



SPECIAL DELIVERY



A publication of the Postal A's Model A Ford Mail Truck Club

Fall 2025

Volume XXX Issue 4



Postal A's Chapter

Model A Restorers Club
Model A Ford Club of America



[HOME](#) [About Us](#) [Mail Bag](#) [Swap Meet](#) [Tech Info](#) [Photo Page](#) [Members Only](#) [Contact Us](#)

WIX | This website was built on Wix. Create yours today. [Get Started](#)

The Postal A's is a self-help organization established in 1977 as a chapter of the [Model A Ford Club of America](#). Its aim is to gather information to develop a standard for the Model A Mail Truck. This led to many years of newsletters consisting of 800 pages. Information collected became the basis for the comprehensive book, "The Ford Model A Mail Truck" by Aldie E. Johnson, Jr.

Our organization has been in existence for nearly 50 years and continues to support and assist in the restorations of these outstanding vehicles.



US Post Office Logo

This logo was in effect during the Model A era. It was introduced in 1837 and remained the official logo until the transition of the US Postal Department to the United States Postal Service in July of 1971.



Typical Model A (100 cu ft) Mail Truck



Typical Model AA (200 cu ft) Mail Truck

What's New?

07/01/25 - Added more newsletter links

06/14/25 - Added more photos on the [Photos Page](#)

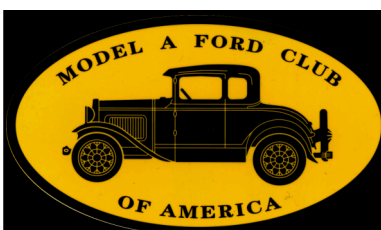


Last Updated: 7/1/25



Copyright 2025 Postal A's Chapter

SEE DETAILS OF NEW WEBSITE ON PAGE 2!



MAFCA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

MARC SPECIAL REGION



Visit our website at www.postalas.com or www.postalas.org

2025 Officers



Charles Hilton
President
pres@postalas.org



Robert Kiley
Vice President
vp@postalas.org



Jim McPherson
Treasurer
treas@postalas.org



Roger Davis
Secretary
sec@postalas.org



Wayne Arnholt
Technical Director
techdir@postalas.org

The Postal A's

The Postal A's is a Special Interest Body Style Chapter of the Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA) and a Special Region of the Model A Restorers Club (MARC), whose purpose is to aid its members in the authentic restoration, use and enjoyment of a limited production of commercial bodies built for the U.S. Post Office Department and mounted on Ford Model A & AA chassis.

The Special Delivery

To assist in achievement of this purpose, The Special Delivery newsletter is published by the Postal A's. It is written, edited, and published on a volunteer basis by the newsletter staff. All signed materials are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the newsletter staff or the Postal A's. Any unsigned material, facts, opinions or other information is the sole responsibility of the newsletter staff, is believed to be the most current and accurate information available on the Model A Mail Truck, but does not necessarily represent an official position of the Postal A's, MAFCA or MARC. Authorization to quote or reprint from the Postal A's Special Delivery is granted provided proper credit is given.

Postal A's Website

Additional information is available via the website @ www.postalas.com.



A special thanks to Lawrence Komp for the Mail Truck drawings on our letterhead & newsletter

On the cover the new website.
Most of the information has been brought over from the old site.
The new site is at:

[www:postalas.com](http://www.postalas.com)

The old website is still at:

[www:postalas.org](http://www.postalas.org)

SEE LAST PAGE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OUR FIRST VIRTUAL (ZOOM) MEETING

MAIL TRUCK PARTS AT HERSHEY

Jim McPherson will be at Hershey in Oct.

If you need parts (see last issue) let him know over the next week or so.

