

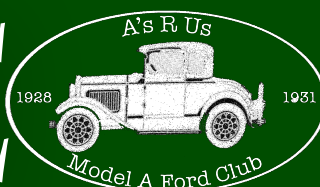


VOLUME 17

ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2012

# BACKFIRE



Chicago Southland Chapter, Model A Ford Club of America

<http://www.drivingthedixie.com>

<http://asrus.homestead.com>



I want to thank Tim Dionne for arranging the tour of the Crown Point Sheriff's House and Jail on August 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 and the dinner afterwards. Not only was the tour informative but also it was a great club activity. The insights of the tour guides and seeing the jail first hand give you a better idea the difficulty Dillinger would have had not to have help to escape the jail. In fact I could see where Lake County thought it was "Escape proof". I would agree if the guards had followed a few simple rules this could be true. But from what I've read it seems as if there was inside help. In this newsletter I started out just with a short story on the visit to the Crown Point Sheriffs House and Jail. Now after a few hours of looking at newspaper articles from the time, interviews and the tour guides comments I believe I have compiled what seems to be a pretty accurate story of how Dillinger escaped by combining numerous and at times conflicting stories. I hope you enjoy the newsletter for this month highlighting "Public Enemy #1" John Dillinger.

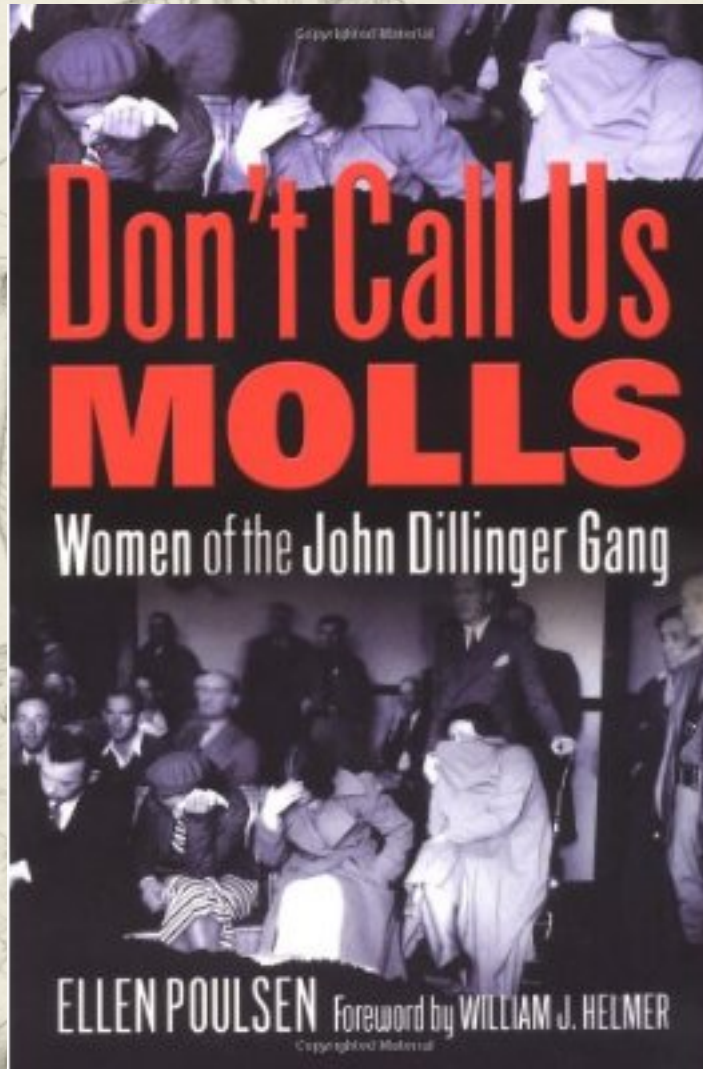
**Header Picture:**

Famous Dillinger photo in the booking room of the Crown Point Jail.



*The Carp  
Editor in Chief*

*Phil Serviss, Editor*



Buried under decades of stereotype and parody, the true history of the female companions of the Great Depression's bank-robbing gang is uncovered. *Don't Call Us Molls* carefully examines the legacy of the Dillinger women using eyewitness and descendants' accounts as well as courtroom and prison records. This book explores the collective experience of these fugitives and offers a thoughtful, well-informed commentary on past attitudes toward the marginalized women of the day—the lawbreakers, the informers, and a lone female sheriff. FBI memos, court transcripts, and never-before-published photos reveal the events experienced by women under siege, resurrecting historical figures and their private behavior. This history lays bare the personal lives of the wives and girlfriends of the public enemies of the 1930s and examines how their conflicting loyalties were challenged and exploited by unrelenting pressure of the United States government to betray their men.



