ARIZONA BIRD CHATTER

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 9 October 2024

October

ACTC member Carter Rodgers' 57' Tbird, was manufactured on the 24th of October, 1957 is our featured car his month: My car is considered one of the "Late Birds" since, Ford extended the 57 TBird production (Mid-September - Mid-December), due to engineering/production delays in the newly designed 1958 Square Bird. This makes my car one of the last 2-3 thousand 57 Tbirds produced.

My Great Grandfather purchased my 1957 Thunderbird in January 1965 at which time my Grandfather (Jim) dated my grandmother (Sherri) for the full year until that December. When Great Grandpa decided to sell the car for reasons unknown. During that year Grandpa drove to high school, won numerous drag races both on and off the street and basically abused her to no end, so the story goes.

This car has a long, long history within the ACTC; Some ten years later the Lil Bird was purchased by ACTC member Chuck Dager who painstakingly restored her to her current condition. Chuck later sold her to ACTC member Ken Falkenberry who enjoyed her for several years and later passed onto ACTC members Gary and Jamie Thompson. Grandpa Jim Rodgers tried for years to buy the car back from the Thompsons and finally after much persuading Jamie gave her up. At the time I owned a coral sand 57 and decided to sell her so I could acquire the Lil Bird that belonged to My family on a couple of occasions. The car is as Chuck restored the car with exception of fuel injection and disc brakes installed by my Grandfather. She now enjoys the occasional car show and driving on weekend ACTC outings and a semi-retired life in her air-conditioned space in Grandpa's garage. My car is sometimes called the "Tuxedo" having a black & white formal appearance. My Tbird so remains in the ACTC family. By, Carter Rodgers

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President's Desk

"The Other Side of the Porthole"

By Jim Rodgers

The 55-57 Thunderbird & 56-57 Continental MKII, Fords Styling Leads

A few of you know I recently purchased a couple of 1956 Continental MKII's (two of the 3,005 ever produced) and while I am very familiar with the 55 to 57 Lil Birds, I am a newbie when it comes to the MKII's. Therefore, I have done a great deal of in-depth research on them and while doing so found a fond resemblance and design parallel to our Lil Birds which I thought you might enjoy reading. Both of their impressive stylings and tech features is why I have a mutually high appreciation for these cars. While design teams both at the Continental and Thunderbird design studios were working independently, they obviously were in close contact as the resemblance is uncanny in many regards.

The Ford Thunderbird lead stylists William Boyer and Lewis Crusoe designed the 55-57 Tbird's. While the Continental MK stylists were Gordon Buehrig and John Reinhardt. Both design teams directed by Henry Ford II, were assigned to not only design great cars but to develop a car that would enhance Ford's image and its historically solid reputation. In the end to increase Ford sales across the board. It is not a far reach to see that both teams achieved their assigned task. Even though these were two mostly independent stylists teams operating in two different studios, the two cars share many styling cues.

Continued on next page >>

What's in that Tbird Trunk For Sale?

- **Ford AOD transmission/bell housing. Includes linkage for shifter, throttle, cooling lines. Bell housing fits 292 & 312 $750.00**
- **Craftsman Drill Press w/stand & doll, includes 3" vise $75.00 (Just SOLD!)**
- **Craftsman belt sander, 4"x 36" belt & 6" Disc. (extra sandpaper) $60.00**
- **Craftsman 3D sander (extra sanding Discs) $40.00**
- **Halogen shop lights(2) on stand $25.00**
- **Electric car jack and impact gun kit (never used) $40.00**

Contact: Bob Michele Ph#: 602-768-5710

- **Tbird 56/57 Port Hole Hardtop, needs refurb, the glass is good and most of the chrome $ Free!**

Contact Jim Rodgers Ph# 602-300-5792

- **Ford/Tbird 1957 Shop Manual, in fair condition $15.00.**

Contact: Walt Bonneau
email waltbonneau@gmail.com

- **1957 Colonial White Tbird, D-Code in nice condition $39,000.00 or OBO. Located in Peoria, AZ**

Contact: Mike Wood Ph# 602-568-8140

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The 55-57 Thunderbird & 56-57 Continental MKII, Fords Styling Leaders

