

# Thunder Words



*The August Flower is the Gladiolus. It symbolizes perseverance, integrity and strength.*

**August 2025 ~ Volume 48, #8**  
**Dedicated to the 55, 56, & 57 Thunderbird**  
**Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club**  
**Chapter 65, Classic Thunderbird Club International**



**PREZ SAYS:** Glad new member **Larry Dawes** could join us for the July business meeting. He now has perfect attendance! We had 11 attendees at **Marty's** July Tech Session and **Mary Lou's** shopping spree. See **Jack's** article on the session and shopping. Not only is **Marty** knowledgeable on all things T-Bird, but he does a great job explaining his information. **Mary Lou** certainly knows Elkhorn shopping. Thanks, **Marty** and **Mary Lou** for another excellent event. The August activity will be a T-Bird showing at the Oxbow Living Center, 1617 Bills Drive, Ashland, NE on Saturday, August 23rd, followed by lunch at Ruhlman's Steak House in Ashland. We ask for cars to be in place at Oxbow by 12:30 pm. We will park just outside their front door. Departure is scheduled for 1:15 pm, which should give residents time to see the birds, ask questions or reminisce about "the good old days" with us. We will then caravan to Ruhlman's on Hwy 6 in Ashland with lunch reservations for 1:30 pm. Ruhlman's is a new restaurant with an excellent menu, staff, and surroundings. They will give us an area of our own for lunch. Please RSVP to **Jack** at [jesanford@cox.net](mailto:jesanford@cox.net), 402-578-3743, the number of folks and T-Birds who be attending the show and lunch so we can alert the Home and restaurant. Our regularly scheduled business meeting will be on Thursday, August 21 at Trackside in Waverly. Enjoy your summer and your birds! **Rob**

**Oxbow Living Center**  
**Car Show – 12:30 pm**  
**Lunch – 1:30 pm Ashland, NE**  
**August 23, 2025**

**2025 Meeting Dates:**  
**Waverly – Aug. 21 - Oct. 16**  
**Omaha – Sept. 18 - Dec. 18**

**Next meeting August 21,**  
**6 pm – Track Side Bar & Grill**  
**Waverly, NE**



[www.Nebraskalandtbirds.org](http://www.Nebraskalandtbirds.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/nebraskatbirds/>  
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## July Meeting Minutes

President **Rob Kinsey** opened the meeting at 6:05 pm. Introduced new member, **Larry Dawes**, to the members who were not present at the last meeting. Those present were **Rob Kinsey, Marty & Mary Lou Bierman, Jeff Brown, Joel Hutchins, Larry Dawes, Jack Sanford.**

A motion by **Joel** to accept the June meeting minutes as scribed in the July Newsletter was seconded by **Marty**. The motion passed.

**Old Business:** **Rob** complimented the newsletter editor on the fine newsletters and thanked him for being the acting secretary. **Marty** reviewed the tech session format, which will include optional T-Bird lighting, a Sun machine demonstration and a child's 1955 electric car (T-Bird). **Mary Lou** will lead a tour of shops in Elkhorn. Lunch at 1:30 pm will be at Chevy's. It was again pointed out that if the weather is bad or you just don't want to drive your T-Bird, your choice of vehicle is welcome.

**New business:** After a short discussion the Oxbow retirement home car show in Ashland will be on August 23rd, at 12:30 pm. Following the show, we will have lunch at Ruhlman's in Ashland at 1:30 pm. Our September event will be in Lincoln. **Vicki** is to lay out a restaurant tour i.e. Sonic. Because of the CTCI convention, this event will be late in September on a Sunday.

October will be a Loess Hills Tour. We will meet at Casey's on Highway 92 just east of the school for the deaf at 1:30 pm, October 19th. The tour will probably take an hour and a half. There will be a stop for ice cream in Council Bluffs at the end of the tour.

We will have a December meeting in Omaha on the 18th.

### Brags:

**Joel** drove his '57-T-Bird to Montana and brought it home on a trailer. His sister said the trip was a success.

**Jeff** had his T-Bird in the Logan, IA, July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. His 9-year-old niece passed out the candy.

