Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio

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August 2015 Newsletter

MEETING MINUTES:

Call to Order: The July 9th meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Beverly Knauper, club president, who extended a hearty welcome to all.

Attendees: Peg & Brett Andrews, Nancy & Julie Blake, Ruthie & Wayne Dennis, Jan & Guy Gifford, Lisa & Roger Hamm, Beverly Knauper & Jim Ross, Jim Lenz, Scott McGaha, and Jay Walsh

Approval of Minutes: The June meeting minutes, as shown in the July newsletter, were unquestioned by the members, and therefore stand as published.

Announcements: Beverly expressed a few words of appreciation to Brett for all he has done with the by-laws, to Wayne and Roger for their roving reporter skills and to Peg for her efforts in writing and publishing the newsletter. (We might add to that list our President, herself, who does an outstanding job in so many ways to keep us inspired and motivated!)

Beverly praised the 60 Years of Thunderbird celebration in Dearborn, MI, saying how exciting it was to see over 200 Thunderbirds in one place at one time, and remarking there was lots of history, great stories and good people. The Michigan club did a wonderful job putting it all together. Attached to this newsletter are three reviews of the event with accompanying pictures. The accounts are written by three different club members. It is interesting to read everyone's story.

Guy announced that Jim Ellinger's car is now on the road and is for sale. It is a beautiful car.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: Lisa Hamm gave the Treasurer Report saying that there was no change since last month.

Events: Upcoming events that were mentioned at this time were the Arthritis Foundation Classic Auto Show and Cruise-in in Dublin, OH July 10th and 11th; the July club activity which is putt-putt golf and lunch at Young's Dairy on July 18; the Franklin Sonic cruise-in on Friday, July 31st, and the Lebanon Ford Pig Roast on August 1st.

On September 20th Carillon Park will host the Concours D'Elegance. It's the 75th year celebration of the Lincoln Continental.

OLD BUSINESS: A date of Saturday, September 12th was set for our club picnic. It will be the activity for the month of September so it is scheduled on the Saturday following the club meeting. Sunday, September 13 was designated as a rain date in case the weather is uncooperative on Saturday. The picnic will be held at Peg and Brett's home. They will provide the entrée and beverages and club members will bring side dishes. Maps to their home will be provided at the September meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: After all the discussion in the previous months concerning the update of the by-laws, Brett has drafted a new version which includes the changes. The draft will need to be approved by the Board of Directors. At this time, with the absence of Gary Hufford, the Board consists of only two members. Three are need for the vote. Brett motioned that upcoming President, Roger Hamm be added to the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Club elections are soon coming up. There will be elections for Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Roger Hamm, our current Vice President will take on the role of President. Beverly encouraged everyone to get involved in taking a turn as an officer. She said, "The club belongs to everyone and there are PERKS to participating!"

If you are interested in submitting a letter of candidacy for one of the above mentioned offices, please give your signed letter to Roger **at either the August or September meeting**. Per our club bylaws candidacy letters must be received by the vice president not later than September 15th. The names of candidates for elected positions will be published in the October newsletter and the elections will be held at our club meeting on October 8th.

OPEN FLOOR: Scott mentioned that he had gone to a cruise-in at Lofinos and one guy took a flyer about our club. He also gave out a flyer and our website on the 4th of July at the Greene.

There was a discussion whether the by-laws should be open to the public on the website or restricted to club members. VTCI is on-line and their by-laws are available to the public. Scott motioned that it should be the web master's choice. The membership agreed. The webmaster announced that he intended to make our bylaws open to the public on our website.

Scott suggested making Carillon Park's restaurant and associated areas our August social event. He will have more details at the August meeting. Thank you, Scott, for all you do to make these adventures possible.

ADJOURN: At 7:50 p.m. Beverly asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Brett and seconded by Lisa.

Beverly Knauper, President

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

August Birthdays

26th: Bea Walsh

August Anniversaries

4th: Roger & Lisa (31 yrs)

If you haven't been asked for the date of your birthday or anniversary, or you need a correction, please e-mail our Club Secretary, Peg Andrews, at pegasus@woh.rr.com

From the President's Nest:

We're at about the mid-point of the car season which means there are still plenty of opportunities remaining to show off the Thunderbirds. Make sure you check this newsletter and the *Show & Shine* calendar for details.