**The women of the outlaws had money as they dressed quite well with the latest fashions.**



Opal Lans

Mary Kinder

Mary Evelyn "Billie"  
Frechette



With Best Wishes  
Sincerely  
Evelyn Frechette





## Crown Point Sheriffs House and Jail

**On** March 3, 1934, while awaiting trial for the alleged murder of an East Chicago policeman, John Herbert Dillinger, the most notorious outlaw in the nation at the time, reportedly took command of Sheriff Holley's heavily armed jail. As the story goes, using a toy gun whittled from the top of a wooden washboard and coated with black shoe polish he took over the jail with the help of Herbert Youngblood. In reality the escape was probably arranged with the help of John's attorney Louis Piquett reportedly paying a sum of money to lake County officers and passing a real gun to John at one of his visits. The first jail officer to be captured was Officer Blank after he allowed a maintenance man to go into the cell area without the prisoners being in their cells. This was a violation of jail policy. The maintenance man was grabbed and Dillinger demanded the maintenance man have cellblock access door be opened. Blank opened the cell access hall door and now Dillinger had control of the whole cellblock. Dillinger had Blank start calling guards one by one down the hall and capturing them, putting them in cells. In the process he and Youngblood locked up 33 people with-in 15 minutes, including the warden and a dozen deputies. No other inmates wanted anything to do with Dillinger's escape and remained behind.



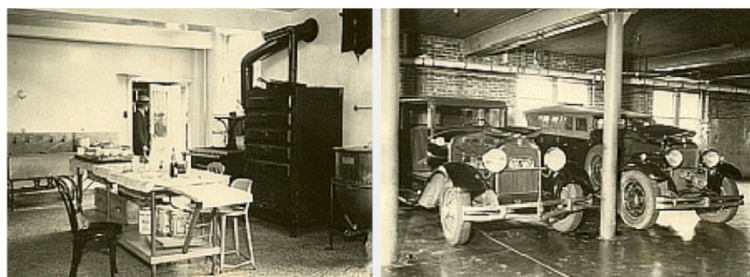
**Dillinger's Cell**



Now having the complete run of the jail they took the only master set of keys for the jail and two Thompson sub machine guns from the prison lobby that were brought in to secure Dillinger from any attempts to spring him by his gang. To further embarrassed the town, as well as then-42-year-old Sherriff Holley, John made his way though the kitchen into the garage under the jail. Dillinger tried to steal one of the cars that were

there but the keys were kept in a safe back in the jail lobby and John didn't know that. The prison Warden Lou Baker's wife was encountered in the jail's garage and confronted John and Youngblood. She was subsequently locked into a broom closet. So the cars at the jail couldn't be used to pursue them later, the ignition wires were taken to disable them. Dillinger, Youngblood along with hostage Blank scaled an 8-foot wall behind the jail

Common room for Dillinger's cellblock



Dillinger and Youngblood escaped through the kitchen of the Crown Point Jail. They made their way to the Main Street Garage where they took Sheriff Lillian Holley's car after disabling the two remaining cars shown above. They sped away taking two hostages, a prison attache and garage mechanic Edwin Saager whom they forced to be the driver.

complex entering the rear of the garage next to the court building just north of the jail.

Confronting the mechanic "Saager", John asked, "What the fastest car in the garage was?" He was told the Sherriff's Ford V8 was. Every one was piled into her brand new V-8 Ford equipped with a short wave radio, red headlights and siren. In an

interview with the mechanic, Mr. Saager stated that they left town with Officer Blank driving to the north and then headed west to Illinois. At one point they ran off the road and had to put chains on the car to get it out of a ditch.



