

**E**dwina McCoy Barnes is our guest writer for June. In this two part series, Edwina tells what she remembers about the early days of the Bakersfield Club. Edwina has been a member of the Bakersfield Model A Club longer than anyone else. She was married to Luke McCoy when the club was founded by him and some friends. This is how it was in the beginning, and to a large extent how it still is - *Dan*

### In The Beginning ... Things I Remember (Part 1 of 2)

By Edwina McCoy Barnes

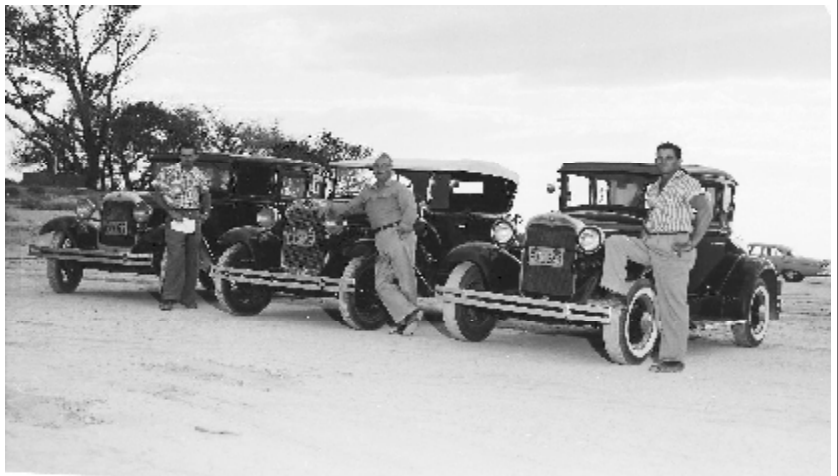
**A**s most of you know, in October of 1955, there was a small group of Model A enthusiasts from the Los Angeles area. This group got together and decided to organize a social club for Model A owners in Southern California. It was aptly named the "Model A Restorers Club of Southern California". Activities were confined to the Los Angeles vicinity. With the publication of its illustrated periodical The Restorer in May 1956, the car club rapidly gained popularity throughout the country. The club began to take on national implications. In 1957 the club was reorganized and renamed with revisions for the affiliation of other Model A Clubs as Chapters. Under its present name "Model A Ford Club of America" the club was founded in the City of Glendale, County of Los Angeles, and State of California on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 1957, and incorporated on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 1957. The first few clubs to become chapters were Bakersfield in January of 1958, Edwards in February of 1958 (which unfortunately no longer exists), and North Jersey Delaware Valley and Potomac in April of 1958. Since that time, the club has grown to national and even world status. The Model A Ford Club of America (M.A.F.C.A.) is now one of the largest car clubs in the world devoted to the preservation of one make of automobile.

In the fall of 1957, O.C. Ransom, Gene Gallups and Luke McCoy wanted to start a club in Bakersfield. They called Glendale to get guidelines for starting the club. The three then began talking to other Model A enthusiasts in Bakersfield. With the help of W.L. Brown, J.C. Holt, Rudy Gallups, Don Pelster and Frank McKee, they had enough people to form a quorum and thus became a club. The first meetings were held at O.C. Ransom's little neighborhood store and pool hall on South Union Avenue. Gene, Rudy and Don then went to Cambria Pines and met with Art Miller to get application papers to become a chapter in M.A.F.C.A.. These are the men I remember that started the Bakersfield Club. There may have been more, but that was over fifty years ago! In January of 1958, Bakersfield became the first club to attain chapter status. On April 25, 1961, my husband, Luke McCoy, and I went to Sacramento to file to have the chapter incorporated.

The club membership started with an active member (usually the man) paying \$5.00 dues, his family members were included at \$1.00 each. We started off with a bang! In no time we had a big group and had lots of fun!! This was a family club. We had children and teenagers so we made sure there was no drinking at club functions. No one seemed to mind, if they did, they kept it to themselves. At the time the club started, Rudy Gallups was 16, Ken McCoy was 14, and Jimmy Holt was 14 years old.

I have often been asked how many members the Bakersfield club began with. I can't remember the exact numbers for 1958, but by 1959 the club roster had 37 active members plus their families.