Fall will eventually come, however, and with it will be our election of officers. We will be electing a vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. I urge you to consider nominating yourself for a chance to lead the club. Everyone with a willingness to serve is qualified. Roger will have nomination forms at our next meeting.

I like to find fun things and here is my latest. How many of you remember the 1959 movie "T-Bird Gang"? I haven't checked to see how many Academy Awards this dandy took home. The movie is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/-D_8N-QeNK4 and lasts just a little over an hour. (I could review the movie but that would spoil your fun.) I suggest doing a web search for "T-Bird Gang" to view the original publicity poster before watching the movie. The poster has a Thunderbird, some young people, and the teaser "the one year out of high school crowd – fast cars, girls . . . no place to go". That got your attention, didn't it? After watching the movie, look at the poster again and see if anything seems strange.

On that mysterious note I'll just say, "See you at our next meeting."

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

Event	Date(s)	Location
1. August Social Event	Aug 15th	Carillon Park
2. Display Oakwood Historical Sociaety	Aug 23rd	Long-Romspert Homestead Museum (Oakwood)
3. Club Picnic	Sep 12th (13th rain date)	Brett & Peg's Home

CLUB OFFICERS

President: Beverly Knauper (513) 752-8821
Vice President: Roger Hamm (937) 835-5992
Treasurer: Lisa Hamm (937) 835-5992
Secretary: Peg Andrews (937) 237-1131

Flight to Dearborn

Story by: Beverly Knauper

Lacking a death wish, this Buckeye did not pack Ohio State University gear into the Thunderbird for the journey to Wolverine country. For me, the destination was too close to "that school up north". For the Thunderbird, having first taken flight at the Ford Wixom plant, it was seeking one's roots. Upon our arrival at the hotel, did I detect an increased spark of energy in the Thunderbird as it encountered even more RetroBirds than we left at home? I was greeted with a Ford bag containing an assortment of Michigan products: Vernors ginger ale, grape Faygo, Better Made potato chips, Sanders candy, and Jiffy corn muffin mix. I'm liking this 60th Thunderbird Celebration already!

Ruthie and Wayne took me to dinner that first evening at Big Fish, a Dearborn restaurant. If you want a first class dining experience, make sure Ruthie and Wayne are your dinner companions. The food was excellent and the conversation delightful. Peg and Brett accompanied Ruthie and Wayne to dinner on Thursday evening. Since I wasn't there, I can't provide details except that there is a Brett and carrot cake story.

Since others have reported on this Thunderbird celebration, I'm going to try not to duplicate their efforts. By Thursday morning, the Thunderbird had learned of a flock of Thunderbirds gathering in one part of the parking lot and was demanding to join them. As we entered the special roosting area, we encountered a spectacular sight: generation after generation of Thunderbirds, even other Pacific Coast Roadsters. The Thunderbird quickly settled in, as you can see in the photo, and sent me on my way.

I concur with the Roving Car Reporter that The Meurer Automobilia Collection is the best private collection I have toured. It's a very diverse and large group of vehicles and also the best quality I have seen. I couldn't begin to pick a favorite. However, as a "fins" girl, this finned car with "Resale Red" paint makes my short list. A nice "Bullet Bird" will catch my attention every time (I've never claimed to not be biased.), like this Sports Roadster.

Thursday evening I was the only TSWO member to boldly go to the Strolling Dinner in the hotel lobby. I think the others had looked at the pre-registration information about the dinner and decided to be more fiscally responsible. In truth, the Michigan food "dinner" (coney island-style hot dog, Better Made potato chips, Vernors and Faygo, and local ice cream) had some attendees going to a restaurant afterwards. However, the mythical Thunderbird in the sky must have been watching over me and guided me to join a table of people which turned out to be members of the Water Wonderland Thunderbird Club (WWTC), the host club. They are a wonderful, friendly group of people. I said our club was small and asked about the size of their club. They responded that their club is "small" also – about 160 members. I soon realized that size is relative as they went on to explain that the local Ford Mustang club, to which many of them seem to belong, has between 1000 and 2000 members. A number of the Thunderbird club members are retired Ford employees and they seemed happy to have spent their careers at Ford Motor Company. One woman, however, volunteered that she thinks poor marketing by Ford and initial price-gouging by dealers caused the less than expected sales of the RetroBird. The president of WWTC, a retired Ford vice-president, talked a bit about planning the 60th Thunderbird celebration. He said that the group wanted attendees to get some of the history of Ford Motor Company and the automobile industry. He also thanked me multiple times for coming. It was a most satisfying meal for me.

