



The Wing



Official Journal of the
Northern California Vintage Thunderbird Club

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SEP/OCT 2016

THE TOMB RAIDERS



Current Events

September 24th
T-Birds on the Wharf
Santa Cruz
October 22nd
Delta Tour #2
November
Villa Montalvo - Saratoga

What's Inside

President's Message	2
2016 Calendar of Events	3
Upcoming Tours	4 and 5
Flight Log –	6 and 7
Elvis a 'Ford Man'?	8 and 9
Car of the Month	9 and 10

Board of Directors

Founded on September 26, 1976, the Northern California Vintage Thunderbird Club of America, Inc. (NORCAL VTCA) unites owners and enthusiasts of ALL Ford Thunderbirds built in 1956 through 2005 in a common effort to enjoy and preserve these fine cars.

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The above officers are here to serve the members of this club

Our website is at

<http://norcal-vtca.org/> and
the facebook location is
www.facebook.com/norcalvtca?ref=stream

President's Message *By Craig Cuslidge*

Dear Members

I'm really getting tired of including in my messages obituaries of so many of my long-time friends. Our club has lost another one of it's founding fathers this summer with the passing of Chuck Schultz, member #5. Chuck was one of the "original five" to attend a VTCA meet in Southern California in September 1976, prior to our clubs formation. He met 4 other Nor-Cal T-Bird owners there and realized there was an interest in forming a club. I met Chuck in March 1977 in Berkeley at the clubs 2nd official meet. He heard my last name and asked if I knew a Mel Cuslidge, my dad. It seems that after WWII Chuck and my father were co-workers and friends from 1945-46 on construction jobs in Stockton. It's a small world. Chuck and my dad renewed their friendship until my dad's death in 2006. During those years Chuck was often like a father to me as well.

Chuck served the club in every office including president, was author of our by-laws, judged at concours, and hosted more events and meets than I can count, all with a smile on his face. Chuck also played the role of guardian of the treasury, often without that smile. In the last several years his health has prohibited his attending our meets, but he always loved hearing about what was going on with us. Chuck was a very special person and will be missed by the club and it's members and especially by me.

As for the events: our July meet at the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum and our August Horse & Feathers picnic in Lodi were fantastic. Both were fairly light in attendance but superb in quality and fun. Upcoming events are: September at Santa Cruz Birds on the Wharf; October for Delta Tour Version 2; November at Villa Montalvo in Saratoga and December for the Holiday Party.

PLEASE! Dust off and gas up your T-Birds and attend our upcoming meets. Hope to see many of you soon.

Happy Birding, Craig Cuslidge

Note from the Editor

Thanks to Vic Quarello for many of the pictures in this issue. Your editor was off on some other adventures again at the tour times.

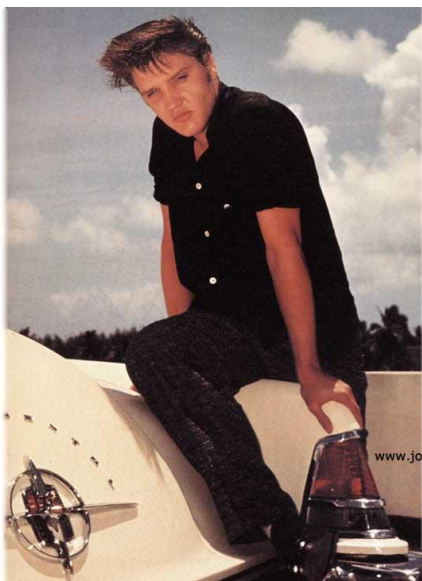
I also want to thank the individual that sent a copy of *The Wing* to VTCI for their annual newsletter competition. We received a Silver Award for 2015.

Also thanks to Tim van Raam for directing me to the story about Elvis and the 1962 Sport Roadster.

Russ = oldcarr.rc@gmail.com



Picture of the Month



Elvis with his Continental Mark II.

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 24th

** TBirds on the Wharf in Santa Cruz

*Taste of Morgan Hill on Sunday after Wharf

*October 8th Saturday – 23rd Annual Alameda Classic Car Show

October 22nd – **Delta Tour – Version #2
See inside for info.

November – **Villa Montalvo – Saratoga

December

**Holiday Luncheon

The 2016 Calendar has filled up so if you have ideas for a tour for 2017 please let Craig and Miki know so we can include them in our planning.

Call Craig at 209-463-2793 and he will help you arrange a tour. The *Wing* editor will design and publish a flyer for the tour.

