

Thunder Words



August 2026, Volume 49 #8

Dedicated to the 55, 56, & 57 Thunderbird
Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club



Prez Says: We had a good turnout at our July 16 meeting. I am still looking for a club member to sponsor an event in September and perhaps a club picnic. The remaining months all have an event to offer our club members, so watch the calendar of events in the newsletter.

Mary Lou and I attended the Hawkeye Classic Thunderbird Club meeting July 12 at the Owl's Nest restaurant in Panora, Ia. Panora is a small town on Highway 44 northeast of Adair.

Highway 44 is known as the Western Skies Scenic Byway and extends west to Missouri Valley through small communities settled by German and Scandinavian immigrants and is known for its verdant fields and scenic hills. After lunch, we drove it west and stopped at the community of Elk Horn (not Elkhorn, NE!), which is home to a working Danish windmill. The community was settled in the mid-1800s by Danish immigrants since the countryside resembled their homeland. A windmill was disassembled in Denmark, shipped to Elk Horn, and reassembled according to a labeled model shipped along with the parts. The windmill was used to mill flour and could mill up to 4200 pounds of flour a day. It is still working today, and one can tour the inside and the multiple floors that have the gears and stones for the milling process. Overall, it was a great day for a lunch, top-down drive, and learning about the history of this area.

Martin Bierman, President



Next Event
Vintage Wheels at the Fort
Car Show
August 9, 2026
10 am - 2 pm
30th & Fort, Omaha, NE

2026 Meeting Dates:
Waverly – March – May – July – Sept. – Dec.
19 21 16 17 17
Omaha – April - June - Aug. - Oct.
16 18 20 15
November Friendsgiving – November 21

Next
Business Meeting
August 20, 2026
6:00 PM
Omaha, NE



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Minutes of the Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club, July 2026



Secretary's report: President **Bierman** called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Trackside Bar and Grill in Waverly, NE. Eleven members were in attendance, but no T-Birds due to a thunderstorm. **Bob** and **Diane Young**, who are members of our club, and the Hawkeye Classic Thunderbird Club were welcomed and introduced.

Minutes: The minutes of June's meeting were approved as listed in the newsletter by a motion from **Tom Woodman** and a second by **Jeff Brown**.

Treasurer's Report: **Jeff Brown** reported on the checking account balance. No bills were submitted,

Old Business: **The Ashland, NE**, car show is July 19, and spaces have been reserved in front of **Lee Sapp Ford** for club members' cars. Registration is 9-12 a.m. August 9 is the Valley, NE car show on the streets of downtown Valley. Registration is 9 a.m. September 8-13 is the VTCl International Convention in Flagstaff, AZ. No club event is scheduled for September, and a club member is needed to host an event. A club picnic mid-September was suggested. October 4 is a joint event with the Hawkeye Classic Thunderbird Club at **Scott and Renae Steffens'** home to view their car collection. Food and chairs will be provided, and members are asked to bring their own beverages. Further details will follow. November 21 is our Friendsgiving Dinner at Sean O'Casey's Restaurant in Omaha. Details to follow

New Business: **Jack Sanford** asked for a copy of our bylaws. **Martin Bierman** will locate a copy and have it available at the next meeting. **Jack Sanford** proposed raising our club dues from \$15 per year to \$25. Most clubs charge \$25, and our dues have been the lowest for years. Dues support our food bank charity donations, the cost of the website, financial support for the year-end member dinner, and other costs and fees. Most members present supported raising the dues. **Jack** also has been paying the costs of the newsletter since he became editor. He asked that the club pay the expenses (postage, ink, etc.), or the individuals who require a printed newsletter could pay a fee. Discussion favored the club paying the newsletter costs. Both of these issues will be on next month's agenda in order for club members to have more time to discuss and evaluate them. At that meeting, a vote will be taken on both issues. **John La Duke** suggested approaching companies for paid advertising in the newsletter. He will also explore the Lincoln Children's Home for our Christmas donation of gift cards.

Brag Box: **John La Duke** was contacted by an individual whose brother in Illinois was selling a 1955 and a 1957 T-Bird. He will get further information to develop an ad for the newsletter. He also helped find rubber bumper parts for a 1957 Ranchero tailgate.

