



THUNDERBIRDS OF SOUTHWEST OHIO NEWSLETTER

August 2022



MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: Once again, President Roger Hamm was very punctual when he gaveled to order the July meeting of Thunderbirds of Southwest Ohio at exactly 7:00 PM EDT, in our customary MCL Cafeteria meeting room. He greeted a total of 19 members to the meeting, after which he asked if anyone needed TSWO windshield decals for their cars. He offered to distribute decals to anyone at the meeting who needed one (or more).

Attendees: Members in attendance at this meeting included Roger & Lisa Hamm, Dave & Deb Harvey, Brett Andrews, Mark & Jackie Allen, Mike & Donna Bach (relatively new members), Nancy & Julie Blake, Jim Ross & Bev Knauper, Paul Loschi, Dave & Susan Menke, Jim Russell, and Tom Tirey & Gina Hocter.

Approval of Minutes: President Roger mentioned that (as always) the minutes from the June 2022 meeting had been included in the July newsletter, which everyone should have received by now. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mike Bach, and was seconded by Brett Andrews. The motion for approval was passed unanimously,

Membership Update/Discussion: Roger mentioned a prospect that he's been working on for a while. He saw the gentleman again at last Saturday's Kettering Cruise-In, this time with a different T-bird. The gentleman apparently has not yet decided to join this fun group.

There were no updates to report regarding members' contact information, so the June 1, 2022 roster remains up to date.

Jim Russell had to replace his generator with an alternator. Unfortunately, the alternator was defective and had to be returned for replacement. Following the replacement, so far, so good.

Dave Harvey mentioned that, thanks to some help from Roger, he has finally managed to resolve the problem with the rear float bowl on their '57 T-bird. It now runs & drives, no longer spewing fuel from the damaged rear float bowl onto the engine. That being the good news, the bad news is that there is some type of electrical problem that periodically draws the battery down (this has been ongoing for some time now). The alternator is the prime suspect, but he will have it tested to see if it's OK or not. If not, the next step will be to accumulate some data under a

variety of running conditions, then take the car to a professional for the final diagnosis and repair.

Roger was preparing to take his '66 T-bird in for some work on Tuesday, but when he stepped on the brake pedal (still in his driveway, fortunately), the pedal went all the way to the floor. He found the master cylinder to be bone dry but was unable to determine where the fluid was going (unless it was leaking into the booster). He had the car towed into the shop for the work (the brake fluid issue turned out to be a bad brake line). Several other maintenance-type work items were performed, but on his way home, the car died after a right turn. Roger couldn't determine if it was fuel-starved or flooding out. Apparently, the car was "getting even" with Roger for having neglected it too long.

Sunshine Committee Report: July birthdays are: Susan Menke (2nd), Jim Lenz (3rd), Jackie Allen (13th), and Tom Tirey (20th). July anniversaries are: Darrell & Ruby York (27 years on the 1st), Jay & Bea Walsh (55 years on the 15th), and Jim Ross & Bev Knauper (15 years on the 29th). Happy birthday and happy anniversary to all these people.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Lisa Hamm's report was brief, as there have been no changes in our finances since last meeting.

Club Activities/Events: President Roger referred to the rather-large event pool that is listed on the agenda, and briefly mentioned most of them.

Old Business: Regarding surplus club property, President Roger reminded us that the two canopies that had previously been approved for disposal were turned over to Bev Knauper and have been donated to her church, Batavia Faith Methodist Church. As to the two Car Show signs, Roger (who, in addition to his TSWO membership, has a membership in the other "mostly-T-bird" car club) reported that he turned those signs over to the other club at its meeting last month. Therefore, the only club physical property remaining is our supply of walkie-talkies, a small quantity of oldies-type music CDs, and our club banners.

New Business: Mike Bach wasn't sure if New Business was the place for this, or if it should have been mentioned in Club Activities and Events, but he wanted everyone to be aware of the Antioch Shrine Car Show, which will be held on the grounds of Antioch Temple (corner of E. 1st St. and N. Jefferson St., in downtown Dayton) on Sunday, August 28th. He mentioned that his car is usually the only T-bird there, but he's hoping for more T-birds to show up this year.

