



Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio

Newsletter
March 2024



MARCH 31ST

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Exactly at the strike of 7:00pm Scott hammered the meeting to order at the MCL Cafeteria on February 8, 2024.

Attendees: Nineteen club members were present for tonight's gathering to include President Scott McGaha, Vice-President Mike Hall, Past President Roger Hamm, Treasurer Lisa Hamm, Mark & Jackie Allen, Brett (acting Secretary) & Peg Andrews, Nancy & Julie Blake, Jo & Larry Doelker, Adam Gulden, Ron Heinz, Jim Ross & Beverly Knauper, Ron & Linda Prater, and Charley White. Based on a prior meeting recommendation, Scott prepared and distributed to each member in attendance a stick-on name tag so the new members could learn the names of the long-time members and vice versa. Scott announced we would be having two presentations again at this meeting, so it was important, in the interest of time, we not get side tracked from the evening's agenda.

Approval of Minutes: Scott pointed out that the minutes for our January 2024 club meeting were published in the February 2024 newsletter. He then asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Larry Doelker made the motion which was seconded by Brett Andrews. Scott then opened the floor for any discussion about the contents of the minutes. Hearing none, Scott called for a vote on the motion. It passed unanimously.

Membership Update/Discussion: Scott announced that Roger and Lisa had been contacted by Fay & Tom Dupuis who were interested in joining our club. They were provided a membership application. Lisa subsequently received the completed application along with the appropriate club dues. Fay & Tom are now become our newest TSWO members.

The question was then raised if there were any corrections or updates needed to any members contact information on our membership roster. None were identified.

On the question of any T-bird updates, Charlie White informed the group that the Tonneau cover he had mentioned ordering at the January meeting for his 2004 retrobird had arrived. The unit came with primer paint, so Charlie went out looking for a reputable paint shop to tackle his project. He felt the cost of the cover was reasonable but kind of hinted that the cost of the painting was more than he expected, but it needed to get done. Charlie described that the tonneau is being painted the same red color as his retrobird, but with the addition of some black accents. He promised to send pictures to the newsletter editor when it is complete and installed.

Sunshine Committee Report: February was a big month for club members' birthdays. Those celebrating their special day included Linda Prater (4th), Peg Andrews (11th), Nancy Moore (14th), Jeanne Hall (16th), Gina Hctor (24th), Barb Kraemer 26th), Charlie White (27th), and Owen Taylor (28th). Scott mentioned we had no February anniversaries at which point Brett noted we did have one anniversary. He pointed out that this month we are celebrating our 16th year together as the Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio.

Treasurer's Report: Lisa provided a report on the financial status of the club account. She identified the income received from dues and the outlays of club funds to club members for reimbursable expenses. She also explained that the dividend accrued on the club's funds was placed in our checking account, rather than savings, to simplify funds management and tracking.

Special Presentations: Again, this month we had two presentations by club members. Julie brought with her to share with club members two more diecast vehicles from her vast collection. One was a replica of the 1961 Bullet Bird Indianapolis Pace car, and the other was a tractor trailer vehicle hauler which had working headlights and taillights and contained two miniature Thunderbirds on board the trailer.



Mike Hall was our second speaker. Mike entertained us with a PowerPoint presentation on the Allegheny Ludlum Stainless Steel Thunderbird. He gave a brief history of the manufacturer and how over the years they had manufactured three different stainless-steel vehicles to include six 1936 Ford Tudor Touring Sedans, two 1960 Thunderbirds, and four 1966 Lincoln Continentals. Mike

noted that the Thunderbirds cost approximately \$36,000 each to manufacture (about \$246,000 in today's dollars). The presentation was accompanied by numerous pictures of these awesome stainless-steel vehicles (mostly the '60 Thunderbird). He also mentioned that one of the Thunderbirds now resides on permanent display at the Heinz Museum in Pittsburgh, PA. Brett mentioned that he believed those members who were not present at tonight's meeting would find Mike's presentation equally interesting, and suggested Mike prepare an article for the club newsletter based on his presentation or send him the presentation and he'd create one.