Tim Dionne standing in the hallway of Dillinger's cellblock





**1934 map showing improved roads.  
Between Crown Point and Rt.41 all the roads were dirt and are not shown.**

Asked what was talked about he stated nothing much and with a smirk said they did sing, "Get along little doggy". Finally making a hard road at St. John, IN they headed south then headed west again probably driving Beecher blacktop road making Peotone 25 miles away. Dropping the hostages off in Peotone John

Dillinger gave the group \$4.00, a couple cigarettes and then headed to Chicago. It took over an hour to release the 33 captives from the cells, as they had to bring in acetylene torches to cut them out. Officer Blank was investigated along with others but there wasn't enough evidence to proceed with



On March 3, 1934, Sheriff Holley's 1933 Ford was found abandoned at Ardmore and Kenmore Ave.'s in Chicago, where John had switched to the 1933 Essex Terraplane 8 that "Billie" had bought for him.

prosecutions. It was also said that Officer Blank said he went to Indianapolis to meet with state investigators yet there are no records of him being there. It is assumed that he finished the deal with Dillinger's lawyer Piquett.





In the aftermath of the breakout citizens from around the country sent 100's of wooden guns to Sherriff Holly's office rubbing in the humiliating events that had happened.

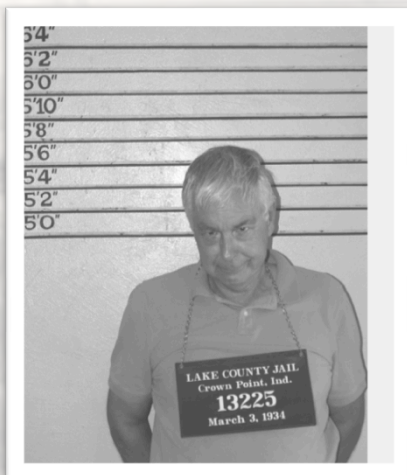


Dillinger on the family farm shortly after the jailbreak holding a wood gun.

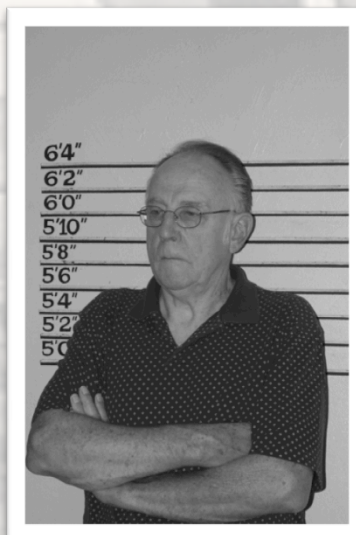


Left to right: The Main Street Garage where Dillinger and a fellow prisoner stole Sheriff Holley's car to make their escape. To the right of the garage is the County Court House where John was to be tried for murder. On the far right behind the tree, crowds gather in at the Crown Point Jail where John had just made his escape.

## More of Crown Point Jail's Notorious Inmates



Jon AKA  
"The Mechanic"



Bob AKA  
"Boom Boom Bobby"

