



# T Bird News

North Texas Vintage  
Thunderbirds, Inc.

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## Prez Prattle

Things have been extremely quiet in the ol' ragtime garage. Just haven't taken the time to do much with the bird this past month. Sad really...lots going on this time of year. There are always car shows in conjunction with Halloween..."Trunk-or-Treat type things. I missed them all. Yes, I still travel but things have been worse this month. One of my co-workers fell off his roof. Good news...he will recover...bad news...my "territory" just doubled for a while. Spent the last two weeks in Kansas and Missouri. Don't like the weather in Nebraska this time of year but I may be called to go there as well....always something.

I owe an apology to Ben King. I was going to support the home coming parade in Commerce but gave in under weight of my "list" and did not go. Sorry Ben, I feel badly and we as a club should step up and help out next year. All those beautiful people deserve to ride in something other than Camero convertibles

Speaking of parades...Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day. Dallas is honoring our beloved veterans with the annual parade in downtown Dallas. Betsy and I are going to give a few of our finest a ride. Hope to see some more of you there...if nothing else...curbside waving flags.

Looking forward to our Christmas party and planning session in January

Gotta' go put the laundry back in the suitcase...

Prez

## Christmas is Coming!

One of the best NTVT, Inc. events of the year is just around the corner! At 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 10th, we will gather at Humperdinks Restaurant, 700 Six Flags Drive in Arlington. This is a really fun get-together that you will not want to miss. The 50-50 drawings we have held at each meeting this year will help defray the costs, but you need to RSVP to Mike Rabjohns or Betsy McMahon so we can let the restaurant know how many will be attending. There will be a cash bar.

Don't forget to bring your 2012 club dues with you to the Party. To make it convenient, the club will pay your VTCI dues for you if you bring \$65.00 to the December meeting. That will cover the NTVT, Inc. annual dues of \$30 and the VTCI dues of \$35.

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## “Please Come to Austin for the Springtime...”

Ok, ok, so Kenny Chesney sang “Boston” instead of Austin. But he would have said Austin if he had known about the 2012 South Central Regional Convention hosted by the Capitol City Thunderbirds and how much fun we are all going to have there April 12-15, 2012. The convention will be held at the recently renovated Crowne Plaza Hotel, conveniently located at the intersection of I-35 and US 290.



Festivities will begin with a pay-as-you-go dinner at Pappadeaux Seafood Restaurant near the hotel on Thursday night, followed by an ice cream social back at the hotel. Friday, you will have the opportunity to enjoy a Duck Ride on Ladybird Lake. That night you will have a chance to dig out your penny loafers and poodle skirts to revisit the 50's and 60's at the Sock Hop. There will be chicken and beef fajitas with all the trimmings to go along with the tunes and good times. Saturday morning will be busy as some owners will be shining cars to get them ready for the judges. For those who are not interested in hanging around the judging field all day, there will be transportation to various shopping venues or historical places of interest, like the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and the LBJ Library. The day will conclude with a delicious banquet and the awards ceremony.

Look for the registration form attached to the email message (the same one that delivered this newsletter to you!). Be sure to get your registrations in early, and don't forget to call the hotel to book your room. Remember to ask for the special Thunderbird Convention rate of \$115.00 per night.

## Plan Ahead for the VTCI International Convention

Have you ever been to Charleston, SC in the fall? I haven't, but it's certainly something I would love to do and I know you would enjoy it, too. And September of 2012 would be the ideal time to plan that trip! That way, you would be there for the 2012 VTCI International Convention, September 25-30. The event will be held at the Charleston/Mt Pleasant Courtyard Marriott, which is offering rooms at a group discount rate of \$114.00 per night.

You won't be idle (unless you want to be!) as there will be lots of tours on the agenda from which you can select. One tour will include a Civil War Submarine, Fort Moultrie, and the Warren Lasch Conservation Center in North Charleston. Another tour will cover the Charleston Tea Plantation; or you could tour some lovely homes of Historic Charleston and the Boone Hall Plantation. You can book a dinner cruise on the Spirit of Carolina, tour Patriots' Point and Fort Sumter, or go on a Ghosts and Graveyard tour. Rest assured, there will be many opportunities to visit with old friends and make new ones as you enjoy these events.