**Rob** received a rock chip to his windshield coming to the meeting. Claims, last trip on the interstate.

**Dave Freeburg's** memorial was August 19<sup>th</sup> at the Brookstone Meadows retirement home. **Dave** passed away December 18, 2024. A donation on **Dave's** behalf will be made to the Parkinson Foundation.

The meeting was closed at 6:50 p.m. after **Mary Lou's** motion and **Jeff's** second, was passed.

Respectively reported by **Jack Sanford**, Acting Secretary.

A good showing of T-Birds at the July meeting.  
The black 1955 T-Bird belongs to new member  
Larry Dawes.



Rob

Jack

Marty

Jeff



## BIRD TECH TALK

By Martin Bierman "I want to test my fuel pressure."



**Question** - A 1956 T-Bird owner is concerned about his fuel pump function and wants to test his fuel pressure.

**Answer** - With all the complaints about new defective fuel pumps over the last couple of years and the low availability of new or rebuilt pumps testing fuel pump pressure has become more necessary than before to diagnose fuel delivery issues. Symptoms of poor or stumbling acceleration, stalling and failure to start are the main symptoms of fuel pump failure and would indicate the need to test fuel pressure.



The 1955-57 fuel pump is a dual action pump with a top diaphragm for vacuum to the wipers and a bottom diaphragm for the fuel pump. Fuel pump pressure is rated at 4-5 psi at 900 rpm; fuel pump capacity is one pint in 45 seconds or less at 900 rpm. In order to test the fuel pressure, one will have to insert a T-fitting into a fuel line and attach a fuel pressure gauge to the T-fitting. I chose to use the fuel line running from the fuel filter to the carburetor and I cut a piece out of it with a tubing cutter. Then I attached the T-fitting (see picture) using

5/16 in. I.D. fuel line with spring clamps to the ends of the T-fitting and the fuel line. I attached the fuel pressure gauge to the 1/8 in. NPT female fitting in the T-fitting. The fuel pressure gauge rests midway in the fuel line and is readable from the driver's side of the engine bay. The finished product is durable and could be permanent.



Summit Racing #- Sum-G1713CL



Summit Racing #- Sum-800135



## CTCI NEWS

**Treasurer's Report:** John Kledis presented the 6-month financials. In the first six months CTCI is showing a small net gain. Due to many of the cost-saving efforts, this is the first time in many years that we have had a bottom-line net gain. Based upon those cost-saving efforts (and meeting our projected membership number), we are projecting a small net profit by the end of the year. John did note that we still have a functional loss for the year but that is being offset by the investment income. On the Balance sheet, John discussed that we are in fairly good shape. We have moved part of the approved investment income to the operating account. We plan to move the balance of the approved amount later in the year. He stressed again that CTCI needs to continue to reduce overhead expenses wherever possible and increase membership.

**Member Renewals:** Garrett Shropshire presented membership renewals through the end of 2024. Last year (12/31/2024), we had 3,601 active members. Since the first of the year, we have already gained 75 new members as well as an additional 14 members who have returned from previous years. As of June 30, 2025, we are at 3,134. We are planning on meeting our projected goal of 3,200 members by the end of the year. Meanwhile, we continue to work with members as they renew their current membership.

**Co-Sharing of Membership:** Garrett praised many of the chapters who have already sent in their chapter membership rosters. As a result, those chapters also received a listing of all members who are in the chapter area but not members of the local chapter. We are very excited about this partnership, where both local chapters and CTCI are able to expand.

**Cost Saving Ideas:** We continue to include savings from the Early Bird changes, Storage changes, and reduced Office hours. In addition, the office is continuing to work on other cost-saving efforts. One of those items that is helping is the change of credit card processors. We are starting to show significant savings. For example, in June of 2024 we received \$7,296 in Gross Credit Card Receipts at a processed cost of \$567.66 or 7.7%. In June of 2025 we received \$8,343 in Gross Credit Card Receipts at a lowered processed cost of \$317.62 or 3.8%. Put in another way, we saved \$331.50 by using our current processor in the month of June alone.

