



THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...

By Ed Melozan

Howdy, fellow Model Ters! In our March 2001 issue, we talked about getting a T ready to drive after being stored for the winter. Let's touch on a few more things that may help when bringing a stored T to life. I'll also talk a little about storing a T.

Ok we've changed the oil, put in water with a rust inhibitor or, better still, put in anti-freeze and there's fresh gas in the tank. We also have charged the battery. But what if the T won't start?

If we have fresh gas and opening the petcock on the carburetor gives us a good stream of clean gas, then we might want to check the ignition system. Disconnect the plug wires at the spark plug and position them near the base of the plug. There are two reasons for doing this. First, we can see what kind of spark we're actually getting at each plug and second, if there's a short in the timer wiring, the engine won't kick back while we are hand cranking it. Turn the ignition switch to BAT and slowly turn the engine over with the hand crank. Watch the coils and make sure that each one buzzes and that only one buzzes at a time! The plugs should fire in the order 1,2,4,3. If two coils buzz at once, you have a short in the coil primary wiring. The most common shorts are at the timer connections. This might be a good time to mention that the engine pan bolt under the timer should be put in with the nut under the pan instead of on top as all the other bolts are! If this bolt is put in like the others, it's very likely to short against a timer connection.

When you have all the coils working with a good spark at the plug, turn off the ignition and replace the plug wires. Make sure the spark lever is all the way up (some cars seem to start better if the spark is a notch or two down from the top). Set the gas lever 3 or 4 notches from the top, open the gas mixture about a quarter to a half turn richer than normal, pull out the choke and give her a try. If you feel the mixture control isn't set correctly from the last time the car ran, turn it gently down until it's completely closed (don't force it or you will score the needle and seat) and then open it about a turn and a quarter to a turn and a half. That's usually a good starting position.

Now let's touch briefly on storing a car that won't be used for a long period of time. Some folks like to mix some two stroke engine oil with a small quantity of gas and run the engine for a few minutes with the mixture. The two stroke oil tends to lubricate the upper end and will stay on surfaces for years. Next, drain the gas tank and carburetor! Modern gasoline begins to deteriorate on about a month! If left in the tank and carburetor it will turn to varnish and you'll have a real mess to clean out when you try to get the car running again!

Jack up the car and place jack stands under the axles at all four wheels. By the way **Never** jack a T up by putting a jack under the differential! The Model T differential housing is not strong enough to support the weight of the T on that one point and a sprung differential and axles are a real possibility! Check the tire pressures. 25 to 30 pounds in 21 inch tires and 45 to 50 pounds in clinchers should do the job. A slightly lower pressure than normal will take some strain off the tires but let them keep their normal shape.

Taking the weight off the wheels is also a good idea for the wood spoke wheels. The weight of the car is normally on the bottom two spokes in each wheel. Over time, this constant pressure can compress the bottom spokes enough to cause them to be loose.

Drain the oil and pour in four quarts of new oil. Drain the radiator. Remove the sparkplugs and squirt



some engine oil in each cylinder. Do replace the spark plugs so moisture can't get in.

Remove the battery. Don't store on a cement floor as it will discharge the battery. That should do it. When you're ready to roll at some future date, the startup should go much faster.

See you down the road...