Friday morning we hopped onto buses for the Ford Piquette Plant and the Edsel and Eleanor Ford estate tours. Riding the ancient and huge freight elevator at the Piquette Plant is itself an interesting experience. The docent-led tour of the plant was exceptional, in large part due to the enthusiasm and knowledge displayed by the volunteer docents. I learned a lot of Henry Ford history from the stories told by our leader. He made everything so interesting. The docents do their own research on topics that interest them and also fabricate items for the displays. They are incredible people. As an assembly plant for early Model T's, the Piquette Plant received parts in crates. Some people back then noticed that the wooden crates all had specific holes in them and wondered why. The reason was that the crates were broken down at the assembly plant and used as floor boards for the automobiles, with the holes being attachment sites for items such as a steering column. The tour really highlighted Henry Ford's seemingly innate ability to minimize costs in order to make more profit and also, in the case of the Model T, to lower the price to the consumer. I'd tour this plant again if given the chance. If you're interested, there is a website. Then it was a bus ride to the Edsel and Eleanor Ford Estate. This is a beautiful home with a view of Canada across the lake. We toured about 20 of the approximately 60 rooms in the house. Items of interest to me include the lack of air conditioning, rooms that are rather small by mansion standards (it's not the Biltmore House), the presence of radios built into a number of tables, built-in scales in the bathrooms of the women but not men, and a playhouse on the grounds for their daughter that includes electricity and plumbing. The estate didn't make Wayne's short list of homes to own – there were just too many people roaming the house and grounds! On the bus rides I enjoyed chatting with a young couple from Canada. She had recently purchased a RetroBird and her excitement and enthusiasm were contagious! She loves her Thunderbird and is looking forward to driving it for a long time. Sharing an appreciation of Thunderbirds with hundreds of wonderful people over the course of three days was the absolute best part for me.

Friday evening's pig roast at Nankin Mills has been covered by other roving car reporters so I will just add that the food and company were very good and the three guests (Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone) contributed a lot to my understanding of their lives and times.

Saturday was the event I had looked forward to for months: the Thunderbird at Ford World Headquarters for a cruise-in. I awoke during the night to the sound of rain on the windows. As the rain settled in to stay for the day, the cruise-in was cancelled. The Thunderbird seemed less disappointed than I, for it was content to remain in its roost with the vast flock of colorful 'Birds. As for me, when the going gets tough, the tough go…shopping! Ruthie and Wayne saved the day by hosting a trip to Bronner's Christmas Wonderland in Frankenmuth, billed as the "world's largest Christmas store". Suffice it to say that the trip was the perfect consolation prize. Let me add that at the breakfast table when Brett was asked if he wanted to come along, his 'NO" response could be heard before the question was finished. I, on the other hand, refused to give my home telephone number to Wayne, who

had threatened to warn Jim of impending financial ruin. Roger appeared to be totally crestfallen when Lisa decided to join the excursion.

The final event of the celebration was Saturday evening's Back to the Fifties Dinner Dance. It was a fitting way to end the event. Many attendees really dressed in 1950's grand style. There were more poodles on clothing than poodles at the Westminster Dog Show. The band was tremendous and played and sang all of the "doo-wop" favorites of the 1950s. At least I think they were the favorites, since I am way too young to remember them. Some people received awards, such as for "hard luck" or coming the greatest distance. One of the hard luck recipients was a Thunderbird involved in a traffic accident near the hotel. I wonder if a "Michigan left" was involved. In Michigan, it is illegal to turn left at the traffic lights of many intersections. Instead, one has to continue driving in the direction that one doesn't want to go until a break in the median is found. Then, one makes a left U-turn in the median to get back to where one actually wanted to go, and can finally make the turn, as long as it isn't a left turn. Sound confusing? Then you grasp the premise of a "Michigan left". Meanwhile, back at the dinner, John Clor, who does enthusiast outreach for Ford, was an excellent dinner speaker. As an ambassador for Ford Motor Company, he worked hard to convince us that Thunderbird is a nameplate revered by Ford and that we matter to Ford. I met John a few years ago and he is a very nice man who writes an informative and fun monthly column for the Mustang Club of America's magazine *Mustang Times*. He is truly a Ford asset. John passed out copies of a Ford racing booklet that I believe had been aimed at dealers. The evening passed quickly. I was lucky and won a table prize: a pair of Thunderbird bookends, shaped like the back of the hardtop with a porthole. Since I had nearly ordered these several times, I was extremely happy to get them.