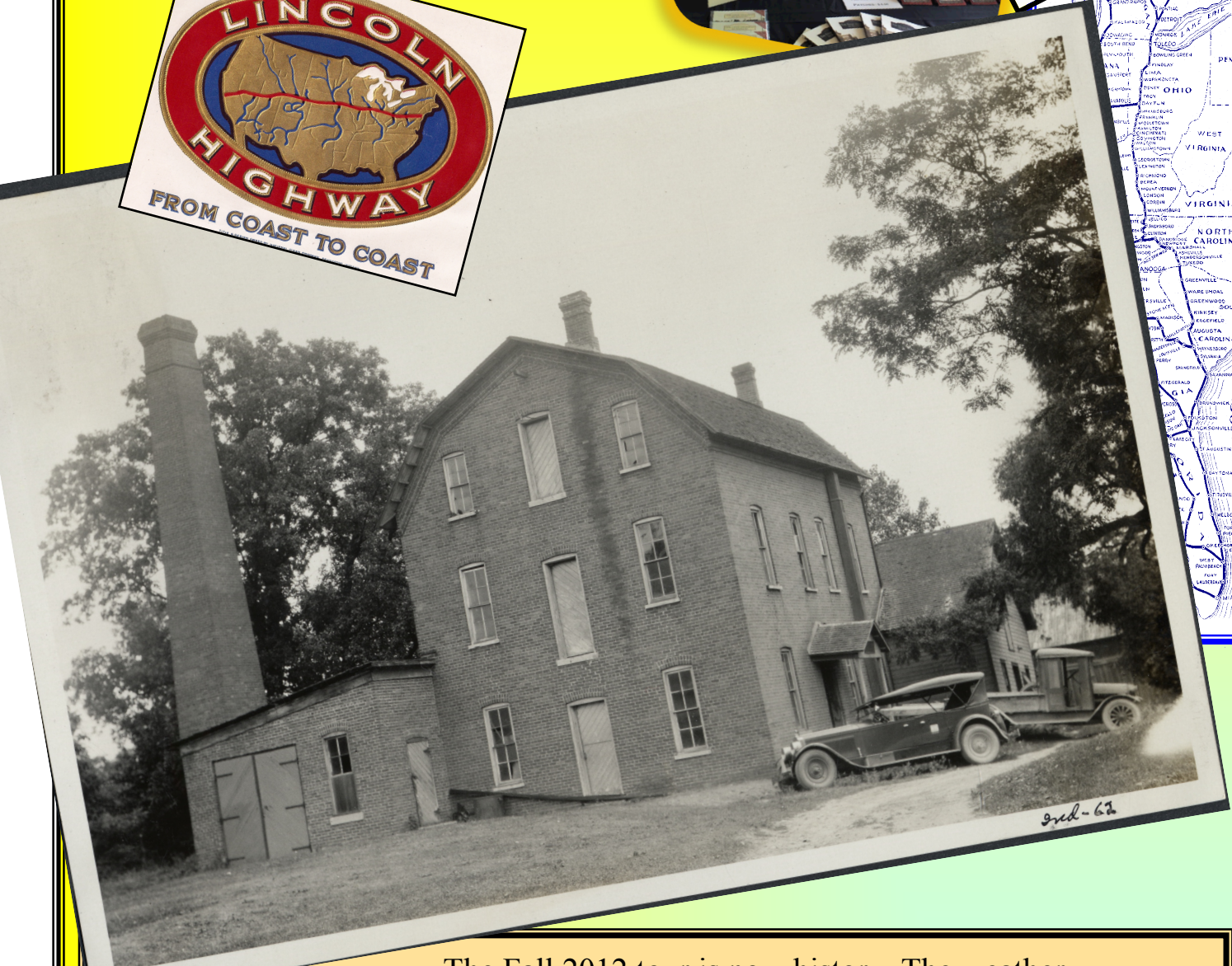
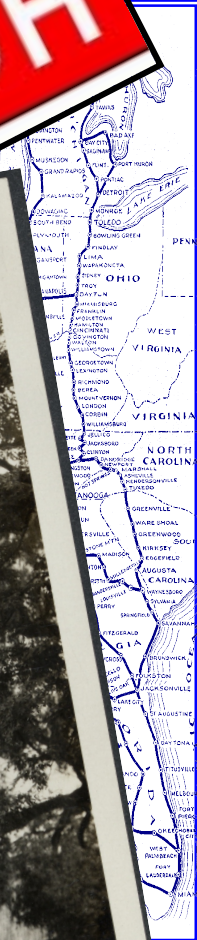


Penelope AKA  
"The Black Widow"



# DIXIE HIGHWAY HERITAGE

By Jim Wright



The Fall 2012 tour is now history. The weather cooperated perfectly and a number of interesting sites were visited. On Friday, many enjoyed our visit to Deep River Park and Wood's Mill on the Old Lincoln Highway near Hobart. Wood, a native of Massachusetts built his first mill at the site in 1838. This wood frame structure burned down and was later rebuilt of brick in 1876 by Nathan Wood, John's son. This is still the structure that stands today as a fine example of early "industrial" technology. The mill was also a stop on an early Lincoln Highway Association inspection tour in the early 1920's. The building has changed little over the years.



# Key By Code by: Phil Serviss

**Almost** everyone has a locking door handle or two lying around without keys to work it. I know that there are a few cars in the club that never get locked because they don't have the key. Pryor to taking the 31 Tudor to Kentucky I looked all over for keys for the lock and couldn't find them. I ran out of time and was on the road for a week without being able to lock the car. I had no problems but there was always a thought, that maybe someone's curiosity will get the best of them. I looked in the maintenance manual and found that the locks can't be disassembled as they are mechanically pressed together so pulling the cylinder was out of the question. I called two of the largest suppliers of Model A parts and they had no way to make me a key but they would sell me a blank key for \$3.50. That's when I decided to bring two door locks along on our fall trip and see if anyone else's key will work in my handle. At Saturday night's dinner the handles were passed with no luck at the first couple of tables. A couple of keys fit the keyway but didn't turn. Then two of our youngest members Kurt and Travis spotted stampings under the rust on the shaft of the door handles. All it took was young eyes and the first part of the problem was solved. On Monday I cleaned up the handle shafts and oiled the tumblers and went to the locksmith. The locksmith took a quick look in his computer under pre-1950 codes and I had a new key in less than 4 minutes. So if all you need is a key, pull the handle and clean the shaft to reveal the code. The key blanks are readily available. I have gotten prices from \$15 to \$10 to get a key cut by code at the local locksmith.



