



T – Times

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Three Rivers Model T Ford Club
P. O. Box 7083
Kennewick, WA 99336

“T-Times” is the publication of the Three Rivers Model T Ford Club and is published monthly solely for its members and exchange with other antique automobile groups. Editorial copy and advertisements should be sent to: Editor 218 NE A Street College Place, WA 99324 by the 25th of the month for inclusion in the next month’s issue. Email dpeters0258@gmail.com

The Three Rivers Model T Ford Club is a chapter of the Model T Ford club of America. Membership is recommended and encouraged. Make membership requests to: MTFCA P.O. Box 126 Centerville, IN 47330. Annual local club dues are \$20. Monthly meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Reata Springs Baptist Church, 2830 Leopold Lane, Richland, WA at 7:00 PM.

2010 Officers

Club President Marlene Coder m.coder@hotmail.com
Vice President Dean Stokes dwstokes1@embarqmail.com
Treasurer Mike Porter
Secretary Wanda Stokes dwstokes1@embarqmail.com
Newsletter Editor Dale Peterson dpeters0258@gmail.com

Board Members

1 Year -- Marlene Coder
2 Year -- Russ Armstrong
3 Year -- Fred Fraser

Special Dates

June Birthdays are:

Jane Armstrong – 6/03
Richard Seewer 6/16

June Anniversaries are:

Larry & Marlene Coder 6/4 Merle & Bertha Feik 6/20
Joe & Jolene Kuhns 6/06 Mike & Linda Porter 6/22
Larry & Hattie Huetson 6/13 Jim & Sandi Elenbaas 6/29
Jim & Betty Patterson 6/17

Coming Events

June 16	Monthly meeting will be a dinner meeting at El Molcajetes Mexican Restaurant in Grandview (201 Division Street) (509-882-3554) at 6:00 p.m
June 18	Tea Tour. Details at May meeting. Please see Meeting Minutes for details.
June 27 - July 1, 2011	MTFCA National Tour, Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada
July 26-28	Ritter Hot Springs Tour – Dale Peterson tour chairman. Note change in dates.
September?	Annual Tour with Gary Ellingson sangar29@centurylink.net
August 18	Monthly meeting in Richland
December	Christmas Party

Submitted by Mary Fraser:

Farewell, My Lovely

E. B. White

(An aging Male Kisses an Old Flame Goodbye, Circa 1936)

I see by the new Sears Roebuck catalogue that it is still possible to buy an axle for a 1909 Model T Ford, but I am not deceived. The great days have faded, and the end is in sight. Only one page in the current catalogue is devoted to parts and accessories for the Model T; yet everyone remembers springtimes when the Ford gadget section was larger than men's clothing, almost as large as household furnishings. The last Model T was built in 1927, and the car is fading from what scholars call the American scene - which is an understatement, because to a few million people who grew up with it, the old Ford practically was the American scene. It was the miracle that God had wrought. And it was patently the sort of thing that could only happen once. Mechanically uncanny, it was like nothing that had ever come to the world before. Flourishing industries rose and fell with it. As a vehicle, it was hard working, commonplace, heroic; and it often seemed to transmit those qualities to the person who rode in it. My own generation identifies it with Youth, with its gaudy, irretrievable excitements; before it fades into the mist, I would like to pay it the tribute of the sigh that is not a sob, and set down random entries in a shape somewhat less cumbersome than a Sears Roebuck catalogue.

The Model T was distinguished from all other makes of cars by the fact that its transmission was of a type known as planetary - which was half metaphysics, half sheer fiction. Engineers accepted the word 'planetary' in its epicyclic sense, but I was always conscious that it also meant 'wandering', 'erratic'. Because of the peculiar nature of this planetary element, there was always, in Model T, a certain dull rapport between engine and wheels, and even when the car was in a state known as neutral, it trembled with a deep imperative and tended to inch forward. There was never a moment when the bands were not faintly egging the machine on. In this respect it was like a horse, rolling the bit on its tongue, and country people brought to it the same technique they used with draft animals.

