



# THUNDERBIRDS

*of Southwest Ohio*

Newsletter

January 2023

([www.thunderbirds-sw-ohio.com](http://www.thunderbirds-sw-ohio.com))



Happy New Year!

**2023**



## CHRISTMAS PARTY

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, fifteen club members and one guest participated in our annual Christmas party and White Elephant gift exchange. For a change of pace, the gathering was held at the Florentine Restaurant in Germantown, Ohio. Members in attendance included Roger & Lisa Hamm, Scott McGaha, Dave & Deb Harvey, Brett & Peg Andrews, Nancy & Julie Blake (quest: Nancy's daughter Sharon), Jim Ross & Beverly Knauper, Jo & Larry Doelker, and David Koehler & Barbara Kraemer.

This was a new TSWO Christmas Party experience for many of us. Those who have been in the club for a while have been accustomed to walking through a buffet line for our meals. This year we ordered from the menu and the Florentine had some delicious choices. Although we didn't have the pretty table decorations from previous years, we still had our Thunderbird cake provided by Nancy and Julie.



As has become a tradition, members were presented with a Christmas ornament hand made by Nancy. Brett distributed Thunderbird of Southwest Ohio 2023 Calendars that he had custom made. The White Elephant gifts were all neatly stacked on the table while members enjoyed friendly conversation as we waited for attendees to arrive. Roger welcomed all to our annual

Christmas Dinner and White Elephant gift exchange. Attendees scanned the menu and we all had soon placed our orders. Once we all had concluded our meals, it was time for the festivities. Prior to starting the gift exchange, Roger recognized those who had birthdays in the month of December which included Darrell York (9 Dec), Lisa Hamm (10 Dec), Beverly Knauper (15 Dec), Julie Blake (17 Dec), Dave Moore (24 Dec), & Brett Andrews (31 Dec). There were no anniversaries this month.

It was now time to begin the gift exchange. Lisa had participants select a number (1-15) from a basket. Beverly had drawn the number "1" and so she had the honor of selecting the first gift from the table. Since no other gifts had yet been opened, she had to be content with that gift

until after the last person had selected., then she got to select from any gift in the room, if she still possessed the original gift she had selected. Because she had selected a music box with a rotating Baby Bird on top which played the Beach Boys," Fun, Fun, Fun", she didn't get to hold on to that gift long before it was taken. Unable to provide a blow-by-blow description of each selected and stolen gift, suffice it to say there were a lot of gifts changing hands before we game was concluded. The pictures on our club website will tell the story. You can get a feel who had their gift stolen by how many gifts they are shown holding in the party photos on our website.

Having given our meals the opportunity to settle, the gift exchange having run its course, and the restaurant's closing time fast approaching, it was time to enjoy a piece of that delicious Christmas cake. The evening was soon at an end. We wished each other Merry Christmas and Happy New Year as we went on our separate ways. Below are a few photos from the event. Additional pictures are available on our website under "Recent Club Events" in 2022.





## *President's Message:*

Happy New Year, fellow TSWO members! I hope everyone in the club had a wonderful Christmas and now an even better new year holiday. Lisa and I were able to go to Virginia and spend Christmas with my mom, older brothers and their wives and my niece and her husband. We all had a very good time, except for me catching a bad cold and feeling miserable from Christmas Eve until the Tuesday after.

I really had a great time at our club Christmas party at the Florentine Restaurant in Germantown last month. I was pleased with how many of our members were able to experience the fun times we all had, opening the table full of gifts and watching some of them changing hands more than once. I think the gifts were all wonderful and am sure everyone is happy with the gifts they ended up taking home. For the members who were unable to make the party, you missed a good time and were missed by those who attended. Thank you for all you have done to make it a great time for all that attended. I look forward to doing it again next (well, actually, this) year!

As January is now upon us, it is getting closer to the time we all enjoy, and that is cruise season. I am hoping 2023 will be full of warm, dry weather so we can get our Thunderbirds (and Corvettes) out to car shows and cruise-ins. It is also when many car owners start working on their cars to get them ready for the summer season. I hope the season begins early this year.