Be sure to mark your calendars and book your room. And watch The Scoop for more details about registering for this VTCI International Convention hosted by Florida West, North Georgia, & Space Coast Thunderbirds. Plan now to come and enjoy their “Southern Hospitality!”

# October Pics



Like Comment

Tag Photo



## **Bird Brains: a Saga, Part Five—Fade To Black**, by Dan Sublette

The 1963 Acapulco blue Thunderbird convertible was the “Genesis” bird. This vehicle was the matriarch of the family fleet that had grown to six birds by 1983. My parents had happily toured in this car to seven national VTCA meets and countless other shows and parades. During its twenty-some years of crisscrossing the USA, the odometer had maxed out and started over twice. Regardless, because of the care bestowed upon the ol’ gal she could still hold her own on the show grounds. However, by 1986 the airfield was being circled and the flaps were deployed for landing. Not that the enthusiasm had waned but truth was, dad wasn’t feeling well.

For more than a year everyone had noticed a tremor in dad’s right hand and arm. Nobody said much but if we did, he brushed it off as being the result of a “strain.” The persistence of the condition finally provoked a rare visit to the doctor. Sure enough, it was Parkinson’s. We had always joked about TBD (ThunderBird Disease). This, however, was too real and we most certainly would embrace the cure. There isn’t any.

Parkinson’s creates tremors and ridged muscles. The walk of the afflicted is generally reduced to a shuffle. There is medication that reduces symptoms, but in the end, the disease prevails. If there is a bright side it’s that the progression usually takes a number of years to run its course. We still had some time.

Even though the bird(s) now set a lot, the party wasn’t totally over. The local community held a charity auction every year. I’m not sure how, but dad came up with the idea to auction himself off. He donated a “chauffer driven ride” to and from the high school prom in a vintage Thunderbird convertible. A proud father bought the deal for his daughter and date. Dad gussied up in a tuxedo for the grand occasion and chauffeured the happy couple around for the evening (the prom queen in the prom queen of cars)!

I too was under the influence of life changing forces. I had re-entered college to maintain pace with advancing career opportunities. My oldest was about to start college as well (translation: There is no time for hobbies and I am going to need a hell of a lot of money)! The “straw” was when I suffered the bane of all car collectors. I lost my storage. DAGNABBIT! This was the signal that it was time to “bail out”. There was an upcoming collector car auction being held in Indianapolis. It was also advertised that a portion of the proceeds would be donated to a particular charitable cause. This would be the easiest and most humane way. I shined up both the ’66 convert and the Town Coupe and listed them in the auction. I delivered them in two trips because I wanted to drive them both for one last time. The prices they brought that day were not great but acceptable.

The ride home was somber. I was reflecting back. My cars were gone. There was also some sense of unfulfillment. I had never been able to really get involved in many of the things the folks had always enjoyed. Perhaps the largest felt omission was I had never attended a national VTCA meet. It was over. I pulled me out of this funk by focusing on the upcoming new opportunities for my son and me. GOSH (Grand Overwhelming Serious Happenings)!

Dad had retired from the auto parts store. Not necessarily due to his condition but because it was time. He did take a part time job as a bank courier. This kept him busy for about three hours and left the rest of the day for him to putter around the property. Mother continued to work (for awhile), which left dad at home alone with time enough to get into trouble. There were a couple of notable incidents. Blazes of final glory actually.

One morning, after mother had left for work, it was “clean out the barn” day. Pop was rolling up cords, putting tools away, picking up rags and busting down empty cardboard boxes. The latter were stuffed into the burning barrel. Around midday dad went to the house for a boloney sandwich and the noon news. He was sitting at the kitchen table when he became aware of sirens. These got his attention because sirens were not all that common out there in the country. With every bite, the sirens grew louder. Finally they became loud enough that it was worth the effort to struggle up out of the chair and go see what was happening. Happening

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## Bird Brains, Part Five—Fade to Black, *continued*

indeed! Most of the field around the barn was ON FIRE! The entire Volunteer Fire Brigade was descending upon it! Evidently a burning ash had floated up out of the barrel and settled in the grass. Good news and bad news. Good...the barn and contents, including the Genesis Bird, were spared. Bad...the fire had advanced into the row of three Thunderbirds that set outside. They were all scorched. The '63 hardtop got it the worst. Dear ol' dad thanked the fellows for their hard work and apologized for troubling them.

