



# Thunderbirds Of Southwest Ohio

Newsletter  
April 2024



## MEETING MINUTES

**Call to Order:** President Scott McGaha dropped his President's gavel at 6:45 PM on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at MCL in an effort to bring the meeting to order. So many members were engaged in friendly conversation throughout the room that it took 4 or 5 more "gavel raps" for Scott to obtain everyone's attention and actually take control of the meeting. Our members are so friendly and willing to discuss all things Thunderbird, etc.

**Attendees:** There were 22 members in attendance tonight, including President Scott McGaha, Vice-President Mike Hall, Secretary Dave Harvey, Past President Roger & Treasurer Lisa Hamm, Mark & Jackie Allen, Brett & Peg Andrews, Larry & Jo Doelker, Adam Gulden, Ron Heinz, Paul & Sherry Loschi, Dave & Susan Menke, Ron & Linda Prater, Jim Russell, Tom Tirey, and Charley White.

**Approval of Minutes:** Since the minutes from the February meeting had been published in the March newsletter (sent out by email 1 week earlier), President Scott asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion of those minutes. The motion was made by Roger Hamm and was seconded by Ron Heinz. President Scott then asked if there were any questions, concerns, corrections, comments or anything else regarding the February minutes as posted in the most recent newsletter. There being no questions, concerns, corrections, comments, or concerns about the minutes, President Scott called for a vote to approve the minutes, and the vote was unanimous in favor of approval.

**Membership Update/Discussion:** President Scott asked if anyone had any changes to report in contact information or any other roster updates. There were none to report.

Next, President Scott asked if anyone had any Thunderbird updates (either vehicles newly acquired or recently disposed of, or work in process or recently completed). Charley White reported that his recently acquired (split) boot cover for his Retro-Bird had arrived, and the painting has been completed to his specs (including some very nice custom pinstriping). Pictures of the new cover were included in the March newsletter, which arrived one week before tonight's meeting.

Adam Gulden is considering the installation of a new type supercharger in his '93 LX 363 stroker. If/when he completes this installation, he expects the output to be in the range of 800+ HP. Stay tuned, there may be more to follow on this topic.

**Sunshine Committee Report:** President Scott reported all our March birthdays and anniversaries. Nancy Blake celebrated her birthday on March 1<sup>st</sup>; President Scott McGaha celebrated his birthday on March 2<sup>nd</sup> (interesting fact: Scott's younger brother Todd, whom many of us have met, also shares that same birthdate - he arrived on the scene exactly two years after Scott made his appearance); Deb Harvey is celebrating her birthday today, March 14<sup>th</sup>; and Terry and Carol Powell are likewise celebrating their anniversary today, March 14<sup>th</sup> (their 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary).

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Lisa Hamm's report for February reflected the receipt and deposit of \$10.00 in 2024 dues, as well as an expenditure of \$7.47 to have Roger Hamm's name engraved on the President's gavel box, recognizing his service as our immediate Past President.

**Special Presentation:** Vice-President Mike Hall's presentation this month started with a follow-up to his presentation last month on the Alleghany Ludlum 1960 stainless steel Thunderbird. After diligent searching, Mike managed to acquire an original brochure (printed by Alleghany Ludlum in 1960) to promote that stainless steel Thunderbird and their products (BTW, Alleghany Ludlum also produced a 1936 stainless steel Ford Deluxe Sedan and a 1967 stainless steel Lincoln Continental). He passed this rare brochure around the room for everyone to inspect.

His main presentation was on the 1967 Thunderbird Apollo. This car was produced at the direction of Abercrombie & Fitch (a world-renowned high-end retailer at the time), to be used to promote traffic at their 5 flagship stores. Mike pointed out several significant features of the Apollo (which were specially-modified cars, top-of-the-line, fully-equipped with all options, and they were all painted in exclusive Apollo Blue). The cars cost about \$15,000 back then, which is around \$137,000 or so in today's dollars. Interior modifications included a great deal of custom woodwork, gold-plated knobs and other paraphernalia (including the front grille), a custom-built full-length center console (including a radio telephone, Philco color TV, dual reading lamps for rear-seat passengers). An additional refinement included an electric razor (it plugged into the cigarette lighter). The front passenger seat had a power-adjustable headrest AND footrest. Both front seats were fitted with folding tray tables for use by the rear-seat passengers (the rear seats also reclined). All seats were covered with special dark blue leather. All 5 of the cars were considered not to be concept cars but were specially modified custom versions of production vehicles, since A&F intended to sell the cars once they were finished with their promotions.

