

Thunder Words



**February 2025 ~ Volume 48, #2
Dedicated to the 55, 56, & 57 Thunderbird
Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club
Chapter 65, Classic Thunderbird Club International**



Pres Says: My battery is dead. Last purchased in 2021 so it's due. I'll check NAPA again. Can't wait to fire up the bird when it's warmer! Our first 2025 business meeting will be March 20th, 6 PM, at the Copper Kettle in Omaha. Bring ideas for club events and join us even if the bird isn't quite ready. Always good conversation. Hope to see you in March!

Rob Kinsey, President



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BIRD TECH TALK

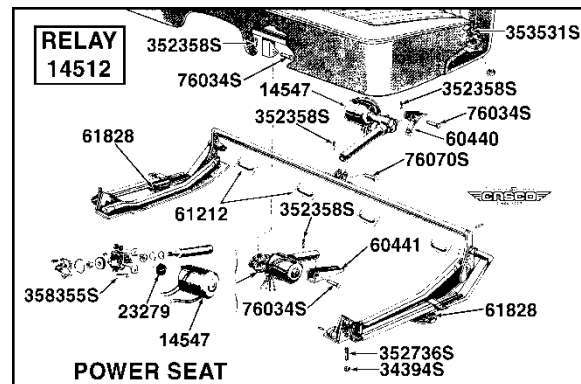
By Martin Bierman

“I need to remove my T-bird seat”



The owner of a 1955 T-Bird wants to remove his seat in order to work under the dash. All 1955 T-Birds had power seats, and the seat frame can be separated from the power seat frame rails and removed without removing the power seat rail mechanism. First, raise the seat all the way up with the vertical seat motor. Next, move the seat all the way forward with the horizontal motor. This will allow access to the front seat rail bolts.

Remove the two ½ inch seat frame nuts at each front end of the seat. A ratchet end wrench works the best for this since the front nuts are in tight quarters. Next remove the rear seat ½” nuts. The rear of the seat can now be propped up higher with a board and the clip on the transmission tube end of the horizontal motor under the seat can be removed. Finally remove the rear prop and prop the front of the seat up and disconnect the four motor wires (black, yellow, red, and green) from the loom. The seat bottom and back can now be lifted and removed as a unit with the horizontal motor attached or the seat back can be removed from the bottom at the hinge attachments and then each can be removed. A helper will be required, and it is easier to remove the seat from the passenger side if possible due to the steering wheel.



1956 and 1957 T-Birds had a similar power seat mechanism or a manual seat option. On cars with manual seats, it is easier to remove the seat with the seat tracks attached due the cable attachment under the seat bottom. The seat and its tracks can be removed by removing the four nuts from the underside of the car which hold the tracks to the floor. The seat can then be removed attached to its tracks.



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Editors: **If you are removing your seat, you may want to consider this modification.** JES

Taken from CTCI Technical Google Group — ctc.org
POWER SEAT MODIFICATION 7)

Install the cover and screw it tight. By Scott McGilvary This tech tip is complement of Peter Leddy who was working on a power seat while I stopped by. Some owners need more leg room than their power seat is capable of giving. By performing the following modification, you can add an additional inch plus is achievable. If you don't think an Inch is significant, try moving the seat in your family car an inch out of its normal position and see. Picture #1 is of the seat frame out of the car and turned over. The two bolts in the middle of the track hold the seat to the



frame. Picture #2 shows the rear bolt removed. Just rearward of these two bolt heads is a "nub" that is the stop for the ball bearing over which the seat moves. This "nub" needs to be flattened. If it is just cut off the resulting hole will not let the ball pass. Use a punch to knock the "nub" nearly flat and use a file, grinder or Dremel tool to smooth it down. The ball will now stop at the head of the first bolt when it is reinstalled in the track. An additional eighth of an inch can be gained by cutting the rear part of the bolt head away. Remember to do both sides and your passenger will always be ahead of you. If you didn't do it when the car was restored clean and lube the tracks to insure smooth operation. Also sight down the tracks to see if a previous owner's weight has bent the tracks. Picture #3 shows stock travel of the seat and Picture #4 shows the gain. Note Distance from end of silver track and seat frame. Picture #5 shows a second hole drilled in the floor bracket, so the seat has the range it needs. This second hole may not be necessary

but why take a chance, it's a lot of work to do It later. This procedure is only good on 4-way

seats. Dial-O-Matic seats are limited by their motors and theoretically would stop where they always did, but in a worst-case scenario this modification could harm the motor.



