

MODEL A FORD CLUB OF AMERICA

By Charlie Scott, Shingle Springs, California
Source: *The Restorer*, September/October 2007

Author's Note: The source information for this article was obtained from a review of all past issues of The Restorer. Although The Restorer is not considered an official MAFCA "policy" document, I believe it comes as close as anything we have. The Steering Column articles give us important information from the President, the Restorer Editor's column brings the editor's thoughts forward, Letters to the Editor show some member views, and there are many articles describing special activities, programs and progress of the club.

1955



On October 16, 1955 in Southern California, a group of 15 local Model A owners, many who were national members of the Model A Restorers Club (MARC) met at Red Grow's Auto Sales lot in Glendale. The result of this meeting was a decision to organize a regional group. On November 13, 1955, a constitution was drafted, temporary officers appointed, first dues collected, a headquarters established and the Model A Restorers Club of Southern California was born.

Pictured at left:

Lloyd Fulford, Charles Gutshall, Hans Ortlieb, Walt Joyce, his son Walter, Pat Joyce, Fred Smith, Ethredge Bleyloch, Red Grow, Art Miller, Bob White, Sam Gates, Jack and Vivian Payton.

1956

On February 26, 1956 the first Annual Business Meeting and the election of officers for 1956 was held and **Art Miller** became the first president. In May of 1956, the first issue of *The Restorer* was published as the official club publication. *The Restorer*, by the third issue and by immediate popular demand, was offered to all MARC members, effecting national distribution at a subscription rate off \$3 a year. By direction of the parent club classified ads were restricted to the Southern California territory designated in the Regional Charter. The 13th of November, 1956 marked the first anniversary of the Southern California Region. Membership had grown from 21 members in February to 107 in November.

1957

As the March/April 1957 issue of *The Restorer* arrived, **Jim Ryner** had been elected president and *The Restorer* reflected the growth of the region and the growth of new committees to handle the work of the club. In the July/August Restorer, a new series was about to begin called "How to Restore Your Model A." The club was gearing up for the MARC National Convention in Dearborn to be held in August. **Art Miller**, then the-editor of *The Restorer*, wrote a two-page article about the forthcoming meet. The September/October Restorer reported on the MARC Dearborn Convention. At that meet, **Red Grow** received a Special Grand Award with "Betsy," his 1930 Sport Coupe. There are two interesting observations about this issue of *The Restorer*. The masthead indicated for the first time that it was "copyrighted by the Model A Ford Club of America, 1957" and second, it contained classified ads from nationwide subscribers, which was not formerly permitted.

By the time the next issue of *The Restorer*, November/December 1957, arrived, the **Model A Ford Club of America** was firmly established as the newest National Model A Ford club in the country. The lead article provided insight into how the club was to take advantage of the success it had with the growing popularity and national subscription requests for *The Restorer*. The article told all subscribers that they would automatically become members of MAFCA. In addition to *The Restorer*, the members would receive a membership card and an annual Roster.

This issue of *The Restorer* in particular reflects the talent that our founding leaders had. In addition to being very professional in its layout, *The Restorer* included an abundance of pictures. There were interesting articles on club activities, a fashion column, technical tips, an article on rebuilding the chassis, an abundance of classified ads from throughout the country and a column about what other clubs were doing. This carefully conceived issue undoubtedly set the format of the magazine and was a catalyst in establishing our membership base. By the end of 1957, MAFCA had more than 700 members and was receiving inquiries about forming Chapters.

The club was aggressive in member recruitment right from the beginning. This first bi-fold brochure said in part, "Objects of the club are to act as a clearing house or medium of exchange for parts, parts information, reference material, and authenticating originality, to aid members in their restoration problems. But the club also offers a chance for *The Restorer* to enjoy the fruit of his labor and have fun with his car by sponsoring a variety of activities such as meets, tours, picnics, swap-sessions, and many other events. These activities are held in a manner and on a level that stimulates family fun."