Joel Hutchins now has air conditioning in his classic Mustang.

Adjournment- 7:12 p.m. with motion by **Bob Young** and second by **Jeff Brown**.

Respectfully submitted, **Mary Lou Bierman**.



Members starting on the left and going around the table:

Dick & Diane Heinke, Mary Lou & Marty Bireman, Joel Hutchins, Tom Woodman, John LaDuke, Jeff Brown, Jack Sanford, Diane & Bob Young.



TECH TALK

Map Light Installation and Bulb Change



The map or courtesy light is installed in the center of the dash above the radio for all three years T-Birds. Power for the switch and light bulb comes from a fused connection at the back of the headlight switch. The chrome bezel is installed from the front, and a sheet-metal housing is attached to it from the rear with two screws, clamping the two pieces to the dash. The plastic lens is attached to the chrome bezel from the front and is held in place with two small tabs on the top and bottom of the lens. Be careful handling the plastic lens since it is brittle, and there is limited availability. The map switch is attached to the rear housing and protrudes into the front bezel. The lamp socket is installed from the rear. In order to change the bulb, the socket must be removed from the rear. Access is limited due to the radio below, and removal of the radio allows better access to the lamp socket. The light bulb is too large to be removed from the front. The lamp socket and map switch should be tested for voltage, and if absent, a blown fuse is likely. The 6-volt fuse is 9 amps, and the 12-volt fuse is 7.5 amps. If the map switch is defective, replacement switches and wires are available from the T-Bird vendors. The door switches are also part of the circuit and should be inspected for corrosion and defects. Their wiring should also be checked for bare areas that may cause a ground.





Board of Directors Meeting Highlights

Video Conference July 17, 2026

Treasurer's Report: John Kledis is currently working on the first half-year financials and should have them ready for the next meeting. He made a quick look, and at this point it appears that we will show a functional loss. This functional loss is being partially offset by the dividend and interest from the investment account, so it appears that there will be a small net loss for the year. He discussed that the functional loss is set by revenue (membership and merchandise sales). He pointed out that most of our expenses are fixed for the year. From the balance sheet, we continue to be in good shape. BUT John stressed that we need to continue controlling overhead expenses and increase membership for the balance of 2026.

Member Renewals: Garrett Shropshire, through the Office Activity Report, documented Member Renewals. Garrett shared that Last year (12/31/2025), we ended up with 3,271 active members. Between January and June of 2026, we gained 91 new Members. In addition, we gained 18 members who returned to CTCI from prior years (before 2025). As of 6/30/2026, we are now at 2,845 active members. We are at the end of the regular renewal period. We are now working on reminders to those missing members. At this point, we have 475 members who have not renewed. Of that total, we have only received 55 notices of dropouts.

2026 Member Renewal Marketing Plan: Garrett outlined that three different chapters were sent CTCI materials for shows and events, and a fourth chapter has also made a request. In addition, one club asked for (and received) materials for a "Thunderbird Appreciation Day" event. The CTCI Office will continue to send materials to chapters to support and encourage membership in CTCI.



Office Activity: The CTCI Activity report & stats for the Factory Invoices and Merchandise Sales for the whole year of 2025 and year to date for 2026 were presented. The CTCI Office has assisted the invoice committee in processing 33 Invoice requests so far in 2026 which is up from the 10 of the same time last year. Merchandise sales for the year to date is at \$ 9,517.53. We are up in merchandise sales from the same period in 2025. In addition, since we are adding very few (fast sellers) to the inventory, our balance sheet for the store continues to get better (turning inventory into cash).

Joint Convention 2026: Based upon the CTCI Board agreement, the CTCI Office is working on the orderly shutdown of CTCI's part of the 2026 Joint TOA Committee. To date, CTCI has spent over \$8,000.00 which includes the first hotel deposit, registration plug-in, software, setup, and convention related material. We are hoping to complete this process over the next few months based upon agreement - cooperation of the members of the group.

