



May is Model A Youth Month

What is it?

It is an idea and the basis for a plan introduced in 2021 by the Model A Youth Restoration Award organization (MAYRA) to remind Model A clubs, their members, and all Model A owners that they are instrumental in maintaining and assuring the future of the hobby. It is a plan to encourage clubs to identify and implement activities, especially during May of each year, that attract both youth and adults to the hobby.

Why is it important?

MAYRA's observation is that Model A clubs generally do not have the mindset of thinking about the future of the hobby. Emily Ellway, one of our Board Members, says it best.- "We come to you to ask a favor of participation in the hopes of establishing the next generation of Model A enthusiasts. Across the nation and world, the hobby's future is up in the air, and it is up to us to bring it back down to earth and run with it."

What is the goal of "May is Model A Youth Month"?

The initial goal is to encourage Model A clubs to plan an activity in May to introduce Model A's to youth and young adults who know little or little about them. The intention is to make a lasting impression that will remain with them to a time in their life when they are ready to consider an automotive hobby. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of Model A enthusiasts.

How to do it?

It is not difficult –

1. Identify a target group of youth and young adults.
2. Make a personal visit, phone call, or write a letter to their program's representative. Which of your friends might have a connection in the target group?
3. Explain the purpose of wanting to set up an activity. Tell them how it will benefit them and be a learning experience.
4. Set a date that works for them and your club members.
5. Have fun.

Here are some ideas for targeting youth directly

ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL – Arrange a visit with the principal and the teacher. Work with them to plan a lesson around your visit. It could be the prominent part Ford automobiles played in early transportation, coloring pages for the younger set, sketching the Model A for the older kids, economics, and the importance of affordability in the late twenties into the early thirties. Show the group how to start the car. Have them honk the horns. Allow the kids to sit in them behind the wheel and take a picture. One club in Florida even drove alternative education students from one side of the high school to the other and dropped them off to a line of parents who applauded their arrival. Try to repeat the visit on an annual basis. Set the seed, then nurture it.

HIGH SCHOOL AUTO SHOP – Arrange with the shop teacher and administration. The audience will allow for more technical talks about how the engine works. Let the students experience all the senses of a Model A. Demonstrate timing, firing order, and metallurgy. One club with a member who rebuilds engines, and with the help of the shop teacher, has also engaged the class in tearing down the engines (a source of cheap labor!)

BOY AND GIRL SCOUTS – Augment an event they have at a park or perhaps assist scouts earning a merit badge. Participate in a car show they may be sponsoring. Scout leaders are always looking for other activities. Check with them. Other youth organizations include Police Athletic League, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

CHURCH OR TEMPLE YOUTH GROUPS – Once again, the leaders tend to look for different activities. Check with them and partner up for a fun, informative session. Imagine the added access the early cars gave to folks who wanted to attend church services, but the distance was a deterrent. What other relationship might automobiles have with a church or temple?

Here are ideas for setting up activities that will attract youth and adults

YOUR LOCAL FORD DEALERSHIP – A NATURAL PARTNER?

Team up with them for a “Then and Now” weekend event, staging a Roadster next to a Mustang convertible or a Depot Wagon next to a van. Tap into some of their advertising to promote the event. Make sure you have something for the children to take home. How about including the Model T club in your area? ...along the same lines

CELEBRATE A LOCAL BUSINESS HAVING A SPECIAL (80 or 90th) ANNIVERSARY – Is a restaurant, jewelry store, or any locally owned establishment passing a significant milestone? Stage your cars outside the business and serve as docents to the company’s founding era. Be there to give guided tours back in time.

CARS SHOWS, CARS, AND COFFEE – Too often, we shun car get-togethers. Let’s start getting out to them. A stock Model A may stand out among the GTOs or slammed Civics. Many of the Cars and Coffees are only a 2-3 hour commitment on a Saturday morning.

LOCAL COMMUNITY MUSEUM – Often overlooked, virtually every community has a museum heralding the area’s history. Perhaps a semi-permanent display. Or set it up for a Saturday morning event so that your cars become museum pieces themselves but can still drive on the roads. Let the youngsters sit in the cars, take pictures, and honk the horns.

When to do it?

May of every year and all year long.

Visibility is the key.

In general, the visibility of the hobby is Model A club members and others driving their Model A’s, participating with their cars in community events and projects, and generally being out of the garage. For the hobby to grow, clubs need to develop a mindset that the hobby’s future is in their hands when planning activities and events. “Think Youth” should be that mindset.

The Question:

Model A clubs need to ask themselves, “What can we do to ensure the future of the hobby?”

As a reader, you also have to ask, “What can I do to ensure the future of the hobby?” Talk to your club president about scheduling a Model A Youth Month activity.