



Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio *Newsletter*

October 2016



MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by the club president, Roger Hamm, at 7:00 p.m. on September 9th, 2016 at the MCL Cafeteria.

Attendees: Roger & Lisa Hamm, Scott McGaha, Brett & Peg Andrews, Nancy & Julie Blake, Beverly Knauper & Jim Ross, Guy & Jan Gifford, Mark & Jackie Allen, and Darrel York.

Approval of Minutes: The president asked if there were any comments or corrections relating to the August 2016 club meeting minutes as published in the September newsletter. No concerns were raised and the minutes were approved as written and published in the September 2016 club newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We want to wish a belated happy anniversary to Mark and Jackie Allen who celebrated their 27 anniversary on September 9th. Congratulations!!!

As always, we begin by querying the membership about any issues relating to the purchase of a new or work completed or underway on member thunderbirds. Nancy indicated she now has her Thunderbird back but it still has a heating problem that needs to be addressed. Scott's new fuel pump on his 66 seems to be working well but he is still curtailing the distances he travels for now. Mark mentioned that he had some minor dents repair on his retrobird and it turned out looking great.

Both Roger and Scott mentioned our fun trip to the 2nd Street market. Those attending included Roger & Lisa, Mark & Jackie, Scott, Guy & Jan, and Brett. Several members had breakfast or sipped coffee as we listened to live guitar music and toured the various booths. Guy and Scott brought their thunderbirds, but the others may have been scared off by the impending rainy weather.

Roger read a letter from VTCI headquarters announcing our club had won a Bronze award in the annual club newsletter contest. A hearty thanks to Brett, Peg and Beverly for serving, now or in the past, as our newsletter editors and to all of you who have submitted articles for publication. It was a newsletter Peg prepared that was submitted to the contest for consideration. Keep writing; we always need articles.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: Lisa reported on the club's financial status indicating that the only change from last month's report was the deposit of the club dues received from a new member.

Event Planning:

Scott discussed our pending trip to the Friday night cruise-in at the Rip Rap Roadhouse. Originally we were planning to go the Friday after the meeting (Sept 9th), but the forecast for heavy rains necessitated we change the date to the following Friday. If you plan to attend, you are encouraged to bring your t-bird. Advertizing from the Roadhouse indicates that participants who bring a pre-1970 car will get a 20% discount on their meals.

Next our planned club trip to the Gilmore museum in Michigan was discussed. At a previous club meeting we had selected a date in October to go on the trip. However, due to some schedule conflicts that arose, it was decided that it would be best if we deferred the trip till spring. At a future meeting we will again address the trip so we can select a new date well in advance and folks can put it on their calendar.

As an October club event, we discussed touring the Pennsylvania House in Springfield and then we'd either preceded or followed the tour with lunch together. Pennsylvania House is only open from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday. Saturday, Oct 29th, was selected as the date for the trip. Further details will be discussed and finalized at our October meeting.

The next topic was our Christmas Party. As we have done in the previous two years, it was decided to again have the gathering at the MCL cafeteria. More discussion will follow at a future meeting.

As a possible November event, it was proposed that we consider a return visit to the Valley Vineyard to again grill our own steaks/salmon and sample some wine. The possibilities of this trip will be addressed at our next meeting.

Cars events mentioned included the Concours D'elegance on Sept 18th at Carillon Park, the Springfield Swap Meet on Sept 10-11th, and the JDRF Car Show in Sharonville on Saturday, Sept 24th.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business to discuss

Open Floor: Brett asked if anyone had experienced a low beam light problem on their retrobird. After changing the bulb, his passenger side low beam still didn't work. No one had experienced with such a problem. He also described his minor bout with shingles. He advised members to strongly consider getting the shingles vaccine shot as he had done just last year. It was credited as being the reason he experienced such an extremely mild outbreak.

Adjourn: With no further discussions, Roger requested a motion to adjourn. That motion was made by Mark and seconded by Jan. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

**Next Meeting: October 13th, 7:00 pm,
MCL Cafeteria, 4485 Far Hills Ave,
Kettering**

Roger Hamm
President

Message from the President:

October is a month of transition. The weather starts transitioning from the hot, humid days of summer to cool and comfortable days in the first part of the month, then down to cold and frosty mornings by the end part of the month. I am not looking forward to those frosty mornings when I will have to get up a bit earlier to scrape frost off the windshield of the car before heading out to work. We will also be transitioning to few, if any, car shows to attend. I was looking at the Show & Shine calendar last night and found very few shows after the Jack Roush car show on October 9th. Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend that show due to being in Virginia to celebrate my parent's 68th wedding anniversary. If any of our members have not been to that show, you should try to attend. Mr. Roush always shows up and will even sign things that show participants bring with them. Two years ago, Lisa & I attended the show and I had him sign a couple of my 66 Tbird hubcaps for me!

