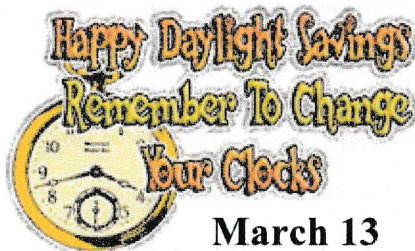




The FLIVVER FLASH

The Official Newsletter of The Space City T's ~ Houston, Texas
A Chapter of The Model T Ford Club of America

Volume 34 Issue 3



March 2011

March 13



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The Flivver Flash is published by the Space City T's chapter of The Model T Ford Club of America in Houston, Texas twelve times per year. This newsletter is produced for the education, edification and enjoyment of members and those expressing interest in joining the Space City T's. Said education, edification and enjoyment is as it pertains to the Model T Ford automobile. The Flash is also shared with other antique auto clubs. Other clubs may feel free to use articles from this publication with credit to this newsletter or the original source. News, articles, ads or anything of interest to club for publication must be submitted to the editor by the deadline of the 20th of month preceding the month of publication. Printing takes place the last week of the month.

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The FLIVVER FLASH

Editor: Stan Hoekstra
19427 Bear Springs Drive
Katy, Texas 77449
(281) 858-5577
email: stanhoekstra@att.net
<http://spacecityts.org/>
Webmeister: Doug Brough
Membership Chairman: Will Rice

The Space City T's Club is the Houston, Texas Chapter of The Model T Ford Club of America. All questions concerning membership in the Model T Ford Club of America, The Vintage Ford magazine, MTFCA Library, Chapter Insurance, purchase of manuals, back issues or store items can be directed to the following address:

Model T Ford Club of America
119 West Main Street, PO Box 126
Centerville, Indiana 47330
Phone: 765.855.5248
Fax: 765.855.3428
E-mail: jay@mtfca.com



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On The Cover



Thomas Alva Edison was Henry Ford's former employer and long time mentor.

To read how they collaborated on an experimental electric car in the early 20th century, turn to page 4

Margaret Haney

1934-2011



Margaret "Memaw" Hindmarsh Haney went to be with the Lord on February 13, 2011 at the age of 76. Margaret was born to Florence and Herbert Hindmarsh of Lincoln, England.

Margaret is survived by her husband J.B. "Jim" Haney and children Carol Lartigue and husband Emilio of Jenks, Oklahoma, James Jr. and wife Laurie of Houston, Michele Sanford and husband Paul of Oakton, Virginia, and Michael Haney and wife Kimberly of Houston. She is also survived by 9 grandchildren and 2 great-grandsons.



Baby Shower for the Lillekers



The program for the March 9 club meeting will take an interesting and unusual turn.

Jennifer and Ross Lilleker are expecting and we are throwing a baby shower.

See Sandra Lucas's dispatch below.

ATTENTION: Ladies

We will be having a Baby Shower for Jennifer and Ross Lilliker at this month's meeting. They are registered at Target and Babies R Us.

If you would like to help with refreshments, please contact Sandra Lucas at 281-731-3533 or by email at sslucas10@yahoo.com.

2011 Calendar of Coming Events

March 6-10 2011 **Model T Ford Winter Tour**
Ocala, Florida
Contact: Steve Ellis 352-207-1498
or Miriam Williams 937-465-4661
Email: ellis-1@embarqmail or wintertourinfo@hotmail.com

March 9 2011 **Space City T's Meeting**
Program: Baby Shower for the Lillekers
See item on page 2



March 17-18 2011 **Chickasha Pre-War Swap Meet**
"World's Largest Early Auto Meet"
Contact: Mike or Susie Ersland
(405)224-9090
information@pwsml.com

March 19 2011 **Car Show and Shine**
Beechnut Manor Living Center
Sponsored by the Vintage Thunderbird Club of Houston
12777 Beechnut—Houston, Texas 77072
Contact: Dennis Blasingame—281-879-7630
See enclosed flier

April 2 2011 **2011 Tune Up Tour**
One day tour in the Navasota area
Hosted by Denny and Gwen Irvine
(936) 856-2929
dirvine@suddenlink.net



April 28-May 1 2011 **Pate Swap Meet**

Don Moore
7751 Oak Vista
Houston, TX 77087
(713) 649-0922 (713) 645-4177 (fax)
PateSwapMeet@aol.com

April 30 2011 **A Drive in the Country Tour**
Hosted by Jim Haney and the Stokleys
Contact Rosemarie Stokley—832-444-9927
Please RSVP by March 30
See enclosed flier

June 27-July 1 2011 **2011 MTFCA National Tour**
Cowboys and Coalmines
Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada
Contact: Les Schubert 403 931-2628
Limited to under 100 Model Ts.