I hope everyone is ready for another year as a member of Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio. I hope this year will be as good or better than last year. I decided to take a look back at our membership rosters from September 2016 to November 2022 and here are some interesting numbers - - September 2016: 22 members; November 2017: 26 members; November 2018: 28 members; May 2019: 29 members; August 2020: 31 members; November 2021: 34 members; and October 2022: 40 members. So, as you all can see, our club is slowly growing in numbers. We are a growing club and I hope to see that trend continue into 2023. I know that whenever I see a Thunderbird sitting in a parking lot, I try to see if I can find its owner and try to let them know about our club. I hope you all do the same, as I am always happy to welcome new members to our club. I know we can't get everyone to join, as I have found out with several owners I have tried to recruit and could not get them to join. But, don't let that disappoint you, as some people just don't seem to want to join any kind of car club. I will still keep trying, even if I happen to see those people somewhere I will approach them and ask why I haven't seen them join yet. I know of at least two I am still trying to get into our club and hopefully, they will this year sometime. I look forward to seeing everyone at this month's meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> at MCL Cafeteria, remember the meeting starts promptly at 7:00 p.m. Have a good day and see you then.

*Roger Hamm*



**Next Meeting: January 12th, 7:00 pm, MCL Cafeteria, 4485 Far Hills Ave, Kettering**



January Birthdays

16<sup>th</sup>: Roger Hamm  
18<sup>th</sup>: Paul Loschi

January Anniversaries

28<sup>th</sup>: Jan & Guy Gifford (67 yrs)



**Reminder: Annual TSWO Dues Are Due**

Per our club bylaws, club dues are to be paid not later than the first club meeting in the year for which the dues are to be paid. Members who are delinquent for paying dues for more than 60 days will be dropped from the TSWO membership roster. Just as a reminder for you VTCI members, your VTCI dues are also due in January.



**Notice: Pending Proposal to Amend TSWO Bylaws**

An amendment to our club bylaws has been submitted to the Board of Directors. The amendment concerns the current bylaw language in Article III, Part 2, Dues Renewal/Delinquency/Reinstatement. Currently, this referenced bylaw dictates that both TSWO and VTCI dues must be paid to remain a TSWO member. The proposed change would remove any reference ties to VTCI. Several years ago, we changed our bylaws to follow the VTCI criteria that only 50% of a club must be VTCI members. Therefore, this part of our bylaws should have been modified as well, but wasn't. This amendment is an administrative action to clear up an unintentional oversight. Although our bylaws give final authority for bylaw changes to the TSWO Board of Directors (BOD), it also strongly encourages discussion of such changes with the club membership prior to a BOD final decision. That discussion will take place at our January club meeting.

**NOTE:** A few months back, in a previous newsletter, I suggested the inclusion of member Thunderbird stories in future newsletters. I mentioned then that I would publish our T-bird story first to provide some extra time in preparing your input. Well, here is Peg and my Thunderbird Story. So far, I have not received any other stories. I could really use one for the February newsletter. If you are writing one, I'd like to have it in electronic format not later than January 31<sup>st</sup>. That will give me the time I need to format it to fit the newsletter which will be published in the first week of February.

## Our Thunderbird Story

(By: Brett & Peg Andrews)

**My First Ride in a Thunderbird:** The first time I ever had the Thunderbird experience was as a teenage boy. While on vacation in Pennsylvania, the son of one of our family members had a Square Bird. I can't tell you what year. I believe it was either white or powder blue. I rode in it one time and thought it was so cool. I never had another close encounter with a T-bird until I had been in the service for nearly 20 years and was living in Ogden, Utah.

**The First Thunderbird We Purchased (1985):** While in the military and stationed at Hill AFB, Utah I made it known to some of the folks who worked in my office that I was looking for a classic car to fiddle with as a hobby. One of the guys said he had a 1966 Thunderbird sitting in his garage that he was interested in selling. In a few days I went to his house to see it. We



went out to the garage, and I saw what looked like a car hidden under a tarp with a bunch of boxes and various other items stacked all over it. You couldn't tell what kind of car it was. We spent 20 minutes taking all the stuff off the car and stacking it elsewhere. Once it was uncovered, I could see it was a Thunderbird and not in too bad a shape, though there was some minor rust, the paint was slightly oxidized and faded, and the engine was a mess. Knowing literally zilch about

Thunderbirds at the time, all I knew was that it wasn't a convertible. I eventually confirmed it was a town hardtop with an Ember Glow paint job with a matching interior.

I really liked the look of the car and wanted it. We made a deal. After securing the financing, I spent several hours at the seller's house working to get it running and moderately road worth so I could take it to our home a few miles away. We succeeded and that evening my first classic was sitting in my driveway. Now I had to decide what part of its restoration I was going to tackle first. I decided to work on the engine. Since it ran reasonably well, it didn't appear to need any change out of major components like power steering pump, alternator, water pump, etc. But I did give it a good cleaning, replaced all the hoses and belts, gave it a complete turn up (plugs and plug wires, points, condenser, distributor cap), changed the oil and filter, and installed new air and fuel filters. I'm glad I did the engine first because before I knew it, I had

reassignment orders to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. I had just arrived in Utah the previous year and after only 17 months I was on my way East. I wasn't about to leave without my Thunderbird.