Jim can be reached at his email above or call or text him at: 706-564-0120

Booth will be at Hershey Chocolate Lot

C3B 26-29 not C3B 30 as in "The Restorer"

MORE INFORMATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE POSTAL A'S

A couple of issues ago I did a article on the history of the club. Although I got some of it right, I left out some information. Rick Black, one of the original founders, gave me some updated information which I am publishing here. I apologize to Rick for my lack of knowledge and am thrilled about being able to set the record straight. More about Rick later.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE POSTAL A's

Although the first formal act to establish the present organization of Model A Mail Truck owners and enthusiasts was a brief Newsletter sent out by Thurston (Koke) Twigg-Smith in February of 1977, it was certainly based on earlier spadework by others. The mailing of that Newsletter was to an initial mailing list, which consisted primarily of a list of owners, and reported owners, which had been compiled by Gary Grebbien earlier. This list started back in about 1971 when Grebbien began the restoration of a 1931 Model A Mail Truck which was destined to become the most well known Mail Truck then in existence. Grebbien's truck was the feature vehicle (and also the month of December) in the 1977 Motorcraft calendar, which featured only Model A's. That photograph (and the other calendar photos that have subsequently been reissued in later years by many other advertisers—generally with deteriorating quality, color reproduction and detail clarity) shows several features which later research found to be incorrect. Recognizing the difficulty of restoring a relatively unknown body style, Grebbien had sought out others (including Frank Graham) who owned such vehicles and initiated an informal self-help group to aid in maintaining or restoring with authenticity. The success of that effort manifested itself with the honors subsequently accorded Grebbien's truck and also that of Frank Graham (Frank's truck earlier had been a winner in 1974 at the Queen Mary MAFCA Nationals in Long Beach). Perhaps a brief aside is in order. In the course of his attempts to determine what a good original Mail Truck looked like, Grebbien journeyed cross country from his home in California to spend several days in, around, under and over a good original unrestored truck on Cape Cod, MA—owned by Richmond Bell.

To quote from Twigg-Smith's February 1977 letter, "I am a recent purchaser of a Mail Truck and I would like to form an official group, dedicated to the restoration and preservation of A and AA Mail Trucks." Twigg-Smith wrote to MAFCA about his idea and due to the lead time in publication, it did not appear in *THE RESTORER* until the May/June issue (Vol. 22, No. 11) in which was a general write-up on Body Style Groups, including a mention of the Postal A's being in the formative stages.

Meanwhile, in the preceding issue of *THE RESTORER* (MAFCA, March/April 1977, Vol. 21, No. 6), appeared two ads in sequence in the WANTED category, both relating to Mail Trucks.

Unknown to each other at the time, the first ad read "MODEL A & AA MAIL DELIVERY INFORMATION WANTED. Who built the body? How many were made? We have located several owners and are compiling a roster to help us exchange information. Any information or owners names would be appreciated. Rick Black, 122 Elm Ave., San Bruno, CA etc." The following ad read, "1931 MAIL TRUCK. Would like to correspond with anyone having and/or restoring this body style—particularly need plans for wood parts, sources for door hardware, window details, or photos, Govt. plans, etc. Aldie Johnson, 22 Burlington Rd., Bedford, MA etc." Naturally it didn't take long to get these two together with Twigg-Smith and the embryonic stages of the Postal A's was underway.

By the end of June 1977, Twigg-Smith had sent out another of his informal newsletters, which listed some new names (Jack Dixon, Hugh Pearson, Gordon Reed, Aldie Johnson and Rick Black) along with Gary Grebbien and his list of 25 addresses. Another interesting quote from that newsletter said, "The 1978 National Convention of the MAFCA will be in Washington, DC next summer. I would like to throw out the spark today that we all get together, and possibly have an announced seminar of our own!" Well, the informal get together did occur, but it took another eight years for the Postal A Seminar to take place.

Another brief progress Newsletter in July of 1977 was followed by a return-postcard-questionnaire in September to all known (or reported) Mail Truck owners. Forty-five questionnaires were sent out with a rather phenomenal return rate of 75%! However, of the 34 returned, there were only 23 confirmed owners, 20 of whom belonged to MAFCA and 8 belonged to MARC.