As the calendar turned the birds kept getting pushed farther back into the tree line. They no longer would run. The fire, time and neglect were rapidly turning them into "parts cars" (hate to use the J word). It was obvious that they would not be returned to former grandeur. Dad made a gallant attempt for a while until he no longer had it in him. There was one happy escapee. The red over white '63 convert was sold to an auto shop teacher who promised to "bring it back." He kept his word and returned to show the folks after it was once again roadworthy.

The final episode came one bright colorful Saturday morning. The Fall Festival was going on in town and it was parade day. Dad's medicine was working and he was feeling pretty good for the moment. Good enough that he decided to enter the Genesis Bird in the parade. They hadn't been "Thunderbirding" for long time. The bird just set in the garage mostly. Mom and dad washed it up and motored off to join the fun.

Local parades are special because the folks usually see lots of people they know. As they idle along, there is always someone to wave and say HI! This parade was no different until just past half way. The venerable old bird was doing her usual good job but abruptly balked and stalled. Dad put it in park and attempted a restart but only for a second. He told mom to get out of the car fast! The smoke was rolling and the paint on top of the hood had suddenly turned black. The bird was ON FIRE! The carburetor had overflowed and lit. There was a fire truck behind them but it too was antique with no equipment on board. Dad was restrained from opening the hood. He probably would have tried to snuff it out with his shirt or something! Five minutes past forever, a fire extinguisher finally arrived. It was too late. This old very dear friend of the family...The Genesis Bird... was totally burned out under the hood. What an extreme tragic spectacle, and right in front of the hometown crowd.

The bird was towed home and pushed into the barn. Dad unbolted things and manually pulled the top up out of the trunk. There wasn't enough wiring left to make the electric windows roll up. He just threw a blanket over the ol' gal and let her set. This whole episode took a lot of the remaining wind out of dad's sails. Although he never admitted it, he knew he was not up to the task of bringing her back. It was over.

The Genesis Bird set in that old barn for about twelve years. It became the residence of mice, raccoons and insects. This menagerie did to the inside what the fire had done to the underside. The poor old bird just wasted away along with its rusting siblings outside. I hadn't been able to intervene. After more than two years of getting my schooling complete, I took a traveling job. Then it was a move first to Tennessee then Texas. The bird set. Dad ebbed away as well.

The end came in August of 1999, ten days before mom and dad's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It was a slow fade to black. He was home under the care of hospice. We all had a chance to say good-bye. He saw all his great-grand children, including a brand new set of twins for the first time. We had exchanged I Love You's for the last time. No animosities. No unfinished business. He had given me everything I had ever really needed to make it in life... primarily love and a good example (the car stuff was just a bonus). The Heavenly Roll was called. He answered. Mom was there and held his hand. I was there and held Mom. Cindy arrived shortly and held me.

## Tech Talk—Master Cylinder Conversion

### Conversion from a single reservoir master cylinder to a dual reservoir master cylinder on a 1960 Thunderbird.

I was adding factory air conditioning to my 1960 Thunderbird and decided to go with a dual master cylinder at the same time for safety. This car will be driven to club functions all around the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex and VTCI south central regional conventions. My '60 has the 430 Lincoln motor option. Upon adding A/C I was also converting to the under-dash bellows and pedal system. I am only going to include the information on converting the master cylinder in this article. If you are also adding air please contact me and I will be happy to share my experience on that installation.

I first purchased a 1967-1968 Mustang dual master cylinder for non-disc brakes. This master cylinder uses only the two lower bolts on the firewall. I threaded the nuts back on the upper bolts since these are also used to help secure the pedal bracket.

I made a gasket for the master to firewall to insure a good moisture seal. I used the factory push rod for the '60 not the push rod that came with the cylinder. I did have to adjust the eccentric on the pedal to reduce the distance the rod pushes forward. I adjusted this until the rod was just touching the plunger with the pedal at rest. This should be a good starting point.

I purchased two adapter fittings for the master cylinder.

