

# Thunder Words



June 2025 ~ Volume 48, #6  
Dedicated to the 55, 56, & 57 Thunderbird  
Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club  
Chapter 65, Classic Thunderbird Club International



**PREZ SAYS:** After a year of planning, we found a great weather day to do the Lincoln tour and lunch. On National Thunderbird Appreciation Day, too! Pioneer Park seemed to be the hit of the tour. My wife, **Vicki**, broke her hip on Mother's Day eve, and an impromptu stop to visit her at the Southlake Village rehab facility brightened her (and my) day. Many thanks to **Marty** and **Mary Lou**, **Jack** and **Karen**, **Dick** and **Diane**, **Tom Woodman** and **Bob** and **Cathy** for participating. The tour included five Classic Thunderbirds, all of which functioned without a hitch. Check the newsletter for upcoming meetings and events. **President Rob Kinsey**

Sonic Drive-In Tour 6/22/25  
1:30 PM - Meet at Jack's  
18112 Atlas Street - Omaha

June Dates:  
14 – Flag Day  
15 – Father's Day

Next meeting June 19, 2025.  
6 pm – Trackside Bar & Grill  
Waverly, NE



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<https://www.facebook.com/nebraskatbirds/>

Sponsored by Lee Sapp Ford



## May Meeting Minutes

### May 15, 2025, Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club Meeting Minutes

Vice President **Martin Bierman** opened the meeting at 6:10 PM. Present were **Marty and Mary Lou Bierman, Dick and Diane Heinke, Jeff Brown, Joel Hutchins, Bob McGowan, Don Indra, Alan Tast, and Jack Sanford**. Marty explained that last Saturday, Vicki Kinsey had been getting ice when she was struck by a ton of ice coming out of the freezer, causing her to fall and break her right hip. Surgery was on Sunday at Bryon West, and on Wednesday, she was transferred to Southlake Rehab Center. We all wished her a speedy recovery.

A motion by **Jeff Brown** to accept the April meeting minutes as scribed in the May newsletter was seconded by **Bob McGowan**. The motion passed.

**Jeff Brown** presented the Treasurer's report, noting that only one member remains unpaid. Jeff Brown then moved to donate \$250.00 to the Texas Club for the 2025 Joint Convention, which Robert McGowan seconded. The motion passed. **Bierman, Hutchins, and Sanford** will be attending the convention. Jeff reported that the ENWICC dues for 2025 have been paid, and he is in the process of paying the exemption state tax.

#### Old Business:

Only **Bierman, McGowan, Tast, and Sanford** indicated that they would attend the T-Bird Convention. It was explained that it only took two cars, one leading and one following, to be a tour, so the tour is on for Sunday. **Joel** said, if allowed, he might join in one of his special cars.

#### New Business:

**Marty** suggested that attending the joint CTCI/VTCL Convention would be worth the effort, as it features a new display at the Medal of Honor Museum. Jack reported on the June Sonic tour, noting that he changed the starting point to his home, rather than the Discount Tire parking lot. **Marty** will hold his Tech session on July 19<sup>th</sup> at his storage garage in Elkhorn at noon, with lunch at Jukes around 1:30 PM.

**Mary Lou** has two new stores to show the ladies. We still need an event for August and September. A couple of car shows were suggested, Valley Days, August 10<sup>th</sup>, and Arlington, August 23rd. Jack reported on the Loess Hills October Tour. No date has been set. Lincoln's turn for the Friendsgiving Party in November. **Jim Lantz and Jeff Hoffman** will be hosting the event at Fire Thorn Golf Course; the exact location they hosted it at in 2021.

**Brags: Jack** reported that a failed shock was causing his balance problem. A new one was installed. At the Saturday Skills and Grills Car show, he received a trophy in the 1956 category, and his door prize was a nice set of wrenches.

**Bob McGowan** reported that he had a stroke on January 16, 2025. He is now fully recovered but has a load of Prescriptions. He had to spend a couple of days in the hospital. His lack of voice control was the telling sign. He suggested that if you suspect having a stroke or heart attack, call the EMTs, don't walk into the emergency room.

**Alan Tast**, a former member, rejoined today. He had a widow-maker episode in February and lost 20 pounds.

**Jeff Brown** stated that his T-Bird started after sitting idle all winter.

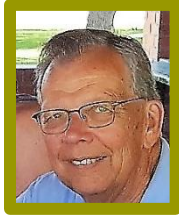
**Don Indra** is working on someone else's 1957 T-Bird.