In August 1977 Rick Black set the official wheels in motion by circulating a petition to MAFCA requesting recognition as a Chapter authorized "to conduct our activities in a worldwide organization of Model A and AA postal vehicles under the name of the Postal A's Chapter". The required five signers of that petition were T. Twigg-Smith, Rick Black, Aldie Johnson, Richmond Bell and Hugh Pearson. The MAFCA Board of Directors acted favorably on that petition (as well as petitions from three other new chapters) at their October 8, 1977 meeting. Rick Black was officially notified of acceptance by letter

Continued from page 3...

from Ed Christopher, the then Chapter Coordinator, on October 26, 1977. Thus, the Postal A's will soon be celebrating their 25TH anniversary. It was not until the 1991 Annual Meeting of MARC that the Postal A's were recognized as a Region of MARC.

The MAFCA January/February 1978 issue of **THE RESTORER** (Vol. 22, No. 5) first listed the Postal A's as a Body Style Chapter.

Now that the Postal A's were officially launched, Twigg-Smith continued to put out at his own expense an occasional Newsletter—in February and September of 1978, January, May and November of 1979, and April and September of 1980.

The 1978 National Convention in Washington, DC was the first opportunity for any significant get-together (as had earlier been proposed by Twigg-Smith). Rick Black convened an informal evening meeting in his room at the Sheraton National at which Gary Koser, Don Floyd, Aldie Johnson and Rick Black compared notes. It was particularly good that Gary Koser could come since he had driven his truck to the Convention from Milwaukee. Also, Paul Thomas had been responsible for getting the Baltimore Post Office's 1929 AA Mail Truck to the Convention. Attracted by seeing the two Mail Trucks on display one day, Jim Nickerson came to look and talk about his Mail Truck (which, unfortunately, was back home in New Jersey). Rick Black took advantage of his time on vacation in Washington to spend a couple of days poking through the U.S. National Archives. Probably the most significant find then was a copy of the Invitation To Bid (including the specification) for the last (1931) procurement of ½-ton Mail Truck bodies. This started a chain of research which has been the most significant factor in establishing the who, when, where, how (and even a little bit of why) of the U.S. Post Office's Model A and AA Mail Trucks.

The first appearance of the Postal A's in the MAFCA **RESTORER** Chapter News occurred in the March/April 1981 issue (Vol. 25, No. 6) which reported the results of the first attempt to catalogue who had what. This was a sort-of precursor that fell out of what was to come two issues later.

Based on some discussions with Phil Allin, the then-Editor of **THE RESTORER**, at the 1978 MAFCA National Convention, the Postal A's took the initiative to provide sufficient suitable and useable copy and pictures for Allin to create a

predominantly Mail Truck issue of **THE RESTORER**. What evolved exceeded expectation, and the Vol. 26, No. 2 issue (July/August 1981) of **THE RESTORER** with Frank Graham's 1929 A Mail Truck on the cover has become a classic and a "collector's issue".

Another memorable issue of **THE RESTORER** was in March/April (Vol. 34, No. 6) which pictured Ken Wall's AA Mail Truck in front of the Yosemite National Park Post Office as a "stamp" cancelled in La Habra, CA. In this issue, sometimes called "Mail Trucks Revisited, the majority of articles pertained to Mail Trucks—sort-of an update on Vol. 26, No. 2.

Rick Black's earlier forays in to the National Archives had prompted Dave Zimmerli to try his hand, and his first significant find was printed in the January/February 1982 issue of **THE RESTORER** (Vol. 26, No. 5). It consisted of the Post Office drawings of the "generic" ½-ton size Mail Truck body of 1930. Zimmerli has subsequently found a great deal more of significant records, which have added immeasurably to Model A Mail Truck knowledge.

After about a year and a half hiatus in putting out his Newsletter, Koke Twigg-Smith managed to find time and some new information to issue another of his Newsletters in February of 1982. Along about that time, Aldie Johnson volunteered to take over the editing/publishing chores of the Postal A Newsletter on a little more formal quarterly basis, and that continued for a number of years, culminating with the publication of his book **THE FORD MODEL A MAIL TRUCK** in 1999.