Club Activities/Events: Scott began a discussion on proposed options for near-term club activities. For February, based on a recommendation received from Ron Prater, Scott proposed a visit to the Two Cities Pizza in Mason, Ohio, noting that their name was derived from the fact they serve both New York style thin crust and Chicago style deep-dish pizza. The attending membership was in general agreement with the activity and after some discussion February 25th seemed to be the best date among the membership present. Scott announced that he will send out an e-mail with more definitive details.

Scott then jumped to the month of April to discuss a club activity tied to the pending total solar eclipse which will occur on April 8th. Scott distributed a map showing the path of the eclipse across Ohio. The ensuing discussion focused on options for where we could meet as a club to view the eclipse as well as possible locations for lunch together prior to the event. Several locations were suggested with a final decision to be made at our March club meeting. Members were cautiously advised to be sure to wear the special protective glasses when observing the eclipse. Locations such as Drug Mart, the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, and Amazon were suggested as places where such glasses could be purchased.

Old Business: There was no old business to discuss.

New Business: Scott opened the new business discussion with a recommendation received suggesting we start our club meeting 15 minutes earlier at 6:45 pm. The suggestion was based on the fact that in several instances we were rushed to complete all discussions of agenda items due to the imminent closing of the restaurant. It was pointed out that most folks had finished eating well in advance of our current 7:00 pm start time. A survey of members present showed that there would only be a minor inconvenience to a limited number of people. Therefore, it was decided that beginning in March our club meeting would start at 6:45 pm.

Scott took a few moments to offer the TSWO club logo window clings, obtained for the club by Roger & Lisa, to anyone who needs one for their windshield. Scott cautioned not to cut it down too far otherwise it would not stick properly and that it should be installed on the inside of the window.

Finally, Scott spent a few minutes discussing the status of International Thunderbird Club (ITC), noting that they were involved in some internal strife among the club officers and its president. It remains to be seen what the future structure and status of this organization will be.

Calendar of Car Events: Scott opened by mentioning his February 7th e-mail to club members in which he notes his discovery of the retirement of the website AutomotiveMileposts.com. He considered that website a great resource for collector car information, including Thunderbirds from 1955-1979. He explained he was able to find a source to recover some of the information at "Internet Archive", a non-profit digital library. He mentioned he was able to find most of the Thunderbird information at:

1955-1979 Ford Thunderbird | AUTOMOTIVE MILEPOSTS (archive.org)

Scott reminded members our next club meeting is at MCL on March 14th. He also mentioned the Carlisle Ford Nationals would be held from May 31st - June 2nd. Finally, he re-emphasized to the members of the VTCI International Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan from August 7th to 11th. He pointed out that it was up to those attending to book their own VTCI event registration and hotel reservations.

To round out this agenda item, Scott discussed the genesis of the topic in his February Newsletter President's Message. It fundamentally comes from the custom of placing a small toy duck on jeeps that people thought were nice. The owners, who knew of this increasing trend, would then typically

display their collection of ducks inside their vehicle usually on the dashboard. Scott suggested that as a club we may want to consider doing something similar for Thunderbirds. He proposed it could be a small toy bird with possibly a miniature version of our club's membership application or marketing flyer attached to entice as yet non-club members to join.

Open Floor: Larry Doelker suggested the possibility of the club getting involved in a parade. Ron Prater mentioned that he knew the mayor of Mason and that he may be able to get the club an invitation to participate with our Thunderbirds in their annual parade. Another option mentioned was the August Hot Summer Nights event in Bellefontaine that includes a parade. Though not discounted, no firm decision was made at this time to pursue either of these options at this time.

Brett advised the group that the suggestions made at the January meeting to add eBay Motors and Amazon to the list of Thunderbird parts suppliers on our website have been completed. Each of the parts supplier listings on our website has a direct web link to that supplier's homepage. Brett also mentioned he ran across another website known as Thunderbird Bob which he also added to our suppliers list. Thunderbird Bob exclusively lists parts for 2002-2005 Thunderbirds.