A secretary is needed. If anyone is interested in taking on club responsibilities, please step forward. The meeting closed at 6:50 p.m. after Bob McGowan's motion, seconded by Jeff Brown, was passed. Respectively reported by **Jack Sanford**, Acting Secretary.



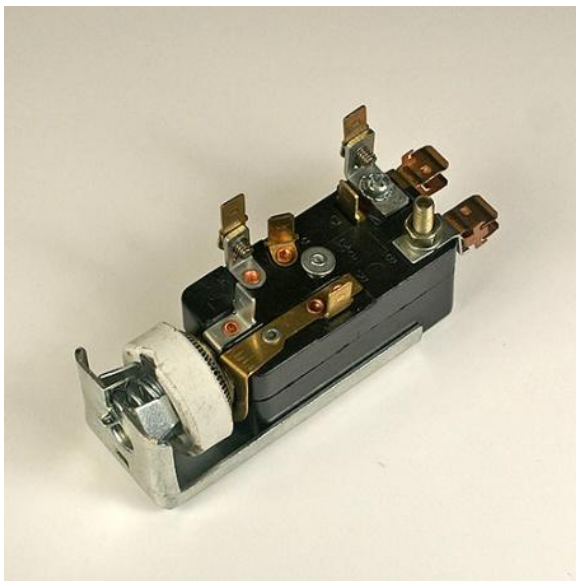
## BIRD TECH TALK

By Martin Bierman



### T-Bird Circuit Voltage Considerations

It is tempting to dive into solving an electrical problem as long as the key is in the off position. After all, what can happen if the key is off? There is the story of an individual who had his wedding ring welded to an electrical fixture and suffered a third-degree burn to the finger because he contacted a “hot” circuit under the dash when the key was off. Turning the key off does not turn off the power to all the electrical circuits; one must **DISCONNECT THE BATTERY** to do this.



So, what circuits are “hot” when the key is in the off position? In the '55 -'57 T-Bird, a large yellow wire is connected to the battery cable at the starter solenoid lug. This wire is “hot” as long as the battery is connected, and it runs through the firewall to the headlight switch, which then powers multiple circuits. The headlight switch contains circuit breakers and one glass fuse. Wires that are hot run from the rear of the switch to the clock, cigarette lighter, and the courtesy light. The courtesy light circuit has the glass fuse at the rear of the switch, and the cigarette lighter has a fuse on the end of its case; the clock should have a fuse inline. The headlight, parking, and taillight wires come off the top of the switch, as well as the brake light wire. All the instrument light bulbs also receive power from

the switch. These circuits can all have voltage when activated. The switch also sends power to the ignition switch. Additionally, there is another yellow wire at the starter solenoid lug that enters the firewall and is attached to several breakers. Wires to the power seat and power window relays run from these breakers and are “hot” at all times. Finally, the voltage regulator and horn relay receive power from a yellow wire.

A significant portion of the car's circuits are “hot” in the key off position at all times, and the headlight switch plays a major role in this. This is why it is mandatory that whenever any electrical work is done, the battery be disconnected; one should also remove any jewelry, especially when working under the dash.

## CTCI NEWS

**Treasurer's Report:** John Kledis presented the 4-month financials. In the first four months CTCI is showing a small net loss. We are very encouraged by the cost savings efforts to date. 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 also let the board know that the Tax Report 990 for 2024 is now complete and has been filed. We have paid our taxes for the year. Even with all of the cost savings efforts, he stressed that CTCI needs to continue to reduce overhead expenses wherever possible and increase membership.

**Member Renewals:** Garrett 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 50 new members as well as an additional 13 members who have returned from previous years. As of April 30, 2025 we are at 3,024. 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 Data:** Garrett praised the chapters who have already sent in their annual required chapter membership roster. As a result, those chapters also received a listing of all CTCI members who are in the chapter area but not members of the local chapter. We are very excited by this partnership where both local chapters and CTCI are able to expand.

**Cost Saving Ideas:** We have now implemented most of the "Board Approved" cost saving ideas. To date, all of The Early Bird savings suggested have been incorporated. We are currently estimating that CTCI will save over \$12,000 annually on these ideas related to The Early Bird. We are so very excited to see that these ideas will help to improve our financial situation and turn a possible loss into a possible profit in 2025.

In addition, we have completed the following items:

- 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
- Combining the CTCI Invoice Operations & Museum space.
- Change CTCI Office to 4 days a week (Tuesday through Friday)
- Give new members a window sticker in lieu 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 2025 CTCI has had over \$4,700 in Merchandise Sales and is higher than last year. In addition, 16 requests have been received for factory invoices.

