



THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...

By Ed Melon

Howdy Fellow Model T'ers! Spring is fast approaching and we all want to get our cars back on the road after a colder than normal winter. I thought we might briefly review the things we will want to check to get our cars ready for fun as the warmer weather arrives.

Let's start at the front and work our way back. We'll need to fill the radiator unless the car has been filled with anti-freeze. Either way, add water until it's about an inch deep in the top tank. That's all we need and more will simply run out the overflow or around the radiator cap. Now's a good time to check for leaks around hose connections and, if you have one, the water pump packing nut. No leaks?? Great! You will want to add a can of rust inhibitor or a gallon of antifreeze will do the same and raise the boiling point a few degrees.

Now let's check the spark plugs. Hopefully, they will be clean with a light tan color on the insulator around the center electrode. If the insulator is white and blistered, a cooler plug may be needed but that's rare since our low compression T engines burn pretty cool and usually need a hotter plug rather than a colder one. If you clean the plugs, be careful not to roughen the insulator which will cause it to foul more easily. A dry sooty insulator and electrode indicates too rich a mixture and an oily residue means we probably have too much oil in the engine or our rings are letting some oil leak past.

If using coils, set the plug gap around 30/1000's. Distributor systems can be 35/1000's and with high a voltage coil 40/1000's should work well. Don't over-tighten plugs when putting them in. Just tight enough to keep them from leaking. If using modern 14mm plugs, tighten till snug and then go another quarter turn.

If you drained the carburetor and tank, put in some fresh gas and open the valve on the bottom of the carburetor to let the gas wash out any trash that has accumulated while stored. If the tank has gas, it's still a good idea to let a little drain out to wash out the carburetor.

Now is a good time to drain the oil and refill with fresh oil. If you don't mind using an extra quart, you can pour one quart while the crankcase plug is still off and you'll get some more of the dirty oil in the rod dips of the pan. Replace the crankcase plug and pour in 3 1/2 to 4 quarts of oil. Wait a few minutes and, with the car level, open the bottom petcock. You should get a steady stream. When checking oil by opening the petcocks, do not assume you have oil if you get only a few drops! You will always get that even if the oil level is below the petcock because of capillary action! There must be



a steady stream. The ideal oil level is half way between the two petcocks but I like to have it high enough to run out of the top one. Then I know it's got plenty of oil. I use a brass and glass sight gauge, sold by any of the T suppliers, and that lets me know exactly how much oil I have without crawling under and getting dirty opening a petcock! What oil?? I have used 10w30 for many years and have never had a problem.

If you use a timer, open it up and wipe it clean. Check the rotor and contacts for wear and if it's a tiger give it a light coating of oil. If a New Day or Anderson, a little vaseline on the rotor and contacts will add to the life of the timer.

If you are running coils, now's the time to check the points and, if worn, replace them. If the car has been sitting for a while, it may help to take a business card or 600 grit sandpaper and run it between the points a couple of times. When sitting, the points will sometimes get some film or corrosion which will make the coils miss-fire. Make sure the spark is retarded, turn on the key on battery and turn the engine over slowly to make sure all four coils are buzzing. If you have a distributor, a quick pass between the points on it will also insure a good electrical contact. I once could not get my T to start after sitting for a few weeks. Cleaning the points was all it needed but I didn't think of that until I had worn out my arm!

These checks will help us get our car running smoothly. Climb in, give her some gas and I'll...

See you down the road...