



Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio Newsletter



May 10th



May 2026

(www.thunderbirds-sw-ohio.com)

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: The April 2026 meeting of the Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio car club was called to order in the private dining room at MCL Cafeteria, located in Kettering, OH, at 6:45 p.m. on Thursday, April 9th by President Mike Hall. President Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting, acknowledging the good turnout, which he attributed to the warm weather. He also believed the warmer weather explained the appearance of Thunderbirds out in the parking lot again. Before covering items on the agenda for the night's meeting, extra copies were distributed to those in attendance who did not already have a copy.

Attendees: There were 20 TSWO members in attendance at the meeting: President Mike, Vice-President Adam Gulden, Secretary Scott McGaha, members Mark & Jackie Allen, Jeff Almond, Brett Andrews, Nancy & Julie Blake, Larry & Jo Doelker, Dave Harvey, Ron Heinz, Gary Hufford, Dave Menke, Jim Russell, Shane Soniat, Tom Tirey, George Touchette, and Norm Orlowski.

Approval of Minutes: After welcoming everyone to the meeting, President Mike moved on to the next item on the agenda, which was approving the minutes of the March 2026 club meeting, as recorded by club member Jackie Allen in the absence of club Secretary, Scott McGaha, and recently posted in the April edition of the club newsletter. No questions, concerns, or corrections were brought forward by those members in attendance. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shane Soniat and seconded by George Touchette.

Membership Update/Discussion: President Mike next asked all those in attendance if anyone knew of any new or potentially new members who might be interested in joining the TSWO car club. Other than Mike relating his conversation in the parking lot prior to the meeting with someone admiring the Thunderbirds parked in front of the building, no one had any membership updates to share.

Thunderbird Updates: Next, President Mike asked if any members in attendance had any recent T-bird acquisitions or experiences to share.

Dave Harvey shared with everyone that he believes he now has resolved the charging issue that has been plaguing his '57 Thunderbird since last summer. It turns out, the length of the

replacement alternator belt that was installed last summer was correct, but the width of the belt was too narrow, causing it to slide down into the "V" of the pulley assembly when the motor was running and begin to slip and thus not generate enough voltage to charge the battery. Replacement by another alternator pulley of the same length, but slightly wider width has resolved the issue, as confirmed by a voltage reading device Dave owns that plugs into the cigarette lighter.

Next, Norm Orlowski related his recent repair experience improving the performance of the air conditioning system on his recently acquired '02 retrobird. In researching a recommended area dealer for servicing Ford automobiles, Norm shared his finding of Dixon's Automotive, on N Springboro Pike in Moraine. In addition to repairing the AC system, Dixon's also performed a very thorough overall inspection of the automobile which included numerous photographs. Their assessment of Norm's retrobird is that it is in "good health." Norm also shared a recommendation he has for Keenan Body Shop, on Keenan Avenue, near Hollywood Gaming Casino, in Dayton for anyone needing automotive body repair or painting done on their Thunderbird. Next, Ron Heinz asked if anyone had a recommendation for a good local automotive upholsterer for a headliner installation and other upholstery work he needed done on his Thunderbird. Dewey's Auto Trim in West Carrollton was recommended.

Sunshine Committee Report: For the next item on the agenda, President Mike acknowledged the 3 club member birthdays and 1 wedding anniversary occurring in April. The names and dates of all celebrants were published in the April edition of the club newsletter as well as on the evening's meeting agenda.

Treasurer's Report: Club Treasurer, Lisa Hamm, was out of town but sent her treasurer's report to President Mike prior to the meeting, who related the current status of the club treasury to those in attendance at the meeting, based on Lisa's report to him.

Old Business: Several items of old business were discussed at the meeting. President Mike gave a synopsis of the club's March 21st visit to the private car collection of John Richardson located at the SugarCreek Foods facility in Washington Court House, OH. Multiple positive comments were shared amongst those in attendance who were able to take part in this event.

Next, founding club member Brett Andrews gave an update concerning a suggestion from the March meeting that the TSWO club cover registration costs each year for a single club member wanting to attend the annual VTCl national convention. Brett informed everyone that the TSWO Board of Directors (BOD) felt that was a worthy expenditure of club funds and that he has volunteered to draft a set of guidelines and policy statement to allow this to happen in a manner that's fair to all members of the club. The BOD will review Brett's draft and discuss further at a future club meeting.