1958

In reviewing 1957, President **Jim Ryner** told of the efforts that came about during the change from a MARC region to becoming a national club of our own. There was a realization that to achieve national administrative policies that would suit our ideas of a national club, it would not be possible given our existing MARC affiliation. To achieve this, a complete local reorganization would be necessary. A potential to become one of the greatest vintage car clubs in the country was recognized and a committee was formed. The Modest A Ford Club of America was recommended as a name that would reflect this goal and bylaws were drafted to place its management in the hands of five Directors elected by the membership. A special meeting of the members was held on September 23 where the proposal was discussed and carried by a vote of 34 to 2. At the Annual Meeting in December the number of Directors was increased to seven. As Jim said "we had weathered the storms of reorganization and developed a national club that would be equal in high quality to our Model A Fords."

1958

The new Directors for 1958, led by **John Gold** as President of our fledgling organization, looked forward to a productive year and forecast "fun & frolic for '58." Among other things they established Chapter provisions and Charter certificates. In January Bakersfield became our first Chapter, followed, through the year, by Edwards AFB, North Jersey, Delaware Valley, Potomac, Evergreen, and Wisconsin. By the end of the year we could claim 1,200 members.

1959

By the end of 1959 we had become the largest single car club with a membership of 1,928. Directors were increased to nine to help carry the rapidly expanding workload of the Board. The first MAFCA brochure was also clever. It featured a fold-down bottom portion (the black panel) and on the reverse side was a coupon for name and address. They didn't ask for your telephone number. Annual dues were \$3.

1960

In August MAFCA held its first National Convention. It was a three-day event held in Atlantic City and hosted by the North Jersey Chapter. A fancy hotel, The Ambassador, was the headquarters. Special room rates prevailed: \$14 for double or just \$12 for a single. With this 1960 National Meet, a two year rotation was begun that replaced the "Annual Meets" which were formerly held in California. That two-year rotation continues today. Les Henry, who was then the new Curator of the Ford Museum, was a guest speaker. Voting procedure and the bylaws were changed, to become effective with the 1961 election, to send mail-back ballots to all members in November with a postmark deadline to be established. The Annual Meeting then would become an occasion for Director installation and discussion of other pertinent member business. Director meetings were at this time held on the first Thursday of every month! The year ended with almost 2,500 members and 34 Chapters.

1962



In 1962 MAFCA had its 2nd National Meet at San Francisco, California, hosted by the Bay Area and Santa Clara Chapters. Once again, Red Grow and Betsy won Best of Show. Here spectators take a closer look at the 1930 Sports Coupe.

The 2nd Annual Meet was held in San Francisco. 148 Model A's were registered and judged, members and guests numbered over 500 and the banquet was attended by 402 people. Once again, **Red Grow** and **Betsy** won Best of Show. Twenty-one Model A's journeyed from New York City, with members replete in red and white striped jackets to attend the meet.

The Ford Motor Company donated an Econoline truck to accompany the tour which carried tools and spare parts and a 1962 Thunderbird convertible for a faster escort car. Parts were supplied by J.C. Whitney of Chicago on consignment! These cars logged 7,000 miles on their trip.

The car Judging system had gotten off to a good start. 19 judges had been assigned to judge defined areas and score sheets were kept on each. Awards were given for a Best of Show, and a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place (one each) in prescribed car categories - 28-29 or 30-31 year, original, restored, modified, open, closed, commercial etc.. Fashion was handled by presenting an award for the best dressed woman and one for the best dressed man.

1963

1963 election returns reached 700, reflecting the decision made in 1961 to use mail in ballots so all members could cast their vote. The first Director from outside Southern California (**Bill Jones** from San Jose, CA) was elected. The ballot contained 19 candidates. In response to many letters to the editor, *The Restorer* began a reprint of the "How to Restore Your Model A" articles. Art Miller's popular column continued to provide detailed research articles about the Model A.

