and to make it interesting.

Questionnaires have been previously sent out by e-mail, and you will find another enclosed with this issue. Please do support the project with your stories photos, and technical articles. Rich will also contact individual members for their input.

Let's have some fun with this, too. It's a journal for future reference, and a great way to scrapbook Model A memories!

## THE NAPER A's 30 YEARS AGO

By Lindy Williams

In 1983, the Naper A's Model A Ford club was just turning four years old. It had been chartered back in 1979 as a Chapter of the Model A Ford Club of America. Two of the

original six members still belong today... Stu Carstens and Rick Enck.

Early meetings were held at Stu's liquor store located at Jefferson and Main Streets in downtown Naperville.

By 1983, the club had grown to 20 members.

That year, the President was Lindy Williams and the Secretary was Jim Burner.

We started the year with a treasury balance of \$715.00 and ended the year with \$607.00. We earned money by participating in mall shows and by making and selling Model A interior wood kits.

We started our 1983 activities with a pancake breakfast sponsored by Stu Carstens and Rick Enck. Prizes were given for the best-dressed couple, the best-dressed person under 18 years old, and the person who ate the most pancakes.

The 1983 Spring Tour was rained out, but we did have a nice club picnic at

Rick Enck's home that August. The club provided meat and members brought dishes to pass.

The Fall tour was to pioneer Park in Aurora. Everyone brought their own picnic lunch.

We had two candidates for 1984 President, Stu Carstens and Joe Cejka. Stu won the balloting by a vote of nine to three and became the President for 1984.

The Christmas party wound up 1983 in style with cocktails at the Overcash's home, dinner at Harry O's, and dancing till late at the Naperville Moose club.





## FOUR GENERATIONS DOWN THE ROAD, IN THE SAME TWO MODEL A's

By Gene Egert

**M**y wife, Cheryl, and I have two 1930 Model A's...they are a Standard Roadster and a Tudor.



Putting the 1930 Standard Roadster to work in the Naperville Memorial Day Parade, May 12, 2013.

**T**he Roadster is an older restoration, but the Tudor is still an all-original car, or as they say, "just out of the barn!" Both cars run great, and have been in my wife's family for over 50 years. They were owned first by her Grandfather (on her Dad's side of the family) but unfortunately not much information has come down over the years, other than photos of her Grandparents with the car. Both of the cars languished in my wife's parents' garage for over 30 years, only being brought out once in 1987

for a friend's wedding.

**A**fter my Father-in-law passed away in 2010, I asked my Mother-in-law if my kids and I could get the cars running again, and joined the Model A club in Naperville. Our members have been great at helping to get the cars back on the road again and open to sharing the wealth of knowledge they have accumulated over the years.

**T**he Roadster amazingly enough started right up after sitting in storage for so long. During the first Winter, we tackled the steering, carburetor, and starter. Following those rebuilds, during our first year of membership with the club my wife and I participated in several car trips, and we became absolutely hooked!

**W**e then focused our attention on the Tudor, only to discover that the engine was locked up. So, freeing up that motor became the following Winter's project. Some club members came over to help during this process, and after checking out a few more things, we added gas and

it started right up after about 50 years of not running. Success! So we were able to drive that car in our second year on several club trips.

**U**nfortunately, on one of those trips the clutch went out. So, I got the club together and they helped pull the motor. After fixing the clutch and checking out the entire engine, we put it all back together and drove her to Bloomington on the old Route 66 with six other club cars on an overnight trip with no problems whatsoever.

**T**he best part of these old cars – aside from the fun of working on them and enjoying the camaraderie of club members – is that I've been taking a different niece or nephew or one of my kids on all these trips. In fact, my daughter, Ashley, now drives one of the cars to some events. That brings us up to four generations of the family driving these same two cars...making it a family affair, which is a great thing!



Going into four generations down the road, and still enjoying a nice family cruise in the 1930 Tudor.



## MODEL "A" BATTERY ADVENTURES

By Rich Volkmer

**L**ast year, we sent for a replica script Ford battery for the '29 Model "A" from Antique Auto Battery in Ohio to replace an old Ford script 6-volter from the 1970's that clearly was past its prime. Its tar top was all cracked and a couple decades of dust had caked onto the top. Even good storage conditions can become diminishing for a battery, but this tired old soul wouldn't stimulate much glow from a penlight bulb after all those years. Little did we realize at the time what a battery odyssey we were getting into.