The next item under old business was a continuation of the discussion to move the venue for the 2026 club Christmas party to the Station House restaurant, located at the St. Leonard

retirement community in Centerville. After a lengthy discussion that included the pros, cons, and options available to us if we hosted our club Christmas party at St. Leonard's, President Mike asked for a formal resolution to move our 2026 Christmas party to the restaurant at St. Leonard's, which was made and seconded by Dave Harvey and Dave Menke, and voted unanimously in favor of by those in attendance.

The final item under old business, concerned further discussion by President Mike regarding the collectible, still-in-the-box, die-cast model of a Ford truck pulling a trailer carrying a retrobird donated as a gift to the club by member Gary Hufford. Discussions in prior meetings considered ideas on how to use this gift for the benefit of the club as a whole, with the most favorable idea being some sort of raffle with this item as the prize. Mike announced that he was going to move forward with the raffle idea and purchase tickets to sell at car shows and cruise-ins during the upcoming summer car season to raise money for the club and give this truck/trailer/car die-cast model as the prize to one lucky winner, probably sometime around November.

New Business: There was no new business to discuss at the meeting.

Club Activity Plans: Next on the agenda, Mike led a discussion of upcoming club activity plans. The meeting agenda included a listing of the next 3 upcoming monthly club activities. Club member Jackie Allen gave a brief update of last-minute details for the April 18th tour of Hawthorn Hill, the last home of the Wright brothers in Oakwood, OH, followed by dinner at Carillon Brewery.

Secretary Scott then led a brief discussion of our Saturday, May 16th, plans to again participate in the car show component of Oakwood's "That Day in May" festival. This will be our May club event to celebrate "Thunderbird Appreciation Day," which takes place on Sunday, May 17th. Members were reminded to contact Oakwood Rotary club member, Mike Armstrong, who is coordinating the car show, if they plan to bring a Thunderbird to the event as space is limited to the first 25 cars that sign up.

Next, a correction to the agenda was made to indicate the date for displaying our Thunderbirds at a Dayton Dragons home game this season is Sunday, July 26th - not the June date listed on the agenda.

Members were asked to put a reservation on their calendars for Saturday, June 20th, if they were interested in bringing their cars to the Grafton Hill Home, Garden, and Car tour scheduled for this date. This is a voluntary, extra event for those interested in participating. Details will follow in an e-mail to all club members.

The "official" club activity for June is a Donut Run in Butler County with a planned date of Saturday, June 13th and a rain date of Saturday, June 27th. Details will be provided at the May and June club meetings.

Open Floor: There were no topics brought up during the Open Floor segment of the meeting.

Calendar of Events: Next on the agenda, President Mike reminded club members of two recurring regional car events:

- Horsepower Farms Cars & Coffee - 1st Saturday of every month, year-round, 8a-noon, at 2227 Trinity Drive, Middletown, OH 45044
- Rip Rap Roadhouse Friday Night Cruise-Ins - special, one-time event, beginning at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 17th, and then every Friday night at 5 p.m. beginning May 15th during the summer. Park in the grass field behind the restaurant.

Special Presentation: Due to lack of time, Mike's planned Thunderbird presentation was postponed to the next club meeting in May.

Next Club Meeting: Finally, Mike reminded everyone in attendance that the next TSWO club meeting will be on Thursday, May 14th, 6:45 p.m., at MCL Cafeteria

Adjournment: There being no further items on the agenda, President Mike called for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Jim Russell and seconded by George Touchette. With no objections, Mike declared the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Mike Hall
President



Birthdays & Anniversaries in May: This month we have four members celebrating birthdays and two couples celebrating their anniversaries.



May Birthdays

2nd: James Russell
9th: Shane Soniat
9th: Norm Orlowski
10th: Sherry Loschi

May Anniversaries

30th: Jeff & Gale Conrad (35 yrs)
30th: Dave & Deb Harvey (38 yrs)



President's Message



Hello, Fellow Thunderbird Fans.