OP & P Adjustments: The CTCI Board approved several changes to the OP & P. These changes will be integrated into a new revision of the OP & P and will be available for download starting on Tuesday after 3:00 PM Central.

Member Meeting: The CTCI Board discussed various options for the "every-two-years" Member Meeting. In the coming weeks the Board will finalize the "Date", "Time", "Place", and "Method" for the 2026 Member Meeting. Please watch for future Blasts and The Early Bird as details are finalized.

2027 Regional Convention: The CTCI Board created a group that will investigate and bring suggestions to the Board concerning the CTCI 2027 Regional Convention. CTCI is interested in partnering (co-sponsor) with a local chapter. Any chapter who might be interested in being involved with the 2027 Regional Convention should immediately reach out to the CTCI Office or E-mailing directly to Garrett Shropshire earlybird@ctci.org

Election Schedule: The CTCI Board approved the Election Schedule for the 2027 Board Position Election. It is posted below:

Election Schedule for Election of 2027 Board:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
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8/1 Last Day to send in and/or correct Candidate Questionnaire & resume

(300 words or less)

9/15 Cut-off date for election. Member lists pulled on this date, member

must be paid & active on this date to vote

9/15 Early Bird goes to Mail

9/20 The Early Bird is released to members and includes candidate resumes

9/20 Candidate resumes are posted to the CTCI website

10/10 Candidate resumes are sent to all members via "Constant

Contact – Blast"

10/15 Electronic ballots are distributed via "Opa-Vote" – election open

10/28 4:00 PM (Central) election is closed.

10/29 Election is verified and counts presented to Board President

11/20 Election results are presented and documented at Board meeting

11/20 Board certifies election results

11/20 Individual candidates are contacted as to final result of

candidate's election

11/20 + (As soon as all candidates are notified) election results are posted

and sent to all members in a blast (Highlights of the Board Meeting)

The next Board meeting is set for September 18, 2026, at 10:00 AM Central.

On behalf of the CTCI Board



The fourth generation Thunderbird

The fourth generation Ford Thunderbird is a large personal luxury car produced by Ford for the 1964 to 1966 model years. Ford restyled this generation of the Thunderbird in favor of a more squared-off, "formal" look. The only remnant of the Thunderbird's former sporty image was that the standard 390-cubic-inch 300 hp (224 kW) V8 engine needed nearly 11 seconds to push the heavy T-bird to 60 mph (97 km/h). The softly sprung suspension allowed considerable body lean, wallow, and float on curves and bumps. Contemporary testers felt that the Buick Riviera, Pontiac Grand Prix, and Chrysler 300K were substantially more roadworthy cars, but the Thunderbird retained its leading market share.

Models



1964 Thunderbird Hardtop Coupe



1965 Thunderbird Hardtop



1966 Thunderbird Town Landau

The revised model was initially offered as a hardtop, convertible, and Landau, with a vinyl roof, simulated Landau irons, and wood-grain interior appointments. The Sports Roadster was discontinued for this generation; however, a dealer-offered convertible tonneau cover and wire wheels option was still available. Total 1964 sales were excellent at 92,465 units, up nearly fifty percent from the previous year. Still, the popularity of the tonneau cover and wire wheel options continued to decline, with very few being sold. The 1964 Thunderbird was the only model of this generation to have the word 'Thunderbird' spelled out on the front hood instead of a chrome Thunderbird emblem. The only transmission available was the Cruise-O-Matic MX 3-speed automatic. The listed retail price for the 1964 two-door hardtop coupe was US\$4,486 (\$46,569 in 2025 dollars), 1965 model year saw the debut of sequential turn signals.



Several features intended for the new generation were delayed until 1965, when front disc brakes became standard equipment, and sequential turn signals, which flashed three bulbs in the broad, horizontal taillights from inside to outside, were added; the latter had been delayed by vehicle lighting regulations in the United States. Exterior trim was revised, including a new grille, Thunderbird emblem replacing the block letters on the front edge of the hood, simulated

front fender vent trim, revised Thunderbird scripts now located on the rear edge of the quarter panels, and revised taillight lens trim and a single center emblem replacing the dual lens birds and block letters, respectively. The popular "Tilt-Away" steering column continued and was a Thunderbird-recognized feature that was later shared on other upper-level Ford Products. Sales, impacted by increasing competition, including cannibalism by Ford's own newly introduced, and more affordable Mustang, dipped to 74,972. Again, the Cruise-O-Matic MX automatic was the only transmission available.