**Office Activity:** Garrett reported on Invoice and Merchandise sales. For 2025 CTCI has had over \$6,664.05 in Merchandise Sales and is slightly less than last year. In addition, 23 requests have been made for factory invoices.

**Board Member Recruitment Committee:** The Board approved the creation of a new permanent committee. The Board Member Recruitment Committee will include the current President, the two past presidents, and one other CTCI member. Its purpose will be to encourage and find members who might be interested in becoming CTCI Board Members. They also will assist with answering member questions about board responsibilities and vetting candidates. Any member who might be interested in the CTCI Board (whether this election or a future one), should reach out to one of the Committee Members for more information.

**2025 Joint Thunderbird Convention Update:** The Convention Update was presented. The current planned date for the Convention is September 9 through 13, 2025, held at the Embassy Suites Hotel located in North Grapevine, Texas (Dallas – Fort Worth area). Interest has been so high that we have now exhausted all of the discounted hotel rooms in the block. For those members who might still need a hotel reservation, you are encouraged to find an accommodation quickly and also contact Sharon at the office to be put on a "wait-list". All members were reminded to get on the CTCI website and register for the convention.





**2026 Thunderbird Convention Update:** Plans for 2026 Convention were discussed. Details to be released soon.

**New Format for Future Conventions and Shows:** Many ideas were considered to improve future CTCI Conventions. The Board is looking a different model for future conventions that matches the CTCI membership requirements and may adjust the "Convention – Judging – Member Meeting" format. More information will be forthcoming.

**Participation at Ford Nationals – Carlisle, PA:** Several CTCI members attended the recent Ford Nationals at Carlisle. This was our first Ford National event. As a result, it was agreed that CTCI needs to take a much larger and visible role at Carlisle in 2026 by partnering with the other Thunderbird clubs. Garrett Shropshire was asked to investigate and report to the Board options & cost estimates to support the 2026 Carlisle event.

#### **Election Schedule for Election of 2026 Board:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
8/1.....	Last Day to send in and/or correct your resume (300 words or
9/1.....	Early Bird goes to Mail
9/15.....	Cut-off date for Election. member must be paid & active on this date to vote
9/20.....	<i>The Early Bird</i> is released to members and includes candidate resume
9/2.....	Candidate Resumes are posted to the CTCI website
10/10.....	Candidate Resumes are sent to all members via "Constant Contact – Blast"
10/16.....	Electronic Ballots are distributed via "Opa-Vote" – Election Open
10/28.....	4:00 PM (Central) Election will be closed.
10/29.....	Election will be verified and counts presented to CTCI Board President
11/15.....	Election results will be presented and documented at CTCI Board meeting
11/15.....	Individual candidates will be contacted as to final result of candidate's election
11/15.....	Election results will be posted and sent to all members in a Blast (Highlights)

The next Board meeting is set for September 19, 2025, at 10:00 AM Central

On Behalf of the Board,  
Bob Bly, President



## Member News

## Joel Hutchins' continuing story

Well, Kathy and I, finally made the trip to Montana as promised three years ago. Our route was a little different than in the past. We stopped in Gordon the first night. I had called ahead and arranged with Connee Kruml and her husband, Steve, to host a small get together as I had some things to say to Dennis and Kathie. It was a great get together, Bernie had his GMBG, (a MGB roadster with a V 6 engine from a Camero in it) a real screamer that he let me drive. The next morning, we left for Big Timber, MT. I started to drive again and noticed that the gas gauge read empty, asked Kathy about it and her response was, my car beeps at me when it wants something. I drove on at a slower pace and got to mile marker 395, the car had gone as far as it was going to go, called AAA and they sent gas a few hours later. Into Big Timber at midnight, then checked into our rooms. The next morning, we left for Helena, MT to have lunch with Maggie and Chris Stockwell,