Adjournment: After all conversation had concluded, Scott asked for a motion to adjourn. Linda Prater made the motion which was seconded by Mark Allen. The gavel fell and the meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Scott McGaha
President



Birthdays & Anniversaries in March: Our club is celebrating three birthdays and one anniversary this March. From the TSWO membership to our birthday and anniversary celebrants, have a wonderful time on your special day.



March Birthdays

1st: Nancy Blake
2nd: Scott McGaha
14th: Deb Harvey

March Anniversaries

14th: Terry & Carol Powell
(19 Yrs)





Happy March Greetings TSWO Club Members!

I don't know about you, but I for one am glad there was an extra day in February this year as I needed it to get caught up on tasks on my "To-do" list. No, I'm not "all caught up" by any stretch of the imagination, but having an extra day to work on things has been a benefit.

Other TSWO club members have been busy recently as well. One Saturday in late January, **Ron and Linda Prater, Jackie Allen**, and I met in the upstairs mezzanine of the Dorothy Lane Market in Springboro to come up with some potential future activities for our club over the next 12-24 months. At the February club meeting, Jackie passed this list out to everyone in attendance and asked them to pick their top 3-5 events that they would like to participate in. Any additional ideas for activities were also solicited from those at the meeting. Shortly after the February club meeting, Jackie e-mailed the "club activity ballots" to everyone that was unable to make it to the February meeting to get their top 3-5 choices also. We got some good responses from many of the club members, and I hope to have shared the results of this balloting with you by the time you read this in the March newsletter. Your votes will help guide us on planning events that are of most interest to club members. Some of the results were surprising, so stay tuned for upcoming event plans as they materialize.

Speaking of club events - and **Ron and Linda Prater** - shout out to the two of them for coordinating our February club event of visiting **Two Cities Pizza in Mason, OH** on Sunday, February 25th, for some truly excellent pizza and good-fellowship. A total of 19 club members and one invited guest were able to attend this event, and the food and ambience, even down to the décor in the bathrooms, was on point! I had the last of the left-over pizza for dinner last night, and am contemplating another trip back soon for some more Chicago-style deep dish perfection. For me, even the drive down to Mason from the Centerville area was a joy. I took S.R. 48 from Centerville down to Lebanon, OH - a stretch of road I haven't driven on in a number of years - where I picked up US 42 that took me directly to Mason and Two Cities Pizza. On the return trip, I took S.R. 741, from just north of the Kings Island area, up through Otterbein and Springboro - another bucolic route I have not travelled in some time. All of which was made even more enjoyable by my decision to get my 2002 retrobird out of early winter hibernation for this event. And I wasn't the only one driving a Thunderbird that day. **Ron and Linda** drove their beautiful, **merlot-colored '04 retrobird** to the pizza party. **Dave Koehler** drove his showroom-new looking **silver '63 Landau**, and **Ron Heinz** brought his single family-owned **'78 Landau**. We had a little impromptu *Thunderbird cruise-in event* in the back row of the parking lot after our meal that was enjoyed by all. Hopefully this was just a(n early) start of what we plan to do frequently once the summer car season gets fully underway.

One final reminder: As noted above in the February meeting minutes, starting with our **March meeting**, we have decided to *start the meeting 15 minutes earlier, at 6:45 p.m.*, instead of the customary 7 p.m. start time. Our last couple of meetings have gone over the allotted one-hour timeframe by 10-20 minutes, which is interfering with the MCL staff performing their nightly

cleanup/shutdown routines in our dining area. We want to be considerate of their need to finish their tasks for the night at a reasonable time. The meetings will still be targeted at **an hour long, finishing up by 7:45 p.m.** We'll now have a 15-minute buffer at the end if we need it, which we can use for a little "after-meeting chit-chat," which many attendees enjoy, if we don't need it. And we should still be exiting the building by 8 p.m., which is closing time for MCL Cafeteria.

That's all for now. Drive Safely Everyone.

