

Dallas VMCCA Members Participate in Car Display for Federation of the Blind

By Don Knight

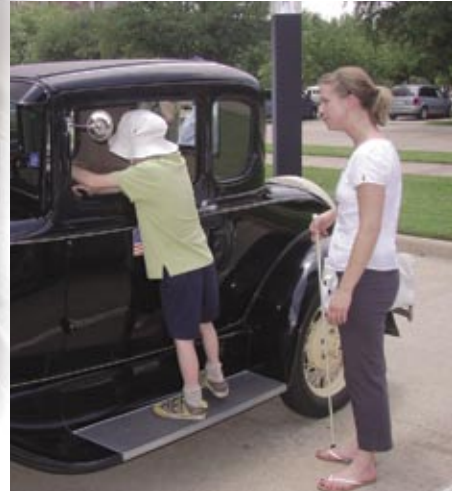
B.D. Berryhill and I were both contacted several months ago by VMCCA member Joseph Naulty of Florida who was very active in planning a National Convention for the Federation of the Blind that was held in Dallas the week of July 2nd. Mr. Naulty had an idea that some of the 3000 attendees at the convention might be interested in a classic car display. Mr. Naulty has lost his sight in the last ten years but still has wonderful memories of old cars.

The convention was held at the Hilton Anatole Hotel and there were over 3000 men, women, children and dogs in attendance. Most

all of the attendees are totally blind with a few having partial sight. We were a bit confused as to how the attendees would enjoy the car display but Mr. Naulty arranged for Ford Motor Company to donate soft gloves for the attendees to use as they examined cars.

The convention itself was interesting as there were many vendors that were testing fabulous new devices to aide the blind. One new product is a portable device that can read print and vocalize the print for the user.

The VMCCA, Dallas Model A



Kids and cars! The Federation for the Blind car display brings smiles to two sisters from Oregon, left, both with congenital sight challenges. Center, a blind little boy is fascinated by an intricate hood ornament. Right, the little boy has permission from the owner to reach into this Model A Ford to honk the horn -- aogah!



A 1931 Model A Ford sedan attracted this couple. He is examining the car's windings with his hands and who knows, possibly he is reminiscing about days gone by.



Ruby and Lloyd Kerr's 1972 Karmann Ghia convertible coupe was popular with visitors. Note that the guide dog is wearing a sign that says "Do Not Pet -- Dog in Training." This technique teaches the dog to be responsive, and responsible to, only the blind owner.

Ford Club, Cadillac Club and Fords of the Fifties club participated in the car display on Wednesday of their convention. We had no idea what to expect as none of us had ever participated in an event like this. The attendees started out to the parking lot and the car owners were asked to lead them around the cars and talk to them as they examined the cars with their hands.

It was a hot, humid, long day but each car owner got as much, if not more, from this experience as the attendees. Their attitude and enthusiasm was

amazing. One young lady sat behind the wheel of one of the cars and said that it was the first time in her life that she was in the driver's seat. She jokingly asked the owner for the keys so that she could take a test drive. The car display was a HUGE success for the convention and they plan to repeat this event at future conventions.

It was a fantastic day and all of the car owners were very proud that we could share our cars with those with special needs.



Joseph Naulty, who had the idea for the car display, enjoys examining an elegant Rolls Royce flying lady hood ornament.



Special thanks to Ford Motor Company for soft gloves so blind visitors could enjoy the cars.



The young lady examining Garland and Jill Sullins' 1931 Model A Ford Victoria enjoyed sitting behind the wheel of the car so much that she asked Garland, "Do you have the keys?" and then said, "Don't worry, I won't go very far!"



This 1931 Model A Ford pickup brought lots of questions and conversation from visitors.



Another Rolls Royce attracts visitors who enjoyed the day so much that the Federation of the Blind plans to repeat the car display event at future conventions.



Don and Cindy Knight's 1959 Ford Retractable Skyliner Convertible and its neighboring 1957 T-Bird both were popular with visitors.