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It is easy to see similar influential common design cues as you stand back and take-in a total view of both cars. They shared the long hood design feature while including the hooded headlights, they both featured the long trunk design with proportionately smaller passenger cabins, center planted (nearly in the middle) to give these cars styling cues of a long sleek look when viewed side, coming and going, further enhanced on the 57' Tbird with a longer trunk. As well as, the tailed winged light treatment seen on these cars. However, the Tbird was simulating a jet engines red exhaust system while, the MKII was more so styled to focus on a luxury softer cue more so, than a sport/speed appearance. The following quote was taken from the article covering the 1957 Tbird "**WAS IT THE BEST YEAR TO FLY?—THUNDERBIRD FOR 1957!** In the review of the cars specifications:

"In 1957, Ford had two of the most distinctive and desired automobiles on the road. One of them was the Thunderbird, the other was the Continental Mark II, which was in its second and final year. Cadillac introduced its hyper-expensive Eldorado Brougham in 1957, the most expensive production car to date (*Editor's note: GM's answer to the MKII*). As with the Mark II, the Eldorado Brougham sold in limited numbers and was meant to make a statement of superiority more than anything else. "

- The 56 TBird carried the iconic rear bumper "Continental Spare Tire" feature while the 57 Continental MKII integrated the Continental tire kit into the rear truck lid design that was used many years to come. The following year, the 1957 the TBird designers also moved the spare tire into the trunk. Most don't know that while the Continental kit mounted off the rear bumper was a desired feature in 1956. Unfortunately, it caused a notable degree of reduced handling for the little bird while driving fast through S-curved roadways. The extra rear hanging weight of nearly 200 pounds pushed the rear handling to its limit on aggressive turns.
- Shared large integrated chrome rear bumper with integrated exhaust tail pipes, giving both an iconic sound from their Y-Block 312 ci in & 368 cu in V8s.
- Both shared the front wide open grill design and surprisingly nearly the same wheel cover styles (a simulated jet engine intake fan).
- Both featured the lower height roof profile having an industry low height of 52 inches for the TBird and 56 inches for the MKII. Most cars of that period carried a height profile of 59-61 inches.
- Both 57's feature a very clean smooth body design with limited body extrusions or distracting chrome moldings, having no exaggerated body panel features.

Where did the cars differ: The MKII was all about size, luxury (marketed as the "Ultra-luxury Coupe'), a higher order of customization and quality. Not a high production personal sport/luxury performance car. Noting that the MKII was not without respectable performance and handling with standard 300 Bhp. Because the 1956 MK II was hand-built and much more luxury featured/customized per customer choices, its price tag was 3 times that of the Tbird's in 1956/7 (average $3,250.00), having a nearly $9,966.00 base price tag (In today's value: $110,000.00 to $115,000.00). The MKII was true customer selected luxury with a wide gambit of new technology. The TBird offered a personal sports car attitude with personal customer desired limited luxury and performance options. It is not a long shot to consider the MKII an expanded Tbird in many regards. (See the attached photos below):

Tbird 57

MKII 57

Tech Facts

55-57' Ford/Thunderbird Repairing & Servicing the Rear Axle

PROVIDED BY DON HENDERSON

Don's View — Repairing & Servicing Your 55-57' TBird Axle Seals

When you are replacing your rear seals (they will leak with time & use), take the axle out of the housing. Use the tip of the axle to pry and or pull the seal out. Check to be sure there is no damage to the axle surface. When installing the seal, apply some #2 Permatex or silicon around the new seal. Make sure to drive the seal in very straight. Put some grease around the axle where the seal rides. This will help to increase the life of that new seal and makes for improved installation. Check and if needed, add back rear axle gear oil using SAE 75W-90 type just to a level that your small finger can feel the oil.

Additional General Servicing Tips:

1. If you have a Ford-O-Matic transmission that has been rebuilt in the last 5-7 years, no longer using the Ford Type-A Fluid;

   When changing your Tbird's transmission fluid and filter along with draining the converter. It will take about 10 quarts to refill, use Dextron type. If it has not been rebuilt, F-Type may be the right fluid. It is recommended by Ford in the original Shop Manual, Section-13 that every 25,000 miles this service should be performed. Don't forget to re-torque to spec the transmission pan. Check the fluid each 1,000 miles to be sure it is at the full dip stick mark and the color remains a light red.

2. When changing your spark plugs;

   Put some Anti-seize on the threads. It makes them come out a lot easier. The spark plug gap is set to .035 for a point ignition/distributor with standard coil @ 20Kv to 25Kv and a .042 –.045 gap for an electronic ignition having a higher 35Kv—40Kv voltage coil. The plugs per the Ford Shop Manual, Section 13-Servicing states that plugs should be replaced every 5,000 miles. Keep in mind newer type spark plugs may last much longer.