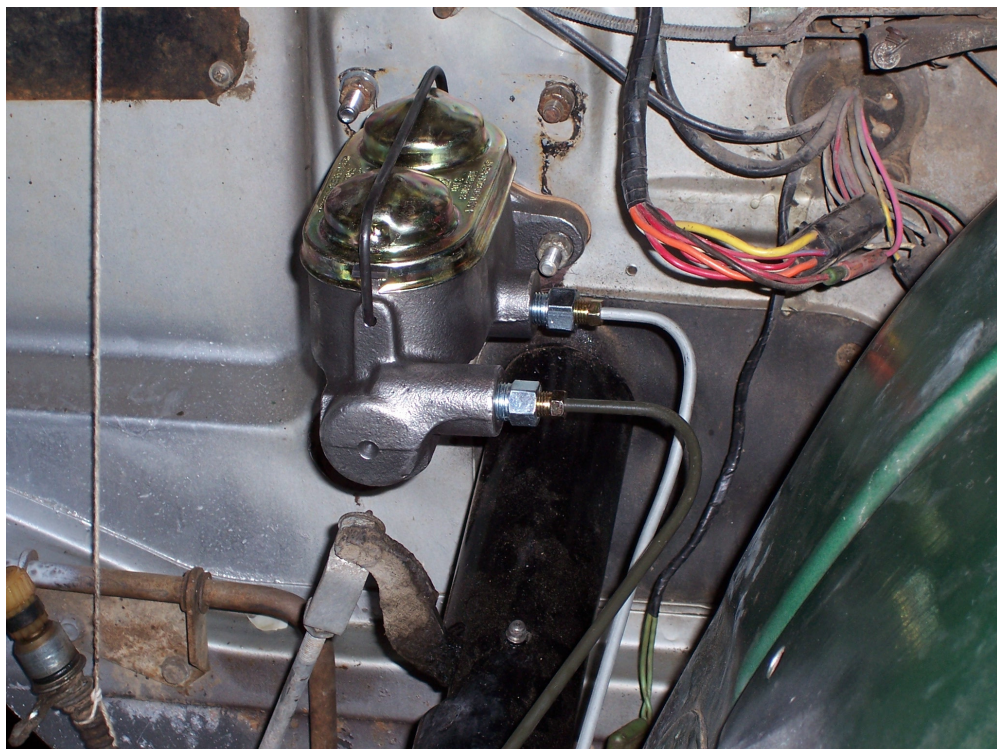
- 1) 3/16 tube fitting to 1/2-20 (Edelmann #265301)
- 2) 2) 3/16 tube fitting to 3/16 straight pipe thread (Edelmann #258302).

This enabled use of the factory fittings on the brake lines (see illustration).

I removed the rear brake fitting from the terminal block on the frame, below and forward of the steering box. I was able to straighten the rear brake line to point up and install a 3/16 tube union. I purchased a second 20" brake line (AGS BL-320) to go from this union to the rear master cylinder reservoir (see illustration). I also replaced the original line to eliminate the risk of damage to the line in straightening.

I installed the brake light pressure switch in the original terminal block where the rear brake line was removed (see illustration). I had a short piece of brake line with a straight tube fitting. I was able to find an adapter for a 3/16 compression fitting to a 1/8 male taper pipe fitting at a local hardware store. I then used a taper pipe union to connect the pressure switch to the above adapter. A simpler adapter would have been a 3/16 tube fitting to 1/8 female NPTF. I was not able to find one of these locally.