**A**ntique Auto Battery is a family-owned company, a manufacturer of quality replica batteries with molded cases and simulated tar-tops since 1989. They come dry, so you buy your own acid locally from Car Quest or NAPA, fill the battery, and charge it before use. They're not cheap, mine cost \$205 plus \$35 shipping. One word of caution, they all come black, with no paint on the raised lettering. So, you have to paint your own lettering carefully on the raised type with a roller. It's not too hard to do, I used oil-based white enamel and a hard rubber roller, applying three very light coats before getting a good solid white "Ford" logo. The finished effort is worth it, you end up with a reliable modern battery that looks correctly vintage on the outside. Too bad it gets hidden under the floorboards.

**S**o much for getting the nice new battery. The real fun starts when it goes into service, the hard part is keeping that big investment useful for a few years. Batteries enjoy regular exercise best, the routine of charging and discharging, with occasional additions of water. So, unless you drive the car routinely, your battery inevitably deteriorates, and is bound to disappoint you some day when you're most counting on it. In fact, Murphy's Battery Law decrees this will inevitably occur on a cold dark night in a remote area where no one else is around to lend a jump or give you a push, and you really need headlights.

**T**o avoid that kind of misadventure, the better alternative scenario is to take care of the battery routinely so it will take care of you. In fact, there are many good practices that help preserve battery life and viability in an old car...

- Disconnect the battery cable when the car is not being used.
- Install a battery disconnect switch for a more convenient way of doing the same thing.
- Replace the car's wiring so transient leaks don't drain the battery (or shorts ignite a fire!).
- Trickle-charge the battery overnight once a month to keep it charged up.
- Leave the battery on a float charger or battery tender over the Winter to exercise it and keep it charged without overcharging.
- Check battery levels often, particularly after long drives or deep charging.
- Top off battery fluid regularly with an EDTA mixture, not just distilled water.

**W**ait a second... what the heck is "EDTA?" you may ask. Well, EDTA is a chemical battery additive. Technically, it is called "tetrasodiummethylenediaminetetraacetate," which gets abbreviated to "tetrasodium EDTA," or just "EDTA." This compound is considered an effective battery rejuvenator because it dissolves sulfate on the plates of a lead-acid battery that has not been properly exercised and charged. Sulfation is, in fact, the principal cause of battery failure, and EDTA can often bring an old battery back to life by reversing the sulfation process. The chemical is for sale as white powdery crystals, and a pound cost us \$24 postpaid from Trailhead Supply in Utah.

### EDTA CAN BRING BACK A BAD BATTERY

**S**everal articles have appeared over the years in Model A literature (also the farm press and the alternative energy media) explaining the theory and practice of using EDTA. The first such article that caught my attention was written by K. L. Martin, an English gentleman chemist and vintage car enthusiast. To restore a shot battery, he says:

- Put on safety glasses to protect your eyes when working with battery acid.
- Tip your battery over and dump the acid into a large polyethylene bowl.
- Flush the battery multiple times in the laundry sink or with a hose outdoors.
- Drop 1/3 tablespoon of EDTA powder into each cell.
- Fill the cells with warm water.
- After an hour, dump the EDTA solution and flush out the battery.
- Put the old acid back in (filter out any clinkers), or use fresh acid.
- Charge the battery.

**T**his may bring back that old dud battery, but only if sulfation is the problem. It will not correct a bad cell or a short. Consider it a Radical EDTA rescue mission, worth the effort because sulfation is the problem 90% of the time.

**S**uffice to say, we resolved to get a batch of EDTA powder to mix up and experiment with rejuvenating an old battery for use as a spare. Searching for sources on the internet turned up an interesting subculture of alternative energy battery people relying upon solar and wind power to charge their banks of lead-acid batteries. *Home Power* magazine is their bible, publisher of a number of interesting battery maintenance articles that remain available on-line. Yes, the survivalists and counterculture folks living off the grid need their EDTA to keep the batteries going. This search led to finding Trailhead Supply in Utah.

### ROUTINE USE OF EDTA PROLONGS BATTERY LIFE

**T**he friendly gent in Utah says you should use an EDTA solution to top off your batteries regularly in order to prolong life, using one Tablespoon of EDTA per ounce of distilled water. He recommends never adding the straight powder directly to battery acid as it needs to be in a distilled water solution and won't dissolve properly in acid only. We used a plastic measuring cup left over from our old photo lab darkroom to measure the water carefully and stored a fresh batch in a thoroughly-rinsed windshield wiper fluid jug. The idea is to routinely use EDTA to prevent sulfation from forming in the first place, thus prolonging the lifetime of that shiny new replica battery.

**F**inal results are not in yet with the rejuvenated old dud battery (the radical rescue mission) but we have begun using the new jug of EDTA solution to routinely top off all car batteries in the fleet, even the newer cars and the lawn tractor as well as the old cars. This is a long-term experiment.