As had been our practice when I received a new assignment, I would take Peg and the family to South Dakota to stay while I proceeded on to my next base. There I would apply for base housing and wait, sometimes for several months, before we got it. Once I had a house, I'd have our furniture delivered and when I had the house livable, I'd go back to South Dakota to get Peg and the kids. So, that is what we did for this move. I packed all the stuff I would need in Ohio into the T-bird and the items Peg and our daughters would need got packed in the Ford LTD station wagon (yes, I once owned a station wagon). The mover packed and shipped the rest. I'll bypass most of the details of that two-day trip to South Dakota other than to mention one harrowing experience. As we drove over the mountains at the western Great Continental Divide just outside Cheyenne, WY, it was lightly snowing, and the 4-lane divided highway was slippery. As I nervously watched Peg following behind me, she did a 360 degree spin out and the car came to rest at the edge of the road on the inside grass strip that dropped off several feet in the median center. Fortunately, everyone was okay, and Peg's car was not stuck, so we were able to proceed. After arriving in South Dakota, and getting the family set up in their temporary apartment, I went on to Ohio in the Thunderbird. Following several months of waiting for base housing, we finally got a home. I returned to South Dakota, retrieved my family, and we remained at that home in Ohio until my retirement from the military.

After retirement, we bought a home in the local area, and I continued to slowly work more on the renovation of our '66 classic. A sad day finally came. As our daughters got older, it was necessary to buy another car for their use. I had to sell the Ember Glow Bird to be able to purchase another more reliable vehicle for their use. During this period, I was a member of the Heartland Thunderbird Club. A member of that club, Gene Mullins, bought the car. Ironically, Gene also owned a used car dealership in Fairborn where I purchased the car I needed. It was "Goodbye" to our very first Thunderbird.

**Our 1966 Hardtop (2003):** For several years after we sold "Ember" I didn't think about getting a replacement. Our kids were getting involved in all kinds of school activities, I was doing a lot of traveling for the Government which left Peg running the household solo on many occasions. Eventually, the day came when the thought entered my mind again and my dear Peg went along with my whim. I was pretty sure I wanted another '66 but this time one that was in better shape. So, I took my time and searched all the sources I could think of for "66 Birds for sale". I found several advertised and went to see a few of them. Finally, I spotted one on the internet that was in Fond-du-Lac, WI. I called the listed contact and arranged to go see the car. When we arrived, we found it was being kept in a heated, carpeted building that resembled a museum. The museum-like facility contained nothing but classic old cars. Maybe 8 or 10. It wasn't a big place, but what it held was impressive. Apparently, the building owner rented storage space out to classic car owners. There was multiple glass displayed cases located through the facility which contained nothing but die-cast car models, nearly all were 1/18<sup>th</sup> scale.



There were literally hundreds of them in these display cases as well as other auto memorabilia hanging on all the walls. While talking with the owner, he took me to his back storeroom where he had more than a thousand more die-cast models - all neatly boxed. He would periodically change them out in the showroom cases. He was a real car guy.

I eventually got around to focusing my attention on what we came there for - to evaluate a Vintage Burgundy '66 hardtop. At first glance, it looked good. There were a few things I could see needed attention (re-chroming the bumpers, new front seat covers, engine clean up). Nothing earth shattering. We were given the opportunity to take it for a drive. However, his rules prevented running a car's engine inside his building, so we had to push the car outside. Peg and I then took it for a drive. It ran well. Upon our return, we told the owner we liked the car, but we were



scheduled to see another car or two back in the Dayton area before we made our final decision. Long story short, nothing we looked at compared to the Burgundy Bird, so I called to see if it was still available. It was, so we were off to Wisconsin again to buy the car.

There was a funny twist that emanated from this transaction. On our first visit, I asked a question about the license plates that were on the car. We were told that the plate stayed with the car and when we registered it in Ohio, we'd also buy new plates and destroy the Wisconsin plates. No problem. However, on our second trip to buy the car, as we were in the middle of writing the check, the license plates were being removed from the vehicle. Upon questioning, we found out they previously told us wrong. The plates had to come off. I began to wonder if this could cause us a problem when driving home. They said if we were stopped, just show them the Bill of Sale. I didn't feel totally comfortable with that, so Peg and I devised a plan. The afternoon when we returned to our hotel for the night before heading home in the morning. I took the license plate off the front of her Kia and put it on the back of the T-Bird. We then agreed that if we made any stops on the way home (gas station, rest areas) we'd park far apart from each other so any policeman who happened by would not see two cars with the same license plate. The next morning, we were on our way. Peg followed close behind just in case I had a problem. It wasn't too bad a trip other than 2 ½ tanks of gas the Bird used (definitely needed a tuned up and the carb rebuild) and the addition of some oil. Over the years since we've had it much has been done - - bumpers re-chromed; new seat covers and cushions; new exhaust, brake lines, fuel lines, brakes, etc. You get the picture. A lot of new stuff.