Big D, Little birds

CTCKC Helpful Hint for Winter Driving February 2024

Spray Silicone Lubricant on Wiper Blades

We've all experienced screeching windshield wiper blades while driving, especially folks that live in regions with cold winter months. When it's not really raining or snowing, but water and gunk is kicked up from the road by the vehicles in front of you, the moving parts don't have much lubrication to keep them quiet. To eliminate this noisy issue, first, clean your windshield wiper blades with a bit of soap and water and then coat the moving parts with some spray silicone lubricant. The silicone will keep the wiper blades running smoothly and quietly throughout the winter months. You may need to reapply the silicone spray a few times, so add the step to your winterizing routine.



FLASH BACK

1987 CTCI *Early Bird*

by Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club member Clarence Johnson

September-October 1987

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PEAK PERFORMANCE FROM YOUR CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD

by Clarence Johnson, #321

The Classic Thunderbird is now fully thirty years old. While many people feel that this is part of its charm, some people who drive their cars a great deal are aware of certain deficiencies in their Birds' performance. Any reading of an issue of the *Early Bird* tells of owners' problems with engine overheating, hard starting, and problems finding suitable gasoline. Actually, the Classic Thunderbird has done very well. It would be nearly impossible for thirty years to go by without showing the need for improvement in any product.

One very minor change can be made that will really improve the daily performance of any early Thunderbird. This change is applicable to all three years, and attacks several problems at the same time. The recommended spark plugs for engines in early T'birds are either Champion 870s, or Champion F14Ys, depending on where you get your information. In a recent check of auto parts stores, I found that neither of these spark plug types is available now, so it makes little difference. The recommended type is now Champion F11Y. This supersedence came as a surprise to me, since for the last twenty years or so, I have been using Champion F9Ys with excellent results, and so I haven't been trying to buy the old type plugs. I recommend that everyone try the F9Ys for themselves.

The recommended spark plugs, the F14Ys and 870s, are called a very "hot" spark plug in the parlance of the automotive industry. They are the hottest spark plugs that have ever been available of the thread and seat type that will

fit cylinder heads of the Y-V8 engines used in early Fords and Thunderbirds.

In a hot spark plug, the porcelain tip inside the engine is longer. Heat from inside the combustion chamber must travel a longer path before it can be conducted through the metal casing of the spark plug to the cylinder head, and finally into the engines cooling system.

The original purpose of using these hotter spark plugs was to burn off deposits that accumulate inside the combustion chambers and especially on the spark plug tips. This was desirable in the mid 1950's, when the average length of an urban trip by car was much shorter than it is today, and extended freeway driving was unheard of except in a handful of cities around the nation. These shorter trips and less complete engine warmups favored the collection of deposits in the combustion chambers.

The problems caused by these spark plugs in today's driving are at least three in number:

1. a partial cause of engine overheating
2. hard starting after a "hot soak"
3. contributes to pinging or knocking using today's grades of gasoline.

The use of the F9Y type of spark plug is preferable, but if the engine burns oil, they may oil foul. If the carburetor or other parts of the fuel or ignition systems are not in good condition, they may gas foul. In either of these cases, use the F11Y type for at least partial benefits.



CTCI NEWS

Save the Date

Joint Thunderbird Convention
CTCI - Grapevine, Texas 2025 - VTCI
September 9-13, 2025
Hosted by
Classic Thunderbird Club International
&
Vintage Thunderbird Club International






Inaugural, Joint International Thunderbird Club Event: Where Thunderbird enthusiasts from around the world are invited to this first-ever joint Thunderbird Club event hosted by VTCI and CTCI

Hotel Information
Embassy Suites Rate: \$159 per night
2401 Bass Pro Drive, North Grapevine, Texas 76051 (972) 724-2600, Option 1
Reservation Link: All Thunderbird Club – 2025 Convention event; Group Code: C. 90E;
Weblink: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/>
Cutoff Date: August 12, 2021