Special exterior features included a sunroof (not generally available on Thunderbirds until two year later), a trunk-mounted TV antenna, as well as the radio-telephone antenna, an alligator-grain vinyl top, special spinner wheel covers, an ice-alert detector/sensor, among other things.

Special thanks to Mike for his time and effort in putting on this presentation.

**Club Activities/Events:** Scott initiated discussion around whether or not to proceed with planning a solar-eclipse-related event. After a little bit of discussion, it was the consensus of the group that it would be best to discard this activity, due to potential traffic congestion both getting to, and leaving from, whatever designated place we decided to meet. Most news reports are predicting the potential for massive traffic jams, not to mention the risks to our cars either from overheating during the traffic jams or from damage that could be caused by extremely distracted drivers.

An alternative April event could be joining in with the Mustang Club for a trip to the Gale Halderman Museum in Brandt, OH, on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. Please hold that date open on your calendar, with further details to be provided before then.

As always, Thunderbird Appreciation Day will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in May. Come to the meeting prepared with ideas for a group event to be held that day. Although not yet tied into that date, it was suggested that our club could hold a doughnut run in May.

President Scott mentioned the survey of potential events that had been sent out to everyone, with the request that members vote on their preferred events. Jackie Allen submitted the results of the voting, which should provide a useful guide to selection of future events that would be of interest to most members.

The Troy Strawberry Festival will hold a car show, as usual, on Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. This could be a good club event, if we could have several people enter their Thunderbirds.

July's event will be a trip to the Garst Museum/Annie Oakley Museum. This could be on any Saturday in July, to be determined by the club. Jackie & Mark Allen will organize this.

In August, Mike Hall will be organizing a club outing to Hot Summer Nights in Bellefontaine, OH. The outing will consist of a parade and a car show.

**Old Business:** There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business:** President Scott mentioned the St. Leonard's Summer Cruise In. The Miami Valley Car Club (MVCC) formerly organized/sponsored this event but is no longer able to do so. Scott asked for some indication of interest from the members present as to whether or not we'd be interested in helping to promote the event. In general, there seemed to be a fair amount of support for the idea.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the club would be interested in doing "parade" events. There are a couple parades in the Mason area, and Centerville has a parade in conjunction with the Americana Festiva on July 4<sup>th</sup> (applications due no later than May 30). No final decisions were made, so be prepared to discuss these at a future meeting.

### **Calendar of Events:**

- Our next club meeting will be on April 11<sup>th</sup> at our usual location, MCL Cafeteria (with dinner at 5:45 PM, followed by our meeting at 6:45 PM).
- Carlisle Ford Nationals, Carlisle, PA - May 31<sup>st</sup> - June 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- VTCI International Convention, Grand Rapids, MI - August 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Cars & Coffee at Horsepower Farm from 8:00 AM to noon (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month, year around).
- Cars & Coffee at Liberty Center from 8:00 AM to noon (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday pf each month, May - October).
- Dayton Cars & Coffee at Austin Landing from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM (generally the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month, April - October, although it will move to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays in July and August, and to

the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September, in order to coordinate with the Dayton Concours d'Elegance, which will be the next day).

- Springfield Cars & Coffee in downtown Springfield (*generally* 9:00 AM to noon on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month, April - September: **exceptions** are June 1<sup>st</sup>, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM, and August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM).
- 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Hot Rod Power Tour (expecting nearly 6,000 cars) will be held from June 10<sup>th</sup> through June 14<sup>th</sup>. It will launch this year in Bowling Green, KY. Day 2 it will move to Nashville, TN. On day 3, the tour migrates to Louisville, KY. On day 4, it moves to Hebron, OH, and finally concludes on day 5 in Indianapolis, IN. Visit <https://www.motortrend.com/events/hot-rod-power-tour-2024-route-announcement/> for more details.

**Open Floor:** Brett Andrews pointed out his shirt that was hanging in the back of the room that contains 2 personal pictures as part of the shirt design (his 2 T-birds, with himself and his granddaughter in one of the pictures). If you're interested in ordering something similar, just visit [geckocustom.com/products/888386](http://geckocustom.com/products/888386) and follow the instructions.