In 1985, the Postal A's submitted to the Joint MAFCA/MARC Judging Standards Committee a Draft Supplement to the Ford Model A Judging Standards to cover the unique aspects of the Mail Trucks. This supplement was reviewed and approved with minor changes by the Judging Standards Committee. The Supplement was further revised in 1997.

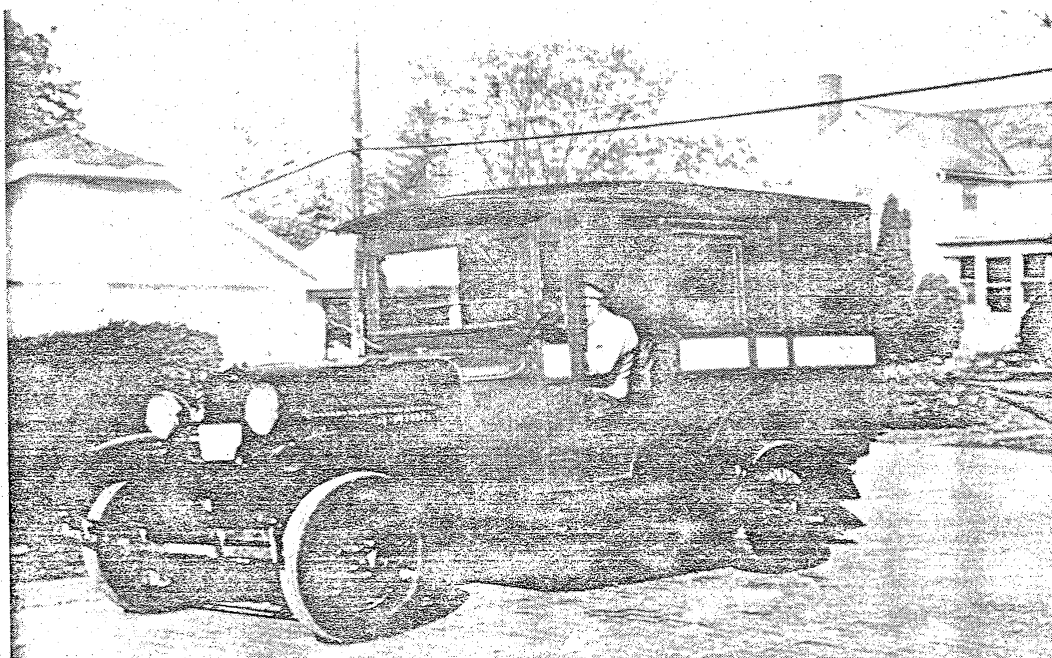
As mentioned earlier, the proposed Postal A Seminar (for the 1978 MAFCA National Convention) did not take place at that time. It was not until 1986 at the MAFCA/MARC World Meet that the first Postal A Seminar took place.

New trucks, new restorers and new information continue to turn up on a continuing basis—evidence that the growing world of Model A Mail Trucks is still expanding.

Found this on some of our Secretaries' archives. Of course, Jim McPherson has been around A Models all of his life. A near as I can tell, this article was first published in the "A" Quail Call", a publication of the Penn Ohio Model A Club and reprinted with their permission



JANUARY FEBRUARY 1979



Continued on next page...

Page 5

Continued from page 5...

ONCE UPON "A" TIME

MODEL "A" FORD FABLES

UNCLE SAM'S TRUCK

by Vernon Burks

In my search for a small Model A Mail Truck (one on a passenger car chassis) during 1963, I found myself at a junk yard at Mentor-on-the-Lake. If I remember correctly, Al Kushing had told me about this one. It was awful rough and besides there was one in a lot better shape within 10 miles of home, if I could get it. I went over to Ontario and finally was able to talk to the owner. I found he had turned down a substantial offer. Even if he would sell at a later date, he would have asked more than I wanted to pay for an unrestored Model A. (Since then, Walt Sapp of Dixie Chapter bought this one.)