1964

The 1964 MAFCA Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky. The location, central to the country, provided an area that could draw members from the midlands and both coasts. Arriving were 290 Model A's ready for judging. Records indicate that there were 1,150 paid spectators. Probably the most unique Model A was driven by President **George Pope** who transported his family from Southern California in a 1930 Model A School Bus!

The Board proposed that Directors be elected for two year terms and terms would be staggered so that we would vote on four one year and five the next. The Annual Meeting which had by custom been held in Southern California up to this point could now be hosted elsewhere if bids were forthcoming. **Tiny Snell**, in a letter to *The Restorer* Editor, wrote that he would no longer be able to continue his very popular column "Tiny Tips" which he had written since Issue 2. Membership was now 3,110 with 80 Chapters. **Lois Rather**, who had written the Fashion column for *The Restorer* for a number of years, in conjunction with several other burgeoning MAFCA Fashion experts, put forth a judging score sheet to be used by a panel of judges for MAFCA Fashion competition. The judging was broken down by category and was similar to car judging in format.

The Board announced a club liability insurance program that could be accessed by Chapters. After a short period it was decided that it would be possible to provide coverage for the Chapters under a National umbrella and the costs were absorbed by MAFCA. We reached 100 Chapters and the Chapter Coordinator set up a procedure to send each Chapter a routine bulletin or newsletter to advise of hot items, Chapter matters, etc..

1966

The 1966 National Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was well organized and well attended. Board meetings had moved from Red Grow's Auto Sales office, to Directors' homes to President **Ken Kaitschuck's** main floor office in the California Federal Savings and Loan in Los Angeles.

Volume One of the popular series "*How to Restore Your Model A*" was published in book form and offered to the membership. Members would pay \$4 including postage, shipped in a sturdy cardboard carton! Foreign membership dues had to be raised to accommodate overseas mailing costs.

1968

As 1968 ended, we had completed the very successful 5th National Convention in Dallas, Texas. There were 1,476 participants, 423 delegates and 326 cars registered. It was billed as MAFCA's first computerized meet where judges used specially prepared IBM cards for totaling points. The system was also used for other chores like sorting meal tickets, tour tickets, etc. 144 Chapters were active. Dues were \$5 a year.

The Middle Years

In the next several years we entered a time of steady growth. The club had carved its mark on the Model A hobby and became the most familiar name in Model A circles. As we entered the 1970s, our international membership had expanded to 20 countries making us a well established worldwide club.

A number of bylaw changes that had been in queue over a few years were put forward for member vote. The changes were to establish the minimum age for Directorship at 21 years, a Director must be able to be bonded, a Director could not serve on Board for more than four consecutive years, a Directors meeting at the National Banquet could be held but was not a requirement and that proposed amendments could be submitted by either Directors or following petition by the membership to the Board of Directors and that these proposed changes could be voted on by the membership by mail ballot.

1972

In 1972, building a bit of history by this time prompted adding our "Years Ago" column to *The Restorer*. As you might expect the first was titled "15 years ago" and featured a half-page article about the first meetings of our founders. It stated that rather than just jumping into social activities the group took the time to have further meetings, to devise bylaws, elect temporary officers, and establish first dues (\$3). The forerunner of our Annual Banquet was held at the Candlelight Inn in Glendale, California. The mechanics for producing Judging Standards with MARC were investigated.

1973

In 1973, the Board had a concern that the National events were becoming an enormous undertaking and that only the larger Chapters had the ability to host them. We had reached over 200 Chapters and the Directors hoped that maybe dynamic associations of Chapters might band together for purposes of sponsoring the events thus enabling smaller Chapters to share in the National activities. The first Regional group (then called an Association) was chartered in Northern California. With the publication of Volume 18, Issue 4 in 1973, a significant era came to an end. **Jim Ryner** and **Art Miller** as Managing Editor and Editor, retired from *The Restorer*. Not only had they been our first two presidents but had continued to produce the magazine that had become such a landmark part of the Model A hobby since the beginning. Fashion editor **Lois Rather** also decided she would retire after 12 years, turning the reigns of the fashion world over to **Edie Jones**.

