



T Bird News

North Texas Vintage
Thunderbirds, Inc.

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Prez Prattle

Well it's been a hectic month in the ol' ragtime garage. November is when I feel the heat for the year's unmet goals and suddenly...Christmas is upon us...much to do...

First, there have been a couple of recent firsts for my bird since the restoration (completed four years ago already!). These would be parades! Some may think I am a bit leery of this activity since a parade "sparked" the big fire that ruined the ol' gal and put 'er in the barn 25+ years ago, but no...just haven't taken the time until now. Betsy, Ron and I were privileged to escort some of our honored veterans in the annual event through downtown Dallas. I removed the tonneau cover and made room for three. The guy up front was a sailor who served on a tanker hauling fuel through the North Atlantic. The two in back were father and son. One a Marine involved in the battle of Guadal Canal and his son, an Army ground pounder who did his duty in Vietnam...wow.

Enjoyed the veterans so much, I took up John Garfield's invitation to join the annual Midlothian Christmas parade. Dominic joined in with his spirited little Turbo Coupe as well. This parade is a "Festival of Lights" so I squeezed some time out of the schedule and "got lit"...well the bird did anyway. Left the hydraulic trunk lid up and installed a temporary wooden platform over the folded top. Covered that with a white blanket and erected an all white pre-lit Christmas tree through a hole drilled in the middle. Wired up an inverter and BINGO...instant parade float! Cindy found some oversize Christmas stockings at a craft store. These were stuffed with Teddy bears and "hung over the deck lid with care".

The evening was not stress free. The weather "played misty" during preparations (bird got wet for the first time) and it was "heavy coat" cold. The thing that really hit my button was the cantankerous inverter. With the help of Dominic and John, the whole thing was assembled on-site. However, when the inverter was turned on...nothing happened. Dang thing burned out or something. Cindy said I became a "bit snippy" during the trash for the cause....my apologies to my fellow club members. However, a Christmas miracle did occur. Tried the switch one more time just before roll off and THERE WAS LIGHT...have no idea why...how...Anyway, the shop dog Izzy, Cindy and myself, all wearing Santa hats, had a good time. Looking forward to next year.

In conclusion, my heartfelt thanks to all those that work hard at keeping this club a growing, FUN organization. By using the strengths of many individuals, the work gets done. I truly look forward seeing you all every month. The Christmas party was indeed a heartwarming conclusion to our year. Keep our ailing members in your thoughts and prayers and....a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Prez

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January Planning Meeting

Most of us are focused on the holidays right now, but one of the most important meetings of the year is coming up soon, so mark your calendars! Then join us at Tachito's Mexican Restaurant at noon on Saturday, January 14, 2012. Besides enjoying great company and superb food and service, we will be discussing our ideas for club meetings for 2012. This is your chance to nominate a place, suggest an activity, or just volunteer to host a meeting. We need everyone's ideas so we can come up with a calendar that makes everyone happy in the New Year.

The address is 3210 W. Illinois Ave., Dallas, TX, 75211.

Mystery Member

This month instead of a member highlight, we have a "mystery member." Be the first to correctly guess the identity of this member, and you will receive a prize. Just be the first to email or telephone me with the correct answer.

This member hasn't always been a Ford man (OK, that was clue #1: this member is *not* Betsy McMahon!) In fact, his very first car was a 1953 Chevy. It wasn't exactly his choice for a first vehicle, but as he needed a co-signer and his Mom wouldn't agree to the 1950 Ford he had his eye on, a Chevy it was—a nice sedate, non "hot-rod" type of car. But for a 17 year old, it wasn't bad. Didn't make the best hot rod but he tried. His next car, though, was all on his own and he moved over to the Ford camp with a two-door 1955 Ford Victoria (Power Pac w/4 barrel and dual exhausts). Later, that got traded for a '57 Ford Fairlane 500 that was one of the last year production from the Dallas Ford Factory. Got to visit the factory and see it built. But couldn't drive it until it was transported to the local dealer. Sure helped having an Uncle who was a great Ford salesman!