Sunday morning I roused the Thunderbird and we had an uneventful drive home. The Thunderbird seems happy to have returned to its much smaller flock here. Thus ends my tale. Who knows what stories of Dearborn that Thunderbird could tell.

Beverly

Our Dearborn Adventure

Story By: Roger Hamm

On Thursday, June 25, 2015, my wife, Lisa, and I departed Dayton to drive up to Dearborn, Michigan for the 60th anniversary T-bird car show. We decided to leave after work and drive to Perrysburg, Ohio, and spend the night. We left Perrysburg Friday morning around 10, after having a nice breakfast at the Cracker Barrel across the street from our hotel.

We got to the Detroit area around noon, so we decided to make a side trip to American Jewelry and Loan that we have seen on the TV show Hardcore Pawn to see what it was like and in hopes that maybe we might be lucky enough to see Les Gold, his son Seth Gold and daughter Ashley Broad. Unfortunately, they were not there, but we did see some of the others in the store that we have seen on the show. We spent about an hour looking around and then decided to head on out to get to the Double Tree Hilton where the show participants were lodged.

We got checked in, got our free warm cookies (much to our delight and surprise) and then went to our room to settle in. We later went and got our show materials and our T-shirts and were advised of the schedule for the weekend. We went to the Hospitality Room where all were gathered for meet and greet and had pretzels, drinks and other assorted munchies. Unfortunately for me, I ended up breaking a filling on one of my teeth, so I had to be careful how I ate the rest of the weekend.

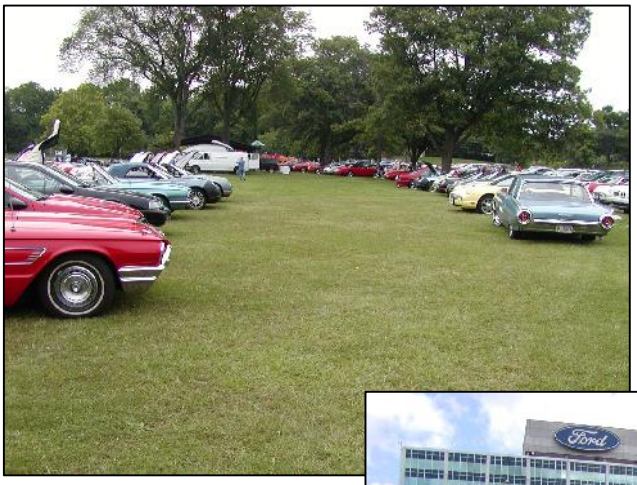
Friday night was the nice drive to the Pig Roast dinner. There were lots of T-birds that caravanned to Hines Park nearby. We even had a police escort stopping traffic at busy intersections so we could proceed through non-stop. I had Wayne and Ruthie Dennis and Beverly Knauper in our Windstar. The drive was great until we were about halfway through the park when one of our police escorts decided I wasn't supposed to be in the line of T-birds. He made me stop on the side of the road until all the rest of the T-birds passed, and then he went around me. Why he waited until we got all the way to the park before stopping me I will never know.