Note: Consult Ford /OEM for specifications.

Historical Facts

55-57' Ford/Thunderbird LIFEGUARD Safety

In 1954, Ford engaged in management discussions to address the increasing injuries that occurred due to automobile accidents. Ford management had its customers in mind from both a safety perspective and marketing campaign to sell more cars. Ford had engaged the automobile accident studies from Cornell University that determined that the design of existing car interiors lead to an increase in injuries or even death. Ford took this to heart and offered the new "LIFEGUARD" option for 1956 and most of the LIFEGUARD features as standard in the 1957 Tbird (*Padded Dash & Visors, Convex Steering Wheel, Door Locks that would not fly open in a head-on accident).* While Ford pushed safety, GM was pushing performance as their marketing campaign. In the end, GM's campaign sold more cars. As most Americans still did not see safety as a big issue. By the end of 1957 less than 10% of Tbirds were ordered with safety belts. Drivers still thought it would be safer to be thrown out of the car in an accident than to stay in the car. See below the 1956 LIFEGUARD advertisement below, the gold Lifeguard decal was placed inside the doors.

Exclusive Article

The Making of an "Angry Bird"

A Gold Medallion award in Senior Non-Original class winner
By Michael & Jeannie Wood

Preface: We asked long time ACTC members Mike and Jeanine Wood to tell us about the history of their 1955 Resto-Mod Tbird know affectionately as the "Angry Bird". The Woods long involvement in many 55-57 Tbird restorations makes them one of the leading experts covering the many positive features and a few not so popular issues of these well styled cars.

Over the years while I (Mike) owned Nostalgia Motors I was lucky enough to restore over one hundred Classic Thunderbirds. We did three grades, body on, body off and body off Concours. I loved the style of these 1955/1956/1957 Classics Birds but, was very unhappy with their shortcomings.

After I retired and sold the shop but just had to continued playing with these Birds. I had purchased a rough 1955 TBird to build, after pricing out the parts $70,000 worth. I had to reconsider my thoughts. At the time I had a 1957 totally restored Bel Aire and a show quality 1951 NASCAR style Mercury. I sold the 1957 Bel Aire and decided to take the Mercury to an Auction. At the Auction was a 1955 Resto-mod Bird, it was about 60% completed. My mercury didn't sell and the 1955 Bird didn't sell so we made a deal, he got the Mercury and I got the Pro-mod Bird. I sold my rough Bird and finally had accumulated the funds to finish my new Bird the way I wanted it.

After starting my 1955 Bird and heard it run I decided to name it **Angry-Bird** because it roared. I have never owned a white car, but they had done a wonderful job on the finish, I decided to keep it white. It had a beige soft top, but due to the fact all of the new electrics were behind the seats you could not put the top in there, so I had a boot made to cover the top when it was folded down on the package tray. However, driving it with the top down was more then I could handle. Made a trip to Yuma, AZ at a high rate of speed and the wind/sun beat me to death. So, I decided to build a hardtop with a hertz cloth cover (made it look like a convertible). The headliner is a late model type (it gave me two inches more headroom so I could wear a cowboy hat. After a trip to Tubac. AZ the exhaust droning killed us. Magnaflow came out with a new octagon shaped muffler that would fit in the x-frame so I installed them and ran the tailpipes under the axle to have more room (due to the lowered car suspension, old ones would bang when loaded with two people and luggage (not much room). My wife always takes a lot of luggage so, I decided to buy a CANAM motorcycle trailer, now I had room for luggage, spare for trailer and one for the car. Now the trunk can carry my display signs, cleaning products, chairs and a few tools (not for me but for others on a tour... smile!).

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The four cam 1998 Lincoln MK8 engine was beautiful but didn't run the way I wanted it too.

There is a tuner who specialized in Fords so I took it to him for a tune up. After a two month wait to get it in his shop and a week there he called and said it was ready. He found many problems, originally the horsepower was about 200 –225, after his workings and putting it on a dyno it was putting out a healthy 325-350 horsepower (a 9.8 Pounds of weight/Bhp, most cars are 12-16) and the car runs like a dream (fast and smooth).

Now it came time for luxury items like a good sound system and updated the interior so I had it redone in two-tone beige with Camaro bucket seats and a center console. It is really comfortable and has great tunes.