**Club functions

*Other items of interest

Website of the Month

Where can you see Thunderbirds in their native element in movies and TV? Try this website for Thunderbird sightings in different venues. Sometimes the same car appears in different episodes as in the Andy Griffin/Mayberry clips.

<http://automotivemileposts.com/movietvbirds.htm>

Front Page Picture

Inside the "Tomb" at the Rosicrucian Museum in San Jose. We finally got Vic into one of the pictures since he is usually on the other side of the camera.



**Monterey Bay Classic Thunderbird Club
Invites All**

**Classic ('55-'57) Vintage ('58-'66) & Retro ('02-'05)
Thunderbirds**

To The 19th Annual

Thunderbirds on the Santa Cruz Wharf

Saturday, September 24, 2016

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Rain or Shine

**Goody Bags, Dash Plaques, Raffle, Scavenger Hunt & Awards,
Spectacular Ocean & Mountain Views
Restaurants, Shopping on the Wharf & Santa Cruz Boardwalk**

Please complete and return to:
MBCTC, PO Box 2721, Aptos, CA 95001-2721
by September 17, 2016

Entry fee: \$40.00 Rain or Shine
Proceeds benefit Children's Hospice & Palliative Care Coalition.

Name: _____

Address: _____ **Email:** _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Club Affiliation _____ **Car Info: Year** _____ **Color** _____

*** SIGNED:** _____ **Date:** _____

* Participants accept and assume full responsibility for any injury or loss to themselves or family or property and agree to release from any and all liability the Monterey Bay Classic Thunderbird Club and/or the City of Santa Cruz, California.

Your cancelled check serves as registration confirmation.

DELTA TOUR #2,

Saturday, October 22

It will be hard to live up to the first wonderful Delta tour we had a few years ago, but the area is large with lots to see so we're going there again to spend the day taking a tour of some of the scenic and historic sites of the San Joaquin Delta area.

We'll be meeting between 9:30 and 10 a.m. at Specialty Sales Classic Cars at 300 Chadbourne Road, Cordelia Junction, exit 41 on Hwy 80 in Fairfield. We'll have coffee, look at the great cars, and be on the road again by 10:30. From there we'll take 80 East to Hwy 12 (exit 43) to Rio Vista and stop at the Western Railway Museum for a short train ride along the old route and a tour of their museum housing antique engines and cars.



From the museum we'll go into Rio Vista for lunch at The Point Restaurant, which overlooks the Sacramento River. After lunch we'll do a Delta drive on winding country roads along Delta islands and crossing waterways on the only remaining ferries in the California state highway system.

There will be wonderful scenery to look at and photo opportunities for our cars. We'll end our tour at one of the wonderful Lodi farms/wineries where we can shop and maybe relax with a beverage of our choice.

Please call Craig and Miki at **209-463-2793** if you have any questions or to let us know how many people to expect for the train ride or the restaurant, as we need to give them advance notice of our numbers.

We're going to have a great day. Hope you can come along.



Flight Log #1 Horse and Feathers – Lodi

By Miki and Pics by Vic

Horse & Feathers this year was a very nice event. It was only kept from being a great day by a surprisingly low turnout. Very sorry if you had to miss it this year. The day was perfect, around 84 degrees, with a lovely breeze, and, of course, all that lovely shade. The food was, as always, delicious and diverse. Everyone seemed to enjoy looking at the great cars and visiting with old friends and new.



The Sacramento Area Mustang Club was there, their first year as the “Horse” to our “Feathers”, as was the Falcon Club, but we also had members of Sierra Mustangs there who said it was their favorite event and they still want to come. OK by us!



As always, the raffle was fun, and almost everyone went away with something. The game of ball scoot was won by Tracy from the Mustang Club, who beat out our Ted Faia and took home a bottle of wine. It was her birthday, so that made the victory even sweeter. The hubcap toss was boisterous and close and came down to a play-off.



There was no board meeting after the show, so we had time to visit with others who weren't ready for the day to end. Craig and Ted got in their horse shoe game. I'm not sure who won but I don't think they even care. The game's the thing.



Because of the light turn out, the raffle proceeds did not cover all the costs, but the short fall was only \$31.00 per club. A better turnout next year will put us back in the black. Please try to come, as it's always a really great day, and the more people and cars the more fun to be had!

Flight Log #2 Rosicrucian Museum

Pics by Vic

After a great low calorie (Ha Ha!) brunch at Bill's Café we traveled about ¼ mile to the Rosicrucian Museum in San Jose. This is a fantastic museum and well worth the trip if you haven't been there. We only had one bird show up (Marilyn's) so I won't run a picture of that since you have all seen it many times before.

