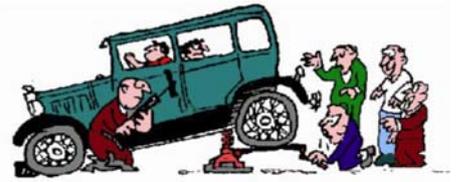




From the Garage -

by Paul Hunter



Clutch Bearing Maintenance

HISTORY OF THE CLUTCH

For years, leather belts were used to control horses and hyperactive kids. Such a handy item became the first connecting device between an engine pulley and a vehicle drive wheel. Tension on the belt transmitted the power from one to the other.

In 1893, the Duryea brothers began using a large single-plate disk attached to the flywheel. It was lever operated with leather or fabric lining. Burnout occurred within a few hundred miles, fortunately an Englishman perfected the use of durable asbestos and solved the problem of constant repairs.

How long has it been since you greased the clutch throw-out bearing on your Model A? Where is the clutch throw-out bearing? The clutch throw-out bearing is located between the clutch plate and the transmission. Access to the throw-out bearing grease fitting requires removing the rubber or carpet floor mat and the metal plate on the rear of the clutch housing. The clutch housing plate is held into place with two flat screwdriver head bolts. Loosen the bolts until the metal plate can slid upward toward the engine and removed. The grease fitting is on the top of the drive line. A couple squirts should be sufficient. I grease the throw-out bearing in my car every 1000 to 1500 miles.

The clutch throw-out bearing only operates when your foot is on the clutch pedal. "Riding" the clutch to slow down, when shifting gears or depressing the pedal while stopped, i.e. at a stop light or waiting in traffic, all bad habits causing excessive throw-out bearing wear. While greasing the bearing is inconvenient, replacing the Model A throw-out bearing requires removing the engine or transmission. My advice, do not depress the clutch pedal to slow road speed or cease forward motion. Rather apply the brakes using long intermittent pulses; and when stopped, depress the clutch pedal, shift into neutral, release the clutch pedal and hold position using the braking system. That is what car brakes were designed to do.



Interesting enough, modern manual transmission automobiles and trucks still use a clutch throw-out bearing similar to that in our Model A Fords. The main difference is access to this bearing is more complicated. Some models require removal of the engine and transmission as one unit. So – whether driving your Model A Ford or a modern manual transmission vehicle you want to do everything you can to prolong throw-out bearing life.

Our thanks to Leland Hardy from The Connecting Rod Willamette Valley Model A Club - Editor