But wait, why doesn't the A/C work as well as I would like when it was built, they installed an A/C manifold that was too narrow and the freon keep leaking out. Wes Henderson built a new wider manifold, now I have cold air and no leaks, love Vintage Air. Now suspension the original builder put in a 4-link rear system and it was set up for drag racing, so that had to be modified, now it rides much better. Changed wheels to 7" instead of 8" so I could turn better, now it turns great, without hitting the sway bar.

I have shown the car at three CTCI Concours shows and could only get Gold. Made some more changes and drove to the Flagstaff show Western Classic Round Up and finally got a Gold Medallion award in Senior Non-Original class. Now ANGRY-BIRD is happy and so are we.

October:

Cathy Burklund	10/03
Ken Goldstein	10/06
Bret Williams	10/06
Denis Frank	10/10
Jo Cannold	10/10
Mary Lee	10/11
Yvonne Wagner	10/15
Linda Thurston	10/18
Gary Thompson	10/23
Doni Bodell	10/28
Sharon Ames	10/28

October:

Kerry & Jody Pokorski	10/04
Kate & John Marchisotto	10/06
Bob & Kathy Michele	10/12
Jim & Sherri Rodgers	10/28
Stuart & Jo Cannold	10/30

Interesting October Facts:

Known originally as the month of new campaigns and festivals including that of celebrating a good harvest—

October from the Latin word "octo" or Romain word "octavus" meaning eight. It was one of the original months in the very early Roman calendar before two other months were added. Dating back to nearly 760 B.C., as March became the first month of the year so October became the 8th month unlike todays calendar of being the 10th month.

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Recent Events

August 19-22, 2024 Des Monies, IA Annual Convention Meeting

The Annual meeting was attended by ACTC member Chuck Thompson representing Arizona

The CTCI 2024 International Convention

Hosted by the Iowa Hawkeye Thunderbird Club

The 2024 Convention is now history. The Iowa chapter deserves recognition for a job well done. It was one of the best conventions, and one of the most interesting, of all the conventions that I have attended.

The convention ran from Wednesday to Sunday, and was held at the Sheraton hotel in West Des Moines, Iowa. The location was great with many interesting things to do close to the hotel.

I know that many ACTC'ers have never had the opportunity to attend a CTCI convention. It is much more than just a car show. On Wednesday, the convention kicked off with a tour of John Wayne's birthplace in Winterset, Iowa. It was a very informative and interesting tour. There was beautiful museum devoted to his many films and lots of John Wayne memorabilia. The original house had been nicely restored with furnishings of the period. Well worth the trip. One interesting fact for the ladies. John Wayne weighed 13lbs. when he was born. He was born in the house with the help of a mid wife. They grow them big in Iowa! Wednesday night Hills Automotive hosted a Welcome Party at a great Italian restaurant. The theme was a 50's pizza party with great food, Richie Lee & the Fabulous 50's band, dancing and lots of opportunity to meet new T-Birders from all over the country. Over 200 persons attended.

On Thursday, following the Judges Training, we headed out to two interesting private tours. The first was to Karl's Kustom's. Karl's is a large customs shop that restores all types of cars, builds custom cars to owner's specs, builds engines, does upholstery and painting etc.

Then it was off to the Dennis Albaugh collection. This is a private collection, not open to the public, for the owners own private enjoyment. In the collection, he has one of every year Corvette made from 1953 to present. He also has one of every 1957 Chevrolet convertible made in every color. The collection has over 250 Chevrolets, many, many collector and rare vehicles dating back to 1908 and thousands of memorabilia items.

The collection is housed in his private garage that sits on his private 19 hole golf course!

Friday was the official CTCI judging days. There were over 65 Classic and Retro Thunderbirds across all classes…Concours, Touring, Display only. For those not participating in judging there was a tour to downtown Des Moines for shopping , sightseeing and visiting the State Capital.

Saturday started off with a membership meeting which was followed by a driving tour. Then, in the evening, a cocktail party and awards banquet to honor all those attending and to present awards for the cars that were judged. It was a fun time. Great setting. Super nice people. Great food. Interesting tours. And lots of beautiful TBrids on display to enjoy.

Next year, the convention will be in the Dallas area. It will be held September 10th to 14th, 2025. Why not plan on attending. It's not just the cars. There will be lots to see and do. A good chance to see and learn about a different part of the country. Let's plan to have at least +6 representative from the ACTC.

And a chance to make some new friends.

