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# Scenes from Nov. 12 Blue Licks tour



*Above: Country roads, fall scenery and a line of Model A Fords—it doesn't get any better than this (photo by Kim Hollis). Below: Richard Hobby, right, demonstrated good CKMARC hospitality to new members Linda and Jim Anderson. Right: The turnout of members' cars was impressive. Below, right: some of the cars gathered at the museum after lunch (photo by Kim Hollis).*



## Christmas meeting is Dec. 10

Join your CKMARC friends at Southern Heights Baptist Church, 3408 Clays Mill Road, Lexington, for our annual Christmas potluck and auction Dec. 10. **John and Karen Blair** and **Jeff and Mary Rhoads** will again serve as hosts.

Bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert to share; the club will provide meat, drinks, plates, napkins, and utensils. Lunch will be served at about noon, but feel free to come any time after 11 a.m. to get a head start on the fellowship. Afterward, there will be a short business

meeting and election of officers and directors.

Be thinking about tours and activities for 2012. If you know of an interesting place that the rest of us would enjoy, you'll have an opportunity to write it down during the meeting and volunteer to organize and lead a tour.

Start now collecting your items to donate for to the silent auction. Proceeds will go directly to help offset club expenses and keep your dues low. And speaking of dues, treasurer **Mike Tearney** will be available at the meeting to collect dues for 2012.

## President's message

It has been an honor to serve as president of CKMARC these last two years, and it's all because of the tremendous support each of you has given me. Whenever there's an idea for a tour or a project, I know someone will step forward to help.

A special shout-out goes to our officers and directors, who work tirelessly to ensure that we have a variety of interesting events available. In fact, thanks to our many volunteers, we often have more activities than most of us can fit into our schedules. But isn't that a great problem to have?

We've experienced success in other ways as well. Your participation in split-the-pot raffles and auctions has helped keep our club on sound financial footing. We have an active group of members working on plans for the national meet that we'll be hosting in 2013. And new members continue to join because everyone makes them feel so welcome.

I've heard it said many times, but it bears repeating—CKMARC feel more like a family than a club. My family and I are proud to be a part of this group.

Thanks again for your support the last two years, and I know the new officers and directors can continue to rely on you.

—Jerry Baker

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# The eight stages of restoration: Those project cars just don't put themselves back together

*Adapted from a May 2009 Road and Track magazine article by Peter Egan with editorial by Grant Baker.*

Last weekend I drove 50 miles through high winds and drifting snow to the small city of Madison, Ind., to pick up the brass pieces for my 1915 Model T project. My friends at Mirror and Brass Works had removed the old, dull nickel plating from all the parts that Henry Ford meant to be polished brass.

Mr. Hein wrapped the parts in bubble-wrap, placed them in a box, and laid it gently in the passenger seat of my car. It was nice being reconnected with these hard-to-find pieces. Sending them out-of-state to be stripped, polished, and (in some cases) plated took me out of my comfort zone. I was glad to have them back and restored to their original glory. At each traffic light or straight stretch of road, I found myself peeking through the bubble wrap to remind myself how nice they looked.

Things were slippery on the return trip, with the wind blowing torrents of snow across the highway. It wasn't a great day to be out on the highway. Still, I had to go get those parts the minute they were done; couldn't wait a day longer. You see, I'm on a roll right now with my project, energized by a whole new stage in my Model T restoration. This is the phase where I can no longer stand the sight of rebuilt car components scattered randomly around my shop, cluttering up the floor and shelves. I develop an almost feverish need to take those big chunks and put them back on the car, just to have it all in one place. Essentially, I just go nuts and start reassembling everything with the manic energy of someone using an entrenching tool during a mortar attack. Call it the sudden need to make order out of chaos.

There's also a subtext of mortality here: What if I get hit by a truck and Jennifer can't find the steering column? She'll have to find a buyer as clueless as her late husband, and that's not easy. Most people want a car that steers.

So, if that garage-cleaning frenzy is merely one phase of restoration, what are the others?

I thought about this on my wintry drive home from Madison and decided there are, roughly, eight phases to a car rebuild. Other car buffs may have more or fewer, but here's how it works in my case.

### Stage one: The lightning clap of inspiration

This is where you suddenly decide, for no rational reason, that you simply must have a certain car. It can be tripped by a photo in a magazine, a want ad, a faded car parked on a front lawn, or a discussion with your buddies over a cup of coffee.

My dad recently went through this stage again. He called to say he'd just bought a pile of Model T parts. Full running gear, fenders, extra engine and wheels, plus a second running gear that was so rusty he decided to cut it in half to make it easier to load on the truck.

I started searching for different things people had made for the Model T frame. It could wind up being a car, a tractor, or anything in between. I looked through my parts catalogs to see which parts I had that would work on a '23.

Dad and I spent an hour on the phone, talking over plans for this rusty pile of metal. I know he has wanted to build a C-cab Model T, and this was the perfect start. I've dreamed about building a speedster someday. What he had was an empty canvas, a blank slate, and by the time I hung up I was ready to buy one myself. Only my unfinished "T" prevented this new grail from hovering before my eyes with the full glow of divine luminescence.