Dave Menke mentioned that since he and Susan won't be able to attend next month's meeting, he wanted to mention again the particulars as to our participation in the WACO Fly-In event, which will be our September club event (on Saturday, the 17th). The plan is to gather at McDonald's in Vandalia at a specified time and take a back-road tour to arrive at the Fly-In, where all our cars will be parked together (sort of a mini-Thunderbird show).

Calendar of Car Events: Next Club meeting will be on August 11th, again at MCL Cafeteria. Roger mentioned several car events that are ongoing, as well as some special events:

- Fridays - Beavercreek Cruise-In, at Vineyard Church (Indian Ripple Rd)
- Saturdays - Kettering Cruise-In, at Kettering Town Center (E. Dorothy Ln & Woodman Dr)
- July 16th - Hot Air Balloon Challenge and Car Show (2:00-5:00), Smith Park, Middletown
- July 22nd - Voss Hoss Cruise-In, Loop Rd.
- July 24th - Kettering American Legion Post 598 Cruise-In
- July 30th - Thunderfest Festival and Cruise-In, Middletown

Open Floor: No open floor comments were offered.

Adjournment: President Roger called for a motion for adjournment of the meeting. The motion was made by Dave Menke, seconded by Paul Loschi, and passed unanimously. The meeting was gaveled to a close at 7:36 PM, after which many members stayed to visit with each other.

Roger Hamm
President



Birthdays & Anniversaries in August: For August, we have two birthdays and one anniversary. The TSWO membership wish you much happiness on this your special day.



August Birthdays
25th: Beverly Lake
26th: Bea Walsh

August Anniversaries
4th: Roger & Lisa Hamm (38 yrs)



As I was thinking about what to write about for this month's President's Message, when I came upon this article from Hagerty's that I thought I would share with you. It discusses how the huge tire that you see when driving along I-94 near the Detroit airport came to be. I am sure you will enjoy this article.

If you've driven past the giant Uniroyal tire alongside I-94 near Detroit, you know it's a big wheel. A very big wheel. It's so unusual that celebrities are drawn to it. Fantastical stories have been told about it (no, it never rolled onto the freeway). A book was written about it. Yet,

while an estimated 100,000 or so cars pass the landmark every day, it's likely that many of the drivers have little or no idea of how it came to be.



The giant tire was created for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, not as the 80-foot-tall billboard it is now, but as a Ferris wheel. It was originally part of a static design that featured a tire wrapped around a globe, meant to symbolize the automotive boom of the early 1960s. World's Fair officials ultimately decided to use the globe by itself as the event's central figure, calling the steel structure the Unisphere (it still stands in Flushing Meadows).

They didn't give up on the tire idea, however. Conceptual drawings were created of a unique Ferris wheel—appropriate, considering that George Washington Gale Ferris debuted his famous invention at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. Designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the same architectural firm behind the Empire State Building, the towering New York World's Fair Ferris wheel was shopped around to tire companies. U.S. Rubber bought in, but only after it was guaranteed exclusivity as the only Ferris wheel at the event. The tire originally read "US Royal Tires" and included 24 barrel-shaped gondolas that could carry four passengers each. Among the 2 million fairgoers who enjoyed the picturesque ride were Jacqueline Kennedy, Caroline Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Jr., actor Telly Savalas, and the Shah of Iran.

At the end of the fair's second six-month season in October 1965, the giant tire was offered to anyone willing to dismantle it and haul it away. U.S. Rubber found no takers, so it decided to gut the Ferris wheel components and place the outer structure near its headquarters along I-94 between the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and the Motor City. As Steven J. Frey, author of [The Giant Tire - From New York's World Fair to Detroit Landmark](#), told Michigan's [Press & Guide](#) last year, the tire company really didn't have much choice in the matter—and not only because World's Fair exhibitors were contractually obligated to disassemble or demolish their structures.



"They tried very hard to give it away," Frey said. "Can you imagine the publicity disaster if the world's largest tire went to a landfill? So, they decided if they can't give it away, they have to keep it."

They shipped the tire to Allen Park in 116 sections, loaded onto 22 railroad cars, and reassembled in 1966.