Tentative Schedule

Tuesday Sept 9 th	Convention Set up *Bird Bath* DIY
Wednesday Sept 10 th	10AM Convention Check-In Begins - Embassy *Bird Bath* DIY
	1PM Depart For AT&T Stadium ...includes Motor Coach and AT&T admission
	5PM Featured Speaker - INVITED Guest John Kraman, MECLUM Auctions
	Dinner On Own
Thursday Sept 11 th	8AM-5PM Convention Check-In Embassy and *Bird Bath* DIY
	9AM VTCI BOD/Gen Membership/VTCI Judge Training
	9AM CTCI Judge Training
	1PM (Attendee Choice) Depart For Thunderbird Driving Tour to Texas Motor Speedway
	1PM (Attendee Choice) Depart For George Bush Library ...includes Motor Coach and admission
	5:30PM Featured Speaker - Steve Legel - "The Greying of the Classic Car Hobby"
	Dinner On Own
Friday Sept 12 th	8AM Separate VTCI and CTCI Owners and Operators Meetings
	9AM VTCI and CTCI Separate Concours Judging - All Classes - Embassy Suites Parking Lot
	10AM Depart for Dallas Arboretum-incl Motor Coach/admission- for car owners not involved with Concours Judging-lunch on own at the Terrace Cafe
	12PM Combined VTCI/CTCI Concours Judges Lunch
	6PM The All Thunderbird Party with Cash Bar, Recognition Awards and Entertainment
Saturday Sept 13 th	7AM Swap Meet-Hotel Parking Lot
	10AM On Your own Grapevine Historic District Shopping - Free Shuttle from Hotel
	10AM Thunderbird Driving Tour: Sam Pack's Private Automobile Collection; Lunch
	1PM Tour concludes with stop at Minter's Thunderbird Restoration facility for VIP Tour
	5:30PM Cocktail Hour/6:30PM Award Banquet ...Plated Entree w/ cash bar please mark preference below.
	Chicken, Salmon, or Steak, (Includes Salad, Desserts or Dietary meal (plus Coffee/Tea). All Gluten Free - -
Sunday Sept 14 th	Bon Voyage



Grapevine Texas

While Texas is known for its wide-open Western spaces, big modern cities and famous small towns, the suburban city of Grapevine has carved out a historic niche from the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolises that will surprise and gladden the hearts of Old West fans. The city has invested a great deal in its vibrant, walkable downtown, with its restaurants, shops and nighttime entertainment as well as its ever-popular Grapevine Vintage Railroad.

grapevinechamber.org



Grapevine Vintage Railroad
Starting Seasonal Vintage Railroad



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CTCI Elects New Officers for 2025

Today, 1/10/2025, the CTCI Board met to elect the officers who will lead CTCI in 2025.

First, the Board welcomed two new members to the 2025 Board. They are:

Bill Jurkonie – Director Region 4

David Berkey – Director at Large

The newly elected officers are:

President – Bob Bly

Vice President – Marsha Hash

Treasurer – John Kledis

Secretary – Brian Carron

The board also made the following appointments to the Board

Director Emeritus – Chuck Thompson

Ex Officio – Darcy Knapp

Newly Elected President Bob Bly thanked the outgoing 2024 board for their service. He made a special note to thank those who have completed their service and will be leaving the Board. They include:

Chuck Thompson – President and Director at Large

Charlie Hensley – Director Region 4

In addition to the Election of Officers, the Board did conduct a few items of Business:

The Board approved the final Income / Expense report for the 2024 Convention held in Des Moines, IA. This also included the action to finalize the allocation of the \$8,000.00 of seed money for the Convention. The 2024 Convention did show a profit of \$631.57.

The Board approved the allocation of \$8,000.00 for the seed money for the 2025 Joint Convention, which will be held in Grapevine, TX.

Treasurer's Report: John Kledis presented an abbreviated Treasurer's report. He is still working on completing the Year End but can estimate that the club will have a functional loss of about \$51,000. Including the gains from our investment the final loss for CTCI will be 15 to 20 thousand dollars. He stressed that CTCI needs to reduce overhead expenses and increase membership in order to break even for 2025.