September 28-October 2 2011 **Texas T Party**
Bastrop, Texas
The Heart of the Lost Pines
Jeff and Luke Cordes, Chairmen
713-926-3217
cordesworks@yahoo.com

Space City T's Directory Call for Pictures

Fellow Space City T'ers,

In an effort to make our membership directory even more useful and fun, we're collecting pictures- face shots to include next to members' information, and a separate section to showcase our cars. Don't be left out!

I hope you'll participate in any of three ways:

1.) Email me (wrice123@usa.net) pictures, pretty much in any format or size. I'd appreciate a head shot of you, perhaps another of your spouse, and a good picture of your antique car or each of your cars.

2.) Bring your smile to the March Space City T's meeting and I'll take your picture then.

3.) Bring photographs to the meeting or mail them to me, and I'll copy the pictures and return them to you.

I'm excited about this project and hope our new membership directory will be as useful to you in connecting names and faces as it will be for me!

Best,

Will Rice—Membership Chairman—Space City T's

Mailing address for pictures:

Will Rice
4310 Phil St.
Bellaire TX 77401-4615

Dues Are Due

The December issue of the newsletter contained a card for submission of dues. If you received the newsletter via email, a form for submission of dues was attached that can be printed and filled out for return to our treasurer. If you could get your dues paid before the end of January, it would greatly aid us in the process. The sooner all are in, the sooner the annual roster will be available. If you have a change you would like to make in your entry, make a note on your dues submission form.

Do not send dues to the editor

Send all dues to our treasurer,

Tony Marino
302 Torrey Court
League City, TX 77573



Henry Ford and the Electric Car

By Daniel Strohl



photo from the collections of The Henry Ford

That Henry Ford and Thomas Edison became good friends later in their lives is well known. They camped together, they presented each other with lavish gifts, they owned houses immediately adjacent to each other. Many Ford enthusiasts also know that, at the time Ford first drove his Quadricycle on the streets of Detroit in 1896, he was working for Edison at the Detroit Edison Illuminating Company. They also know that a couple months later, when Ford was introduced to Edison and showed Edison his plans for a gasoline automobile, Edison encouraged him to pursue those plans.

That Edison and Ford later put their minds together to conceive a low-priced electric car is not so well known.

At about the same time Ford founded his eponymous automobile company, Edison had made inroads into battery technology and began offering nickel-iron storage batteries for several uses, among them automobiles. His announced plans that same year to convert four large touring cars from gasoline to electric power (using his own batteries, of course) reeks of a publicity stunt to sell his new batteries, but it was enough to get him listed in the Standard Catalog. And though he prodded Ford off into production of gasoline cars, by 1903 he was denouncing them.

Electricity is the thing. There are no whirring and grinding gears with their numerous levers to confuse. There is not that almost terrifying uncertain throb and whirr of the powerful combustion engine. There is no water circulating system to get out of order – no dangerous and evil-smelling gasoline and no noise.

Ford, however, still high on Edison's encouragement (he's often quoted as saying that Edison was the greatest man in the world, so he would probably have jumped off a bridge if Thomas Alva told him to), not only rigorously pursued the gasoline-powered car and left Detroit Edison to found his own automob-

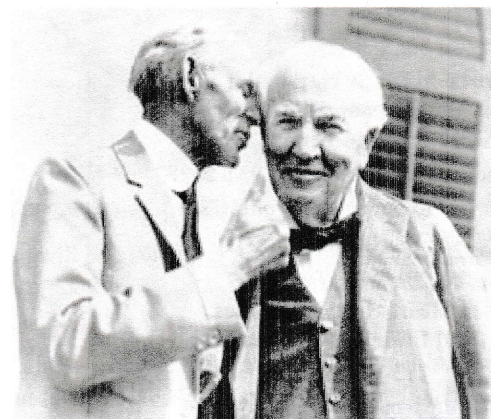
ile company, he also ordered the development of a flywheel magneto system for the Model T specifically to avoid using batteries. (One story I've read, possibly apocryphal, is that during one of Henry Ford's camping trips, the battery in a pre-production Model T overturned, cutting the trip short and causing Ford to ban batteries from his new low-priced car.)

Just about five years later, Ford began to change his mind. In early 1914, word had gotten around that work had started on a low-priced electric car. Reports appeared in the Wall Street Journal, in the trade magazines, and in other newspapers as far away as New Zealand regarding Ford's foray into electric cars. Ford himself even confirmed the rumors in the January 11, 1914, issue of the New York Times:

"Within a year, I hope, we shall begin the manufacture of an electric automobile. I don't like to talk about things which are a year ahead, but I am willing to tell you something of my plans.