**Committee Reports Received:**



**Newsletter Committee**

- Newsletter contest will include new award levels for the 2025 contest.  
(contact Marsha Hash for more information)

**Membership Committee**

- Providing materials for chapters to promote CTCl

**2025 Joint Thunderbird Convention Update:** The current planned date for the Convention is September 9 through 13, 2025. The board was updated on room night commitments and registrations to date. Interest has been so high that we had to re-negotiate additional rooms (for the third time). The Volunteer list was presented. If you want to volunteer, please contact your Regional Director. The convention will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel located in North Grapevine, Texas (Dallas – Fort Worth area). All members are reminded to get on the CTCl website and get the convention form. [CLICK HERE](#)  
In addition all members are encouraged to go the Hotel website and reserve rooms. [CLICK HERE](#)

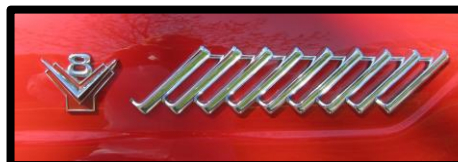
**2026 Thunderbird Convention Update:** While it is early, planning has started for the 2026 Convention. It is our goal to again work with VTCl under the Thunderbird Owners Association to hold the Convention on Route 66. With the 100-year anniversary of the famous Route 66 in 2026, we hope to combine the Convention along with the Route 66 celebrations. More information will be forthcoming as the planning starts to take shape.

**Participation at Ford Nationals – Carlisle, PA:** Participation at Ford Nationals in Carlisle was discussed. We have several commitments to help out at the shared CTCl/VTCl tent greeting guests and highlighting benefits of Thunderbird ownership. For anyone planning on going to the show June 6-8, please stop in at the tent and say “Hello”.

**Thunderbird Appreciation Day:** Finally, to all CTCl Members, please remember that this Sunday, May 18th is Thunderbird Appreciation Day. We are hopeful that everyone will get a chance to socialize with other CTCl members and enjoy their Thunderbird.

**The next Board meeting is set for July 18, 2025, at 10:00 AM Central.**

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





## 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/all-thunderbird-club-2025/>

Cutoff Date: August 12, 2025.

## Tentative Schedule

Tuesday Sept 9 <sup>th</sup>	Convention Set up "Bird Bath" DIY
Wednesday Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>	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, MECUM Auctions
Thursday Sept 11 <sup>th</sup>	Dinner On Own
	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
Friday Sept 12 <sup>th</sup>	5:00PM Featured Speaker – Steve Legel – "The Greying of the Classic Car Hobby"
	Dinner On Own
	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
Saturday Sept 13 <sup>th</sup>	12PM Combined VTCI/CTCI Concours Judges Lunch
	6PM The All Thunderbird Party with Cash Bar, Recognition Awards and Entertainment
	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
Sunday Sept 14 <sup>th</sup>	1PM Tour concludes with stop at Minter's Thunderbird Restoration facility for VIP Tour
	5:30PM Cocktail Hour/6:30PM Award Banquet ...Plated Entrée w/ cash bar please mark preference below.
	Chicken, Salmon, or Steak, (Includes Salad, Dessert) or Dietary meal (plus Coffee/Tea). All Gluten Free - -
	Bon Voyage



## Thunderbird Appreciation Day – Lincoln – May 18, 2025



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<https://www.facebook.com/nebraskatbirds/>

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## Member News

**Five Little Birds and one modern iron made the Thunderbird Appreciation Day Lincoln tour. President Rob Kinney led the tour, which was followed by Marty and Mary Lou Bierman, Dick and Diane Heinke, Jack Sanford and guest Karen Hippensteel, Tom Woodman, and Bob and Cathy McGowan. The tour covered much of downtown Lincoln, the University of Nebraska, the Capitol of Nebraska, Pioneer Park, lunch at Lee's Chicken, and a visit to Vicki Kinsey's rehab center, where she is recovering from a broken hip. Delightful day.**







Thanks to Cathy and Bob McGowan for the pictures.