One of our first outings was to Edwards Air Force Base in October of 1957. We had three cars that attended, O.C. Ransom, J.C. Holt and Luke McCoy and their families. They came home with a prize of 5



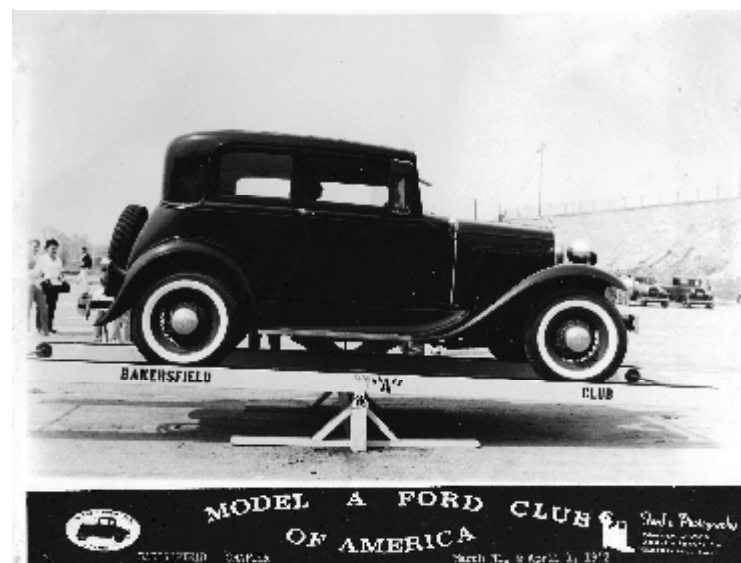
**First meet at Edwards Air Force Base Oct 1957 before Bakersfield became A Chapter. Left to right: J.C.Holt, Penny Ransom, and Luke McCoy. J.C, Penny and Luke came away with prizes... 5 gallons of gas each.**

gallons of gasoline that each had won. Col. Franklin S. Allen was the president of the Edwards Chapter. In May of 1958, Edwards held another big meet. They held rallies and gymkhana competitions. We camped on a little island on a dry lake bed, not far from Rosamond. For several years, because we had so much fun there, we made this an annual event. The first few meets only Edwards, Bakersfield and Southern California Chapters participated (because they were the only Chapters!) but as Chapters formed, they were also included in this meet.

Among the founding Edwards members was Capt. Ivan C. Kincheloe. He was a test pilot who flew the Bell X-2 rocket aircraft to 126,000 feet over the desert. His Model A had previously been owned by Lt. Col. Pete Everest who flew the Bell X-2 to a speed of over 1,900 miles per hour. Lt. Col. Everest had purchased the car from Major Charles Yeager, who will go down in history as the first man to travel faster than the speed of sound! Because of its history, Capt. Kincheloe's 1930 Model A became the mascot among Edwards Jet Jockeys!

In October of 1958, Bakersfield sponsored our first Frazier Park Potluck. We invited the mother club from Southern California. We had great food, games and friendship. With our car games, you might win a prize for the worst tires. The prize might be a patch kit or a hand pump. If you had a dirty engine, you could win a can of engine cleaner. We did not have the usual type of competitions! We had a great time because everything was done "in fun". This became an annual meet that continued into the early 1970's. In 1991, it was decided the meet should take place again. Some of the original ideas were taken off the shelf and put to use. It has been nice to renew old friendships and make new friends. In the more recent years, Chapters from the C.C.R.G. have also been included in this meet. If you are in the vicinity, this meet is held the first Sunday of October. Please feel free to stop by and enjoy the festivities with us.

Another of Bakersfield's fun events was the Hare and Hound chase. Luke and I were the hare. The day before, we would mark the trail and count the number of lime filled bags we had to use. We started about an hour ahead of the "hounds" with the filled brown bags. Luke and I timed ourselves as to know how long it should take the "hares" to complete the course. We marked the trail on a map then we would throw the bags out at the street comers. The bags would break and leave a white marker on the street (yes, we had permission from the Police Dept. to do so). When the hounds followed our trail, they had to count the markers and choose which direction to turn. If they didn't find another marker within a block, they had to go back to the marker and go a different direction until they found the next marker. At the end of the run, the team with the closest time and correct count was the winner. We would award the prizes then enjoy a potluck dinner.



One of more unusual projects included the use of a "teeter board". In 1959 or 1960, Luke McCoy and Howard Evans built the club's first teeter board. It was made of wood. During building, Luke and Howard needed to find the balance point of the board. They set up the board, then Howard drove his Model A upon it, not thinking about the board being halfway into the garage. Well you guessed it! Howard's Model A got stuck!! Yes, he did have to do a little repair work on his "A"! We used the board in our first swap meet held at the old fair grounds by the Kern County Museum in 1960. This board, with a car balanced on it, was used as a logo on the club's letterhead for several years. In the 1970's, Ken Kaiser built the club's second teeter board. This board was constructed of metal. It was always such a fun event to watch and participate in. At the C.C.R.G. Clovis Jamboree, a teeter board was a part of the games. Everyone had a great time with the board.