The fact is that Mr. Edison and I have been working for some years on an electric automobile which would be cheap and practicable. Cars have been built for experimental purposes, and we are satisfied now that the way is clear to success. The problem so far has been to build a storage battery of light weight which would operate for long distances without recharging. Mr. Edison has been experimenting with such a battery for some time."

Ford may have fibbed a little by saying that multiple experimental cars have been built, but we know for a fact that at least one experimental Ford electric was built in 1913, as seen above out in front of Ford's Highland park plant. It was a tiller-steered car with an unusually swoopy frame and a contingent of batteries under the seat. The man operating it, Fred Allison, was an electrical engineer from Detroit who was tasked with designing the car's motor. According to Ford Richardson Bryan, writing in his book, *Friends, families, & forays: scenes from the life and times of Henry Ford*, the car's electrical system and overall design were handed to Alexander Churchward, at that time the vice president of Gray & Davis, while general mechanic's duties were assigned to Samuel Wilson, a former Cadillac employee. A year earlier, Churchward had written a paper on The Standardization of the electric car (in which he argued for a 25 MPH maximum speed for all electric vehicles), while Wilson had experience with Cadillac's self-starter program.



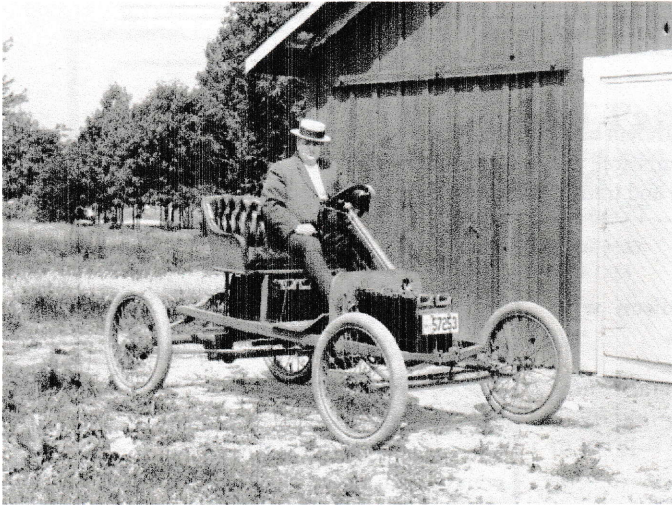


photo from the collections of The Henry Ford

Work continued into 1914, as we can see from Allison perched atop the second experimental electric car, this one using a Model T frame, suspension and front axle, a Model T steering wheel, and a worm-drive rear axle. The latter indicates that the motor, mounted behind the driver in the prior car, resided up front in the second car, near the additional bank of batteries. Regarding that worm-drive rear axle, Ford Richardson Bryan once again fills us in, noting in his book, *Henry's Lieutenants*, that Eugene Farkas was responsible not only for the worm-drive rear axle that was later modified for use in the Fordson, he was also responsible for the entire chassis of the electric car. Rumors swirled in the automotive press for the remainder of 1914, stoked by Henry Ford's secretary, Ernest Liebold. Edsel Ford was said to have been put in charge of the Edison-Ford. Henry Ford was said to have bought an electricity-generating plant in Niagara Falls, as well as a site off Woodward Avenue specifically for the production of the Edison-Ford. As the year wore on, the rumor mill pegged the release of the electric for 1915, then 1916. Details on the car varied: It would cost somewhere between \$500 and \$750, and it would range somewhere between 50 miles and 100 miles on a charge. Even today, sources vary as to whether the car would have a brougham or cabriolet body placed atop its chassis. Edison himself, in an interview with *Automobile Topics* in May 1914, divulged no details and made his best "It's coming, just be patient" speech that GM has perfected in recent years with the Volt. He called attention to the fact that a new automobile, especially one embodying such radical features as a \$500 or \$750 electric pleasure car naturally must have, cannot be designed and constructed in a few weeks.

"Mr. Henry Ford is making plans for the tools, special machinery, factory buildings and equipment for the production of this new electric. There is so much special work to be done that no date can be fixed now as to when the new electric can be put on the market. But Mr. Ford is working steadily on the details, and he knows his business so it will not be long.

"I believe that ultimately the electric motor will be universally used for trucking in all large cities, and that the electric automobile will be the family carriage of the future. All trucking must come to electricity. I am convinced that it will not be long before all the trucking in New York City will be electric."