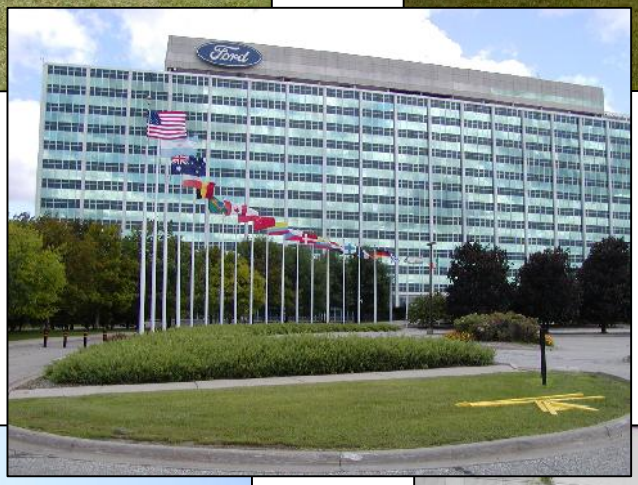
The dinner was great and there were probably about 100 T-birds there lined up all along the grass. I have never seen so many Retro Birds in one place at one time, along with a few other generation Birds thrown in with them. We had a great time eating and listening to stories by Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harry Firestone. They were great entertainers and told several good jokes also.

Unfortunately, the weather was not at all cooperative on Saturday, with heavy rain causing the show to be cancelled. Many guests decided to go on home and those that stayed decided to venture out by themselves. Lisa, Wayne, Ruth, Peg and Beverly decide to go to a Christmas store called Bronner's in Frankenmuth. I adventured out by myself and went on a tour of the F150 plant. It was very interesting hearing the history of the plant, Henry Ford and the area. I also was able to see different parts of the trucks being put on the empty shell and then seeing the final truck ready for its first test drive to take it to be loaded up on the railcars and off to the dealership that ordered the truck.

On Sunday morning, we checked out of the hotel to head home, but we decided to take a short side trip to the Ford World Headquarters building and a few last minute pictures in front of the two different buildings. Luckily, we had nice sunny weather on the drive home (of course).

Birds at the Pig Roast & Ford Buildings





Thunderbirds in Dearborn 2015

Story by: David Wayne Dennis
Our Roving Car Reporter

How was the 60th anniversary show? The show can be described with two, three letter words—**Fun and Wet**. It was Fun with a Capital F and on show day it was Wet with a Capital W. As always I like to start with the best first. On Thursday afternoon we drove out to tour a private car collection. It turned out to be an absolutely stunning collection. Also, I thought it was quite innovative to use a real Thunderbird as a road marker. Now for a sample of what the collection had to offer. Let me be honest and tell you that I was taken with or should I say fell for the fabulous blue 57/58 Cadillac pictured below.

This beautiful Caddy came from the factory with a stainless steel top. Everything on this car was absolutely impeccable! I'll have to admit that I had never heard of a Cadillac with a stainless steel roof much less seen one. It turns out that one of the guys there had actually worked in the stamping facility that produced the stainless steel roofs. He said the problem with producing the stainless tops was getting the lines in the stainless straight. As a result, they could only use one out of five tops produced. Cadillac definitely was not happy with 80% of their top production going in the scrap heap. So this Cadillac saw a very limited production run. Note: the unusual hood on the Cadillac in the following picture. Shades of a corvette?

Take a look at the two 1956 Packard's in the background of the picture above. These were a very close second to the Cadillac. The two Packard's were identical except for the tops—one was a hardtop and the other was a convertible. I don't recall having ever seen two classic cars in the same collection displayed side by side that were identical except for the tops. Again, both of these cars were flawless.

Does anybody recognize the two ladies posing with the Packard's?

Next are a Packard Woody, a Buick, and a Studebaker. Not a single slouch to be found anywhere in this collection.

Looking down from the loft gives you an idea of what we had to feast our eyes upon.

The gentleman that owns all of these cars has a Christian Printing Company on the opposite end of the building. While I did not hear him say it, apparently he was telling one of the visitors that the printing business had not been very good lately. Without skipping a beat, the visitor said that should be easy to solve. You can just sell the cars and you will be set for the rest of your life. The gentleman shot right back, "I'd rather sell one of my sons". I'm positive he was not serious and was really proud of his sons but it also tells you exactly how he feels about his cars. Aren't we all really proud of our families and our cars?

