



# BACKFIRE

Chicago Southland Chapter, Model A Ford Club of America

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JUNE 2009

## Spring is Here!!!

<http://www.drivingthedixie.sinthasite.com>

We are officially on the road again and I want to break out in song! (OK I'll just hummm). I truly love the driving season. I wish I could have joined the group on the shake down cruise out towards Kankakee but I had too much to do at home. On the "Spring Trip" to Dixon IL. we had wonderful weather to travel in and had a great time as usual. It was also nice to see Nancy and Claude's two sons (17 & 15) join us on the trip driving their own car. It's been a long time since I could jump out of a car the way they did.

Phil



*The Carp  
Editor in Chief*

**Header Picture:**

Amboy IL. at the train station. We had a total of 15 A models on the trip.

More inside!



### Inside this Months Issue:

- Due to space shake down cruise report will be next month
- Lisota's Garage tech talk
- Spring Trip to Dixon IL.
- Jim's Dixie History
  - Meeting synopsis

# DIXIE HIGHWAY HERITAGE

By Jim Wright

Ford records indicate that on April 14, 1931, Henry Ford with son, Edsel at his side, drove off the assembly line in the Twenty Millionth Ford, a 1931 Slant Windshield Town Sedan. The car was specially painted with TWENTY MILLIONTH and the Ford logo on both sides and on the top.

Within a week, this car was the central attraction as it was taken to Ford dealerships, state capitals and landmarks nationwide, along with as many as twenty other 1931 models of various body styles. Sort of a rolling new car show, they began in the East and headed out West. At these stops, local dignitaries, celebrities, and dealers as it bestowed tons of free

The car drove along the Dixie Highway in Illinois in the summer of 1931 to visit Hanson Ford, located just off the highway at Third and Oak Streets in downtown Watseka. As in other communities, hundreds of townspeople turned out to view this "milestone" car and this photograph records the event.



## Dick Tracy 1930 Strip #3



# Jon Lisota: *Motor Medic*



## Tech Talk Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at “Bob’s Garage”

We had several members show up for the headlight adjusting. Some with only one eye working, some showing the top leafs of the trees, and one fellow was hunting night crawlers. The process was quite easy, with the board that was made up for aligning the headlights. We want to thank Bob Steinmetz for the use of his big barn. It really made the adjustments go well. We always have a great time at Bob's.

**Well, we completed our Spring Tour.** It sure was different than our shakedown cruise. Shakedown went smooth as silk. We started out, checking Bob's carb. Turns out, we replaced everything but the kitchen sink. Ended up, the coil was bad. Of course Phil told us that. Then Ken's little yellow coupe, decided to run on two cylinders. Quick check, and off came the head. Needed a new head gasket. With the help of Claude and others we got it changed. Now it's up and running good again. Next day, he's dead in the water, again. Quit running at a stop sign. Now what? The ignition cable into the dizzy is too loose and vibrates in too far and shorts the circuit. This happens several more times. Nope, don't tape it. A's didn't come with black tape on them. Just screw it out every time it stops running. Then Karen Kolinda's car stops at a stop sign. Won't start. Her points closed up. Open the points and she off and running. Oops, don't forget Ken, now the engine is making a banging noise. Ken's four-blade fan, is hitting the hose clamp. Readjust the radiators support rods. This helps some, but one fan blade is bent. We straighten it up and run good. Before he gets home, it is hammering again. Upon closer look, he finds one of the blades about ready to break off. He made it home okay. Now Ron Bonneau's car won't accelerate. When he advances the timing, it runs worse. Ended up, we changed the lower plate and condenser. Further down the road it acts up again. Should have replaced everything at once. The points spring was so weak, they won't stay closed. So replaced them, he made it home in good shape. Had to push start Phil a couple of times, low battery. His cutoff switch was corroded. Took that out of the circuit and he seemed to be okay then. Almost forgot, back to Bob again. The starter spring broke. With help from Randy and new bolts and washers, he was good to go in twenty minutes. Bob couldn't help much on this trip with the mechanicals, this time. He aggravated his back and had a hard time moving around. But we did make use of his knowledge.

## Spring Trip 2009

On a crisp May morning fourteen cars and twenty-eight people met for breakfast in Wilmington. Had some car issues before we finished breakfast. What we didn't know was that this trip would be among the happiest for Jon Lisota and all the others who love working on badly behaving Model A's. The number of crises seemed to be about a dozen. I'm sure Phil will have a detailed report in Backfire. We also learned that all GPS Models do not always agree. Those ingredients make for a great trip.