Brett also mentioned that, among all of us, we collectively own 48 Thunderbirds. However, only 28 pictures are displayed in the "Member T-Bird Gallery" section of our web site (<http://www.thunderbirds-sw-ohio.com/>). Brett encouraged everyone who does not yet have a picture of each of their T-birds on our web site to send any "missing" pictures to him ([andybrett99@gmail.com](mailto:andybrett99@gmail.com)), and he will then put the pictures on the web site. That will be quite impressive once all 48 pictures are in place!

Dave Koehler sent an email to Brett suggesting that we add to our roster the T-birds owned by each member. He asked if anyone objected to his doing that. There seemed to be a general consensus that this would be useful to do.

Brett also reported that he has added a new sub-menu on our web site, titled "Items of Interest." This will be a "gathering place" for all sorts of interesting T-Bird things. Thus far, it is a repository for Mike Hall's write-up about the 1960 Allegheny Ludlum stainless steel T-Bird (along with a downloadable PDF of his PowerPoint presentation from our February meeting). It also contains Mike's write-up (and associated PDF/PowerPoint file) regarding the 1967 Thunderbird Apollo, which he presented at our March meeting. As an added bonus, there's a nearly-6-minute video of an Apollo that was being shown at the Hershey Fall Meet in 2014, showing in great detail much of what Mike described in his presentation. Look for this section of our web site to grow, as more interesting material finds a home there.

**Adjournment:** There being no other business to be addressed, President Scott called for a motion for adjournment. The motion was offered by Ron Prater and seconded by Roger Hamm. With a rap of the gavel, President Scott declared the meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM EST.

*Scott McGaha*  
President

**Birthdays & Anniversaries in April:** We have two birthdays and one anniversary to celebrate in April. From the TSWO membership, may you have a wonderful day celebrating your special occasion.



**April Birthdays**

4<sup>th</sup>: Jay Walsh  
6<sup>th</sup>: Ruby York

**April Anniversaries**

28<sup>th</sup>: Owen & Carl Taylor



Greetings and Salutations Fellow TSWO Club Members!

By the time you read this in the April newsletter, the total solar eclipse event on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> may already be in the rearview mirror. If so, I hope everyone survived it with some gas left in your vehicles and food still in your pantries. Boy! Some of the news items leading up to the event were sure predicting some dire outcomes for the day should you decide to venture outside your home! We may laugh when we hear stories of how people in bygone times behaved during solar eclipses, but are we really much better in these supposedly modern times?

I hope everyone saw my March 23<sup>rd</sup> e-mail announcing the TSWO club event for the eclipse was canceled due to concerns for over-crowding and congested roadways throughout the surrounding southwest Ohio area. In that e-mail I also suggested an alternative April club event of attending the **National Mustang Day Celebration** at the **Gale Halderman Museum** in **Brandt, Ohio** on **Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**. Details about this event can be found on Facebook. This will be the Saturday following our next club meeting on Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. I think it would make a nice impression if we arrive to this event as a group. Toward that end, I am proposing that we gather someplace nearby in our Thunderbirds and then caravan as a group to Gale Halderman's place. A potential meeting place could be **Thomas A. Cloud Memorial Park** on Brandt Pike. We could meet up there between 10:30 and 11am, and then form a caravan of Thunderbirds for the 7-mile drive north on Brandt Pike to the **Gale Halderman Museum** on **West National Road (old US 40)**, just west of Brandt, OH. We can gauge the club interest and put the finishing touches on this plan at the meeting on Thursday prior. Stay tuned for an e-mail shortly after that with the final plans.

I also recently received e-mail confirmation from VTCI that **Thunderbird Appreciation Day** this year is on **Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>** as we had guessed. We are planning to do a **Dayton-area Donut Run** event on that date. I will be putting together the list of donut shops to visit soon, and Brett Andrews has been volunteered to assemble the route maps to guide us along the way. This is a fun event, and a good one to have a co-pilot/GPS expert in the passenger seat to help with navigation so each driver can focus on the roadway. Stay tuned for more information on that event as it develops.