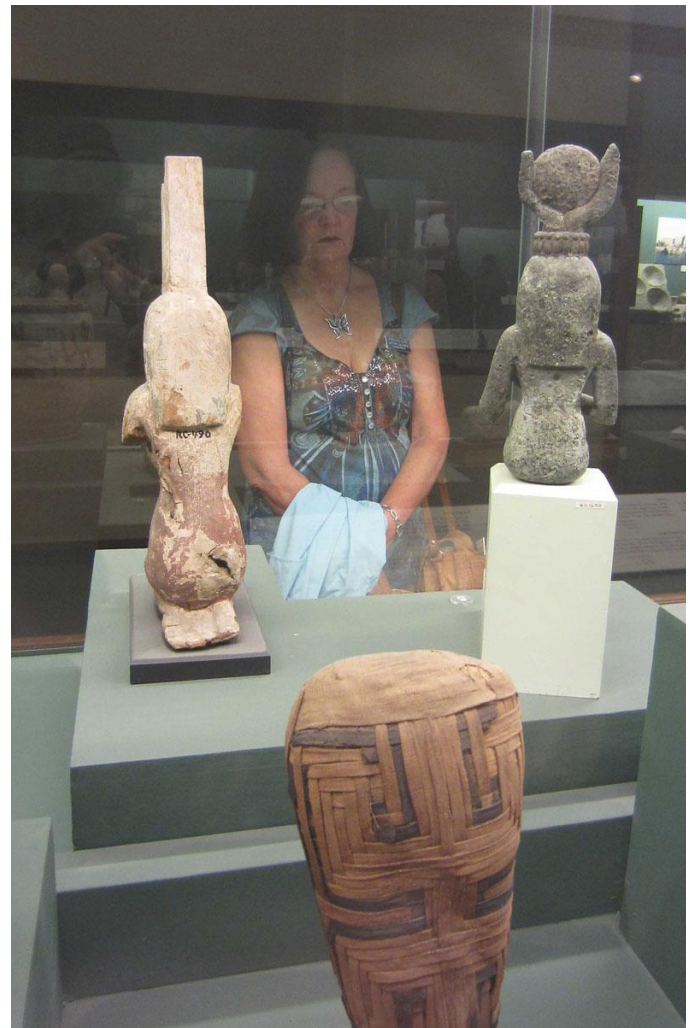


The museum starts with an Egyptian theme on it's outside architecture and continues down to the dark tomb tour on the inside. The displays were fascinating and covered thousands of years of history.



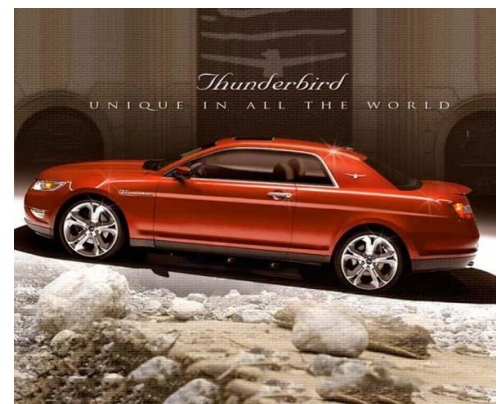
The day was so nice that we could not just end the day after the tour so we drove about a mile more to the Sharra's chocolate factory in San Jose. This little jewel has been in business for more than 100 years and has a wide range of premium chocolates.

They also have homemade ICE CREAM. So we all decided to have a cup of raspberry and fudge swirl



ice cream to top off our tour. While we were sitting outside in the shade of some large trees enjoying our indulgences along came a "parade". A local bicycle club paraded by for our viewing. These bicycles were fantastic.....all types ..vintage ...trikeslowriders... and all home modified. They just kept coming. There must have been more that 500 with all ages of riders. Quite a show.

Such a nice day demanded we keep the top down and take the backroads back to San Martin. Thanks Craig and Miki for another great outing.