**The code on this handle is A1135 =51311**  
**Ford pre-1950      ILCO blank 1098M**  
**HPC card C4      cutter CW10LL**



**This key cutter uses code cards inserted into the face of the machine to give the dials corresponding pin positions for the key.**

**Acme in Worth, IL. will cut by code for \$8 per lock by letting them know you are with A'SRUS. That's a good Deal!**

**ACME LOCK & KEY**



**BONDED & INSURED LOCKSMITHS**  
11350 South Harlem Avenue • Worth, Illinois 60482

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A'S R US MEETING MINUTES  
September 19,2012

**MEETING LOCATION:** Al & Sandy Kaleta's home.

**CALL TO ORDER BY PRESIDENT TIM BORCHERT AT:** 7:10PM. Tim introduced our new Member, Al Betschart. We want to welcome him, his wife Sabine and 2 boys Oz & Odin. The August minutes were then read by Sandy and approved as read.

**TREASURERS REPORT:** Jim presented a written report detailing and comparing 2011/2012 Driving the Dixie Receipts/Deposits. 50% of the 2012 profits were transferred into the Driving the Dixie account as agreed upon by the communities. Jim reminded the membership that the MAFCA/chapter dues are now due.

**FAMILY NEWS:** Joe and Marlene were at our meeting and we were happy to hear that they will be joining us for our Fall trip. Linnea looked great and she & Chuck will also be joining us. Both thanked the membership for their prayers. Dale & Ken went to visit Marvin & Irene and stated both were doing well and will hopefully join us for our next meeting. Fran announced that her Granddaughter Brittney has received another scholarship.

**OLD BUSINESS: WRAP UPS: Crown Point Jail tour** was a success and the guides invited our group to come back anytime. Steve said his boys had a great time. Faustinos did a great job serving lunch.

**Driving the Dixie:** Tim reported that 4 villages attended the meeting and they discussed improving the time frame on the Island, and concern re: contributor recognition etc. He also stated that Bob won a recognition award for his Woody and Alan won \$137.00 on a 50/50 draw.

**Exposure Trip:** Phil reported that they had a Great Trip, ran some beautiful roads, enjoyed the ferry crossings, encountered some rain, and only had 2 minor breakdowns. Tim BJ said he really enjoyed the trip, it was relaxing, more spontaneous than our other trips and recommends all the members try it. Phil shared that he is looking into a trip around Lake Michigan for next year.

**Labor Day Parade:** Tim BJ reported he and 4 members from Frankfurt car club were the only model A's in the parade.

**Tech Talk:** Tim BJ stated that our last tech talk was informative, interesting and really enjoyable. It was one of the best attended talks in a long time.

**Manteno VA trip:** Jim reported that everything is a go for the following Saturday trip. We will meet at Mayberry's Restaurant on route 50 by 9:00AM. We are due at the VA at 10:30AM. Tim BJ is bringing a printer/paper and Dale said she has a backup printer to bring. She also submitted a bill for the frames which was approved and paid.

**Fall Trip:** Jim announced we have 46 people with 20 cars attending. We are to meet at the Egg & I restaurant 222 Dixie Hwy for breakfast. They open at 6:30 and we will leave at 8:30AM. He gave a brief rundown regarding the planned activities. Driving the old Yellowstone Trail, Dixie Hwy, and Old Dyer Rd, stopping at the Mill at Deep River, Plymouth Museum, and Studebaker Museum, walking tour of Notre Dame etc. Chuck & Linnea volunteered to bring the grill for Fridays dinner and makings for lunch on Friday and possibly Saturday. Breakfast served in the Hotel and Saturday dinner will be at the Studebaker Museum. Sunday is a tour of a Sheriffs House and Jail and a late lunch stop.



**Balmoral Race Track:** Wally reported that everything is set for the October 20<sup>th</sup> dinner and race. He stated we need to arrive at 5:45 in Period Dress for a ride around the track.