On December 11, 1964, we finally got back up to Mentor-on-the-Lake to look at that Mail Truck, again. I decided it could be restored so put a deposit on it and went back up on December 19, with a trailer, and brought it home.

When we got it, it was a very cold day and the truck was frozen in the ground. The men at the junk yard lifted it onto the trailer with a boom on the back of a truck.

I got the body, frame, splash aprons, running boards and fenders, but I couldn't use anything but the body. The reason I couldn't use anything else was that it had set on the ground without the front and rear ends for so long it was sunk in mud and everything had rusted.

I had the chassis restored at the time I retired in October, 1972 and finished the body after that. It was done by October, 1973. I had to make the back doors and tailgate. Dave Wyant of Dixie Chapter told me a large Mail Truck was in the Mt. Vernon junk yard that had the hardware on the back doors.

The pieces were interchangeable with the small truck, so I was in business.

By this time, the car was complete, except for the Uncle Sam "I Want You" posters that went on the sides of the body. I just couldn't find any as big as I needed.

In 1976, when we were on the Penn-Ohio Tour, we stopped in a town in Pennsylvania where they were having sidewalk sales. As we were walking along, shopping, one of the group noticed a recruiting office that had just the size poster I needed in the window. I hurried in to inquire if they had any more. The recruiter asked how many I needed and opened a file cabinet and handed me a dozen from it. The poster had been reprinted in 1976.

I had the Mail Truck to one Penn-Ohio Meet but it's not a practical vehicle to run as there is no seat for a passenger. So, until it's needed for delivering the mail, it is on display in our collection.



Continued from Page 6



This picture is from the collection of Roger Davis, our club secretary. He graciously sent it to me as it is the same picture that was in the original article. He is much clearer than the copy I had. Thanks Roger

FOUND ON eBAY™



I had been looking for one of these for a while and although I have seen several that were missing the box, or a part of the truck, or I was too cheap to buy, I had never purchased one. This one came up and I got it for \$17.95 with the taxes and shipping. Now what do I do with another piece of memorabilia that I have no room for?

Saw this on either Ford Barn™ or Vintage Ford Forum™

I have not checked this out so proceed with your own caution!

*Many of you are aware that a **Gates 700** fan belt will fit a Model A. However, more auto parts stores have discontinued handling Gates products and have switched to Dayco belts. The Dayco equivalent listed in their belt cross-reference chart is too small! The next size larger belt, **Dayco #22425**, will fit perfectly and should last longer since it is a heavy duty woven belt.*

Again, I have not checked this out or know if this is for an original Model A with a generator or has been modified. I just put it in my files for future reference.

From Dale Walker in Kansas City, Mo:

My 1931 Ford Model AA postal truck was used inside the post office from dock to dock. The only time it was on the street was the 1933 killing across the street from the post office. They hauled the prisoners to jail from Union Station. The original driver sold the AA to me years ago.

EVOLUTION OF POSTAL A'S PATCHES

The first patch was evidently designed by Aldie Johnson, one of the founders of the club. That patch looked like this.



I tried for many years and recently received this from Rick Black.

This second patch below is from an unknown source. I actually found it on eBay™ but we don't know if it is an original patch with MAFCA embroidered on it or someone had it custom

If you have any information on who did this patch,



formation on who please let me know.

The third and final patch.



I designed this patch since we didn't have any of the earlier ones.
I have a very few of these left. If you need one and are a member,

send \$5.00 to:

Postal A's

539 Whaley Pond Rd.

Graniteville, SC 29829

11729 Delivers at Hershey National 2024

Roger Davis

In October 2024, I had the chance to take my 31 Model A Mail Truck #11729 from Utah back to its roots in Pennsylvania and Minnesota. I realized this was probably the only chance I'd have to enter my Mail Truck in the Antique Automobile Club of America's (AACA's) Nationals at Hershey. All the hard work to prepare 11729 for the show and judging paid off when I learned at the Awards Banquet that 11729 earned a National First Prize (Frist Junior) at Hershey 2024.