Investment Fund Update: Garrett Shropshire reported that the investment account is greater than the original investment and greater than the end-of-year 2023. The investment returns for the year 2025 are over 3.7% annual yield rate. The investment plan follows the previously approved "U S Treasury Bond ladder". The yield rates in 2025 continue to be subject to the Fed Treasury Rate.

Member Renewals: Garrett presented membership renewals through the end of 2024. Last year (12/31/2023), we had 4,015 active members. This year, we gained 215 new members and 20 previous members, ending the year at 3,601. We continue to convert new members from the Test Drive Program. We are deep in the 2025 Membership drive.

Cost Saving Ideas: The board agreed to implement multiple cost-saving ideas. This includes:

Getting rid of the excess office equipment (file cabinets, racks, and show cabinets)

Eliminating all excess Early Birds and associated storage

Crating all CTCI Museum Items

Moving the CTCI Invoice Operations into the Museum space.

Eliminate all Excess Over-Book runs of the Early Birds

Change CTCI Office to 4 days a week (Tuesday through Friday)

Give new members a window sticker in place of dash plaque

Eliminate printing the Concours Rules for new member packets

Change credit card processor to reduce merchant fees

Office Activity: Garrett reported on Invoice and Merchandise sales. For 2024 CTCI has had over \$14,000.00 in Merchandise Sales. In addition, 67 requests were made for factory invoices.

New Committees for 2025: The board approved the following Committees for 2025. The Committees include Membership; Publicity; By-Law; Joint Activity;



OP&P Clean-up; '55-'57 Authenticity; Modern Classic – Retro Activity; and Executive – Finance.

Appointment for 2025: The board approved two appointments for 2025. Chuck Thompson was appointed as the Ex Officio. Darcy Knapp was appointed Director Emeritus.

2025 Joint Thunderbird Convention Update: Brian Carron presented the Convention Update. The current planned date for the Convention is September 9 through 13, 2025. Brian updated the board on some difficulties in finalizing the hotel contracts. The convention will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel located in North Grapevine, Texas (Dallas – Fort Worth area). All members were reminded to get on the CTCL website and get the convention form. In addition, all members are encouraged to go to the Hotel website and reserve their rooms. Embassy Suites, 2401 Bass Pro Drive, North Grapevine, Texas 76051. <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/all-thunderbird-club-2025/> Or call (972) 724-2600, Option 1, Group Code C 90E.

Other Joint Thunderbird Activities: Brian Carron also presented the other possible Joint Thunderbird activities. These include Carlisle Ford Nationals (Carlisle, PA) which will be held June 6-8, 2025.

The next Board meeting is set for March 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM Central

On Behalf of the Board, **Bob Bly, President**

Just for fun!

Three sisters, ages 92, 94, and 96, live in a house together. One night the 96-year-old draws a bath. She puts one foot in and pauses. She yells down the stairs, “Was I getting in or out of the bath?” The 94-year-old yells back, “I don’t know. I’ll come up and see.” She starts up the stairs and pauses. Then she yells out, “Was I going up the stairs or down?” The 92-year-old is sitting at the kitchen table having tea and listening to her sisters. She shakes her head and says, “I sure hope I never get that forgetful.” She knocks on wood for good measure. She then replies,

“I’ll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who’s at the door.”



Member News



Memorials



David Arthur Freeberg was born on April 1, 1943, in Fremont, Nebraska, to Reverend Carl and Gayle (Brixius) Freeberg. He grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, and graduated from Central High School. He later attended classes at both Luther College and UNO. While working as an orderly, Dave met Sandra Clark, who was one of the student nurses. The two were married on March 20, 1964. They were blessed with two children, Mari Anne and Jill.

For many years, Dave worked in sales in the automotive parts industry. Dave had a charismatic personality and could talk to anyone, making them feel instantly comfortable. He was very good at his job and won numerous sales awards. Dave also appreciated history and volunteered at the SAC Aerospace Museum in Ashland, Nebraska. Dave's biggest passion was for classic cars. He was a Ford guy owning Mercurys, Mustangs, Cougars, a Thunderbird, a Crown Victoria, and a Studebaker. His favorite was his 1951 Mercury. As a classic car enthusiast, Dave, along with Sandy, belonged to almost every car club in Omaha, and they had a lot of good times together going to local car shows.