**A**s an interesting aside, there was an old battery rescue product called "VX-6" sold years ago by Warshawski's and other auto parts stores but it does not seem to be on the market any more. Looking at the J.C. Whitney web site just now ([www.jcwhitney.com](http://www.jcwhitney.com)), they do still sell a battery additive product called "Charge-It Concentrated Battery Additive" by "Solder-It" in two-ounce and one-gallon liquid sizes, but pricing is exorbitant at \$16.36 and \$89.26. A similar product called "Battery Equalizer" appears in the *Farm Show* newspaper being sold by Battery Equalizer Manufacturing ([www.batteryequaliser.com](http://www.batteryequaliser.com)) at \$19.95 for a 12-ounce bottle of liquid, larger sizes available. None of these sources are as cheap as buying EDTA crystals from Trailhead Supply and making your own battery rejuvenator juice.

**F**or your information, here are the contact points for a replica Ford script battery from Antique Auto Battery in Ohio and a supply of EDTA from Trailhead Supply in Utah:

Antique Auto Battery  
602 W. Rayen Ave.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44502  
[www.antiqueautobattery.com](http://www.antiqueautobattery.com)  
800-426-7580

Trailhead Supply  
325 E. 1165 North  
Orem UT 84057  
[www.webspawner.com/users/trailheadsupply/](http://www.webspawner.com/users/trailheadsupply/)  
E-mail: [trailheadsupply@webtv.net](mailto:trailheadsupply@webtv.net)  
801-225-3931.



## SPOTLIGHT ON GAR WILLIAMS



Gar acquired his 1930 Deluxe Coupe in 1959, while still in the service, adding the 1931 Deluxe Roadster and 1929 Town Sedan in later years. The Pietenpol "Air Camper" is an early 1930's homebuilt aircraft powered by a Model A engine adapted for aero use; here he demonstrates how the starter works.

Restoration work has defined Gar Williams' life, both automotive and aeronautical. He has driven Model A's continuously since obtaining a 1930 cabriolet in 1952 while still in high school. In that period of his life, he also first learned aircraft mechanics on the job at Elmhurst Airport.

College at Cornell followed, then a hitch in the Air Force provided four years' experience as a jet mechanic. He kept the '30 Coupe through all those years, later driving it to work and more college on the G.I. Bill. Working in the airline industry for many years, he then turned to restoring antique airplanes from the 20's and 30's. He has restored Piper Cubs, Curtiss Jenny biplanes, Stinsons, Monocoupes, even a Pitts stunt plane. Somehow, along the way, he found time to restore quite a few Model A's as well.

While Gar's first Model A, his 1930 Cabriolet, has long since gone down the road, he has retained

the 1930 DeLuxe Coupe ever since it joined the fold in 1959. It has been painted in the original green twice. The 1929 Town Sedan arrived in 1997, and has been a favorite with the grandchildren ever since for their travels. Gar observes that it was acquired in nice original condition for restoration and has a nice ride.

He's had the 1931 Roadster since 1998, which came to him with a 1961 nitrocellulose lacquer paint job and still has the original leatherette upholstery on the rumbleseat (he has since replaced the passenger seat covering with leather as it originally had). The car came here from Yonkers, New York, and is the model that he really wanted as a broke lad back in 1952 when he obtained his first Model A, the 1930 Cabriolet. This car enjoyed some celebrity fame, once appearing in the movie "Splendor in the Grass," which starred Warren Beatty, Natalie Wood, and introduced Tyne Daley.

This Pietenpol "Air Camper" is a replica of a 1930's-era homebuilt aircraft powered by a Model A engine. Gar acquired this one from central Alabama, where it was built in 2006. With a rebuilt engine heated up to 55 horsepower and featuring insert bearings, it can still take to the air.

Gar belongs to three Model A Clubs, including the Joliet and Fox Valley groups and the Naper A's. He has belonged to our club since the mid-1990's, when he encountered a couple members working under the hood of a stalled '28 Tudor. Rendering them some roadside assistance first (they needed points and a condenser), they later convinced him to join the club.

These days, Gar takes life a little easier, working mostly on his own cars and airplanes. But he still loves to bend sheet metal, crimp aircraft rivets, and work on the old cars in his hanger and shop near the airfield . . . and help fellow club members sort out their Model A issues by hosting tech sessions at his garage.



Gar reports that eight of his nine grandchildren fit in the 1929 Town Sedan when going for rides . . . At least when they were small.

## Model A Spark Plug Voltage Polarity, Part One

### What It Is And Why It's Important

By Noel DeLessio

You may be able to improve the performance of your Model A at low cost and with little effort.