1965 Thunderbird interior

Convertibles borrowed the opening mechanism from the all-new Lincoln Continental where the trunk lid would open electrically in a single piece, hinged at the back of the vehicle, then the fabric top would fold down and disappear beneath the trunk lid. The mechanism was originally used on the Ford Fairlane 500 Skyliner hardtop convertible of the late 1950s. Opening the trunk on convertibles for storage required that the lid be opened electrically, without deploying or retracting the folding convertible top.

For 1966, the 390-cubic-inch V8's power increased to 315 hp (235 kW). The larger 428-cubic-inch (7.0 L) V-8 became optional, rated at 345 hp (257 kW) and providing a notable improvement in 0-60 mph acceleration to about 9 seconds. All models featured a new front clip. A flatter hood, reshaped front fenders, new headlight buckets, a new egg-crate grille with large Thunderbird emblem, new bumper guards, a single bumper bar, and a painted roll pan replaced the previous two model years' two-piece front bumper. The rear taillights were revised, now a 3-piece unit going the full width across the rear; the backup light, now located in the center section, replaced the formerly rear roll pan-mounted lamps.

A new Town Sedan model was offered, which featured a roof with blind quarter panels for a more 'formal' look, at the cost of rear visibility, and removed the retractable side window for rear passengers, which was offered only on the Hardtop Coupe and Convertible. The Landau trim package added to the Town Sedan a padded roof and Landau S-bars. It became by far the best-selling model, accounting for 35,105 units of the 1966 model year's 69,176 units sold. The transmission used on early-build 390 V8-equipped T-Birds was the Cruise-O-Matic MX; however, late-build 390 and all 428 V8-equipped T-Birds had the new C6 3-speed automatic installed.

TOOL TIME*

Two ironclad rules of DIY: Most of us will never have enough time to work on our cars, and most of us will never have enough room in our toolbox. There's a relationship between those limitations: The hours spent futilely searching for this or that, or an overstuffed toolbox, are less time to get stuff done on a car.

A little organization goes a long way. That doesn't mean going completely off the deep end and turning your toolbox into a spick-and-span spot that would make a boot camp drill sergeant blush. There is a middle ground, and here are five tips that might help you find the happy medium between chaos and being so organized that you are afraid to take anything out.

1. Use organizers. It might be obvious, but using organizers to separate tools is the easiest way to keep tools handy each time you go to grab them.
2. Don't get carried away with using organizers. They can often take up more space than is you had simply haphazardly thrown all your tools into a drawer.
3. Stack but be careful. Most toolbox drawers have a surprising amount of depth. With the right positioning, it's easy to stack items without creating piles. This essentially doubles the storage space inside some drawers, but the downside is that it makes it more likely for the underlying items to fall victim to "out of sight, out of mind." In the throes of a project, it's easy to forget that those line wrenches or second set of sockets are actually underneath the wrench organizers.
4. Cull duplicates (of duplicates). It might be time to take a hard look at what you have and if it makes sense to retain it all. No judgment here: we all hold on to a fair number of tools that we simply cannot part with.
5. Admit that some things shouldn't live in drawers. Some tools don't belong in the box. That includes the big hammers that take up too much space. It's just as true for small, often-used tools (think: Allen wrenches) that tend to get lost in drawers no matter how much you try to organize them. As they say, behind every successful toolbox is a good pegboard.

* Kyle Smith – Hagerty's Spring 2026 Drivers Club Magazine



2026 Calendar of Events

August 9 – [Valley Days Car Show](http://valleydays.net) – 9-3 PM Registration \$20 (valleydays.net) – CCB page 44

August – Vintage Wheels at the Fort – 10 – 2 PM – Free Registration – Vintage Vehicles 1900 – 1970 only
30th & Fort Street, Omaha, NE.