After our visit we drove on to Milltown, MT. We checked into our motel and then arrived at the Matson's. Now is the time I need to let you know that everything was not rosy with the car. It had demonstrated some hard starting tendency. When it was hot, not unlike 'vapor lock' but when we were getting ready to go see Gary and Judy and have fresh homemade Cherry pie it would not start at all. No spark. I removed the distributor cap and found no spark, so with my trusty screwdriver I made a point adjustment, and the car started with no problem, no feeler gauge either, why bring one? huh. On city streets it drove alright but on hills or when trying to get up to speed it did not like it and would backfire and spit and sputter. We made it to Montana, no one was hurt, and we had a great time driving and visiting. I told Gary and Judy of the problems with starting and running the car. Gary and I removed the plugs. Gary had the proper socket, and the #1, 4 and 5 plug were black as if they were not firing as they should. Gary and Judy suggested a shop in town but they were too busy and could not get the car in to look at it, I thought back to Judy's and my trip to California in 2007, and when we got to Nevada on a Friday pm and the hydraulics went to pot I rented a U-Haul truck and trailer and pulled it back to Gordon, no problem. That was my thought now and nothing and no one was going to change my mind.

We started out with me driving and as I got along fine, Kathy thought she could handle it OK, and she did. I thought we should take a more scenic route home and after looking at the map we took the road to end up in O'Neill, NE. As we entered NE and rounded a corner I looked at the rear of the trailer and saw some 'dust' but nothing amiss, then Kathy said the truck would not accelerate and I suggested she pull over. The two tires from the right side of the trailer were absent, gone, and the rims were destroyed. The axels were loose from the springs. WE called the U-Haul emergency number and a farmer from SD stopped and offered help and to have dinner with him, we declined as I thought we needed to stay with the car, he said he would stop back. We figured out where we were, got the info to U haul. The farmer returned, said the sheriff would stop by as he had told the preacher at diner we were stranded and please check on us, gave us a bottle of water each, told me his wife had been killed in a car accident 11 years ago, and I told him my wife had died 3 years ago. A young gentleman had stopped shortly after we had pulled off the road, wanted to know if there was anything we needed and we thanked him for stopping and said we had just stopped and did not need anything, car had 21 county plates, NE. The sheriff from Butte County stopped, and he was a great help. He had had experience with U-Haul in the past and noticed the axle problem right off, I had not. U-Haul had trouble locating a replacement trailer and it arrived the next day at 3:15 pm. We hooked the trailer, the U-Haul man did actually, and we drove to Spencer to load the T-bird, Sheriff Chuck met us at the storage shed to assist.



After loading the car, we drove home, we had a good time. I drove half and Kathy drove half. She arranged the accommodation, and I filled the tank truck or car, and she took care of the finances and told me what I owed her in the end. This ends the saga for this year, but Gary and Judy have not driven or ridden in the T bird and that was part of the deal, so stay tuned for the rest of the story. WE (I) decided we needn't go to Texas this year.

Joel





**Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club Tech Session**  
**July 19, 2025, Elkhorn, NE**  
**Hosts Marty and Mary Lou Bierman**

Eleven members and one guest participated in the club event. Only one T-Bird showed up. It was brutally hot. Those attending were John and Barbara La Duke, Jeff Brown, Diane Bessette, Larry and Gail Dawes, Jack Sanford and daughter Heather Harriman, Jeff Hoffman, Bob Young, Marty and Mary Lou Bierman. Under the leadership of Mary Lou, the five women hit the streets of Old Elkhorn, visiting/shopping at The Garden Gallery, Foster's Mercantile, this and that, and other stuff. Yes, their names are in the lower case.



Diane      Barbara      Mary Lou      Heather      Gail

Marty's program was executed as advertised. Six unique lighting options were explained and demonstrated. Some with hand-outs. A parking brake warning light and a mechanical brake light switch were the ones that were the most interesting and rare. The 1955 T-Bird Junior power car is driven by a six-volt starter motor with a top speed of 5 miles per hour. The one on display has been restored and upgraded. It is presently owned by Marty but may go to Bob Young's grandson. There was some sticker price discussion—no decision at this time! Only someone with Marty's ability could own and operate a Sun Distributor Tester (circa 1969 +). Marty secured and had this machine rebuilt in just the last three years. It was demonstrated live. Overall the Tech-Session was excellent with perfect timing. We had lunch in Chevy's backroom. The event was a total success.



Bob John Marty Jeff H. Larry Jeff B.



The guys are looking at Marty's 1955 T-Bird with the 1956 Mercury station wagon taillights. They mount perfectly without any alterations.