Another one of our "fun projects" was "the clown car"! In 1965, several members got together to design and build the car. First, they offset each wheel to a different angle. The car would then wobble down the road. Next, the guys attached a pole to the back of the car. They then attached a 50 gallon drum to the pole. To the drum they added a saddle. To the saddle they added a brave member dressed as a clown. Oh what a ride he did have! The car was painted yellow with black polka dots. It was definitely a sight to see! (Continued Next Month.....)

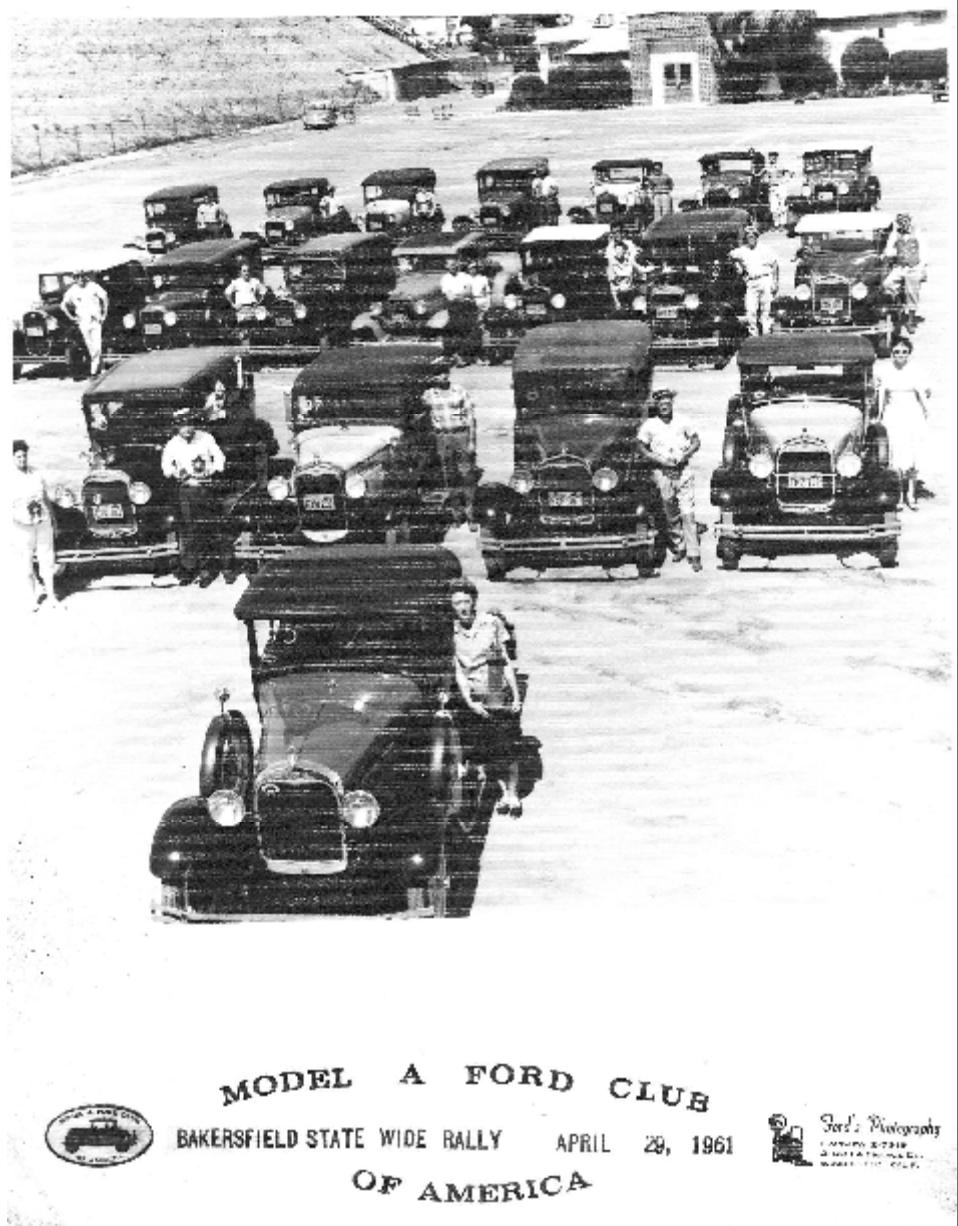
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**In The Beginning ... Things I Remember (Part 2 of 2)** By Edwina  
McCoy Barnes

