

# How the Natural State A Region Came to Be

by Trish Love *(Written July 29, 2017)*



*Trish and Mark Love sitting in their '30 Tudor at the Susie Q Malt Shop in Rogers. (Yes, those are goofy hats!)*

## Greetings Natural State A Members!

My name is Trish Love. As founders of your club, The Natural State A Region, my husband Mark and I have been on your roster from the beginning, but most of you have never met us! We do, however, keep up with you all via email and through my mother, Freda Stueland, and her husband Dick. When I saw Denver's plea for newsletter fodder it occurred to me that it might be interesting to compose the story of the club's formation. Denver was keen on the idea, so I will share what I remember from that time, as well as the inspiration that began it all.

## The VERY Beginning...

I suppose the real beginning of this story was when my dad, Bob Murphy, got his first Model A in the early 70's. He partially restored a 1930 Tudor (my brother Bruce drove this in high school), fully restored a 1929 Tudor (my brother John drove this in high school), and a 1931 Deluxe Coupe. In 2007 or so he finally completed a gorgeous 1931 Cabriolet that he had been carrying around in pieces for more than 30 years. Dad has owned other antique cars, but as a youth, these are the ones that I was most familiar with – especially the coupe, whose rumble seat I rode in, for many a mile.

By profession, Dad was an electrical engineer with Collins Radio in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but he spent all his free hours working on his car projects. He was such an enthusiast that he opened his own Model A parts store in our walk-out basement to help support his "habit". Not to be left out, my mother, Freda (Murphy) Stueland, a member of your club, took on the task of upholstering the cars. She did such a fine job she was hired to upholster the cars of others as well. This, too, became a part of our family activity and helped fund the hobby. Later, as a teen, Dad enlisted me to make, fill and ship orders for "bolt kits" using a complicated recipe list of all the correct fasteners for attaching engine and body parts. Model A restoration had become a family business.



*The 1931 Deluxe Coupe with the rumble seat in which I experienced the elements first hand on many long trips.*



*One of Mother's more ambitious upholstery jobs - a 1912 Model T Touring Car. All leather. Scared her to death. You can't make mistakes when you're working with expensive leather! This car, which belonged to Leland Votrobek of Cedar Rapids, was awarded*



*This group is lined up in front of the motel office and ready to get started on day two of our first big tour to the national show at Green Bay. That is me behind our '29 Tudor. That's Dick Stueland in his Roadster in front.*



*Same trip. The driving tour destination was a huge cherry orchard where we ate our box lunches and got to pick cherries to our heart's content! Hundreds of Model A's!*



*Dad is the orange-clad judge on the front right. Imagine judging a few hundred Model A's on hot asphalt in the searing heat. I didn't appreciate it then as I was usually in the hotel pool during this time....*

It wasn't all work, however. Perks of the job included some great trips to Model A Restorers Club national meets, as well as a Model A Ford Club of America national meet or two. We became very good at dividing up the trunk into three sections – one for each of us – and packing up for a 1-2 week journey from our home in Marion, Iowa, to destinations such as Green Bay, Wisconsin; Dearborn, Michigan; Poughkeepsie, New York; Atlanta, Georgia; and Nashville, Tennessee. We would take the back roads, usually with other Model A-ers in caravan, and enjoy the sites along the way. Mother and Dad both served as judges at the national meets for many years, both becoming senior judges over time. While they were "working" I explored the meet venues and performed amateur curbside judging with my Model A playmates. It was a great way to see the USA and I have many fond memories from, and funny stories of, those years...including a few disaster stories that make better memories than they did experiences!

Dad founded the Hawk "A" Region of the Model A Restorers Club in Cedar Rapids somewhere along the line and we also belonged to the local AACA club. We had many old car friends, participated in a crazy number of parades and enjoyed many, many fun tours. That club hosted a MARC membership meet in Cedar Rapids in the mid-70s and later hosted a national summer meet. Dad co-chaired each, along with Dick Stueland. It was a strong club.

Dad was elected president of the national Model A Restorers Club in the late 70's and served in that position for a couple of terms. Later he served on the MARC Board of Directors for several years up until just a few years ago. When Mother and Dad moved to Terre Haute, IN in the mid-1980s they started the Sycamore A Region of MARC. It was Dad's help and knowledge about "how to start a club" that laid the foundation for the Natural State A Region.