Lunch at Chevy's

**UNPLANNED VEHICLE INSPECTION  
OR  
FUTURE MEMBER**



At our July meeting a young lad approached Rod and asked, "Who owns the blue car out front?" We all thought of Rob's car. When asked which one he liked the most he said the one with the white side wall tires. Rod graciously followed the lad outside for a total inspection and a stint behind the wheel. The lad was a truck drivers son working his way across the country.

## 2025 Calendar of Events

**August 21 – Business meeting 6:00 pm – Track Side Bar and Grill – Waverly, NE**

**August 23 – Oxbow Living Center car show 12:30 pm – Lunch Ruhlman's 1:30 pm – Ashland, NE**

**September 9-14 – CTCI/VTCI International Convention – Grapevine, TX**

**September 19 – Business Meeting 6:00 pm – Copper Kettle Café – Omaha, NE**

**September-? – A Lincoln City Tour, similar to one we did during Covid – it will be in late Sept.**

**October 16 – Business meeting 6:00 pm – Track Side and Grill – Waverly, NE**

**October 19 - A Loess Hills Tour – 1:30 pm start in Council Bluffs – details in future newsletters**

**November 22 – Friendsgiving Dinner – save the date**

**December 18 – Business meeting 6:00 pm – Copper Kettle Café - Omaha**

### Nebraskaland T-Bird Club August Event

T-Bird Car Show at Oxbow Living Center, Ashland, NE. Meet there at 12: 30 p.m., August 23, 2025. **Directions:** Ashland is on Highway #6 north of Lincoln and south of Omaha.

Ashland's turn off highway #6 is highways #63 and #66 west. Oxbow is located on Bill Street off highways #63 & #66 north of Ashland. See the map below.

After the car show, 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm, we will have lunch at Ruhlman's Steakhouse.

Please RSVP to **Jack** at [jesanford@cox.net](mailto:jesanford@cox.net), 402-578-3743, by August 22, the number of folks and T-Birds who be attending the show and lunch so we can alert the Home and restaurant.





## FOR SALE

Roadlamps (fog lights) for 1955-56 Ford Thunderbird. Jerry in Pennsylvania is selling his uncle's car parts in the liquidation of his estate. He has a pair of NOS 1952-6 Mercury roadlamps which are identical to the ones used in the '55-56 T-Bird bumperettes. \$750 plus shipping. Call Jerry at **484-345-9780** for more information or pictures.



Display only – not actual items



Thunderbird Tour during Covid

## Member Birthday

**August****Jim Lantz - 12**

If you want to be recognized,  
please send your birthdate to  
[jesanford@cox.net](mailto:jesanford@cox.net).

**Interstate 80 (I-80)** in the US state of Nebraska runs east from the Wyoming state border across the state to Omaha. Construction of the stretch of I-80 spanning the state was completed on October 19, 1974. Nebraska was the first state in the nation to complete its mainline Interstate Highway System.

- **August 1:** International Beer Day
- **August 3:** Friendship Day
- **August 4:** National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
- **August 15:** Independence Day (United States)
- **August 16:** Bennington Battle Day (Vermont)
- **August 20:** World Lung Cancer Day
- **August 21:** International Youth Day
- **August 22:** International Day of Education

The **Member News**

feature needs your help.  
Send your story to Jack at  
[jesanford@cox.net](mailto:jesanford@cox.net).

***Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club***

President	Rob Kinsey	402-434-9053
Vice President	Martin Bierman	402-289-4516
Treasurer	Jeff Brown	402-572-1995
Secretary		
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"ThunderWords" is the official publication of the Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club, Chapter 65 of Classic Thunderbird Club International. Annual dues are \$15, payable to the Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club, care of Jeff Brown, Treasurer, 7225 S 103rd St, La Vista, NE 68128.

We are still looking for a secretary.  
Let Rob know if you are interested.



Nebraskaland Club Logos. 2X3 ½ inch patch can be sewn or glued on with fabric glue. Look great on shirts, caps, and jackets. Contact Jack at 402-392-1350 – [jesanford@cox.net](mailto:jesanford@cox.net)