Its most remarkable quality was its rate of acceleration. In its palmy days the Model T could take off faster than anything on the road. The reason was simple. To get under way, you simply hooked the third finger of the right hand around a lever on the steering column, pulled down hard, and shoved your left foot forcibly against the low-speed pedal. These were simple, positive motions the car responded by lunging forward with a roar. After a few seconds of this turmoil, you took your toe off the pedal, eased up a mite on the throttle, and the car, possessed of only two forward speeds, catapulted directly into high with a series of ugly jerks and was off on its glorious errand. The abruptness of this departure was never equaled in other cars of the period. The human leg was (and still is) incapable of letting in the clutch with anything like the forthright abandon that used to send Model T on its way. Letting in a clutch is a negative, hesitant motion, depending on delicate nervous control; pushing down the Ford pedal was a simple, country motion - an expansive act, which came as natural as kicking an old door to make it budge.

The driver of the old Model T was a man enthroned. The car, with top up, stood seven feet high. The driver sat on top of the gas tank, brooding it with his own body. When he wanted gasoline, he alighted, together with everything

else in the front seat; the seat was pulled off, the metal cap unscrewed, and a wooden stick thrust down to sound the liquid in the well. There was always a couple of these sounding sticks kicking around in the ratty sub-cushion regions of a flivver. Refueling was more of a social function then, because the driver had to unbend, whether he wanted to or not. Directly in front of the driver was the windshield - high, uncompromisingly erect. Nobody talked about air resistance, and the four cylinders pushed the car through the atmosphere with a simple disregard of physical law.

There was this about a Model T; the purchaser never regarded his purchase as a complete, finished product. When you bought a Ford, you figured you had a start - a vibrant, spirited framework to which could be screwed an almost limitless assortment of decorative and functional hardware. Driving away from the agency, hugging the new wheel between your knees, you were already full of creative worry. A Ford was born naked as a baby, and a flourishing industry grew up out of correcting its rare deficiencies and combating its fascinating diseases. Those were the great days of lily-painting. I have been looking at some old Sears Roebuck catalogues, and they bring everything back so clear.

First you bought a Ruby Safety Reflector for the rear, so that your posterior would glow in another car's brilliance. Then you invested thirty-nine cents in some radiator Moto Wings, a popular ornament which gave the Pegasus touch to the machine and did something godlike to the owner. For nine cents you bought a fan-belt guide to keep the belt from slipping off the pulley. You bought a radiator compound to stop leaks. This was as much a part of everybody's equipment as aspirin tablets are of a medicine cabinet. You bought special oil to stop chattering, a clamp-on dash light, a patching outfit, a tool box which you bolted on the running board, a sun visor, a steering-column brace to keep the column rigid, and a set of emergency containers for gas, oil and water - three thin, disc-like cans which reposed in a case on the running board during long, important journeys - red for gas, gray for water, green for oil. It was only a beginning. After the car was about a year old, steps were taken to check the alarming disintegration. (Model T was full of tumors, but they were benign.) A set of anti-rattlers (ninety-eight cents) was a popular panacea. You hooked them on to the gas and spark rods, to the brake pull rod, and to the steering-rod connections. Hood silencers, of black rubber, were applied to the fluttering hood. Shock absorbers and snubbers gave 'complete relaxation'. Some people bought rubber pedal pads, to fit over the standard metal pedals. (I didn't like these, I remember.) Persons of a suspicious or pugnacious turn of mind bought a rear-view mirror; but most Model T owners weren't worried by what was coming from behind because they would soon enough see it out in front. They rode in a state of cheerful catalepsy. Quite a large mutinous clique among Ford owners went over to a foot accelerator (you could buy one and screw it to the floor board), but there was a certain madness in these people, because the Model T, just as she stood, had a choice of three foot pedals to push, and there were plenty of moments when both feet were occupied in the routine performance of duty and when the only way to speed up the engine was with the hand throttle.

Gadget bred gadget. Owners not only bought ready-made gadgets, they invented gadgets to meet special needs. I myself drove my car directly from the agency to the blacksmith's, and had the smith affix two enormous iron brackets to the port running board to support an army trunk.