We have a great summer ahead of us this year. Our Events Planning Committee has lined up some really great events and shows for us to enjoy. Some of us enjoy the car shows and events that show off our gorgeous Thunderbirds. Others of us like the Museums and famous places that we attend together. Then, some of us are into it for the food and maybe some shopping. I love them all! Whatever your style is, we have something for you. So, roll up your sleeves, shine up that T-Bird, and head out with us for a lot of fun. It's going to be a great year!

Mike



TSWO Visits Hawthorn Hill: The Wright Family Mansion



Hawthorn Hill has long been synonymous with Orville Wright and the Wright family. After purchasing land at Salem Avenue and Harvard Boulevard in Dayton, the Wrights' sister, Katharine, persuaded her famous brothers to build instead in Oakwood's rolling, scenic hills. Both Orville and Wilbur helped design the home, but Wilbur died of typhoid fever on May 30, 1912, at age 45.

Upon completion in 1914, Hawthorn Hill became the residence of Orville, Katharine, and their elderly father, Bishop Milton

Wright. Over the next 34 years, the mansion welcomed Charles Lindbergh, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and other luminaries.

After Orville Wright's death on Jan. 30, 1948, Hawthorn Hill was purchased by National Cash Register (NCR) for use as a corporate guest house. For the next 58 years, the historic home was carefully preserved but only occasionally open to the public.

In August 2006, at the suggestion of Congressman Mike Turner, NCR gifted Hawthorn Hill to the Wright Family Foundation. Managed by the Wright brothers' great-grandniece, Amanda Wright Lane, and great-grandnephew, Stephen Wright, the Wright Family Foundation asked Dayton History to manage and interpret the home.

In March 2009, Hawthorn Hill became part of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. In June 2013, ownership was officially transferred to Dayton History. It is now open to the public, and though NCR remodeled the Colonial Revival home, they meticulously photographed Orville's original décor. Dayton History is bringing the property back to its original appearance. The above photo and narrative (slightly edited) are from the Daytonhistory.org website.

The following are highlights of the TSWO visit (contributors: Mike Hall & Jackie Allen)

Saturday, the 18th of April, the club attended a private tour of "Hawthorn Hill", the Wright Brothers' Mansion in Oakwood. In all, twenty members, family, and friends attended the outing. The participants included: Mike Hall, Scott McGaha, his brother Todd & friend Kent, Roger & Lisa Hamm, Dave & Deb Harvey, Larry & Jo Doelker, Mark & Jackie Allen, Shane & Julie Soniat, Adam Gulden, Jeff Almond, Jim Russell, Rick Kolmin, Gary & Susan Hufford.

We were split into two guided tours due to our size and were taken through the Mansion by Chris and Rachael, the staff guides. Both guides did a phenomenal job in explaining all the rooms and details of the mansion to our interested participants, as well as answering our many questions. We started at 2:30 and finished at 4:00, but it seemed like just a few minutes because it was so interesting.

We were shuttled to the Mansion from the Carillon Park Historic Village area and then back to the park again at the conclusion of the tour. Upon our arrival at the mansion, we noticed several young couples from Tipp City and Troy high schools were using the front of the mansion as the backdrop for their Prom photos.

One of the shuttle buses refused to start when trying to return to the park, despite help from some of our more mechanically minded members. They quickly brought a backup van to get us back to the park and all was well.

At 4:30, seventeen of us walked to the Carillon Brewing Company restaurant right around the corner from the Carillon Park Museum and had a really great dinner together. Food, beverages, and sparkling conversation were the best!



T-bird Line Outside Our April Club Meeting



What's Happening



Thunderbird Appreciation Day (May 17th): Once again to celebrate this year's Thunderbird Appreciation Day, the club is participating in the "THAT DAY IN MAY" activities in Oakwood, with a display of club Thunderbirds on Saturday, May 16th, from noon to 3:00 pm. Final discussion on our involvement will take place at our May 14th club meeting.



Armed Forces Day (May 16th): As it so happens, May 16th, 2026 is also Armed Forces Day which has been an annual observance since 1949 to honor the men and women **currently** serving across all six branches of service (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force) of our U.S. Military.



Mother's Day

*"A mother is she who can take the place of all others
but whose place no one else can take."
- Cardinal Meymillod*

*To all our TSWO mothers,
This is your special day. Enjoy it.*

CLUB OFFICERS

President: Scott McGaha (937) 271-7414
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Vice President: Mike Hall (937) 599-4591
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