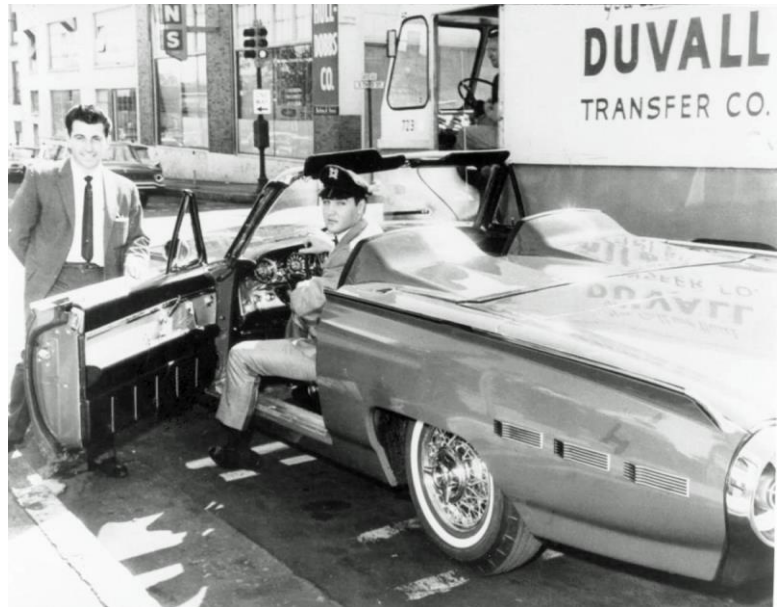
2017 ?

Elvis was a Ford Man!! Well almost!

Elvis' love of Cadillacs is well known as he had numerous models during his lifetime, but there was an opportunity for him to have been a Ford man. On Nov. 17, 1961, Ernie Barrasso, a neighborhood buddy of Elvis', was working for Hull-Dobbs Ford dealership in Memphis. They had just received one of the first new Thunderbird Roadsters in the dealership. Ernie immediately decided the car was for Elvis. He made 3 trips to Graceland before leaving a brochure on the car. Elvis made the trip to the dealership in his Cadillac the next day and fell in love with the red Roadster with black interior and with wire wheels.

This seems to be a fairly basic roadster without power windows, power seats, air conditioning or many other options.....but it had wire wheels! Hull-Dobbs was a large dealer so they had received one of the first Roadsters. Elvis purchased it right then. He told them he wanted the car ready in 15 minutes and quickly the dealer called the local paper who took the picture below. Elvis drove off in the Thunderbird after telling Ernie he would send someone for the Cadillac. Ernie standing in the picture with Elvis was happy with a large \$415 commission on the sale.

The picture ran in the old Memphis Press-Scimitar newspaper and Barrasso got a copy and had it blown up like a poster. Today, it hangs on the wall of his office in his bachelor's home in East Memphis. Next to it is a copy of the bill of sale, also enlarged, showing that Elvis paid \$6,284 for the 1962 8-cylinder sport roadster Thunderbird.



Elvis wanted to drive the car in California while filming the movie "Kid Galahad". Two employees were assigned to drive the car

out. Along the way they discovered some of the wires on the fancy wire wheel covers had come loose and were knocking against the car. They needed replacing, but replacement wire wheels were not available. So, plain ordinary wheels were substituted. Rumor has it that this failure happened during some high speed cornering putting a lot of stress on the wires.

When Elvis saw that the spiffy wire wheels were missing and couldn't be replaced, he called Detroit and demanded to talk to 'Mr. Ford'. When Edsel Ford heard the story, he told Elvis to return the car to the nearest dealer and he'd get his money back. 'I was disappointed', admits Barrasso, 'but after the problem with the wheels, Elvis was never comfortable with the car. I just wish I'd had the money to buy it back'.

Another source has Elvis doing the driving when the wheel failure occurred. Presley was on a drive in his new Sports Roadster when one of the wheels collapsed, apparently while turning at a good rate of speed. This incident made the national headlines, and sent engineers at Ford and Kelsey-Hayes back to the drawing board to refigure wheel load and tolerance. It was determined that the spokes on the forty-eight spoke wheels were slightly undersize at 1/4 inch, and that the diameter of the spokes would need

to be increased to 5/16 of an inch to allow for proper safety margins. Ford immediately recalled the wheels, fitting Sports Roadsters in the field with standard wheels and wheel covers until the new Kelsey-Hayes Wire Wheels could be manufactured and installed. This is proven by an episode on "The Twilight Zone," titled "Showdown with Rance McGrew" which had an original air date of February 2, 1962. This episode was filmed and copyrighted in 1961, and featured one of the first Corinthian White 1962 Thunderbird Sports Roadsters built, complete with all of the Roadster accoutrements--with the exception of the wire wheels. Standard wheels and full wheel covers were provided. Apparently this episode was filmed during the wire wheel recall period. Other TV and movie episodes on the internet all seem to have wire wheels on the Sport Roadsters.

If you are interested in a listing of Thunderbirds in TV series or movies go to <http://automotivemileposts.com/movietvbirds.html> .