Marty at the Skills and Grilles Car Show – Gretna, NE – May 10, 2025





Jack's car at the Skills and Grilles Car Show – Gretna, NE - May 10, 2025

Nebraskaland Business Meeting – May 15, 2025



Alan, Jeff, Mary Lou, Marty, Joel,

Don, Dick, Diane, Bob, Jack

# 2025 Calendar of Events

**June 19 – Business Meeting – Trackside Bar and Grill – 6:00 PM – 13901 Guildford 7, Waverly**

**June 22 – Sonic Tour – Meet 1:30 PM – Jack’s, 18112 Atlas Street, Omaha, NE 68130**

**July 19 – Marty’s Tech Session – 11:30 am - Elkhorn Shop – Mary Lou shopping – Lunch at Jukes**

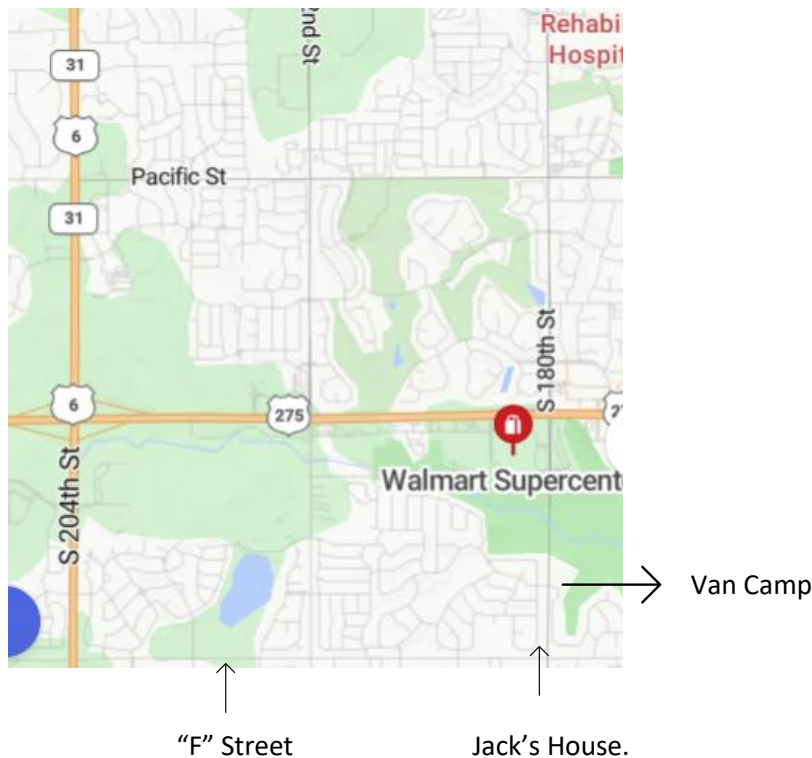
**September 9-14 – CTCI/VTCL International Convention – Grapevine, TX**

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

**How to find Jack’s house.** 1. Enter 18112 Atlas Street, Omaha, NE 68130 into your smartphone or car’s GPS, then follow the directions provided by the lovely lady.

2. If you are coming from Lincoln, use highway 6 to “F” Street. Turn right or east on “F” and travel east to 180<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn left or north and go about half a mile to Van Camp (stoplight), turn left, and then make another sharp left onto 181<sup>st</sup> Street from Van Camp. Head south about one-half a mile to where the road turns into Atlas Street, and there on the corner is my place, 18112 Atlas Street.

3. If you are coming from the North, East, or West, find 180<sup>th</sup> Street and travel to Van Camp. Turn right on Van Camp and take the immediate left onto 181<sup>st</sup> Street. Where 181<sup>st</sup> runs into Atlas Street, the house on your right is 18112 Atlas Street, and you have arrived at Jack’s place. As a point of reference, Highway 275 is also known as Center Street.





## Member Birthday

**June**

Marva Hansen - 3

Tom Woodman – 27

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

- **June 4:** Hug your cat day
- **June 5:** Moonshine Day
- **June 6:** "D-Day"
- **June 14:** Flag Day
- **June 15:** Father's Day
- **June 19:** Juneteenth Day
- **June 20:** First Day of summer
- **June 20:** **World Music Day**
- **June:** Candy appreciation month

The drive shafts on the '55 -'57  
"Birds had the part number  
stenciled in 1-inch yellow  
letters. There were different  
numbers depending on  
whether it was equipped with  
an automatic, standard, or  
overdrive. Each year had its  
own numbers."

The **Member News**

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

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

***Nebraskaland Thunderbird Club***

President	Rob Kinsey	402-434-9053
Vice President	Martin Bierman	402-289-4516
Treasurer	Jeff Brown	402-572-1995
Secretary		
CTCI Rep	Martin Bierman	402-289-4516
Newsletter	Jack Sanford	402-392-1350
Historian	Robert McGowan	402-334-2593
Social Media	John La Duke	701-330-7908
Sponsor	Lee Sapp Ford	402-342-6767

"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.



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)