Edison, by the way, was himself no stranger electric cars. Bryan noted in *Friends, families and forays* that Edison built a battery-powered front-wheel-drive electric car in 1895, and he's noted as owning a few of the very expensive electric cars then in production.

We've so far seen no evidence that the press of the day ever got its hands on a photo or any solid evidence of the two electric experimentals that Ford had built, and eventually, the press seemed to forget about the Edison-Ford altogether. Some conspiracy theorists believe the oil cartels got to Ford and Edison and caused them to abandon the project; they offer as evidence the "mysterious" fire that nearly destroyed Edison's workshops in West Orange, New Jersey, in December 1914. Besides the fact that all work on the electric took place in Dearborn (and the fact that Edison got right back on the horse and had his whole place rebuilt by the next spring), we also see in the coverage of the fire in the December 10, 1914, issue of the *New York Times* that the fire skirted the two buildings in which any work on the electric car would have taken place.

It was seen that the only important buildings that could be saved were the experimental laboratory and the storage-battery building, and all attention was given to them.

Mr. Edison was in the experimental laboratory when the fire began. He helped in the salvage work, and when that was finished he went to the storage battery building and directed the protection of that structure.

Rather, as Bryan wrote, the downfall of the Edison-Ford electric car came about because Ford demanded the use of Edison's nickel-iron batteries in the car, and would have no other battery powering this car. Edison's batteries, however, were found to have very high internal resistance and were thus incapable of powering an electric car under many circumstances. Heavier lead-acid batteries (which would have made the car too ponderous) were substituted behind Henry Ford's back, and when he found out, he went ballistic. The program quickly fell to the wayside with other projects demanding Henry Ford's time. According to *The Ford Century*, Ford invested \$1.5 million in the electric car project and nearly bought 100,000 batteries from Edison before the project fell apart.

Alexander Churchward (who had already racked up dozens of patents and would be issued dozens more) went back to a successful career at Gray & Davis and also, for a time, served as vice president of the A.B.C. Starter Company, the same company that later employed Allison as chief engineer. Of the patents granted to Allison that we've found, one (1,225,558, dated May 8, 1917) was assigned to the A.B.C. Starter Company, while the other two (1,478,196, dated December 18, 1923, and 1,508,377, dated September 16, 1924) were assigned to Ford Motor Company, so Allison very well may have leveraged his experience with the electric car to a career at Ford. Both men were instrumental in Ford's later adoption of the electric self-starter and electric lighting systems in 1919.

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Post Script

The recent rolling electrical blackouts in the Houston area were initially said to be caused by insufficient capacity on the grid. Now there are rumblings that something more nefarious may be going on and that the cause is something called market manipulation. Remember Enron?

However, if it was indeed the result of system overload, one must wonder what happens when all the foretold plug-in electrical vehicles come on line. What happens then?

There appear to be no new generating plants coming on line in Texas. Coal fired plants are deemed dirty, nuclear generators are considered unsafe.

Couple that with NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) and the result is deadlock.

Wind powered generators are now the new great thing. Consider each develops approximately 1/30 the output of a single steam or gas turbine generator. Each take up a large land footprint and require an access road. Multiply that by hundreds to make up a wind farm. Consider that vast sums are being invested in a technology that faces obsolescence and high maintenance costs for a small incremental addition of power to the grid.

Electricity cannot be stockpiled, it must be generated according to current demand.

It is not as efficient as first meets the eye when taking into consideration transmission, distribution and rectifier losses. Oil and gas can be stored and transmission losses are microscopic.

The alleged reason for going to electric cars is to get us weaned from imported oil. And reduce air borne pollution. The equation doesn't change, just the factors have been moved.

Instead of pollution from an automobile tail pipe, we have moved the emissions to a power plant smokestack. Folks, there is no free lunch. To increase an electric's range to compete with that of a gas powered vehicle, an internal combustion engine is still required.

If you are in the market for a used electric car in the not too distant future, how confident do you feel about that battery pack that has seen its best days and will need replacement soon. Are you prepared to shell out the price of a replacement?

When that battery pack is replaced, what happens to the old unit? These things are toxic and they are not small.

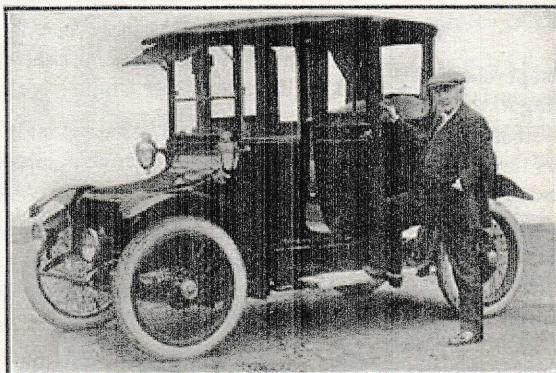
Henry Ford experimented with electric cars in the day of the Model T. See page 4.