And finally, since e-mail seems to be involved in every topic of this message thus far . . . regarding my other recent e-mail to everyone about the Xenia-area wedding party looking for a classic car to use in pictures at their March 30<sup>th</sup> wedding, the bride and groom ended up using my 1975 Luxury Jade Edition Thunderbird for the event!! I sure didn't see that coming! The newlyweds promised to send me copies of the pictures when they get them back from the photographer. I'll share them with you when they arrive. Until then . . .

Drive Safely Everyone

*Scott*

## A Nice Surprise from the Powells



I received an e-mail from Terry & Carol Powell that contained the following:

Terry's Words: "We came across a 2004 Retro Thunderbird Convertible (red) only 2nd owner with only 23,000 miles. We weren't looking for another car but it was just so pretty and in great shape so.....it's coming back with us in May when we come back to Ohio."



## Allegheny Ludlum's Stainless Steel 1960 Thunderbird (by Mike Hall & Brett Andrews)



At our February 2024 club meeting Mike Hall gave an extremely interesting presentation about the stainless-steel cars produced for Allegheny Ludlum by Ford which included 1960 Ford Thunderbirds, 1936 Ford Tudor sedans, and 1966 Lincoln Continentals. I was fascinated with the content of his topic as were the other club members present. After hearing his talk, I was convinced those club members who were not able to attend the meeting that night would also find

the information riveting. So, Mike provided me with his PowerPoint slides from which I prepared the following summation of his presentation. The numerous photos contained in his briefing were extremely interesting, but I couldn't include all of them in this writing. I've selected a few of the best and will place Mike's full presentation on our website under "Items of Interest". The information contained in the write-up that follows was researched and assembled into a PowerPoint presentation by Mike. I merely converted it from a bullet format to paragraphs, did some minor editing, re-sequenced some details for readability, and reduced the number of pictures to fit our newsletter.

**Origin of the Car:** Allegheny Ludlum is one of the largest suppliers of stainless steel in the United States of America. In 1960, they ordered two 1960 Ford Thunderbirds to be made using stainless steel so they could use them for promotional purposes. This was the second time they had asked Ford to build a stainless-steel car. In 1936 Ford built six Tudor sedans for them using stainless steel panels. The cars were used for a coast-to-coast promotional tour to demonstrate all the advantages of stainless steel. The collaboration was extremely successful for both companies.

**The Stainless-Steel 1960 Thunderbirds:** Twenty-four years after the building of the 1936 Ford sedans, the two companies would come together for yet another collaboration. At the end of 1960, two Thunderbirds were constructed of stainless steel for the Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation to showcase the decorative use of stainless steel, at a price of US \$35,000 each (\$346,220 in 2022 dollars). Because of the properties of stainless steel, the production dies would be destroyed as a result of the stamping of the parts. This was not a problem for Ford, as the next generation of T-Bird used a new body style.



To duplicate the T-Birds 3,957 lb (1,795 kg) normal production weight, body panels were made of Type 302 stainless steel, and trim pieces out of Type 430 stainless steel. At the time of their production, because of the maximum rolling mill width for stainless steel, it only produced stock that was 72 inches (1,800 mm) in width. Both cars' roofs were constructed from two 42-inch-wide sections welded together in the middle. The two 1960 Ford Thunderbirds were fitted with skins, grilles, and bumpers from T302 stainless. The material was of such high quality that the two 1960 Ford Thunderbirds still have their original T409 steel mufflers and T304 exhaust pipes to this day. Both T-Birds received mechanical and interior restorations in the 1980s and survive to this day, with one on permanent display at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Insights Into the Production Process:** Ford realized that stainless steel was harder to manipulate than conventional steel, so the panels that were needed to make the two 1960 Thunderbirds would have to be made at the end of the production process, so that's exactly what they did. During the production process, the stainless roof panels were the hardest to make. Back then, a roof panel would normally be stamped using a single die, but the material wasn't wide enough to accommodate the width of the roof. The stainless-steel roof panels had to be constructed using two separate roof stampings for each of the



two cars, then welding the panels together in the middle. When the two 1960 stainless steel Ford Thunderbirds were completed, some of the people involved in the production process thought that the cars were too shiny. The cars then underwent a buffing process that gave them a more brushed look. Billed as "The Historic Stainless Steel Trifecta" and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the cars were sold as a single lot by Worldwide Auctioneers at the 13th annual Auburn

Auction in September 2020 for \$950,000.



### **CLUB OFFICERS**

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