People who owned closed models builded along different lines: they bought ball grip handles for opening doors, window anti-rattlers, and de-luxe flower vases of the cut-glass anti-splash type. People with delicate sensibilities garnished their car with a device called the Donna Lee Automobile Disseminator - a porous vase guaranteed, according to Sears, to fill the car with la faint clean odor of lavender'. The gap between open cars and closed cars was not as great then as it is now: for \$11.95, Sears Roebuck converted your touring car into a sedan and you went forth renewed. One agreeable quality of the old Fords was that they had no bumpers, and their fenders softened and wilted with the years and permitted the driver to squeeze in and out of tight places.

Tires were 30 x 3 1/2, cost about twelve dollars, and punctured readily. Everybody carried a jiffy patching set, with a nutmeg grater to roughen the tube before the goo was spread on. Everybody was capable of putting on a patch, expected to have to, and did have to.

During my association with Model T's, self-starters were not a prevalent accessory. They were expensive and under suspicion. Your car came equipped with a serviceable crank, and the first thing you learned was how to Get Results. It was a special trick, and until you learned it (usually from another Ford owner, but sometimes by a period of appalling experimentation) you might as well have been winding up an awning. The trick was to leave the ignition switch off, proceed to the animal's head, pull the choke (which was a little wire protruding through the radiator) and give the crank two or three nonchalant upward lifts. Then, whistling as though thinking about something else, you would saunter back to the driver's cabin, turn the ignition on, return to the crank, and this time, catching it on the downstroke, give it a quick spin with plenty of That. If this procedure was followed, the engine almost always responded - first with a few scattered explosions, then with a tumultuous gunfire, which you checked by racing

around to the driver's seat and retarding the throttle. Often, if the emergency brake hadn't been pulled all the way back, the car advanced on you the instant the first explosion occurred and you would hold it back by leaning your weight against it. I can still feel my old Ford nuzzling me at the curb, as though looking for an apple in my pocket. In zero weather, ordinary cranking became an impossibility, except for giants. The oil thickened, and it became necessary to lack up the rear wheels, which for some planetary reason, eased the throw.

The lore and legend that governed the Ford were boundless. Owners had their own theories about everything; they discussed mutual problems in that wise, infinitely resourceful way old women discuss rheumatism. Exact knowledge was pretty scarce, and often proved less effective than superstition. Dropping a camphor ball into the gas tank was a popular expedient; it seemed to have a tonic effect both on man and machine. There wasn't much to base exact knowledge on. The Ford driver flew blind. He didn't know the temperature of his engine, the speed of his car, the amount of his fuel, or the pressure of his oil (the old Ford lubricated itself by what was amiably described as the 'splash system'). A speedometer cost money and was an extra, like a windshield-wiper. The dashboard of the early models was bare save for an ignition key; later models, grown effete, boasted an ammeter which pulsed alarmingly with the throbbing of the car. Under the dash was a box of coils, with vibrators which you adjusted, or thought you adjusted. Whatever the driver learned of his motor, he learned not through instruments but through sudden developments. I remember that the timer was one of the vital organs about which there was ample doctrine. When everything else had been checked, you had a look at the timer. It was an extravagantly odd little device, simple in construction, mysterious in function. It contained a roller, held by a spring, and there were four contact points on the inside of the case against which, many people believed, the roller rolled. I have had a timer apart on a sick Ford many times. But I never really knew what I was up to, I was just showing off before God. There were almost as many schools of thought as there were timers. Some people, when things went wrong, just clenched their teeth and gave the timer a smart crack with a wrench. Other people opened it up and blew on it. There was a school that held that the timer needed large amounts of oil; they fixed it by frequent baptism. And there was a school that was positive it was meant to run dry as a bone; these people were continually taking it off and wiping it. I remember once spitting into a timer; not in anger, but in a spirit of research. You see, the Model T driver moved in the realm of metaphysics. He believed his car could be hexed.

One reason the Ford anatomy was never reduced to an exact science was that, having 'fixed' it, the owner couldn't honestly claim that the treatment had brought about the cure. There were too many authenticated cases of Fords fixing themselves - restored naturally to health after a short rest. Farmers soon discovered this, and it fitted nicely with their draft-horse philosophy: 'Let 'er cool off and she'll snap into it again.'