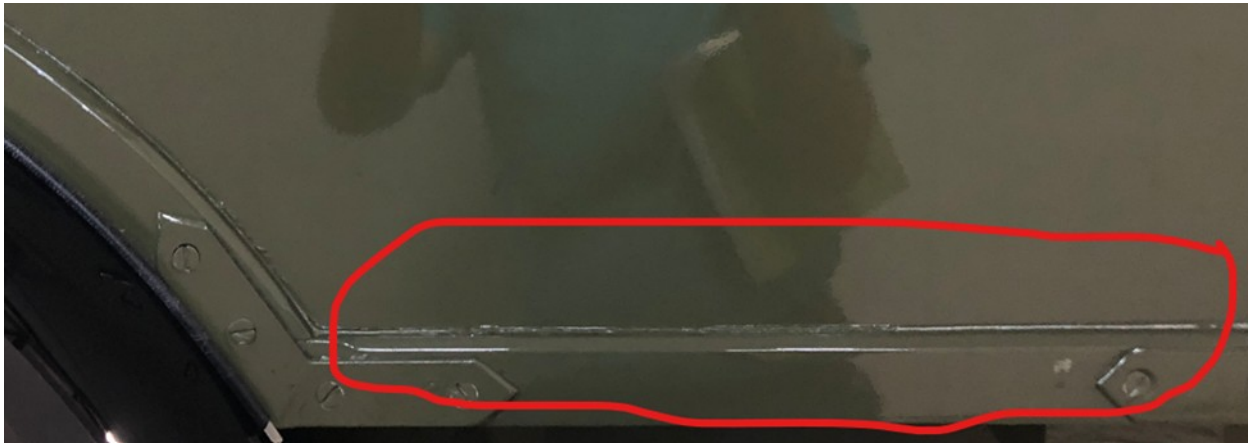


There's a lot of history in these Mail Trucks and I'm fortunate enough to have quite a bit of information on 11729. 11729 was owned by the Post Office Department from March 1932 to 1957 where it served Lake Itasca, Lake George, Emmaville, Two Inlets, LaPorte, and Park Rapids, MN. Jim Reichling of Park Rapids, MN bought it from the Post Office in 1957 and sold it to Gary Warmbold in 2010. Gary had a cabinet-maker friend rebuild the wood body originally manufactured by the Mifflinburg Body Company in Mifflinburg, PA. Gary Warmbold sold 11729 to Rich Heinrichs in 2019. Rich told me that when he bought 11729 the frame was held together with welded rebar. Rich put 11729 on a new frame and restored the engine compartment and fenders very nicely. I purchased 11729 in February 2021 from Rich. I like to say it was easier to buy 11729 than it was to get it delivered from Northern Minnesota to Utah in the middle of winter.



Charles asked me to write up how I prepared 11729 for Hershey. There were many areas to prep 11729 for Hershey; wood body paint, lettering, chassis work, shock absorbers, engine, spark plugs, etc. Covering all these in one article would take up a lot of space. Instead, I'll address each of these topics over the next few editions of this newsletter.

Let's start with the wood body paint finish: The automotive paint pros at Jones Paint & Glass in Provo, UT are considered the best in the state. They recommended the wood body be painted with Benjamin Moore Exterior latex house paint, high gloss, telling me that any of the modern automotive paints would crack as the wood body flexed and moved. I've observed this on the mail trucks I've seen that were painted with modern automotive paints. In my mind, the Latex paint seemed best suited to meet the original Post Office Department specs that it couldn't be sprayed, it couldn't be rolled, it had to be brushed and thick enough to cover the wood grain (See Aldie Johnson, The Ford Model A Mail Truck, pg 67).