### Stage two: The hunt

This is where you search the Internet and want ads for your car. You also announce your quest as loudly as possible at parties and other gatherings in hopes that someone will say, "Hey, my brother-in-law has one of those! It has a cracked block and my sister says if he doesn't get it out of the garage she'll kill him."

The hunt goes on more or less continuously until you finally run out of patience and buy the worst possible example.

### Stage three: The homecoming

Ah, the happiest of all phases. You've dragged the car home with a couple of friends and now it's time to sit up all night long, admiring the shape and sheer rightness of that '29 Leatherback Sedan with the rotted-out lower cowl panels. No real work gets done on this night—just light vacuuming (paper clips, crayons, green pennies, etc.) and mouse nest removal. Car enthusiasts actually glow during this phase. It's the humming voltage of bliss, right before it

reaches the solenoid of reality.

Now is the time for lies. You and your friends say things like, "I don't think those wheels are really bent; it probably just needs new tires." Everyone nods, and you have another cup of coffee to suppress the sudden chill.

### Stage four: Disassembly and the road to amnesia

More good times, an adult version of vandalism where you get to take stuff apart with reckless abandon. You know you should be taking more detail photos and notes, but you're having too much fun to stop. "I'll remember how this wiper motor went in here," you tell yourself. Or, "I'm sure the shop manual has an exploded drawing of all the door latch shims and washers I just dropped on the floor."

### Stage five: The bead blaster years

This is where all those "character lines" on your face come from, the time when most of the work gets done. These are the Dark Ages, complete with plagues, despair, poverty, dungeons, flickering torches, and primitive medical experiments in blood-letting. Your hands are perpetually scarred and your fingerprints are all but obliterated by trying to clean the threads on old bolts with a wire wheel. You reek of primer and parts cleaner. When you come in from the shop in the wee hours, your spouse wakes up just long enough to tell you to take all your clothes straight down to the washer in the basement before you shower. Money you'd never spend on a new flat-screen TV gets blown on jug after jug of various harsh chemicals you hope will loosen up that black gunk in the bottom of your gas tank.

This is a time when many of us who are well insured pray for a meteor strike directly on the workshop, preferably while we're in the house having lunch and examining the Visa bill.

### Stage six: Order from chaos

This is the phase I already mentioned, when you remember that auto parts are most efficiently stored in a shape resembling a car.

### Stage seven: Resurrection

Strangely, I found myself just entering this phase last night, crossing part way over from stage six as I mounted the cowl lights with the newly brass plated tops and lens

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# The eight stages of restoration

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retainers on my Model T. All of a sudden, it looked like a car again.

I sat in a low lawn chair in the middle of my garage and realized that—from this angle—you couldn't tell the car wasn't complete and ready to drive. It's sitting on new tires with freshly painted wheels and new hubcaps; the black paint is gleaming, and the door handles are on. Unless you stand up and gaze into the still-gutted interior—or wonder why there's no steering wheel rim visible through the windshield—it looks like a complete car.

Until last night, I'd almost forgotten that the Model T Ford was originally built as a device for people to drive around in. After two years, I'd started to think of it as a permanent workplace, like a coal mine. I'd forgotten about the part where you come up to the surface of the green earth and enjoy the sunlight.

I've still got a lot to do before this stage is complete. Install the steering column, finish the wiring, trim the interior, align the front end, etc. And the final step is starting the engine to see how (or if) it runs and do all the hours of tuning and fettling to get the car working smoothly.

## 'MARC' your calendar

✓ **Dec. 10** — Annual Christmas luncheon and general membership meeting. See details on page 1.

✓ **Jan. 28, 2012** — Potluck social at Rabbit Run Recreation Center in Lexington.

## Stage eight: Driving around; gradually losing your mind

In this phase, you finally get to drive the car and go places, enjoying the fruits of your labor. You can take trips, visit friends, go to a car show, or just enjoy long summer evenings driving with the top down.

Some folks in this stage are content forevermore with the one car they've so tenderly restored, and feel they've arrived at some philosophical destination. Their work is done and they lay down their tools.

Others get restless. They need a plan—always the plan. Once the cuts on their hands have healed, they stand in the garage and ponder the finished car, the idle tools, and the silent bead-blaster. The absence of noise and sparks and cursing seems troubling. No UPS trucks roar up the driveway. It's eerie.

Then one night they get a call from some crazy guy who's just bought a pile of parts, and they get out their Model T books and begin to wonder if perhaps their work here on earth is not quite done.

## 28th Annual Winter Swap Meet, Jan. 14, 2012

Louisville, Ky. Specializing in Model A Ford parts. Sponsored by the Falls City Model A Club. Located inside the National Guard Armory, 2729 Crittenden Dr. (directly behind Cracker Barrel restaurant). Admission \$3. 10 x 12 vendor spaces, \$15. Car corral spaces outside, \$5. Doors open at 8 a.m. Contact **Frank Rice**, 187 Haley Rd., Shelbyville, Ky. 40065. Phone (502) 834-9895. Email questions to [toolingventures@windstream.net](mailto:toolingventures@windstream.net).

**For sale** — Mitchell overdrive kit. New, in box. \$2,100. Contact **Chris Watters**, (931) 627-0431.