While heading west we came upon a huge wind farm. Just the very vision of it prompted a pop quiz to see who remembered information from a previous wind farm trip. Questions like how fast is the tip of the blade traveling? Or, why are some of the blades turning counterclockwise? (answers to follow if you don't know). After a few wrong turns, a couple of bumpy roads and fear of ending up in another cow pasture we decided to pull into a school yard. Of course, being who we are, and I'm sure forgetting school was in session, we did some horn honking. It ended up being one of "those moments". Bob

standing in the doorway with their noses firmly pressed against the glass. As we are likely to do, we created an impromptu parade for them complete with our usual waves and honks. We also had the opportunity to see our Illinois tax dollars at work. Three work crews, a couple of trucks, one shovel and some blacktop, not one of the crew even breaking a sweat. We found a truly quaint little restaurant in Princeton, IL for lunch. Kramer's Kitchen managed to serve us with more speed than I've seen in a long time. Some of us learned that Mrs. Kramer makes the most outrageous cheesecake in all kinds of flavors. Yum!



Friday evening was the debut for the "Chuck Wagon" built by Chuck Fritz. The wagon portion is still in progress but the grill is a thing of beauty. The Quality Inn allowed the guys to grill burgers and brats and I think hot dogs. Can't remember. Jon, Ron, and



Chuck also brought coleslaw, potato salad, all the condiments, tableware, chips and a birthday cake to celebrate the occasion for Phil, Marvin, and Linnea. We also celebrated Bonnie and Randy's anniversary. Club members brought the customary snacks, wine, beer and all things drinkable! We had a great evening in the large room provided for us by the Inn. We, in turn, provided the front office staff with dinner! We had breakfast at the hotel. Somehow the Thornburg's Model A got misplaced...HMIMM!

**The Illinois River was dramatically out of its banks but the scenery down Route 23 was beautiful. We had an appointment to see the John Deere Home and Historic Site in Grand Detour near Dixon, IL. An 1830's blacksmith shop was in full working condition. A blacksmith demonstrated many of the techniques at that time. An archaeological exhibit also provided a look at the original location of Deere's forge. He created a highly polished steel plow that would quickly glide through the Midwest's sticky soil. Pioneers coming from the east had used wood plows in their sandy soil and quickly became discouraged in their new surroundings. It was truly an interesting place to visit. As usual, we were all getting hungry. Arrangements had been made for us to have lunch and cruise on the Pride of Oregon. This was a real riverboat paddles and all on the Rock River. Here again the water level was clearly over the banks. There was banjo music, good food, good drinks and good friends, what more do you need. The air was crisp but it was still a beautiful sunny day.**



**A statue of Chief Blackhawk stands about 120 feet above the Rock River. The artist created the statue 100 years ago. It is the second highest (five stories) single pour concrete artifact in the USA. This is the area of the Blackhawk War in which Abraham Lincoln served. So much history, so little time to see everything. Many of us thought the afternoon on the boat would also be a great trip in the fall to see the leaves in color. The day was going much too well. Ken's car was in real trouble and after a diagnosis it was called major. A blown head gasket. This might be a problem for some but not for our Model A Medic and his assistants got going. Took about an hour to replace the gasket. The club record is 45 minutes and that was done on the roadside in the midst of cornfields. Lucky**

**for a lot of us in the group. They had pulled Ken's ailing car into a parking lot in front of a Mall. The building had actually been a piano factory in 1893. Now it was filled with little shops and lots of history. How lucky can you get?**

**Back on the road again we were on our way to Amboy, IL just southeast of Dixon. This is a very small town with an unexpected treat. The drugstore in town is filled with antiques representing what a pharmacist would use in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The best part was the original soda fountain, bar stools, wooden booths (very small) and all. You've never seen so many sodas; sundaes, shakes, cones and root beer floats consumed in short order. Brother Bob and I had the opportunity to have root beer floats just as we did when were little kids. That was always our Friday night treat at home. Yes, it was two or maybe ten years ago....I wish! Ron, Jon, Chuck and Joe and made a trial run to this little town a few months ago. They found an old train station that has been restored. There is also a huge locomotive and coal tender on a track as part of the museum. Some of us even found the old jail, which had been, used many, many years ago. It was no more than an oversized cage with a metal bunk. We used this place as a great photo op and indeed, the pictures are great. We needed to get back on the road so we could hurry back to Dixon and go to dinner. Seems all we do is eat.**



The Brown Shingle Restaurant in Dixon served large enough portions to share with friends. Food was really good. We arrived back at the hotel and found our reserved parking area had been taken over by a college sports team. We made other arrangements and put the cones with our names on it behind their vans just as a reminder. Sometimes you just have to do that. The team had apparently lost their game. They were in no mood to be accommodating and move the vans. Some of our people on the third floor found that out in the wee hours of the morning.

