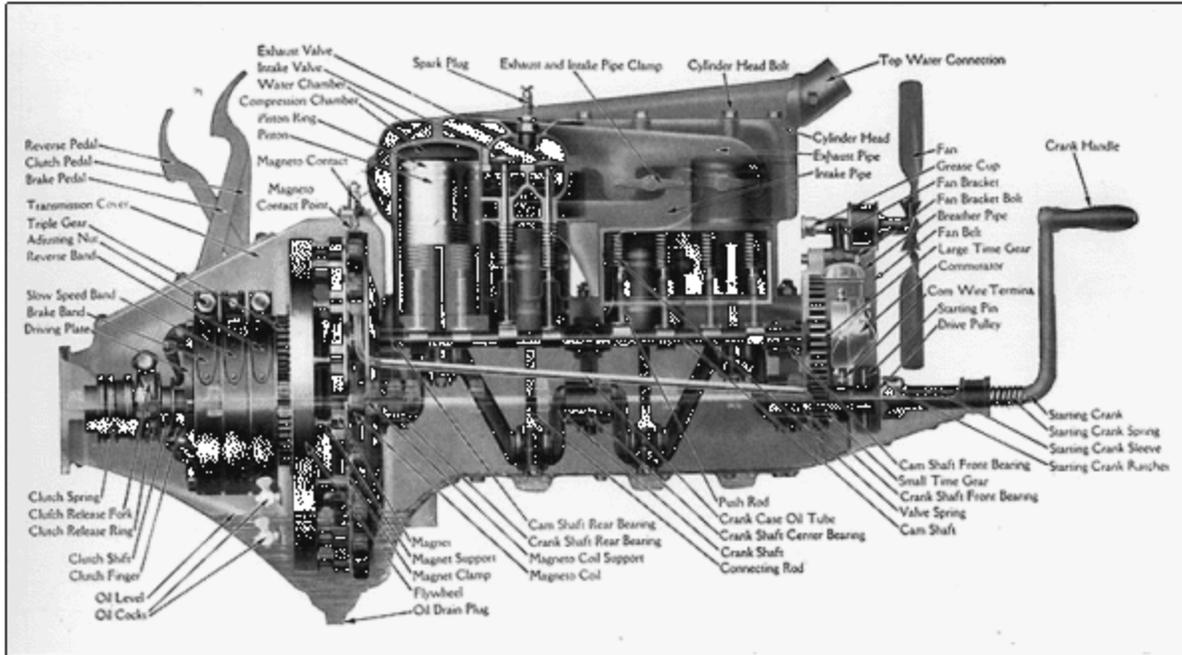


TRAACA Tech Day: 1926 Model T Coupe Engine Removal  
By Craig Brown

December 19, 2015 Norm Madsen's Garage



About twenty-five club members chose to forego the Christmas shopping frenzy at the mall and gather at Norm's garage to remove the engine from his 1926 Ford Model T Coupe. The magneto requires attention and other maintenance items more easily performed with the engine removed are planned for the 89-year-old coupe. Since the magneto is positioned between the flywheel and the back of the engine block under the transmission cover, the engine and transmission would be pulled together. The crew arrived eager, well rested and willing to work for donuts and coffee.



Norm had already performed the “remove to gain access” steps and showed the tech. day crew the liberated radiator, hood, steering column and floor board (which was actually a piece of board). I became distracted with the planetary gears just below the steering wheel in the column that provided enough mechanical advantage for the driver to turn the front wheels. I was very familiar with planetary gears in an automatic transmission, but had not seen them used in a steering mechanism. As Norm rotated the steering wheel, I noticed the slow and steady progress of the pitman arm—this was not quick ratio steering!

The threaded adapters in the number 1 and number 4 spark plug holes that accept eyelets are a clever way to attach the lifting chain to the engine.



We adjusted the chain to give the estimated angle for “up-and-out” hoisting of the engine and transmission. Since the three control pedals stay attached to the transmission, Dan Baxter worked from inside the cabin to make sure the pedals cleared the firewall through the access hole.



With plenty of willing hands to run the jack and position the engine, the crew pulled the engine forward on the disconnected rear engine mounts. The mounts conveniently slide along the frame rails. Once forward enough, the hoist did the hard work while we steadied and slightly turned the engine with Dan's direction in order for the pedals to clear the firewall.



The help and guidance from veteran Model T owners was invaluable in getting the height and angle just right for removing the engine and transmission (with pedals attached) as a single unit. Dan's hand is visible in the picture below guiding the pedals. The left engine mount is just lifting from the left frame rail after sliding forward. Knowledgeable members estimated the weight of the engine and transmission at one-third the weight of the Model T. The operation went smoothly, without drama, and no one had to use their insurance card!





The job has been done correctly when everything that needed to be removed is gone and the remainder is in its place without gouges, bends or dents.



It actually took longer to round up the proper combination of pallets and blocks to position the assembly for separation of the transmission and oil pan. Since we didn't have an engine stand designed to handle the Model T engine, Yankee ingenuity and applied physics were called upon for on-the-spot fabrication.



Since quick work had been made of the engine removal phase, there was some debate over what to do next. Luckily, before twenty-five eager club members over-stimulated with coffee and donuts started grabbing wrenches and reducing the engine and transmission to a disorganized pile of parts, Erwin Gendreau came over from across the street to see what was going on. Erwin recognized the crazed glint in the crew's eyes and their eagerness for more mechanical mayhem and defused with situation with one powerful phrase: "I just bought a really nice Model A Coupe and you are all welcome to come over to my shop and see it."

The clang of dropped wrenches and ratchets hitting the cement floor and the clomping of boots were the only sounds as the entire group moved with military precision across the street. Once inside Erwin's garage, the gleam of the Model A made them forget the Model T.



The Model A was an exceptional example. Since Erwin's shop is a full service, commercial automotive facility, there was even more than the Model A to distract the members of the group. Some wandered over to peruse the wall of Mitchell Manuals containing professional service/repair information; some crawled over the 1968 Camaro shell on a lift with a big-block close by; and a few admired the nicely restored 1966 Barracuda which was Erwin's first car.



With the exploration of Erwin's garage complete, the crowd dispersed. A few returned to Norm's garage to eat some snacks, gloat on the successes of the day and tell stories. The discussions followed some familiar themes: Ford vs. Chevy, Optima batteries vs. all other batteries, Harbor Freight tools vs. tools you will pass on to your grandkids, and so on into the afternoon. There is never a clear winner or resolution to these debates, but it is always good to get new perspectives and ideas on all things automotive. After all, tech. day is about learning and helping each other!