We will also be thinking about what we would like to receive for Christmas and what we want (or need) to purchase our family and friends as a gift. I always have trouble when asked what I would like for Christmas. I always could use new tools (what Tbird owner doesn't). I would love to be able to get my convertible project finished by Christmas, but I am still a long ways from getting there this year.

Our club will begin planning our final activities for this year, including our annual Christmas dinner and white elephant gift exchange. Which gift will transfer hands most this year? We will see in about 2 more months.

I had to replace the clockspring on our Retrobird recently, due to the airbag light coming on with a 32 error code and the horn & cruise stopped working. I attempted to replace it myself, so I bought one online and started working on taking the old one out. What I thought would be an easy one-hour project ended up taking me about 3 hours to complete. I had to take the steering wheel off, remove the plastic surrounds from the column, then remove the plastic lower dash panel & metal plate behind that. Then I was finally able to get to the clockspring. I removed the bad one, installed the new one in and buttoned everything back up. Unfortunately, I must not have gotten it installed correctly because whenever I turned the wheel, it sounded like plastic was breaking. Our first time driving it, the airbag light came back on, and the horn and cruise control quit working. After all this hard work, I was back where I started, but over \$100 poorer. I called the Ford dealer and set up an appointment to have them fix it correctly. I guess there are some things that one should leave to the dealership mechanics.

See you at our October meeting, Thursday, October 13th. Our November meeting will be on November 10th.



October Birthdays

No Birthdays

October Anniversaries

2nd: Brett & Peg Andrews (45 Yrs)



Upcoming Club Events

| <u>Event</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pennsylvania House | 29 Oct (tentative) | Springfield, Ohio |
| 2. Valley Vineyards | TBD Nov | Morrow, Ohio |

CLUB OFFICERS

President: Roger Hamm (937) 835-5992
Treasurer: Lisa Hamm (937) 835-5992

Vice President: Scott McGaha (937) 439-1138
Secretary: Brett Andrews (937) 237-1131

Retrobirds: Those Hi-Tech but Pesky Electronic Modules

prepared by: **Brett Andrews**

(This article is a merged, edited, and reformatted version of two write-ups that appear on the Thunderbird Specialties website. For the complete articles, go to <http://www.thunderbirdspecialties.com/2002-2005-thunderbird-electronic-module-problems-read-first/>. The editor assumes responsibility for the editing & reformatting, but not the technical content.)

Has your 2002-2005 Thunderbird started to exhibit some unusual problems? Engine cranks but won't start? Starts but dies? Power windows don't work? Headlights don't function properly? Instrument cluster gauges don't work? If you've had one or more of these issues the cause may be a defective electronic module.

Today, modern cars and trucks are complex, 'drive-by-wire' technology-laden computers on wheels. They're loaded with electronic control modules that are vital to nearly every function from fuel delivery, ignition, braking, lighting, steering, sound systems and nearly every power accessory found in the vehicle. Needless to say, these electronic modules are vital to the operation of the modern car, and most newer cars and trucks have several of them, located throughout the vehicle, each managing multiple functions, systems and accessories.

What's an electronic module and how do they work?

Most newer cars use one or more electronic modules to control, regulate and monitor the various electronic components and functions of the car. The 2002-2005 Thunderbird has several different modules including the PCM (Powertrain Control Module), FEM, or 'Front Electronic Module,' REM, or 'Rear Electronic Module,' ABS module, Climate Control Module, and more. These modules are known by many different names including 'Body Control Module,' 'Ambient Lighting Control Module,' and 'Engine Control Module.' The array of different modules and the components and accessories they control can be very confusing. Even more confusing is the number of different part numbers for what appears to be the same module. Due to differences between the 2002 Thunderbird and the 2003-2005 Thunderbird, similar parts have several different Ford part numbers and various different two-letter suffixes.



Why are there so many electronic modules and different part numbers for them?

Most of the 2002 Thunderbirds have part numbers that begin with '1W.' Ford made a number of changes beginning with the 2003 Thunderbird, including re-programming the 3.9 liter V8 engine for additional horsepower. Many parts for the 2002 Thunderbird, beginning with '1W,' were superseded by part numbers beginning with '3W.' Some parts unique to the 2003-2005 Thunderbird began with '5W,' or '6W.' The result is literally dozens of different part numbers for a half-dozen or more different electronic modules. Finding out which one you need can be a real challenge.

How do I know which part number is correct for the module I need?

The best way to make sure you get the correct replacement part for your Thunderbird is by referencing your VIN, or 'vehicle identification number.' The VIN can be found on the door jamb or on the metal plate visible at the base of the driver's side of the windshield. After you've identified which module you need, use your VIN to

determine the correct part number for that module. Your Ford dealer or retail parts supplier can provide the correct part number based on your car's VIN.