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CTCI's Tbird Judging

CTCI's Welcome Party

Dennis Albaugh Collection – GM Display Bus Display

Dennis Albaugh Collection – Over 250 Chevrolets >>

John Wayne's Birthplace – Wittenberg, IA

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September 8, 2024 – Barrios @ Deer Valley Airport — ACTC Meeting Minutes

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Rodgers.

Hospitality: We sang "Happy Birthday" to the people born in August and September since there was no meeting in August. Yvonne mentioned a "Celebration of Life" being held at Hansen's Mortuary on September 21st for Paul Fruscello. Please check your emails for details. Myrna Foster is celebrating every day now that she will be turning 88 in November.

Secretary: Yvonne Wagner - No Report.

Treasurer: Chuck Thompson said we have money, and all the accounts are balanced.

CTCI: Chuck Thompson mentioned the CTCI Convention that was held in Des Moine, IA. There were 260 participants and about 65 cars. (See Previous Pages for more coverage). There were great tours, one of which was John Wayne's birthplace. Next Convention is to be held in Dallas., TX. More details to follow.

Public Relations: Don Henderson – He has a 1966 T-bird for sale.

Membership: Judy Thompson said we have 75 Households, 132 members. 7-55's, 16-56's, and 38-57's. Retro birds, 3-2002, 0-2003, 2-2004, and 3-2005.

Historian: Duane Foster said "no history, it's a mystery"

Newsletter Editor: Walt Bonneau, our new Newsletter Editor was not present. Jim told everyone how grateful he was for Walt stepping up and agreeing to do the newsletter and was impressed at how he has done so far.

Vice President/Member at Large: Bob Michele told a few jokes and said there are a few events coming up: Car show in Sun City, Sept 28th, "Run to the Pines" September 26-28, Payson Show October 11th & 12th.

Meetings: October 13th – George's Café in Sun City November 10th – American Legion on Cave Creek December 7th – American/ Italian Club. This meeting is our Christmas luncheon and will be held on a Saturday. *Note: Walt Bonneau visited a club in Sacramento and they have their meetings at Ford Dealership. Bob asked the members if they would volunteer to check out some of the dealerships in the Valley to see if we could have our meetings there.* There were several volunteers.

Inspector General: Steve Kovacic choose Pat Fenlen's 57 because it had a 3rd brake light.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Greg Thurston mentioned the Thanksgiving Parade in Fountain Hills and wanted people to sign up to drive in the parade Split the pot: $61 winner Don Henderson (after Ken thought he won but had his numbers backwards)

Meeting adjourned at 10:36am,

Respectfully submitted by Yvonne Wagner

Future Events

OCTOBER :

Your ACTC MEETING:

LOCATION: **George's Café** 10502 W. Thunderbird Blvd. Sun City

DATE/TIME: Sunday **October 13th** members arrive between 8:30 am – 9:00 am

MISC: Breakfast served at 9:30 am, cost $18.00/person

"Drive your Bird!"

2024 Beeline Cruise-in Car Show:

October 11-12, 2024 (Note the Corrected Phone # for the Hotel Reservation (928-474-0185), Speak to Nova after 2:00pm., rate is $107.00

The Rim Country Classic Auto Club will be celebrating our 31st annual Cruise-in Car Show October 12th at the beautiful Green Valley Park off of Main Street in the **Town of Payson**. We are continuing with our tradition of **Classic Cars, Trucks and Rat Rods 1999 or older.** The Town of Payson will be assisting with food trucks and vendor booths, Yard Games, entertainment, and much more! The event will conclude with a fireworks display, weather and fire restrictions permitting.

The weekend's activities start on Friday, Oct 11th at Rumsey Park, to include a classic car cruise around part of town from 3:30-4:30PM followed by our annual "Burger Burn" cookout (for registrants only). The main show will be on Saturday at Green Valley Park, with parking for the participating cars starting at 7AM.

Car Registration form link on RCCAC website

Don't Forget to Vote For Our Very Own ACTC Member:

If you were at the last meeting or two you heard us talk about the upcoming CTCI Board of Directors elections and our very own **Austin Eaton** is running for Director of Region 6. I encourage you to vote for Austin and you can rest assured ACTC will be well represented should Austin be elected so look for your ballot in your next CTCI Early Bird. (Likely the September issue)

President Jim Rogers

Thank you for your continued support!

PLEASE NOTE !

All dates and events listed above are tentative

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Future Events

NOVEMBER:

Your ACTC MEETING

The **American Legion Hall** t#107, location: 20001 N. Cave Creek Rd. Phoenix, AZ .