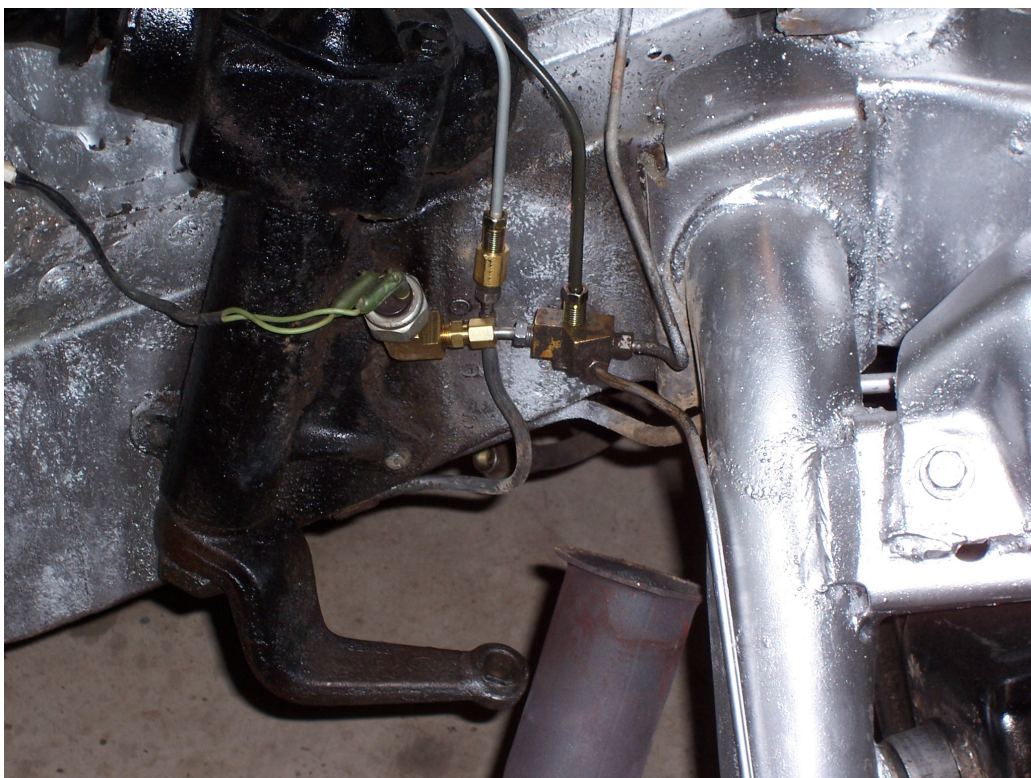
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## Tech Talk: Master Cylinder Conversion, continued

My Tbird had short jumpers attached to the wires so they would reach the switch on the end of the factory master cylinder ahead of the non-a/c brake booster. You may have to add these jumpers to reach the relocated switch. You can verify the operation of the switch by connecting an ohm meter between the contacts and applying the brake pedal. This should close the contacts in the switch.

I install all fittings just snug and check for leaks while I bleed the brakes. Tightening fittings only where necessary prevents over tightening and damage to the fittings or lines.



I am sharing how I chose to upgrade to a dual reservoir system. I am sure there are many variations in master cylinder selection or tube routing. A similar approach may be used to upgrade any single reservoir system allowing for different power brake boosters and front disc brake systems.

Brad Kershaw  
VTCI & NTVT

## Member Highlights

It's time for me to start begging again!

We have a club of over 45 members, and only 11 have submitted information for a member highlight. One of the best things about our club is that we have such interesting members! And we are getting large enough that it may be hard to get acquainted with everyone. So highlighting a member in each newsletter is a great way for us all to get to know one another.

You don't have to write it yourself, unless you would rather. Just send me an email with some information about yourself, your car, your "automotive history" or any other things you would like to share with the club. It's fun to hear about each other's first car, first Thunderbird, or just how many pets you have!

We aren't talking literary masterpieces, here, folks! Just give me something to work with or I might have to start inventing! I will dig out my Creative Writing journal and get started next month.

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## Parade Opportunity

If you are interested in driving your Thunderbird in the Midlothian Christmas Parade at 6:00 p.m. on Monday evening, December 5th, please contact John Garfield.

## January Planning Meeting

Although a specific date, time, or place hasn't been confirmed for the January meeting, we do know that is one of the most important meetings of the year for members to attend! We will get you the information as soon as possible, but in the meantime, be thinking about possible meeting places and activities for our 2012 calendar. When we spread out our hosting duties, it makes for a more interesting club! So start scouting around! What would you like to see the club do in the coming year? Bring your ideas to the planning session, and let your voice be heard!

## 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 Christmas party. NTVT, Inc. dues are \$30 per year. And don't forget to pay your VTCI dues as well. VTCI is our parent club, and we encourage all NTVT, Inc. members to become members of VTCI as well. For convenience, you can make one check in the amount of \$65.00 payable to NTVT, Inc. and Tom will pay your VTCI dues for you!

## NTVT 2011 Calendar

\*Dec 10—4-6 pm. Christmas Party @ Humperdinks at 700 Six Flags Drive in Arlington. RSVP to Betsy McMahan or Mike Rabjohns. Remember, this is what our 50-50 pots supports, so make plans now to join us.

\*Regular Monthly Club Meeting/Activity