A Ford owner had Number One Bearing constantly in mind. This bearing, being at the front end of the motor, was the one that always burned out, because the oil didn't reach it when the car was climbing hills. (That's what I was always told, anyway.) The oil used to recede and leave Number One dry as a clam flat; you had to watch that bearing like a hawk. It was like a weak heart - you could hear it start knocking, and that was when you stopped to let her cool off. Try as you would to keep the oil supply right, in the end Number One always went out. 'Number One Bearing burned out on me and I had to have her replaced,' you would say, wisely; and your companions always had a lot to tell about how to protect and pamper Number One to keep her alive.

Sprinkled not too liberally among the millions of amateur witch doctors who drove Fords and applied their own abominable cures were the heaven sent mechanics who could really make the car talk. These professionals turned up in undreamed-of spots. One time, on the banks of the Columbia River in Washington, I heard the rear end go out of my Model T when I was trying to whip it up a steep incline onto the deck of a ferry. Something snapped; the car slid backwards into the mud. It seemed to me like the end of the trail. But the captain of the ferry, observing the withered remnant, spoke up.

'What's got her?' he asked.

'I guess it's the rear end,' I replied listlessly. The captain leaned over the rail and stared. Then I saw that there was a hunger in his eyes that set him off from other men.

'Tell you what,' he said casually, trying to cover up his eagerness, 'let's pull the son of a bitch up onto the boat, and I'll help you fix her while we're going back and forth on the river.'

We did just this. All that day I plied between the towns of Pasco and Kennewick, while the skipper (who had once worked in a Ford garage) directed the amazing work of resetting the bones of my car.

Springtime in the heyday of the Model T was a delirious season. Owning a car was still a major excitement, roads were still wonderful and bad. The Fords were obviously conceived in madness: any car which was capable of going from forward into reverse without any perceptible mechanical hiatus was bound to be a mighty challenging thing to the human imagination. Boys used to veer them off the highway into a level pasture and run wild with them, as

though they were cutting up with a girl. Most everybody used the reverse pedal quite as much as the regular foot brake - it distributed the wear over the bands and wore them all down evenly. That was the big trick, to wear all the bands down evenly, so that the final chattering would be total and the whole unit scream for renewal.

The days were golden, the nights were dim and strange. I still recall with trembling those loud, nocturnal crises when you drew up to a signpost and raced the engine so the lights would be bright enough to read destinations by. I have never been really planetary since. I suppose it's time to say goodbye. Farewell, my lovely!

** From the *New Yorker* for May 16, 1936.

* E.B. White is the author of *Charlotte's Web* and *One Man's Meat*, among other works.

Monthly Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2011

Tonight's meeting was opened by President, Marlene Coder. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Secretary, Wanda Stokes read the minutes and they were accepted.

Treasurer, Mike Porter gave his report, we have money in the bank.

Old Business

Fred and Mary Fraser and Jane and Russ Armstrong are hosting a [Tea and Tour June 18th](#). It was decided that we will **meet at the Armstrong's at 9:30 a.m.** and **begin the tour of the ABC houses in Richland about 10:00 a.m.**

After touring around Richland to see the ABC houses, we will then return to the Armstrong's for the "[English High Tea](#)". Jane passed around a sign up sheet for those wishing to attend. They asked that you please let them know by June 15th if you would like to come. It is also recommended that you wear a period hat and/or clothing for this event. If you do not have a hat, Jane will have extras for you to wear. [Jane's telephone number is 627-2954](#) and [Mary's telephone number is 946-9850](#). Please attend.

Marlene reminded everyone that the [Pincher Creek National Model T Tour](#) is approaching quickly. Is everyone all set for this tour the week of June 27th?