Lorin Sorensen became our new *Restorer* Editor bringing with him his experience as editor of *Ford Life* and of the *V-8 Times*. Lorin kicked off his premier edition with a story and many original pictures from the Twenty Millionth Ford nationwide tour. Over the course of his editorship he brought us many original Model A era pictures and original Ford Motor Company literature from his personal collection.

Our fiscal year was changed to begin July 1, and dues were raised to \$8 a year. Our Model A'ers became increasingly aware of and concerned about State and Local legislation that concerned our A's. The Membership Director was tasked to look at National legislation and the Chapters were asked to keep track of State issues.

1975

At the end of 1975, MAFCA, with the help of local Chapters, consolidated its operations in a new warehouse and office on Imperial Blvd. in La Habra, California. **Vivian Peyton Hammer**, one of our Founding Members, assumed direction of the facility. In one of the more unusual pitches to host a National Convention, the Aloha

Chapter of Hawaii bid for the 1978 National Convention. The idea to talk with MARC about Judging Standards was pursued. After three years as *Restorer* Editor, Lorin retired and **Phil Allin**, who had been *The Restorer* Assistant Editor for a brief period, accepted the job.

The Board approved travel pay of \$50 for Director meetings encouraging members from all over the country to run for office. A fun color reprint of the December 1927 Model A sales brochure was included in *The Restorer*, devoted to the 50th anniversary of our car.

1978

As we began the year in 1978, MAFCA mourned the passing of our founding member **Red Grow**. The MAFCA Board began a search in the La Habra area for the purchase of property of the national office. Also in 1978, the Secretary and Treasurer were combined into one office. This allowed a Directorship to be established for Special Projects. In 1979, a property was found and purchased in La Habra to become the headquarters of MAFCA.

1980

In April of 1980 an errant driver jumped the curb and smashed through the wall of our office. No one was hurt but our copy machine was destroyed! Since serving MAFCA from the beginning as a Charter member, **Vivian Peyton Hammer** retired as our Executive Secretary in 1980. The Board of Directors determined that the time had finally come to raise dues to \$15 a year for 1981. A review of California Corporation requirements dictated that the offices of Secretary and Treasurer once again should become two separate Directorships. Accounting practices were enhanced by the employment of CPA services, use of an interest earning checking account and rental of a safe deposit box for official documents. Updated joint MARC/MAFCA Judging Standards became available. We learned of the passing of long-time member **Bill Reeder**, a Past President and extraordinary technical author. MAFCA's premier Literary Award was established and named to honor Bill in 1982.

A four car Model A tour group that traveled around the world arrived at the National Convention in Minnesota and a *Restorer* article heralded their extraordinary trip. In October of 1982 MAFCA celebrated both the 25th anniversary of incorporation and the completion of our new Headquarters building. All MAFCA members were invited to attend the dedication and open house. Past President Don Schade began writing the 15 and 25 year column in *The Restorer*.

1983

In 1983 MAFCA Bylaw changes were proposed to conform with changes in California law (our state of incorporation). In 1984, the Ladies Driving Award program was approved by the Board. The Award of Excellence was unveiled for car judging. The Chapter Newsletter Award program was started with awards to be given at the Annual Meeting. The Era Fashion Committee was hard at work on the Model A Fashion Guidelines. MAFCA's 5,000 mile touring award became available to members meeting this annual criteria.

1986

By 1986 the optimism of MAFCA was apparent - use of the office computer was catching on, the Membership Roster was available for \$1 (including shipping and handling!) and could be had for use on your way to the first World Meet at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, the publication of a revised Model A Judging Standards and Era

Fashion Standards moved forward, and the Chapter Challenge (gaining the most MAFCA members) was underway. The MAFCA Library had been established. The Board authorized *The Restorer* be increased in size to 48 pages on a regular basis.