My Ford dealer said the module I need is no longer manufactured by Ford. What can I do?

Ford has discontinued many of the original electronic modules for the 2002-2005 Thunderbird. Some of the older part numbers have been replaced or superseded by different, updated part numbers, but many of those are also out of production and unavailable. The good news is that some aftermarket companies now 'rebuild' or 'remanufacture' electronic modules using original Ford 'cores.' Cores are the metal boxes or cases that hold the various circuits and electronic components that make up the module itself. First, ask your Ford dealer or independent mechanic for the part number of the module you need. Next, request an itemized estimate for parts and labor, and be sure the estimate includes re-programming. Whenever an electronic module is replaced it must be re-programmed or 're-flashed' so it can 'talk' to the rest of your Thunderbird's electrical and computer systems. If the dealer tells you that the part you need is 'backordered,' ask if there is a release date. Keep in mind that a 'release date' is only an estimated date when a part might become available. It is common for release dates to be 'pushed back' one or more times before a part becomes available, and in some cases, after a series of postponements, the part may be listed as 'obsolete,' which means it's no longer 'serviced' by Ford and will not be produced again.

Electronic Modules on your 2002-2005 retrobird:

Powertrain Control Module (PCM) – Among other functions, the PCM controls the automatic transmission solenoids.

Restraints Control Module (RCM) – Controls the front and side air bag supplement restraint system.

ABS Control Module – The ABS Control Module controls the anti-lock brake system.

Front Electronic Module (FEM) -- The FEM controls the one-touch-down power driver's window, the horn relay, and the exterior lighting at the front of the vehicle.

Rear Electronic Module (REM) -- also know as the 'Rear Ambient Lighting Control Unit' controls the exterior lighting at the rear of the vehicle, the trunk release solenoid, and the passenger side power window. In the electronic returnless fuel injection system, the REM also controls the fuel pump on a pulse width command from the PCM.

Remote Keyless Entry Module

Instrument Panel Controller (IPC) – The IPC not only controls the instrument cluster gauges and warning lamps, but also controls the electronic tilt and telescopic steering column.

Automatic Temperature Control Module (DATCM) – The DATCM controls the heating and air conditioning functions.

In addition to these modules there are also three fuse/junction boxes: one located under the hood on the passenger side, one inside the cabin in the passenger side footwell, and one in the trunk inside the spare tire storage well.

What can I do if the part I need is ‘obsoleted’ by Ford and no longer available for either order or backorder?

Some Ford dealers work with one or more companies that ‘rebuild’ or ‘remanufacture’ electronic modules. Remanufactured modules can be identified by the letters ‘RM’ at the end of the original part number. There are a number of aftermarket suppliers that offer rebuilt, refurbished or remanufactured electronic modules, and prices vary widely from as low as \$ 150 to over \$ 800. Ford dealers typically only install and guarantee OEM Ford parts, so if a Ford-supplied part is not available, you may be on your own locating an aftermarket module.

How can I be sure the aftermarket module I buy is the correct part and will work in my Thunderbird?

The best way to confirm that you’re getting the correct module is by cross-referencing the part with your Thunderbird’s VIN (vehicle identification number). Reputable retailers and rebuilders will ask you for your VIN to make sure the part you order is compatible with and correct for your Thunderbird. When ordering a rebuilt or refurbished electronic module, be sure to ask these questions:

- (1) Do you offer a warranty on the module, and if so for how long?
- (2) What is your return policy if the module is defective or turns out to be the incorrect part for my Thunderbird?
- (3) Does the price include a ‘core charge’, and if so, is the core charge refundable when I return my old module?

Before you order an aftermarket electronic module, be sure to ask your Ford dealer or mechanic if they will install a customer-supplied part. This is very important. Some shops and dealers will only install parts they supply. Others may agree to install your part, but probably will not warranty the part itself. Get an estimate for the labor to install your part, and be sure to ask if the price includes reprogramming. Reprogramming electronic modules requires very specialized equipment and not all shops have the proper equipment to perform the reprogramming.

Still confused? Powersport/Thunderbird Specialties can help!

If you’re not comfortable navigating the ins and outs of tackling the replacement of an electronic module on your Thunderbird, contact Thunderbird Specialties! They’ll answer your questions and give you a price quote for a new or remanufactured module, and there’s no charge or obligation for their advice. If you’ve found a good deal on an aftermarket module, they’ll let you know. If you can’t find what you need, they can get it for you. Call them at 310-589-1000 or e-mail them using the ‘Contact Us’ form on their home page of our website: www.mytbird.com