Arrive 8:30 - 9:00am, breakfast served at 9:30am., Cost: $18.00

Club Outing

LOCATION: Scottsdale Pavilions 9120 Talking Stick Way (Indian Bend Rd.)
DATE/TIME: Saturday November 30th members arrive 12:00 Noon – 2:00 pm
MISC: Bring your T-Bird or other classic and hang out for a while.

DECEMBER:

ACTC CHRISTMAS Meeting Event and LUNCHEON

LOCATION: **American/Italian Club** 7509 N. 12th St. Phoenix

DATE/TIME: Saturday December 7th 11:30 am – 2:30 am

MISC: Cost $30.00/person, Italian Buffet Luncheon is included, Cash Bar

JANUARY, 2025:

To Be Announced...

MARCH, 2025

Midnight at the Oasis's, Yuma, AZ, Car Show, March 01-03 Event

www.midnightattheoasis.net

APRIL, 2025

Ford Fest 2025 at Gateway Classic Cars Scottsdale, AZ April 5th 2025. This is a Nationwide Ford Fest Car Show.

https://facebook.com/events/s/ford-fest-

PLEASE NOTE !

All dates and events listed above are tentative

Other Club Information and Requests

Welcome New Members

No New Members this month.

Interested to Joining the ACTC? Please contact Judy Thompson, email: jbretthompson@gmail.com to receive an emailed application form. We would love to have you!

Please submit your Tbird's firewall mounted "Data Plate" so that it may be decoded . This enables your Tbird to be pre-selected and featured on the cover of the newsletter; Such as; a January manufactured car featured on the January months newsletter.

We want to Thank and Welcome are two new ACTC Newsletter supporters/advertisers:

⇒ **Concours Parts**

⇒ **WiseFit Wealth Management**

Request for Newsletter Submissions:

T-Bird Stuff

Contact Walt Bonneau: waltbonneau@gmail.com

All ACTC and CTCI members may submit a request to have an Event, Topic Request, Club Suggestions or Misc. (Thunderbird Related) contribution for publication consideration in the ACTC Newsletter.

(**Note:** *All submissions due by the 19th of each previous month to meet the publication deadline.*

New Advertisers Welcomed;

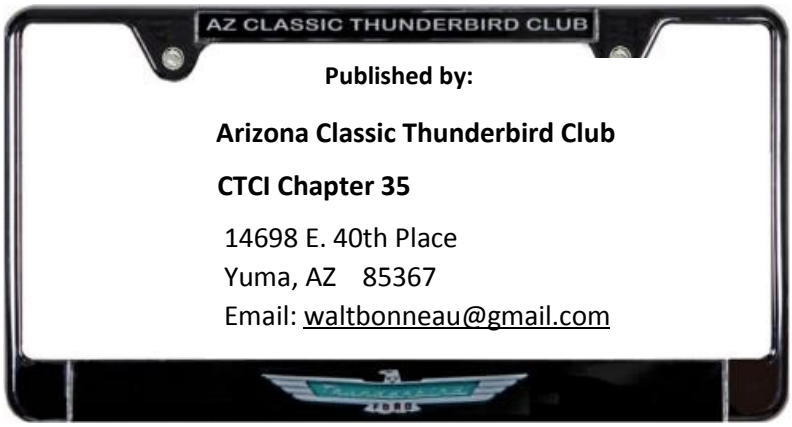
See Walt Bonneau/Chuck Thompson,

See email address to the right>>>

Remember All meetings are smoke and cell phone free!

NO SMOKING

Arizona Bird Chatter



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Arizona Classic Thunderbird Club

CTCI Chapter 35

14698 E. 40th Place
Yuma, AZ 85367
Email: waltbonneau@gmail.com

ACTC – 2024 Officers

President—Jim Rodgers

Email: iAMJR1@cox.net

Ph: (602) 300-5792

Vice President — Bob Michele

Email: rmich1957@gmail.com

Ph: (602) 768-5710

Secretary — Yvonne Wagner

Email: tywagner56@msn.com

Ph: (602) 448-2962

Treasurer — Chuck Thompson

Email: cwbird57@gmail.com

Ph: (408) 773-0222

Ways & Means —- Position Open

Board Member @ Large — Bob Michele

(See above)

Ex-Officio Member — Chris Ames

Email: chistopherames@thunderbird.us

Ph: (602) 722-0749

Website: www.AZclassicthunderbirds.org

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