1987

Directors were being elected from many areas of the country by 1987 and in that year many board meetings were held outside of La Habra. This provided an excellent chance for members to meet our Directors. This was definitely an "On the Road" group, meeting in Northern California, Texas, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, in addition to La Habra. Judging Standards were being put together for the Original Unrestored Class. The MAFCA Participation Award was offered for presentation at Regional meets. The MAFCA Foundation which was considered in 1984, came to fruition in 1987, headed up by **Edie Jones** as President. Members were told how they could contribute to this tax deductible 501 (c) (3) MAFCA organization. A review and discussion of the Era Fashion scoring sheet determined that total scoring points possible would be increased from 100 to 150.

1988

In 1988 annual dues were raised to \$20. After 12 years, at the end of the year in 1988, **Phil Allin** retired as editor of *The Restorer* and was replaced by **Fred Carlton**, another talented MAFCA member. Sadly in October, founding member and first MAFCA President, Life Member and first editor **Art Miller** passed away. Art had been described as "not just a spark plug for his club but the engine that got it started". The updated, revised Judging Standards was advertised in the September/October 1989 issue of *The Restorer*.

1989

By 1989 the MAFCA Foundation established in 1987 became a separate organization and was incorporated as the Model A Ford Foundation, Inc. (MAFFI). This change was recognized as a need for the Foundation to operate independently. One of our early Presidents and Life Member, **Merle Smith**, passed away in October 1989. Merle served on the Board for 12 years, holding virtually every Board position. A new Recognition Award named after Merle, was approved for presentation at National Conventions to the family demonstrating the best overall participation.

1990

The 1990 San Diego Convention would introduce Touring Class judging. In July, the printing of *The Restorer* moved from Southern California to Dallas, Texas, to facilitate what we hoped would be improved efficiency of production. The move was not as productive as it was hoped and so in September of 1991 the printing was returned to Southern California. A membership drive contest enabled Chapters to receive a \$25 gift certificate for signing up five new members. The MAFCA Service Award was formulated for Chapter member recognition. The Board of Directors approved the purchase of the house and property adjacent to our La Habra office for future use, but by the end of the year it became clear that this would not be a fiscally prudent idea. The Dallas Model A Ford Club set a record by arranging a group aerial photograph of 291 Model A's. A new and popular column called "Patent Cures" began in *The Restorer*. This column was written anonymously by member Urb Stair, under the pen name Red E. Power featuring old fashioned tried and proven Model A cures. In keeping with a view to encourage youth participation, the criteria for the Merle Smith award was changed to reflect youth participation in the Chapters and in the youth activities at the National Conventions. MAFCA's Paint and Finish Guide, complete with color paint chips became available for restorers.

1992

In August of 1992 membership topped 15,000. **Bertha Haueter** became our first woman President. To implement the "odd year" Nationally approved meets, the Board approved geographic areas designating them for MAFCA Divisional Meets, and outlining guidelines for their implementation. A multi-change proposed bylaw revision was outlined for the membership. Probably because of the complexity and broad scope of the proposed changes, they failed to carry the membership approval.

1994

The first MAFCA Youth Grant for \$500 was presented at the 1994 Annual Meeting.

1995

The MAFCA Board agreed that beginning in 1995, and in odd numbered years, a MAFCA meet could supplement the bi-annual National Convention. The Judging Standards Committee was busy with revisions. Touring and Modified classes were growing and guidelines for these classes was something the Committee was working on.

1996

In 1996, the changes were reduced in number and simplified, this time passing the membership vote. With the July/August 1991 issue, *The Restorer* was mailed with a dust cover anticipated to save the club \$13,000 a year! The Board voted to instigate an annual Chapter registration fee of \$5, tabled the payment until the next year and then finally decided not to enact it. A membership drive was announced whereby Chapters could receive \$2 credit redeemable in MAFCA merchandise for every new MAFCA member recruited between July and October 1993. In July, the Board announced that it would be necessary to increase annual dues to \$30 at the beginning of the next year.