His first Thunderbird was a 1958; and he owned this car when he met his future wife. He has hung on to the wife since then, but traded that bird away for a '61 Buick, followed by a whole line of other varied cars.

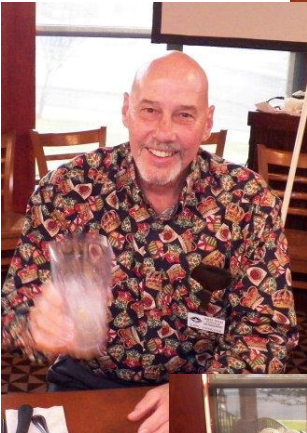
After purchasing a classic Thunderbird about 10 years ago, he got involved with a local "generic" car club that had regular "Show & Shine" cruises at a local restaurant. It was at one of those events that he met a member of NTVT, Inc. and started attending meetings. He and his wife are now active members of our club and have attended many VTCI Regional and International Conventions. He currently owns two Thunderbirds. But I am not telling you what colors or what years, or you might have enough info to ID him! (Can't make it too easy on you!)

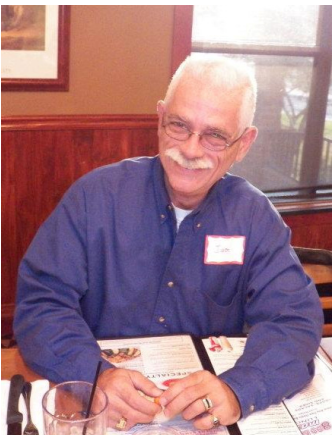
If you need another clue, I can tell you this: Another woman has stolen this man's heart, and his wife must share his attention! But it is ok; the other woman is a four-footed one who has claimed his wife's heart as well!

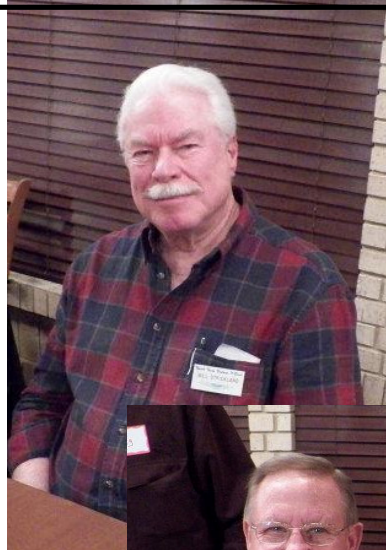
2012 Dues Are Due

Be sure to get your 2012 dues in to treasurer Tom Ossorio! You can send him a check, or bring it with you to the January Meeting. NTVT, Inc. dues are \$30 per year. And don't forget to pay your VTCI dues. VTCI is our parent club, and we encourage all NTVT, Inc. members to become members of VTCI as well.

Merry Christmas, NTVT!







Bird Brains: a Saga, Part Six: Eleven Cents and a Whiskbroom... or... Phoenix, by Dan Sublette

Time kills a neglected vehicle. The burned out Genesis Bird was always heavy on my mind. The sight of other people's nice rides would inflict pain and guilt. This family keepsake was at "parts car" level and sinking fast. The project was both a nagging need and a burning desire (no pimples this time). The kids are raised, college educated, well employed, married, have families and on their own. As a result, I haven't owned a classic Thunderbird in over 20 years. The commitment to an action plan could no longer be postponed.

My employer was moving us to Texas. I made the decision that the criteria for this next house had to include a detached building or space to build one. We soon learned that detached buildings in Texas were usually some distance from the house, had dirt floors and places to hang saddles. We finally found acceptable quarters on six tenths of an acre equipped with a sympathetic zoning board.

August 1, 2003, the certificate occupancy was issued for my newly completed 30' by 40' hobby shop. Bricked, wired, insulated, dry walled, florescent lamped and enameled. It is a Thunderbird Garage Mahal! I am also very happy to report I only shot myself with the nail gun once (it's OK; the doctor sterilized the nail and sent me back to work)! The following winter was used to organize tools and equipment, plan the attack and bolster the budget. I also rejoined the local and national VTCl, devoured the *Scoop*, and collected supplier catalogs. At long last it was close enough to spring. March of '04, the time had finally arrived.