Scott



Our Culinary Visit to Chicago & New York

(by: Brett Andrews)



As was planned at our February meeting for our club activity, nineteen TSWO members gathered at Two Cities Pizza in Mason Ohio on Sunday, February 25th. Those attending included Scott McGaha (El Presidente), Roger & Lisa Hamm, Dave & Deb Harvey, Brett Andrews, Jim Ross & Beverly Knauper, Mark & Jackie Allen, Ron & Linda Prater, Dave Koehler, Becky & Charlie White, Owen & Carol Taylor, Ron Heinz, and Adam Gulden. We extend a big "Thank You" to Ron & Linda for coordinating the arrangement with the restaurant and providing the participants with name tags. Ron was able to secure a private room for us so we could all be together.



According to Ron & Linda this restaurant's pizza was different and really good. For those who have never experienced true Chicago deep dish pizza or New York's thin crust pizza, you soon realize this pizza was not the typical bill-of-fare we get in Ohio. A perusal of their pizza choices on their standard menu not only contained ingredients you wouldn't expect to see on a

pizza, like the mashed potatoes I had on mine, but also some sauces that were drizzled over the top that I had no idea what they were. Of course, you could also build your own pizza, as well, from a list of toppings. There were also appetizers, salads, calzones, and other items from which to choose.





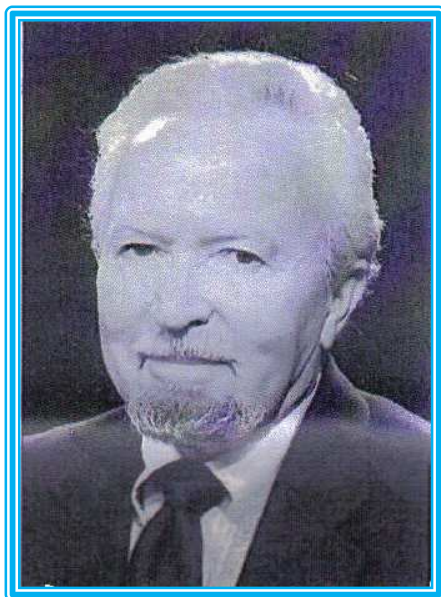
After our food orders had been placed, Jim Ross introduced Eric Kosi who gave a run down on the "Cars & Coffee" event they conduct on the third Saturday of the month, 8:00 am to 12 pm, from May through October. The event is held at the Liberty Center, 7160 Taylor St, Liberty Township. There is no admission fee, but they do accept donations which are given to the Freedom Flight out of Dayton. Eric also handed out flyers on the event which contained the address, exact dates, and a map to the

event site. It wasn't long before the food arrived, so we settled back to enjoy the meal. Lively conversation continued from the moment we arrived until the meal was over. Soon it was time to head home. There was a slight detour in the departure of a few of us. Four club members brought their (or one of their) Thunderbirds, so a small group adjourned to the parking lot to see these rides. Scott brought his '02 Retro Bird, Ron and Linda arrived in their '04 Retro Bird, Dave K. drove his 1963 Bullet Bird, and Ron H. cruised in with his '78 Town Landau, Torino Bird. (Note: The seventh generation of Thunderbird ['77- '79] were referred to as the Torino bird because they were based on the Ford Torino).



Who is this Man? All T-Bird Owners Should Know

(by: Brett Andrews)



This is Alden Giberson. He's the man we should remember and thank for the iconic Thunderbird name. Here's some background on Alden and how the Thunderbird name came about. This information was found online mostly, but not all, in an article entitled ***Retired Ford Stylist Came Up with Thunderbird Name*** which was written and published by Lynn Waldsmith in Feb 2004.

According to Waldsmith more than 5000 ideas were submitted to Ford for the name of their new two-seater to include Fordster. Fordette, Beaver, Wheelaway, Hep Cat, Detroitter, Flag Liners and Savile. But alas, all were discarded. Eventually, Frank Hershey, who at the time oversaw styling at Ford, came across the suggestion to call it Thunderbird and he liked it.

But let me digress for a moment to provide a little more background. According to Waldsmith, it was Alden and his coffee cup that ultimately led to gracing the legendary car with the Thunderbird tag.