Approximately 20% of Model A's now on the road have incorrect spark plug voltage polarity, leading to possible misfiring under load and hard starting when cold. This series of articles describes what spark plug voltage polarity is, how it affects engine performance, how to test it, and how to fix it if it's wrong.

### What Is Spark Voltage Polarity?

Let's begin by discussing the polarity of a car's low voltage system. Your stock Model A has a 6-volt battery with its positive terminal grounded and its negative terminal feeding your low voltage wiring harness.

Voltages in the Model A low voltage system are about -6 volts. This generally is called a positive ground system. However, it can also be called a negative polarity system since its voltages are really negative. Now, let's discuss the polarity of a car's high voltage (ignition) system.

The job of an ignition system is to provide several thousand volts to the spark plugs so they can then generate the spark that ignites the compressed gaseous mixture in the combustion chamber. This voltage can be either positive or negative with respect to ground. If your voltage is positive with respect to ground, then it is said to have a positive polarity. If it is negative with respect to ground, then it is said to have a negative polarity.

Spark voltage polarity will be

determined by how connections are made to the ignition coil's two terminals. If you interchange the wires at the coil's terminals, you reverse the polarity of the spark voltage. A choice of spark voltage polarity can actually be made independently of whether your battery's positive or negative terminal is grounded.

Car manufacturers in the Model A era generally agreed that spark voltage polarity should be negative and thus manufactured their cars accordingly. (The reasons for this will be given in the next section.) Often, the coil's terminals were marked to ensure that correct connections were made in order to produce the proper and desired negative spark voltage polarity.

### Why Is Spark Voltage Polarity So Important?

The magnitude of the voltage available from the ignition system to fire the spark plugs depends on several factors, including battery voltage, engine speed, and the condition & adjustment of various ignition system components.

The magnitude of voltage required to ignite the mixture depends on several factors. These will include engine load, fuel mixture, spark plug gap and wear, and spark voltage polarity. Both the available voltage and the required voltage will vary continually with engine operating conditions.

Generally, the available voltage is greater than the required voltage and the mixture is ignited reliably. However, when available voltage is less than the required voltage, misfiring occurs.

For cars built in the Model A era, there are certain operating conditions where the available voltage is only marginally greater than the required voltage. For example, such marginal operating conditions could be experienced during a cold start, or when the engine is under a heavy load, or when the ignition system needs a tune-up. Under these conditions, the correct *spark voltage polarity* can make the difference between the spark plug firing or misfiring.

*The magnitude of the voltage required to establish a spark with a positive spark voltage polarity can be up to 40% greater than the magnitude of the voltage required with a negative polarity.* Some reasons for this are given later, in the section entitled "Why negative polarity requires lower voltage."

Because of the impact of spark voltage polarity on voltage needed to initiate a spark, virtually every passenger car manufacturer of the Model "A" era built its cars with negative spark voltage polarity. Many owners and some mechanics remain unaware of spark voltage polarity issues, as they originally were addressed correctly by the manufacturer and generally did not change during service. So, why are we concerned? Stay tuned!

### In Part Two, we will discuss...

- ❑ Model A's and spark voltage polarity
- ❑ Testing and fixing spark voltage polarity
- ❑ High Voltage Polarity Test

*Please save Parts One & Two of this series for reference when reading Part Three. Many thanks to Model A News Editor Helen Ehrenhofer, who originally published this article.*



# 3rd ANNUAL 40-HORSE FARM SWAP MEET

*"We started this event to raise funds for MAFFI, The Model A Ford Foundation and the Model A Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan, at the GilmoreCar Museum complex. It is the shining star of the entire campus!"*  
— Ken Ehrenhofer

A pleasant summer day blessed the "40-Horse Farm" Swap Meet in Woodstock on August 24th, as Ken and Helen Ehrenhofer and Mark and Val Maron hosted their Third Annual event to benefit MAFFI (the Model A Ford Foundation, Inc.) and the Model A Ford Museum. This year, 25 vendors came in from across the Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois. There were also 19 Model A's on display, including original cars, meticulously restored cars, modified cars, and a fire engine.

Val and her friend Rose prepared all the food at "Tommy's Deli & Food Emporium" and also operate the food concession at the Illinois Region M.A.R. C. club Winter Swap Meet held every February at the Kane County Fairgrounds.

100% of the profits from this event have gone to MAFFI every year, \$1600 the first year, \$2900 the second year, and \$2200 this year. It is a unique experience, with a very relaxed atmosphere out in the country and continuous Model A and Model T vehicle rides running around the grounds for guests. Only Model A and Model T parts are sold. The Illinois Region sponsors the event, and its members help park cars.