**Our 2004 Retro Bird (2015):** Though we liked the look of the Retro Bird, it wasn't a car we had a strong desire to purchase right off. But that changed. After more and more folks in the club had Retro Birds, Peg and I revisited the question of getting one for ourselves. We had a little prodding from a club member. No names, but her initials are BK and she's married to a guy

named Jim. One day BK let me know of a Merlot 2004 Retro Bird for sale in a dealership down near Cincinnati. Since my favorite color is burgundy/maroon and merlot is kind of maroon, I decided to go take a look. So, the next day I and my grandson headed out to look at T-Birds. There was a black Retro Bird for sale at another dealership about halfway to Cincy, so we stopped there first. I wasn't impressed with that car. We headed South. Upon arrival at the dealership, I couldn't see it anywhere on the lot. I spotted a salesman outside and ask where I could find the Merlot Bird. He told me it had already been sold. So, my grandson and I had lunch at Mickey D's then headed for home. No new Thunderbird, but a great day with the grandson.



Periodically, I would search the internet for Retro Birds and soon came across one in Cumberland, Maryland that matched what I was looking for - - Merlot with a sand convertible top and interior with reasonably low mileage. I rather casually showed it to Peg, and she said, "Let's go see it". This discussion was on Thursday and by Friday morning we were on the road to Cumberland, literally less than a week before Christmas. Though it was after closing time at the car

dealership, we went directly there once we arrived in town only to discover there was no Merlot Retro Bird on the lot. There was an after-hours phone number on the dealership door which we called to see what was going on. We found out the car was owned by a local surgeon's wife and could be seen by appointment only. The dealer was able to contact the owner and arrange for the car to be brought to the lot the next morning. When we arrived the next day, the car was there. We looked it over and took it for a drive. While sitting in a parking lot away from the dealership, we made the decision to buy it. By the way, I didn't mention with each passing hour on that Saturday I was getting sicker and sicker. We both had noticed a strong and obnoxious order in our room the night before that we suspect came from the cleaning agents the hotel used. It clearly had a greater effect on me than it did on Peg.

We decided not to finance but rather pay for the car outright. Since they would not take a check, we spent the next several hours working with and waiting for our bank in Dayton to wire the money to the dealership. When that was all said and done, we were ready to depart with our new purchase, but couldn't. The battery was dead. The dealer ran around town and finally found a new battery for the car, installed it, and we were finally on our way. Due to the lateness of the day, we decided to stay another night (in a different hotel) and leave Sunday morning. Just as we did when we bought the '66, Peg followed me all the home in her Kia while I drove the Retro Bird. To top off the weekend, it rained a good share of the way home.

Right now, both our babies are warmly tucked away in our storage units just waiting for spring.



# The Yankee Doodle Mystery Finally Solved

(prepared by: Brett Andrews)

Just about every one of us at some time in our youth sang this little ditty:

*Yankee Doodle went to town riding on a pony.  
Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni.*

As I got older, I realized the part about calling a feather that had been placed in a hat "macaroni" made no sense. Finally while browsing Facebook, I ran across an article that, after 70+ years, has cleared up my conviction that the song was stupid, and didn't even rhyme. So, for those of you who thought as I did, I'm here to put your mind at rest.

I extracted the following from an article entitled "**Expensive Fashion Trends That No Longer Exist**", written by Amanda Jami, Aug 24, 2022. As pointed out in the lead into this part of the article, this particular fashion was popular in the 1700s.

"This look was (rather unsurprisingly) originally inspired by Italian fashion, taken to the extreme by young, English aristocratic men who were known to exceed the ordinary bounds of fashion. This so-called "Macaroni style" was luxurious and effeminate, most famously recognizable by an extremely large wig with a very small hat placed on top.



The term "Macaroni" went on to symbolize bourgeois excess - and in fact, the song about Yankee Doodle was a joke, poking fun at the naïveté of Americans who thought it would suffice to stick a feather in their hat and call it Macaroni.

While originally worn exclusively by aristocracy and gentry, the fashion extended to men of a so-called 'lower class'. They would don a cheaper version of this lavish clothing in an attempt to raise their social standing or at least appear a higher social class, at a time in history where this was considered extremely important. "

Mystery Solved. You're Welcome

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