The weekend had gone so quickly. We made a stop at the boyhood home of President Ronald Reagan on our way out of Dixon. Although it was early Sunday morning, the caretaker was very nice and opened the garage/barn in back so we could see the old Model T stored there. More photo ops. The trip home was filled with more “car challenges”. Lunch was at Portillo’s and would only be a short time before our final stop in Lockport.



We had the opportunity to tour a museum which originally housed offices for those involved in operation of the I & M Canal. I also learned there about how many men from local towns like Plainfield, Frankfort, Crete and so on had



joined the ranks during the civil were. They had some very interesting records at this facility for Civil War junkies.



Such a full weekend but somehow it had ended too soon. It always does. There were many of our usual hugs goodbyes as we parted in all kinds of directions on our journey to our own homes. We are so thankful to Ron Bonneau, Chuck Fritz and Jon Lisota for a magnificent time. We’re looking forward to the Fall trip to Milwaukee WI, with WSJ Tours.

*Marlene Krygowski*

**May Meeting** was at Bob's Garage Treasures report \$1663.11 50/50 \$38.00 for April.

**Member news:** Tim Bot's wife Pat was hit by a car in Florida crossing the street. Tim says that the car that hit her is fine. The club members are glad to hear that she is also doing well. Ben Heppner says that Nettye is improving every day. Ken and Dale Chamis now have a 1928 Tudor that will be added to their stable of cars.

**Old business:** The club thanks Chuck, Ron, and Jon for all the work on the spring trip. The Christmas party will be at a Beggars Pizza of Bob Granko's choosing.

**New business:** Al and Sandy Kaleta are the proud owners of a 1929 Tudor and will be joining the club. We will be looking into a Joliet Jackhammers baseball outing Sat. August 15<sup>th</sup>. Balmoral Park outing will also be looked into. Crown Theater in Crown Point an outing will be looked into for the New Movie "Public Enemies"

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> of June Meeting**

7:00PM meeting at Park Forest Police Department Court room  
200 Lakewood Blvd. Park Forest, IL 60466 *Steve Coe host.*

**WSJ Tours presents: Fall Trip to Milwaukee Wisconsin**



**Individual Reservations Under A's R Us** - Call the Hotel Directly at  
414-345-5000 or 888-322-3326

For a King or double queen the cost will be \$109.00 per night. You may cancel up to 2 days prior to the event. There are only 20 rooms reserved so call now. There will be many things to see and do. This will be the first time the club has gone to this city.

**Up Coming Calendar of 2009 Events**

**Wed June 3<sup>rd</sup>** Dixie Dash Meeting at the 911 center, Rt. 30 and Kedzie 5:00

**Friday June 5<sup>th</sup>** Blue Island for a TGIF night. Cars show movie and food. Looks like a donation may be made to the club to attend.

**Sunday June 7<sup>th</sup>** Sharon Wisconsin for model A days.

**Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>** Club Event: Driving the Dixie starting in Blue Island at 7:00 for set up and ending up in Momence around 4:00PM for relaxation. We may as in the past go for pizza as a club afterwards.

**Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup>** St. James Church

**Tuesday August 11<sup>th</sup>** Camp Quality in Frankfort, IL

**Rember:** Crete Cruise Night is back 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and Beecher 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month.

Young people now have a place to go and there should be many fewer problems in Crete.

**Manhattan Car Club Cruise Night.** 1009 W Laraway Rd. 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays of June, July and August.

**June 2009**

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**July 2009**

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**August 2009**

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# A's R Us officers and Staff

President – Chuck Fritz Vice President – Jim Wright Treasure – Tim Dionne Secretary – Dale Chamis

Member relations – Joe Krygowski Web Page – Joe Krygowski Newsletter – Phillip Serviss

Parade Coordinator – Wally Ekstrom Director of Safety – Ron Bonneau

Nat'l Rep. – Marlene Krygowski Historian – Tim Bots

Sgt. At Arms Steve Coe Motor Medic - Jon Lisota

Banquet Queen – Robin Rodriguez



Please send **Backfire** articles or items of interest to:

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Randy & Bonnie Senkpeil cruise under the welcome arch on our way to Prairie De tour.

**BACKFIRE**

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