1997

Our membership reached 16,000 and we had over 300 Chapters. The internet became accessible to our members and the MAFCA Web site www.mafca.com became the place to go with **Rick Black** as the webmaster. The *A World*, official MAFCA Youth Newsletter was established by **Archie Cress and Frank Rosin** and made available to our youth at no charge. A 40-year Restorer index was approved for publication, both electronically and in printed format. Clip Art became available to our Chapters through the internet and a book on Car Games was planned for distribution to Chapters.

Our 40th MAFCA Anniversary Annual Meeting (1997) was held in Buena Park, California and was attended by many early members. MAFCA had promoted a National Raffle for a 1931 Model A Roadster. The drawing for this very successful fundraiser took place at the 1998 Reno Convention amid great excitement. In support of the X-cup division of the Great Race, MAFCA decided to contribute funds to Model A youth groups that were driving a Model A and qualified for our X-cup MAFCA grants.

2000

Fred Carlton, our Restorer editor since 1988, retired after 12 years of outstanding service. **Jim Spawn** became our sixth editor of *The Restorer* with the September/October 2000 edition, bringing with him the progress that goes with digital production and desktop publishing.

2001

One of the most exciting Model A events occurred - the discovery of the Twenty Millionth Ford, the famous 1931 Slant Window Town Sedan. A write-up in *The Restorer* detailed the history of this milestone vehicle.

2002

The Ford Motor Company put the Twenty Millionth Ford on display at our 2002 Riverside Convention for us to see. Our second raffle car, a 1930 Standard Coupe, was awarded at the Convention with the proceeds going to our Model A youth programs.

2003

A new policy on the cumulative mileage driving a Model A was approved by the Board beginning in 2003. Restorer statistics climbed to an impressive level - 16,000 issues produced bi-monthly, mailed to all 50 states plus Puerto Rico and Guam, mailed to members in 28 countries. The MAFCA Articles of Incorporation and By-law changes to reflect them were updated and approved by the membership. The **Ford Motor Company** celebrated their 100-year anniversary in Dearborn and our Model A's attended in abundance. A test mailing of *The Restorer* in plastic bags provided no advantage. The size of *The Restorer* was increased to 52 pages.

2005

The May/June 2005 issue of *The Restorer* celebrated the 50th anniversary of our great magazine, which had predated our National Club by a year and a half! Articles from our past editors reflected the steady growth of our club and a good insight into the impressive way we got here.

2006

In time for the 2006 National Convention in Mansfield, Massachusetts, MAFCA's *Book of Fashion Facts* was completed and made available to the membership. Our popular "*How to Restore Your Model A*" series celebrated Volume 7. The Ford Motor Company was finally able to locate the logbook for the Twenty Millionth Ford's nationwide trip in 1931. With this as a guide, they put together film footage and published it on DVD. A view of our car through a time capsule just in time for our 50th!

Chapters were advised our general liability insurance would be gapped until we could determine cost and coverage. Within a few days our insurance problems were resolved and we returned to full coverage. A Chapter Web site Award Policy was announced. Two new Fashion categories were added for "Display Only" and "Model A Era Image."

2007

At our Annual Meeting in Ontario, California, you had the opportunity to visit MAFCA Headquarters, meet with our Directors and celebrate not only our impressive past but help keep your club on the road toward an equally dynamic future.

Additional Sources

There are a few articles from *The Restorer* that will provide you with some additional pertinent historical details. If you are a MAFCA history buff and have access to old Restorers, I would particularly recommend reading two interesting articles written by Bill Jones: (1) The Sep/Oct 1996 issue, page 6, on Red Grow (Part I) and Nov/Dec 1996 (Part II), and (2) The Jan/Feb 1997 issue, page 6 on MAFCA's Early Days. Also, in the Mar/Apr 1998 Restorer, there is an article titled "*In the beginning ... and 40 years later*" on page 9 that includes personal letters from two of our founders in acknowledgment of our 40th anniversary.

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