I flew to Indiana and spent several days at mother's place stripping parts from the rusting "siblings" of the Genesis Bird. Having been caught in a grass fire and spending years sunk in the ground guaranteed these vehicles were well beyond ever being made road worthy. Engines, transmissions, differentials and anything else remotely usable were gleaned. I was absolutely giddy. Early spring weather was cooperating. I was using dad's tools and living our dream again.

The Garage Mahal was a thousand miles away so this was going to be a one-time load to Texas. It all had to go now. At the end of the week I rented a large moving type truck with a car trailer. On Saturday my brother, daughter, son-in-law, two grandsons and father-in-law arrived to help load. All the loose parts were hefted into the truck bed and secured. Then it was time for the main event.

The rusting rollers of the overhead barn door screamed their objection to being roused from hibernation. Sunlight beamed through the cobwebs and fell on the Acapulco blue 1963 Thunderbird convertible for the first time in 12 years. The Genesis Bird was unrecognizable. The pole type barn in which she set was rain proof but not critter proof. The mice had filled the interior with a couple bushels of acorns. The raccoons had marinated these morsels with a couple of inches of poop! Had I been a prospective buyer answering an ad, the odor alone would have made this deal a PASS!

Amazingly only one tire was flat! The spare was still faithfully standing sentry! After the exchange, father-in-law's 4X4 pulled her out to freedom. It looked a little better out in the light of day. Closing the trunk and hood, installing the tonneau cover and securing the top helped but not a lot. We all took turns ratcheting the hand winch. It was difficult getting the car up on the trailer. It weighs 4400 lbs and the rusting brakes and bearings created a lot of drag. Assessment confirms there isn't a single nut, bolt or component that does not need some level of rehab, including, of course, the burned out underhood area.

Bird Brains, Part , *continued*

The family and I exchanged reluctant good-bys. The big yellow van with its pitiful looking tag-a-long was pointed toward Texas. That heavily loaded behemoth was thirsty! Fuel stops were expensive but not without some compensation. Without fail, at every stop, someone ask if that car was for sale! Talk about encouragement! The ride home was great. A cousin met me at home and helped unload. The bird was enthroned in the Garage Mahal and the project officially launched.

Only one thing could make these next months any better. That of course would be if dad were still around to watch this restoration process. I do not overly pine and grieve the passing of my father. I didn't want him to linger in the condition he was in. I fully understand that he had led a full, happy life but it was time for him to go. Besides, I have a wonderful way to remember him. As I work on this bird I am using skills he first taught me. He was the one that last touched most of the parts on this car. And there are other reminders that keep us close. Some may think them silly.

Dad's favorite adhesive was 3M yellow weather-strip cement. He used it for gaskets and trim pieces etc. As I disassemble this car, I'm finding traces of it everywhere. Makes me smile. Dad always put an extra set of ignition points in the glove box of his vehicles. When I finally shoveled and hosed-out this car to where I could open the console compartment, there were the ignition points! The contents also included eleven cents and a small whiskbroom. Not sure why these caught my attention. I guess I can just see dad tossing in the coins while pulling away from the drive-through and dusting off the floor mats before the big show. It's warming.

I intend to bring the Genesis Bird all the way back. The cost will far exceed market value. However, the cost will be but a fraction of sentimental value. Everyone is aware by now; this is a labor of love. I've always been in awe and very much appreciated the "trailer queens." However, I've never owned one for two reasons. One, I couldn't afford it. Two, for me, most of the car show fun was driving the vehicle to and from. Our Thunderbirds were always drivers. By giving this bird only what it needs, I am going to own a trailer queen "by default." The Genesis Bird will be more a Phoenix than Thunderbird!

Hopefully this is far from the end of this saga and only where it leaves off for now. Mother is healthy, active and still drives like A.J. Foyt (both have slowed just a little)! It is my goal to complete this project by (2006?), put the ignition points, eleven cents and the whiskbroom back into the console, and go pick up mom. And GOSH! We'll see all y'all at the nationals... her eighth... my first! Stay tuned...

