

A Unique Seminar!

by Tom Endy

A couple years ago I was technical director of my local Model A club. During my tenure I came up with an idea for a unique seminar that I would like to pass along for those who might want to duplicate the effort.

I had accumulated about 20 or so transmission towers. I am convinced that they have the ability to multiply when left sitting around. Over a period of time I took them all apart, degreased, bead blasted, and painted the housings. I also bead blasted all the salvaged shifting forks. I asked two club members who are experienced welders to weld up the worn areas in the fork slots. They agreed to take on the task and I divided the work between them. I then asked another club member who has a mill in his garage if he would mill out the welded areas of the forks. He agreed and we located a fork that had little or no wear so that he could set his mill up correctly. While all this was going on I also bead blasted all of Henry's killer springs and retainers I had removed from the towers.

When all the work was finished I announced the plan for a seminar at a club meeting. The idea was for club members to bring their towers to the seminar. We would exchange their tower housing, the two forks, and the killer spring for a set that had been refurbished. Prior to the seminar each participant had to determine what he wanted to do about other tower hardware that may be worn. They could purchase new reproduction shift rails along with the two bullets and the small spring, or they could go with what they found in their tower when it was disassembled, or they could root through the junk box I put all the hardware in I had collected from the towers I had taken apart.

They would also have to determine what they wanted to do about the shift lever that more than likely had the ball on the end worn square. They could purchase a new reproduction shift lever, or go with what they found in their tower when they disassembled it. Another option was that the two welders would be on hand at the seminar to weld up the levers as they came out of the towers. Each person would then have to grind or file his lever to the proper .490 round dimension.

On the day of the seminar club members showed up either driving their Model A or with a tower or two in hand. We set up an assembly line for disassembly and another for assembly. I had several killer spring compression tools available for use.

I salvaged all the fork locking pins and along with my own accumulation we were able to straighten and grind the ends of enough for suitable reuse.

I had enough assorted towers that we were able to accommodate the exchange needs for both the early and late tower styles.

At the end of the seminar we had restored about 15 towers. The dirty greasy rusty exchanged towers are now sitting around at my house and I am convinced they have since begun multiplying.

It was a very worthwhile seminar. It was interesting how severely worn many of the towers were when we got them apart. Our club (the Orange County Model A Ford Club of Southern California) is now probably the best shifting club in the country. ☺