On Friday we were off to visit Piquette, the very first Ford factory. It was a small three story brick building that housed Henry's office, the top secret design office, and where the first 12,000 Model T's were made. Then in the afternoon we went out to visit Edsel's home on the lake and that night it was off to the park for the pig roast.
As the old saying goes, "you learn something new every day" was quite true for the factory. I had always heard that you could buy a Model T in any color you wanted as long as it was black. In fact, you could buy one of the first 12,000 Model T's in a variety of colors as illustrated in the following photos.
Quite a sight seeing red, blue, and yellow Model Ts! Did you notice that the whole tire on the Model Ts were white not just the sidewall? After the first 12,000 Model Ts were produced, Henry moved production operations to a new factory. At this point Henry decided to go all black to streamline operations and help reduce costs.

The net result was that these changes helped to reduce the cost of a Model T from approximately $800 to $400.

The old factory also had quite a few trucks that were unique to say the least. There were trucks with tracks, there were trucks with skis instead of tires, and there were trucks with tracks, skis, and tires as shown below.

After having lunch in the old Ford factory we hopped back on the buses and went to the Edsel Ford house on the lake. Sorry to say, they did not allow photographs in the house but they did allow photos in the garage. Before I talk about the photo in the garage just a couple of tidbits from the house, the house was not air conditioned which seemed kind of strange since air conditioning was certainly available at the time the house was built. It was quite warm inside even though it was a relatively mild day outside. Maybe it was because there were a large number of people in the house during the tour that made it so warm. The next interesting item was the kitchen. When we walked in we were instructed not to touch the counter tops. Everybody looked puzzled. What was so special about the stainless steel counter tops? They were not stainless. They were a special silver alloy made in Germany and every time they are cleaned part of the silver is removed.
After strolling across the well kept gardens there was the garage. Inside was a beautiful orange Mustang. However, the most interesting aspect of the garage was a huge turntable in the floor. Note: the circular ring just in front of the tire in the picture below. That was the edge of the turntable.

The chauffeur used the turntable to park cars on each side of the garage and to turn the car around and drive out of the garage instead of backing out. The turntable is set on ball bearings and you just push on the car to turn it around. **People power**-no electricity needed. Edsel got this idea from Henry who had one installed in his barn to turn around his tractor. Edsel even built his chauffeur his own apartment attached to the garage. We were told that sometimes when traffic was bad Edsel would just hop in his boat for his daily commute to work. Going by boat usually saved him about an hour of commute time. Today he would probably just use a helicopter or maybe even a jet ski. Just think about today and imagine Henry Ford II with a suit and tie on a Ford powered Jet Ski on his way to work. What an image!

Now for the pig roast! Right on cue all the Birds lined up in the hotel parking lot for a police escorted convoy to the Park. Since we only had one Retro Bird between us, all five of us piled into Roger's van. We were told to stay in line and do not pass. We were about half way back in the convoy and even though we had the police escort the pace was rather slow at times. Roger being the law abiding guy that he is, strictly followed the rules. However, just before we got to the park one of Detroit's finest who was part of the escort team thought that we had broken in the line. So all of a sudden there on our back bumper was a blue light special. Although a bit irritated, Roger decided that he would not look good in stripes so he pulled over and guess what--the police officer pulled right around and went on his way. About ten Birds later, we finally got back in line and on our way to the park. The Pig roast was excellent. As many of you know Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone were really good friends and enjoyed many camping trips together. After dining on the roasted pig, three local actors portraying the trio provided us with an assortment of stories that resulted in lots of laughs.

Saturday morning and it is car show day. I think the tag below sums it up quite appropriately. A rainy, windblown day in Detroit—MY OH MY what a messy day it was!

Now it is time to close with the grand finale to this story, the tale of the Elfettes great Frankenmuth adventure. Rain, rain and what will the Elfettes do for entertainment? They went to the World's largest Christmas Store. As the raindrops washed away the dreams of the great T Bird 60th anniversary show, the Elfettes were busy making preparation for White Elephant Christmas parties and more.

As I gulped down a Whopper, the store was a flurry of activity the like of which Santa had never seen. Before I could alert the totally unsuspecting husbands, I was emphatically told no phone calls. Sorry guys, I tried but I just simply lost control of the Elfettes. On second thought I never had any control, I was just the chauffeur. So as any good chauffeur is obligated to do, I must abide by the unwritten rule that what happened in Frankenmuth stays in Frankenmuth—at least until Santa arrives. With that I bid you all a Merry Christmas and Happy Labor day!

One and Only Elfettes