**I**n California there are three regional divisions, the Southern California Regional Group (S.C.R.G.), the Central California Regional Group (C.C.R.G.) and the Northern California Regional Group (N.C.R.G.). Each division is comprised of Chapters in that region. Bakersfield belongs to the C.C.R.G.. There are twelve active chapters in C.C.R.G.. The purpose of the Regional Group is to know and support our neighbor's clubs. Each year our group holds a three day Jamboree. The clubs alternate hosting duties. In 1999 Betty Wachob was the chairperson of the Bakersfield sponsored Jamboree. It was a huge success with approximately 240 guests in attendance. Our club is still going strong. We also held the Jamboree in April 2004. Most recently, on April 8-10, 2011, the Merced Chapter hosted the Jamboree. In 2012, it is Bakersfield's turn again.

Through the years our club has participated in many, many events and outings. Some have included other clubs and locations and some have been only our club members. The following are a small sampling of our Chapters activities:

- In 1959 our Bakersfield club went to Kernville for Whiskey Flat Days. This became an annual event that has continued through the years
- We have met with L.A. Chapters at Castaic for tours of the old Ridge Route
- We held progressive dinners (we do like to eat well!)
- Swimming and lunch at Democrat Hot Springs
- Ice Cream socials
- Camping at Greenhorn Mountain
- Camping at Hume Lake
- 24th Street Park Swap Meet - at



**1961 Club Picture - Taken very near the current site of the Sonora St. Gas Station  
in The Kern County Museum**

that time the park was on the other side of the river before the new highway 99 was built

- Weekend trips to the Idlewild meets - We would meet with L.A. Chapters and have great fun
- Great American Car Show and Swap Meet - sponsored by Bakersfield, held at the Kern County Fair Grounds
- Parades, parades and more parades
- Turlock Swap Meet
- 4th of July B.B.Q.
- Christmas Installation Banquets

Our Bakersfield Chapter is also civic minded. We often assist in dedications at the Kern County Museum. We restored the Carriage House at the museum in 1984. In June of 1988, we undertook the project of the Sonora Service Station. Frank Macklin was chairman for this extensive project. There were so many people involved in this project that I can not list all of them. The club did the work and the funding to restore the station. Many hours of sweat and blood went into the restoration. The final results were worth every bit of time and effort. We are all so very proud of our members and their accomplishments at the museum. The Sonora Service Station was officially dedicated on May 28, 1995.

The club also had an account at the Houchin Blood Bank. Members donated blood in the name of our club. The donated blood could then be used by people in need in our community.

So many times I laugh because someone will come up with a "new" idea of something to do, but it's not a new idea at all. We've already been there and done that!

In 1983 Gordon Sanford was chairman of the M.A.F.C.A National meeting that was to be held in Bakersfield on December 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4th. The Banquet and installation of the newly elected National Board Members was held at the Rodeway Inn. Ed Davis was installed as the new M.A.F.C.A. President. We had over 225 guests in attendance. I was awarded the first 25 Year Lifetime Member of both the Bakersfield Chapter and of M.A.F.C.A.

In May 2007, I was honored with the "Jacquie Connelly Award" by the C.C.R.G. It was a total surprise and such an thrill to receive this prestigious award.



**Doris Cesmat, Edwina with Buck Owens, 1982**

Bakersfield is still a very active chapter. On July 22, 2000 we had "family Club" pictures taken under the landmark "Bakersfield" sign. The sign was originally located over the old Highway 99 (Union Ave.) at the corner of California Ave. at the Bakersfield Inn. The pictures were taken at its new location of Sellect Ave. and Buck Owens Blvd. near Buck Owens' Crystal Palace. The sign can now be seen from Highway 99 as you travel through Bakersfield. We had over 30 Model A's in our "family" portrait.

We all still love our Model A's and like my grandmother would say, "Each old crow thinks their kids are the blackest". That is the way we all feel about our Model A's! None of us see the "bad" things about our cars, we just see the pretty, good things of our own Model A's. So ... each "A" is beautiful no matter what!

I am the Historian for the Bakersfield Chapter and have been since 1983. I have memories about the club. To think it's been over 50 years. I don't feel that old until I look in the mirror. I just hope we never give up our Model A's. I still have my 1928 Roadster that I got in December 1957.

The Bakersfield Club, like any family, has had its share of ups and downs. When a problem arises, we work together to solve it together. As long as we can do this, we will continue to be a good club. Sometimes I feel like an old mother hen looking after her young. It's good that they tolerate me and I love them all for it.

Edwina McCoy Barnes