Dale Peterson gave us an update on the [Ritter Creek Hot Springs tour](#) being planned for **Monday, July 25th through Wednesday, July 27th**. The cost will be approximately \$30 and we will be supplying our food. This rustic tour sounds fun. Everyone is excited about being able to square dance in the ballroom of the hotel. Fred and Mary Fraser will supply the record/CD player and Armstrong's have the record with square dance calls. Marlene Coder also has a CD of 1920's music. Dale asked for a head count to give the owners of Ritter Creek Hotel an estimate. Everyone in attendance felt that they wanted to go. The old hotel is two storied with the upper floor the ballroom. There are eight rooms on the main floor and two cabins. The rooms share a bathroom. There is a swimming pool for our use and a hot tub heated by the area's hot springs. Dale suggested that we picnic to and from the Ritter Creek Hotel and bring a BBQ for use while staying there. More will be forthcoming about the great tour.

New Business

Jim Langdon mentioned that **Mecham, Oregon's cafe is open again**. We have toured to Mecham several times and this is always an enjoyable drive and tour. Keep this in mind for later on this year.

Fred Fraser mentioned that he ordered several old musicals from the 1930's through the 1940's. One especially interesting features Amos and Andy driving a Model T as their cab service. If we wish to view these, Fred is willing to share them at one of our meeting. Sounds great!

Mike Porter shared correspondence sent to the club. There will be a Trinity Baptist Church Car Show, Saturday, May 21 from 10:00 to 3:00 in Florence Ct., Burbank, WA. Mike also shared a letter sent to the club inviting us to stay at the Best Western Wheatland Motel in Colfax, WA. The sales manager, Kimberly Marshal invited us and shared the area's highlights. Wayne Williams also invited us to a car show at Canyon Lakes Manor on June 11th. They will feed us lunch if we attend.

After much discussion, it was decided that our **next meeting will be June 16th at El Molcajetes Mexican Restaurant in Grandview** (201 Division Street) (509-882-3554) at **6:00 p.m.** We have not had a dinner meeting in quite some time and decided to have the June meeting there. Wanda will make reservations.

For the **July 21st meeting**, it was decided to move our **Annual Picnic** up from August. We hope to move the **location to Howard Amon Park in Richland**. Fred will check out reserving a gazebo in the park for us. Wanda made the motion that we allow Fred to spend up to \$50 towards the reservation. Jane seconded. Motion carried. More information will be forth coming about our annual picnic.

With nothing more to come before the members, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Wanda Stokes, Secretary

Upcoming Tours Ritter Hot Springs

Due to my work schedule, the Ritter Hot Springs tour will take place July 26-28. Arrangements are proceeding along, sometimes it seems faster than I am able to keep up. If I remember right, I am thinking that Dean volunteered to be in charge of the barbecue Wednesday, and Fred and Mary are bringing the sound system and some music CD's for the dance. If someone is willing, I could use some help with the evening meal Tuesday and breakfast Wednesday. Costs will include \$30/night at the Ritter Hotel, \$30/person for meals not including those on the road and an amount for the trouble trailer. This will add up to about \$60/person for a fun three days. If anyone would like to go but does not wish to drive or does not have a drivable car and would drive the trouble truck, please contact me. For the rest of those without Model T's to drive that would like to go, you are also welcome.

Schedule

Tuesday, July 26:

At this time, the agenda is to leave from Jim and Phyllis Langdon's in Hermiston at 9:00 AM. Lunch at Heppner, possibly Gd's Linger Longer Restaurant-- at least it sounds interesting, others in town as well. Drive back roads from here to Ritter (I have to drive through before then to evaluate the route, but it will include at least some unpaved segments. Evening meal will be at Ritter Hot Springs, no dining facilities so this first meal could be something like fried chicken with potluck salads and desserts.

Wednesday, July 27:

Breakfast, then relax or take a short drive up the Middle Fork of the John Day River to Galena. Sandwich picnic at an appropriate place and time. Back in time for an old fashioned Barbecue then on to the second floor Dance Hall for an evening of Square and/or 1920's music dancing with the surrounding residents invited. Punch and refreshments will need to be provided.

Thursday, July 28:

Breakfast, then leave for the return trip home via Ukiah where we will stop for lunch. Again, there will be some unpaved roads and short segments of Hwy 395.

Reservation for Ritter Hot Springs Tour

Please complete and mail to: Dale Peterson, 218 NE A Street, College Place, Washington 99324 (or give it to me at the monthly club meeting) by July 21.

Name: _____

Number attending: _____

Fee: - _____ (\$60/Person)