Reminder attendance count and money (\$28.69 per person) is due at the October meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Ken Chamis and Ken McNealy stated they have not contacted the owner of the **Private Collection of Antique cars** for a tour. Tim BJ said it is now too late for this year, however, suggested it would make a good Shake Down Cruise in early May 2013, prior to our Gilmore trip. Membership was in accord. Jason reported that the **Pontiac visit** will also probably be in early June/July and that he will investigate it further and get back to us. Bob reported that he has checked out the motel for our **Spring Trip 2013**, Comfort Inn in Plainwell, Michigan. There are 20 rooms blocked Kings \$99.00/2 Queens \$103.00. There is no elevator for the second floor. He also stated he reserved a 15 passenger van for the weekend. He recommended making your reservations NOW. Ken questioned that only 20 rooms were reserved and Bob stated it is a small motel and they will only block a percentage of their rooms.

**Tech Talk:** Date pending after our Fall Trip.

**Breakfast:** October 13<sup>th</sup>, Peachtree Restaurant at 8:30AM.

**Misc Discussions:** Wally reminded the group that the October meeting will be an auction. Dinner served at 5:30PM, a short mtg to follow at 7:00PM and then the Auction with Henry as our auctioneer. He reminded everyone not to forget to bring their contributions to the auction. Large items can be dropped off before the meeting.

**Next months mtg:** October 17<sup>th</sup> at Wally & Kay's home

**Badge fines:** \$6.00. 50/50 \$46.00 winner Marlene.

**Adjourn:** 8:20PM Tim thanked Al & Sandy for their hospitality and goodies.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED: SANDY KALETA  
SECRETARY

## **Gilmore Museum Grande Opening**

**May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Comfort Inn**

**622 Allegan Street**

**Plainwell, MI**

**269.685.9891**

**93.49 King or 2 Queens 99.10**

## Up and coming 2012 Events:

Meeting Wednesday October 17th: Time 7:00P

Wally and Kay's home in Crete.

Club fundraiser. Bring your unwanted items for Auction Night!

Bon Fire!

Balmoral Race Track: October 20<sup>th</sup> 5:30 for line-up

Christmas Party:

Gilmore MI, spring Trip: May 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

Exposure Trip / Lake Michigan Circle Tour:

September 7<sup>th</sup> thru the 13th

### Meeting Places:

Oct 17 Wed Meeting & Auction at Wally & Kay Ekstrom Crete

Nov 21 Wed Meeting at Chuck & Linnea Fritz, Park Forest

December ? Christmas Party?

**Sign-up for meetings will be passed around soon. Please think about a date you can host.**



# A's R Us 2012 officers and Staff

- President – Tim Borchert
- Vice President – Ken Chamis / Treasure – Jim Wright / Secretary – Sandy Kaleta
- Newsletter – Phillip Serviss
- Member Relations – Joe Krygowski
- Web Page – Joe Krygowski
- Parade Coordinator – Wally Ekstrom
- Director of Safety – Ron Bonneau
- Nat'l Rep. – Marlene Krygowski
- Historian – Ken Chamis
- Sgt. At Arms Steve Coe
- Motor Medic - Jon Lisota

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

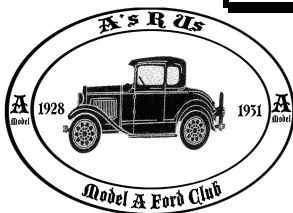
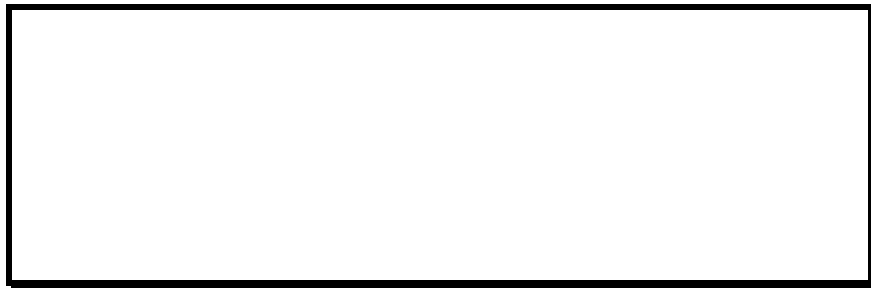
E Mail to: [taxserviss@att.net](mailto:taxserviss@att.net)

Gathering outside the Crown Point Sherriff's House and Jail for our tour.



## BACKFIRE

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Crete, Illinois 60417



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