When Mark and I were not quite married yet we took a trip to see the folks in Terre Haute, then

followed their 1929 Fordor in our "modern car" to the national meet in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. This was Mark's first Model A adventure and he seemed to enjoy it well enough.

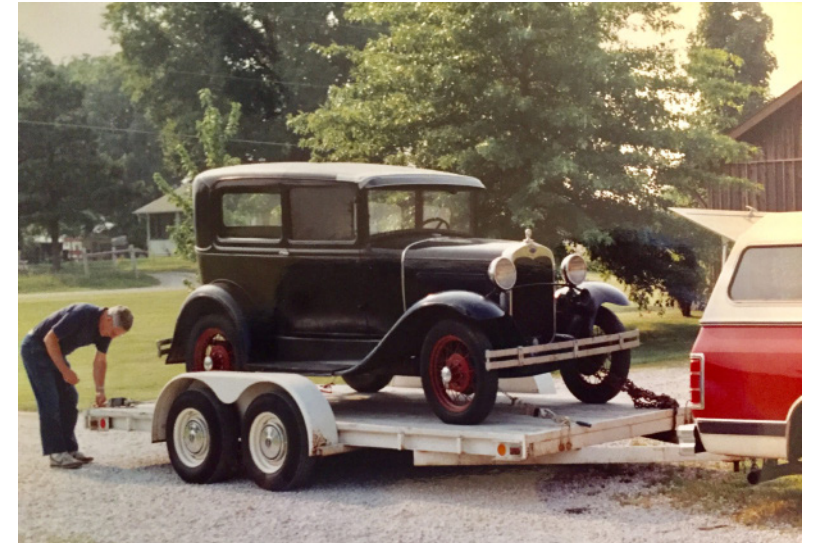
Mark and I were married in February of 1987 in Rogers. I was 25 years old at the time and Mark was 34. In the summer of 1987 Dad sold us (for one dollar!) his mostly original 1930 Model A Tudor. He wanted to bring us into the hobby and thought this would be the jump-start we needed. He and Mother delivered the car and he taught Mark the basics on the mechanics. He had re-built the engine and Mother had re-upholstered it – in fact, she completed it in our driveway while Dad finished trimming on the vinyl top! Mark will tell you that this was my dowry – he held out until Dad threw in the Model A!

In June of 1988, the national MARC meet was in St. Louis and Dad was anxious to see us participate. We were nervous at the prospect of the long drive from Rogers with very little Model A mechanical experience, so to be sure we went, Mother and Dad drove from Terre Haute to Rogers to accompany us to St. Louis. Not exactly a direct route to the destination! Mark remembers the drive that should have taken maybe 7 hours being an 11-hour drive from hell in record heat. As a seasoned passenger, I knew enough to insulate my feet against the manifold with a piece of styrofoam. I also knew to sit on towels, rather than the itchy wool seats. Unfortunately, that did not keep the engine from overheating or our patience along with it! It was a VERY long drive. Fortunately Dad, the cheerful, experienced Model A-er kept us going with his good humor. We even managed to drive home unaccompanied!

### **The Natural State A Region Forms**

Dad's parting words to us when he delivered the Tudor back in July of 1987 were, "You really need to start a club as a support group," and so we did.

Dad, who was and is always on top of technology, had given me his hand-me-down computer. It was an old Radio Shack TRS-80 and used a



*Dad delivers our "new" Model A - a 1930 Tudor. We were given strict instructions to NOT restore it but keep it drive-able and restore another one. We never quite got to that part. Sorry Dad!*



*Here we are about to embark on our epic journey to St. Louis. That is our daughter, Michelle, peeking out of the car.*



*Love family all decked out for the Historic Downtown Rogers Neighborhood July 4th parade - probably 1995. Our son Joe has never been on an "epic journey" but has enjoyed many rides to church and closer destinations!*

horrible-by-today's-standards dot command driven Word-wannabe program. It was that computer that equipped me with what I needed to write letters, compose the club By-Laws, write press releases, and keep up with all the early business of the club. I made a lot of phone calls, got names and contact information of Model A owners through local antique car owners, and came up with a core list of prospective members. In February of 1988, at our inaugural meeting, the charter group looked like this:

- Carl and Astrid Aberg
- Bob Bain and Ferne Schomaker
- Morris and Marci Cothran
- Charles and Linda Hughes
- Bud and Betsy Karli
- Bobby and Elizabeth King
- Dean and Irene Kintner
- Lee and Mary Larson
- Trish and Mark Love
- Bob and Shirley Miller
- Rex and Ada Putman

We chartered as The Natural State A Region of the Model A Restorer's Club, Inc. (MARC) on February 15, 1988. We chartered as a region of The Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA) on July 13, 1990, because some folks liked that magazine better and didn't want to have to be members of both clubs. Mark served as the first president and I was the director. I began writing the Natural State News, the club newsletter. After two years, Mark passed the gavel to Dan Haegert, who then passed it to Charlie Hughes.

When the club was a little over four years old, in May of 1992, the membership was holding steady at about 26 member families. It was then that Mark and I, who were thoroughly up to our eyeballs in church, civic and work responsibilities, made the decision to step back and let the club stand on its own. I gave up my position as editor of the newsletter and Dick Knapp, a fairly new member at the time with some experience at national level MARC affairs, took over as director.

During those early years memorable events included the following:

- A tour to George Washington Carver National Monument and Museum in Diamond, MO
- Visits to Innisfree Retirement Community to display cars and antique clothes, and offer rides to residents
- Hosting a swap meet and car show at Ole Applegate for a few years
- "Garage Tours" to several member's homes and garages – a few at a time
- A tour to Har-Bar Village in Grove, OK
- Playing "car games" at Little Flock Park



*This was our first club logo. We had hats and golf shirts made that were light blue. I remember that they were mens sizes and all the women's shirts were too big. We all put shoulder pads in them, laughed and said, "Big is 'in'." Fortunately, shoulder pads were quite fashionable at that time.*



*At some point – maybe in the late 1990s or early 2000s – when I started freelancing as a graphic designer, I created this new logo for the club.*



*Mark representing the Pride of Heritage Band Boosters in the Heritage High School Homecoming Parade, 2012.*

## Other Model A Involvement

When your father is an organizer, it is hard to stay out of the picture. In 2010, and again in 2014, Dad was the co-chair of the national MARC meets that were held in French Lick, Indiana. I served as his graphic designer and provided these logos, along with a meet poster, handbill, ads for the Model A News, and a meet program, as well as on promotional items.

## So What Happened to the Loves?

In September of 1993 our son Joe was born. As any parent can tell you, that changed everything! Our interests revolved around him, and soon the Boy Scouts of America became our family hobby – and remains so today, even though Joe is now nearly 24 years-old!

You all have made a lot more Natural State A history since we stopped attending the club over 20 years ago! Mark and I are delighted and proud that the club remains a place where Model A enthusiasts can come together and have fun with their big kid toys. We encourage you to enjoy the friendships you have made and keep inviting others to be a part of the club. Most of all, we encourage you to DRIVE THOSE CARS! They aren't any fun to own if you let them sit in the garage!

We still have that mostly original '30 Tudor and love to take it out on beautiful sunny days. We even drive it in an annual Independence Day parade! Our "A" remains a pleasant way to travel and I still get a kick out of hearing the "chuckle" of the engine as it idles. My brother John now owns Dad's Cabriolet and has given it new life attending North Texas car shows and parades. Thanks, Mom and Dad, for a lifetime of enjoyment!



*Logos for the 2010 and 2014 national meets in French Lick, Indiana. That was a gorgeous venue and there was, and is, lots to do in the area.*



*Mother married Dick Stueland, a Model A friend from Cedar Rapids, in 1995. They moved to Rogers in 1999ish.*



*Scouting has been our family "hobby" for the last 17 years. Joe, shown here at 16, not long after he earned his Eagle, is now nearly 24 and lives in Ft. Worth where he is pursuing a Master of Divinity at Brite on the TCU campus. We all continue our involvement with Troop 122 in Rogers.*



*My dad, Bob Murphy, and my brother, John Murphy, with Dad's beautifully restored, award-winning 1931 Cabriolet.*