September 9-13 – [VTCL Thunderbird International Convention](http://vtci.org)* - Flagstaff, AZ

September 18 – Fast Cars & Freedom benefit for the Museum of Speed – Victory Lane, Omaha
Special Guest Al Unser, Jr. – Single ticket - \$150.00

October 4 – Joint Event with the Hawkeye Club – Viola, IA – Save the date – Details to follow

November 21 – Friendsgiving Dinner – Sean O'Casey's Pub - Save the Date – Details to follow

The August event has been changed to the Vintage Wheels at the Fort as a request from the Model A Club to the Nebraskaland T-Bird Club to participate in their show. See the Editor's email sent July 20th. This change was sanctioned by the President for the following reasons: "I would favor changing our event in August to the Fort Omaha show instead of the Valley show particularly since the Fort Omaha show is free and has shade. Marty"

Ashland July 19, 2026



Member cars:

Gray – Sanford
Sunset Coral – LaDuke
Ranchero – Woodman
Mustang - Hutchins



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*Taken from the HCTC August 2026 Newsletter
Taken from the CTCKC April 2026 Newsletter*

CHEAPER E15 GAS PLAN COULD COST YOU MORE THAN EXPECTED

Kansas City Star April 8, 2026, by Simran Bastogi, Autoblog

With gas prices squeezing household budgets across the country, the EPA has stepped in with what it's pitching as a quick fix. Starting May 1, the agency is temporarily expanding the availability of E15 gasoline, a fuel blend containing 15 percent ethanol rather than the standard 10 percent. The logic is simple enough. Ethanol is cheaper to produce than petroleum, so blending more of it into the fuel supply should nudge prices at the pump downward by 10-25 cents per gallon less than standard gas. For drivers already wincing every time they fill up, that sounds like good news.

The EPA says E15 is safe for most 2001 and newer vehicles; however, the bigger risks apply to older vehicles, small engines, and equipment that sits unused for long periods.

YOUR ENGINE MIGHT NOT GET A GOOD DEAL

Ethanol and gasoline do not behave the same way inside an engine, and that difference matters a great deal depending on what you're driving. Ethanol contains less energy per liter than gasoline, which can slightly reduce fuel economy, meaning any savings at the pump can evaporate quickly on the road.

The concern goes beyond efficiency, though. Ethanol can separate from the fuel over time, essentially breaking down into a sludge that damages carburetors and fuel systems. Older vehicles, small engine equipment like lawn mowers, some motorcycles, and cars not specifically built to handle higher ethanol concentrations are the most vulnerable.

For drivers holding onto a car that is 20 years old or more, the risk is real.

LONG-TERM COSTS VS SHORT-TERM SAVINGS

Fuel system damage from ethanol exposure tends to be insidious. Over months and years of use, seals and rubber components in older fuel systems can degrade, injectors can clog, and carburetors can corrode. Repairs to these systems can easily run into hundreds of dollars, effectively wiping out any money saved at the pump many times over. Drivers of non-flex fuel vehicles, which are not engineered to tolerate E15 regularly, face the steepest risk.

The EPA's plan may ease the pressure on wallets in the short run, but for drivers with older vehicles, the true price of E15 could turn out to be much higher than what shows up at the pump.





Quentin Moeller former member passed away during the week of July 20 – 24, 2026, in Parker, Colorado, surrounded by family.

Quentin joined the Nebraskaland T-Bird Club in 2020 and served as Club Secretary from 2021 to 2025.



Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club

President	Martin Bierman	- 402-289-4516
Vice President	Rob Kinsey	- 402-434-9053
Treasurer	Jeff Brown	- 402-572-1995
Secretary	Mary Lou Bierman	- 402-289-4516
CTCI Rep	Martin Bierman	- 402-289-4516
Newsletter	Jack Sanford	- 402-578-3743
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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 Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club, care of Jeff Brown, Treasurer, 7225 S. 103rd Street, LaVista, NE 68128.

Member Birthdays

August

Jim Lantz – 12

If you want to be recognized,
please send your birthdate to
jesanford@cox.net. et.