Olive Drab Green Body: I had the paint store match the color that was already on the single coat on the wood body. I tried the semi gloss Benjamin Moore Exterior Latex house paint but found that when I touched or cleaned the paint it left a shiny mark. I then went to the gloss finish which allows me to clean and touch the finish with no marks. I painted the exterior with 5 coats to cover the grain and the interior with three coats (I was tired of painting by that time.)



Beltline: I had some paint sample strips from Postal As that were considered very close to the original yellow beltline color. I left the paint chips with the paint pros at Jones Paint & Glass and told them that the color was Federal Spec 595, #13695. About an hour later, they called me saying they'd been able to find the formula for Spec 595 and could mix it exactly to the Spec. I used Benjamin Moore Satin Exterior Latex paint. I applied 5 coats which seemed to cover the grain well.



Straight Edges: I made near-perfect straight lines between the yellow beltline and the olive drab green body color by masking with 3M blue masking tape, applying a super thin coat of Clear DAP Acrylic Latex Caulk and smoothing it with my finger. This prevents the paint from creeping under the tape but when removing the tape creates a nearly perfect straight edge to the paint. You must use acrylic latex caulk. Latex paint doesn't cover over silicone caulk very well. Also, silicone caulk doesn't tear in a straight line like acrylic latex. As a humorous aside, I went into Lowe's and asked where the Clear DAP Acrylic Latex Caulk was. The supervisor asked me what I was trying to do. I could just imagine her look if I told her I was painting the wood body on a 95 year-old mail truck. I politely said, I just need Clear DAP Acrylic Latex Caulk to which she responded that she was just trying to help. You know the looks you get when doing a specialty job on vintage vehicles.



This covers various aspects of getting the wood body finish correct. We'll cover other aspects such as lettering, engine, etc in future newsletter articles.

Follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRt59aMaPMM> to see ~1500 photos of around 120 Model A Mail Trucks. Follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS1IAWRVKnw> to view a detailed presentation on Model A Mail Trucks including all of these topics.

RICK BLACK

I have mentioned Rick Black several times in this newsletter. Now I will give you the story behind the scenes. When I did the history of the Postal A's two issues ago, I inadvertently left out Rick as one of the founders. I knew the name, knew he was an early Mail Truck Owner, and had been active in the formative years of the Club. That was the extent of my knowledge other than his affiliation with MAFCA in working with their web page.

Rick emailed me after my earlier attempt on the Club history and simply let me know that he was in on the founding and if I needed early information, just let him know. I called Rick and it was one of the best "A Model" calls I ever made. We talked about the early years of the Postal A's and I got to hear it from someone that had experienced it.

As we continued to talk, I mentioned that I was having trouble updating the website. He quickly told me that he might could help with that. By late that evening, he had the new website well under construction and has continued to work with me as we added to it. It has all of the old information basically but with a more modern and up to date look. There is one major change—it is located at postalas.com not the old postalas.org. The old website is still up and running under that old address.

And finally I mentioned to Rick that I had been looking for an original patch for the Postal A's. In about a week, a patch arrived from his personal collection.

I have been amazed at Model A folks since I bought my first Model A (which was Mail Truck 11405). The local club, the Postal A's (who found me my first truck), and now as I learn members across this great country of ours have all reached out with words of encouragement, help, and have become just good friends. Thank you Rick for all you have done for me personally and the new Postal A's in just the past few months.

Charles Hilton

POSTAL A's ZOOM MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING

On Oct 14, 2025, at 8:00 PM Eastern time, Roger Davis has agreed to host a virtual meeting. Although most of us have used these at work, I have never personally set one up.

Roger is proficient in this (thank you Roger) and we are going to try one just to get to know each other, answer questions, and talk Model A's. Please set this aside on your calendar and plan to join us. Hopefully, your desktop or laptop has a microphone and camera built in so that you may fully participate.

The link will be sent to all members in the next week or so.

Remember mark your calendars now for Oct 14 at 8:00 PM ET