Although it looks like a giant rubber tire, the 12-ton structure is constructed of steel and polyester resin with a fiberglass surface. Of course, that hasn't stopped people from trying to "deflate" it, as arrows have been removed from time to time. Uniroyal even stuck an 11-foot, 250-pound "nail" into the tire in 1998 to promote its self-repairing tires. When the nail was

removed five years later, a real estate agent bought it for \$3000 and used it to promote his business.

The tire sits on a structure supported by pylons set 15 feet into the ground, and the pedestal is surrounded by fencing. The tire, by the way, is not round—it's flat at the bottom where it attaches to the base, further dispelling the 1974 hoax that it had rolled onto I-94.

The tire's wheel/hub design and lettering have changed only slightly over the years, as U.S. Rubber became Uniroyal and then merged briefly with BFGoodrich before the Uniroyal brand was acquired by Michelin. It sits on property now owned by Baker College; sale of the land was contingent upon Baker promising to keep the tire right where it is.

To say that the Uniroyal tire is a celebrity is a bit of an understatement. It has been featured on products ranging from official World's Fair toys to Christmas ornaments and can even be seen in music videos like "Silly Love Songs," released by Paul McCartney and Wings in 1976, and Kid Rock's "[Roll On](#)" in 2008.

McCartney first saw the tire when the Beatles opened their 1965 U.S. Tour at Shea Stadium in Queens, not far from the World's Fair. For security reasons, the wildly popular Fab Four took a helicopter to the fair's Port Authority Heliport, then rode inside a Wells Fargo armored truck to the stadium. Though the concert became legendary, McCartney never forgot the tire, which he only saw from a distance. When Wings made a tour stop in Detroit in '76, McCartney and the band just had to check it out.

Similarly, when Super Bowl XL was played at Detroit Ford Field in 2006, members of the Seattle Seahawks asked to visit the tire too.

As the [Detroit News](#) so wistfully wrote in 2015, once upon a time Uniroyal plants in Detroit employed 10,000 workers who produced 60,000 tires a day, but now "the plants and corporate building are gone. The tire endures."

In our hearts, in our minds, and alongside I-94.

Roger

CLUB OFFICERS

President: Roger Hamm (937) 835-5992
Treasurer: Lisa Hamm (937) 835-5992

Vice President: Scott McGaha (937) 271-7414
Secretary: Dave Harvey (937) 470-2885

Not Surprised, But Fascinated

By: Brett Andrews

I've attended several Mecum Car Auctions in Indy and one Barrett-Jackson Auction in Florida and Lord knows how many I've watched on TV. Obviously, the one thing I look for, especially when I'm there walking around, are the Thunderbirds. Once they hit the auction block, I'm not too terribly surprised at what most of them sell for, but once in a while one surprises me with the high dollars it commands. Well, in searching for some interesting information to put in this month's newsletter, I ran across an article written by Derrick Krom entitled, "**The World's Most Valuable Ford Thunderbird**". As implied by the title of the article, it describes and shows multiple photos of the most valuable T-bird as validated by the Ford Motor Company in 1966.



As you see in the photos, it is a 1955 T-bird. It was manufactured at the Michigan factory on September 9, 1954. This "Production #1" Thunderbird was restored to completely original condition only ten years after its purchased and has remained in mint condition ever since. It is Powered by a 292 cubic-inch "Y" block V8 engine which gets 18 miles per gallon-and automatic transmission. This raven black Thunderbird with black and white leather interior was also the first model to undergo instrumental testing in that year's October issue of *Sports Illustrated* magazine. How much is it worth you ask. Well, it was put up for auction at the Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction in Scottsdale, Arizona in 2009 and sold for \$660,000.

According to the article this car has been featured in magazines, books, and television shows, made special appearances at museums and special events, including the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, and has been pictured with Ford executives and automotive celebrities including Carroll Shelby and Jay Leno.

If you go to the website <https://worthly.com/most-expensive/cars/worlds-valuable-ford-thunderbird/> you can see more photos of the "Production #1" Thunderbird from the 2009 auction and a video featuring a classic 1955 Ford Thunderbird Roadster.