And so the debate goes on. In the meantime, we can still depend on the internal combustion engine that propelled Henry's Model T into the twentieth century.

A PRINCELY GIFT.

Henry Ford Presents Thomas A. Edison with Handsome Detroit Electric.

Whether or not Thomas A. Edison and Henry Ford are collaborating on the production of a new electric car, which is to be sold at a price in



Thomas A. Edison and His New Detroit Electric, Presented by Henry Ford.

similar competition with other makes of electrics as that furnished by the Ford car in the gasoline field, it is of interest to note that Mr. Ford presented Mr. Edison with a handsome Detroit electric car on Christmas Eve. The accompanying illustration shows Mr. Edison about to enter the machine, which is fittingly described as a princely gift.

The machine is a model 47, made by the Anderson Electric Car Company, Detroit, and is mounted on the worm gear chassis. No expense was spared in preparing the interior with every luxury and modern improvement.

Classified Ads

For Sale: 1927 Model T Tudor Sedan.

Needs restoration. Has wood wheels. \$4500.

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Wanted—1927 Front Bumper and Brackets

Contact: Gaylord Willet—Montgomery, Texas

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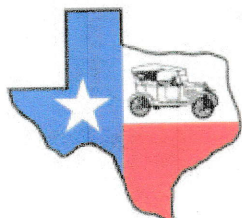
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Wanted: Model T Ford—1909 - 1925 Car or parts needing restoration, running or not. Roadster preferred, must be reasonably priced. Contact: David Craft 281-328-6375

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Attorney at Law

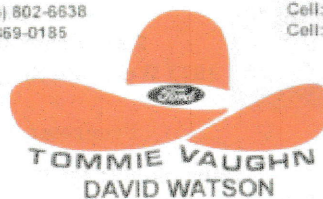
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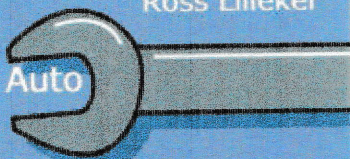
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Next Meeting

March 9, 2011



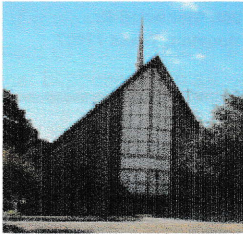
Dine with Friends at
Jax Grill at 6:00 P.M.

1613 Shepherd Drive in the Heights

Then attend the
Space City T's Meeting at 7:30 P.M.

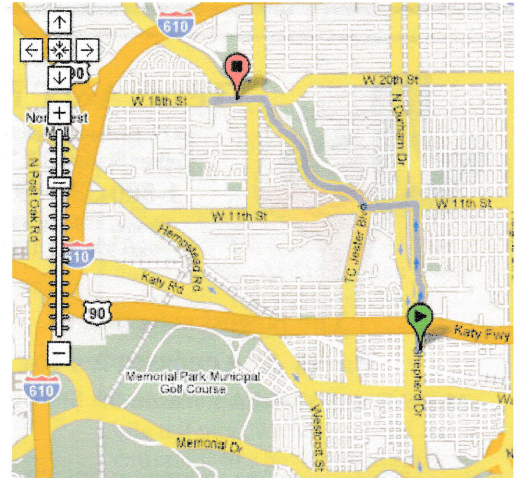
Place:

Lazy Brook Baptist Church
1822 West 18th Street in the Heights



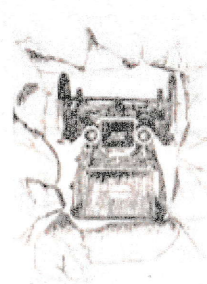
Program:

Baby Shower for the Lillekers



Directions from Jax Grill to Lazybrook Baptist Church

Head **north** from Shepherd Dr - go 0.3 mi
Continue on N Shepherd Dr - go 0.8 mi
Turn **left** at W 11th St - go 0.4 mi
Turn **right** at TC Jester Blvd - go 0.2 mi
Bear **left** at W TC Jester Blvd - go 1.0 mi
Turn **left** at W 18th St - go 0.4 mi
Turn **left** into the **parking** lot of the church



First Class Mail



Space City T's Chapter
Editor: Stan Hoekstra
19427 Bear Springs Drive
Katy, Texas 77449

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