Giberson began at Ford in 1952 as a vehicle stylist after moving to Detroit from the southwest (somewhat ironically, he was born in Detroit). In his move, Alden brought with him a coffee mug that displayed a Native American thunderbird image. Thinking that if the great thunderbird could make it rain and hail, it could also influence the destiny of a new car as well. So, he entered the name "Thunderbird" and won.

In an unusual twist suggested in Waldsmith's article, Ford was concerned that General Motors was also considering that same Thunderbird name for a new concept vehicle they were developing, so supposedly Ford applied for a legal copyright to the name Thunderbird. According to Giberson himself, "The speculation was that General Motors was going to use the name and we should get it first." He further confirmed that "Well, GM wound up with the name Firebird the same year."

I was able confirm that GM did, in fact, develop four versions of a concept car they called the "Firebird" in 1953 [pictured], '56, '59 and '64 with Pontiac eventually producing the Pontiac Firebird in 1967.



Giberson's prize for naming the Thunderbird was a \$250 suit which to him presented more challenges than naming the car. According to Alden, "At that time, you couldn't buy a \$250 suit. The best you could do was about \$170 for a nice cashmere, tailor-made suit. For \$250, you might get something Elvis Presley would wear, something with sequins on it or something. So, I wound up getting a \$95 suit and an extra pair of pants."

Eventually at a Press Preview in Chicago on February 17, 1954, the driving public got its first glimpse of the Thunderbird -- a turquoise prototype. Giberson remembers it well as he and his wife drove to the unveiling in a MG with side curtains during a winter snowstorm. Giberson owned several Thunderbird sedans while at Ford, but never one of the two-seaters. Over his many years at Ford, he participated in the design of many iconic Ford cars of the 1950-1970's, including the 1967-1971 Mustangs and many of the Thunderbirds.

It is likely Alden was a colleague and friend of an individual many members in our club knew, Gale Halderman - - the original designer of the Mustang. Several of us TSWO members have had the fortunate occasion to sit with Gale at his home museum in Brandt, Ohio and listen as he regaled us with his tales of working with Lee Iacocca and the trials and pitfalls he faced as he designed the Mustang. Gale left us in April 2020, but his stories will vividly live on in our memories.

Alden R "Gib" Giberson passed away on October 2nd, 2010, at the age of 84. His name may not be as well remembered as Henry Ford's, but his simple contribution of the Thunderbird name will be on people's lips for decades to come.

A First in Our Club

Just as I was putting the finishing touches on this months newsletter I received an e-mail from Charlie & Becky White. If you remember reading in the February meeting minutes above, Charlie had mentioned he had purchased and received a tonneau cover for his retrobird and was now in a search for a reputable and reasonable painter. His quest has been completed and by the looks of the below photos of the installed cover, it was very successful. If you look closely at the lower right hand picture you'll note the subtle black pinstriping in the center forward section of the tonneau that Charlie added to match and compliment the black interior. As far as I know, this is the first retrobird in our club to now sport such a cover. Looks great, I'm jealous.



Reminders



March 10th: Daylight Savings Time begins, set your clocks forward 1 hour



March 17th: St Patrick's Day



March 19th: First Day of Spring: We'll soon be getting our T-birds out of mothballs and prepped for the 2024 car show/cruise-in season.



March 29th: National Vietnam War Veterans Day: This day is meant to pay tribute to veterans of the Vietnam War, including those who were prisoners of war or listed as missing in action. It was established as an official holiday in 2017 by the Presidential signing of the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act. However, its origins date back to a proclamation made by President Nixon on February 26, 1974 entitled Proclamation 4270-Vietnam Veterans Day. The observance date of March 29th was selected

because it (1) was the day U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished, (2) was the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam, and (3) was the day Operation Homecoming was completed when the last of 591 U.S. prisoners were released and returned to the United States. More than 2.7 million Americans served in Vietnam with Vietnam veterans accounting for almost 10% of their generation.



CLUB OFFICERS

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