Outside of classic cars, Dave's children and grandchildren were his pride and joy. He loved his family very much and was an outstanding husband, father, and grandfather. He will be remembered for his sense of humor, his great storytelling abilities, and for being loyal and dedicated to his family and friends.

David passed away on December 18, 2024, in Omaha, Nebraska. He was preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Gayle Freeberg, and his sister, Margaret Inouye. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Sandra Freeberg; daughters, Mari Anne (Dan) Hartmann and Jill (Joe) Evans; grandchildren, Remmi (Dillon) Plath, Reese Hartmann, Ren Hartmann, Joseph Evans, and Grace Evans; and great-grandchild, Brooks Plath.



September 4, 1933 – January 18, 2025

Donald J. Sudbeck, 91 of Omaha, Nebraska, passed away peacefully on January 18, 2025, at home.

Donald was born on a farm west of Bow Valley, Nebraska, on September 4, 1933, to Arthur and Rose Sudbeck. Graduating from Holy Trinity High School in 1951, he worked on the family farm until he moved to Omaha. Don served in the US Army Reserves. Active in the construction and real estate industry his entire working life, starting at Rorick, then Kiewit Construction, he left to partner with Allen Dickey, and they started a residential home building company, mainly in the Millard area. They built many homes in the Millard area. Later he developed and owned apartment complexes and then land development. After “Retirement” he owned and managed farmland in Cedar and Knox County, Nebraska.

Don loved traveling, reading, playing cards with his friends, hunting, fishing, gardening, golf and “cocktail hour.” Over the years, Don loved celebrating the holidays with his family and actively supported a variety of organizations including the Catholic Church, the Huskers, the Shriners, and many others.

Don was a member of the Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club for many years. He hadn’t been active for several years.





Please use the attached form to submit your dues. The dues are still a low of \$15 per year, probably the best deal in town. Established in 1975, the **Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club** is dedicated to preserving and enjoying one of the greatest cars ever created: the **Ford Thunderbird**.

Advantages of club membership include:

- Regular driving events and monthly meetings every third Thursday
- Social functions such as picnics, shows, and the annual Christmas/Friendsgiving party
- Members with restoration and repair experience
- Assistance with parts acquisition and location
- CTCI master judge to assist with authenticity issues
- Monthly newsletter with a calendar of events and tech articles
- Club participation in car shows and parades

2025 Membership dues - \$15.00		
Name(s) _____		
Address _____		
City/Town _____	State _____	Zip _____
Phone Numbers:		
Home _____	Cell _____	Work _____
Email(s) _____		
Please send this form and check for membership dues payable to Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club care of Jeff Brown , Treasurer, 7225 South 103 Street, LaVista, NE 68128		



2025 Calendar of Events

March 2 – 51st Annual Rocky Mountain Manginelli Swap Meet – Sandhills Global Event Center - Lincoln (same location, new name – 4100 North 84th Street)

March 20 – Business Meeting – 6:00 PM – Coffee Kettle Café, 9905 Sapp Bros. Dr. Omaha, NE

FOR SALE

Dave Freeburg's family is selling Dave's 1957 Thunderbird. Dave's health issues are prompting this action.

My parents were active members of the Thunderbird Club in Omaha. My Dad's health has turned, and we are looking to sell his 1957 Ford Thunderbird. It has a 312-engine, automatic transmission, power steering, and brakes. It is Star Mist Blue with a black interior. It has a new battery, runs well, and is a presentable car. It has a hard top with portholes.

(402) 216-8579. I am a local in Omaha and could show the car.

Mari Anne Hartmann



Member Birthday
February
 John Stekly - 4
 Joyce Aboud - 10
 Bob McGowan - 20
 Joan Lacy - 23
 If you want to be recognized,
 please send your birthdate to
jesanford@cox.net.

The **Member Profile** feature needs your help. Send your story to Jack at jesanford@cox.net.

Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club

President	Robert Kinsey	402-434-9053
Vice President	Martin Bierman	402-289-4516
Treasurer	Jeff Brown	402-572-1995
Secretary	Quentin Moeller	303-204-1761
CTCI Rep	Martin Bierman	402-289-4516
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Sponsor	Lee Sapp Ford	402-342-6767

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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