Parts Corner

If you have Thunderbird parts you'd like to sell or swap, if you would like to advertise for parts you need, or even if you hear of a good parts outlet, be sure to let the other club members know! Remember, part of the advantage of being in a terrific club like NTVT, Inc. is being able to share knowledge and resources. We can all make our automotive hobby easier and more fun if we communicate. Just email the newsletter editor or any officer if you have something you would like to see in the newsletter.

Get Well Wishes

We are sending our good wishes for a speedy recovery to Kathy Rabjohns, who is recovering from hip replacement surgery. After some complications that kept Kathy and Mike away from our Christmas party, we hope things are looking up! Get well soon, Kathy!

If we have missed anyone else who is recovering from surgeries, etc., please know that we wish all our members who are "under the weather" a speedy return to the fast lane!

Veteran's Day Parade

Three NTVT members participated in this year's Veteran's Day Parade in downtown Dallas. Dan Sublette, Betsy McMahon, and Ron Seifert all had so much fun that next year, a lot more of us are going to want to join in! All three of these fine convertibles were used to carry Veterans in the parade and the weatherman cooperated nicely so that everyone could put their tops down and enjoy the sunshine! Thanks, Dan, Betsy, and Ron, for helping to make the parade a special event for those gentleman. And it was a terrific way to showcase those pretty birds!



Betsy & her vet



Dan's Vets



City Hall Reviewing Stand



Ron & Bill Usher

Midlothian Christmas Parade

Recently, John Garfield put out a notice that there would be a great opportunity for Thunderbird owners to showcase their cars in the Midlothian Christmas Parade. Dominic Zanella, Dan Sublette, and John and Ginny Garfield each drove their cars, and although the weatherman warned of nasty weather, it was a beautiful parade. Granted, it was a cold and blustery night for a parade but all made the best of it. Dan's display was a work of art. He designed and built a platform that mounted on his convertible mechanism that held the tree, lights and such. Just look at the picture and you will see the effort put forth by Dan. If we get this chance again next year, it would be awesome to get many more Thunderbirds there to put on a real show of our beautiful cars!

Editor's note: Thanks, Dominic Zanella for sending the pics and the write-up about this parade!



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In Memory

Many of you remember Dickie Randolph, a good friend of NTVT, Inc. He and his wife, Donna, lived near Abilene but attended many of our club events as well as regional and international conventions of VTCL. As many of you know, Dickie passed away from cancer quite suddenly this fall. The club would like to express our condolences to Donna. In his memory, we would like to reprint excerpts from his obituary.



Dickie Lee Randolph

1943 - 2011

Dickie was born June 29, 1943, in Afton, TX, to Tomas Jefferson and Ava Adeline Jordan Randolph. He married Carlene Nelson in 1963 and had two children, Terry and Vicki. Dickie later married Donna Fields Crawford on June 1, 1979 at Tahoka, TX and was immediately blessed by the addition of two more children, Michael Crawford and Sheila Crawford.

Dickie was an electrician and had worked on power lines in Pennsylvania and in Lubbock. In 1974, he and his brother, Rodney, owned and operated Randolph Aviation in Tahoka until he moved to Mission, TX, in 1983, where he continued crop-dusting. He moved to Hodges in 1996 and was a self-employed truck driver until 2003. At the time of his passing, he was employed by Hendrick Healthcare Linen.

Dickie enjoyed waterskiing when he was younger, and he loved restoring antique cars, riding motorcycles and collecting model trains and airplanes. He was known as a happy man who loved to work hard and help anybody in need. Dickie was a lifetime member of the National Rifleman Association, Texas State Rifle Association, Confederate Air Force, American Motorcyclist Association, and Texas Motorcycle Road Riders Association. He was a very strong Christian. Dickie was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Ray and Jerrold.

Dickie is survived by his wife, Donna, four children, eleven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and many other relatives and a host of friends. He will be greatly missed.