Whether or not Elvis was driving when the wheel failure happened the car was returned and Elvis remained a "Cadillac man".

Car of the Month

Rita's Bird

Rita & Mike Press'
1963 Thunderbird

In 1986 Rita expressed a desire to own a '56 Lincoln Mk II and a search was begun. Finding MkIIs few and far between and parts almost non available it was decided to go for a 'Bird and with our little 'Bird being a bit on the uncomfortable side and since '63 was the year that Rita graduated high school that year was decided upon as the car of choice. In 1989 a black hardtop was found in Alameda being sold by the grandson of the original owner.



The car had sat outside for years and was sad with evidence of two incorrectly catalyzed polyurethane paint jobs and a hood and top that looked like they had been used for tap dance practice, there was rot in the front passenger floor and both sides of the trunk and it moaned when turning right. But the mileage was in the low 50Ks and the car ran well enough to drive home. The price was right and so it was brought home and christened "Big Bird".

Mike spent a lot of hours sanding and stripping the old paint (which acted more like rubber). A compression check revealed that the cylinders were becoming oval (common in early FE block engines) but a check of the transmission indicated that it was not rebuilt and almost pristine, thus verifying the mileage.

After rebuilding the power steering control box an entire new front end was installed, this made the sagging with age rear springs look even worse. So, now the rear springs were replaced. The car now drove quite well but smoked a bit. The car was driven as it was further worked on until 1993 when it was ready for final body work and painting.

After removing the entire interior “Big Bird” was turned over to George Fichtner of Auto Perfectionists in Fairfield, CA. The car was plastic media blasted down to the original pickle coat and prepped for paint. Rita selected Rose Beige metallic as her color choice, it was a correct for '63 color and it was the color of a '63 Mercury that had been owned by her late aunt and she had always loved the car. The car was still owned by Rita's uncle and a bolt was removed from inside the trunk for color matching.



George custom matched the color in modern two stage acrylic mixing a bit of “Chrystalline Frost” (fine mica) into the paint for more reflectance and color “flop”. While George painted Marty Mizzi of Mizzi Automotive in Fairfield took care of the engine, boring it with torque plates installed to true the bore and doing a full rebuild. At this point a full, correct chrome dress kit was added to the engine.

While the car was in for paint Mike and Rich Looper took on the seats. The original black was kept for the interior color but the seats were treated to new covers and custom cut foam to improve lateral and lumbar support.

Finally with completion of paint and full interior restoration a set of repro wire wheels was added and it all came together; the car was ready for its first concours – the annual Norcal-VTCA concours in Sacramento. Results of that show were First in Class and tied for Best of Show with 298 points out of 300. Subsequently the car was driven to and shown in numerous concours and shows trophying regularly.

The major drawback to keeping a car in concours condition is that it doesn't drive and stop as well as modern iron. With the car never trailered safety was a concern; it was modified mechanically with dual master cylinder disc brakes and heavy duty sway bars by Dave Adams of Adams Auto Classics in Martinez, CA. These mods make the car as drivable and stoppable as many modern cars and with the 'Birds suspension just as comfortable. Other minor improvements have been made since then - most unseen.



Today when on the highway there is no problem staying with or stopping with the traffic and the car gets numerous thumbs up and smiles from admirers – the best trophies one could expect from a 22 year old restoration. (ed: OK but how do you get the car to the deck of the aircraft carrier Hornet for a picture? Ask Vic!).

Need Help and Information?

Our Technical Advisors

This list is under review. If you would like to be added or removed please contact Russ Carr.

Craig Cuslidge

1958-1966 Concours Detail
1960 sunroofs
1965 General/Restorations
209-463-2793

Bill Edwards

1958-1966 General/Mechanical/Convertibles
510-223-2365

Mike Press

1958-1966 Concours Details/Parts/Services
1961-1963 General/Restoration
510-558-4037

Russ Carr

1961-1963 General Coupe and Convertible repair
408-568-3782

Concours Manuals

Available from Mike Press for \$15.00 plus \$2.00 shipping. Rules plus single series sections available for \$7.00 plus \$2.00 shipping. Contact Mike at 510-558-4037 to order.

Good Guys List

A list of service providers that have done particularly good work on members cars – Available free to members from Mike Press (510) 558-4037, mjprgp@infionline.net. Also, contact Mike if you would like to add to the list.

General Information

Membership

To become a member, please send annual dues to the Treasurer. (\$25.00 if Wing to be delivered electronically and \$30.00 if to be delivered by USPS).

Change of Address

Please send address change notices to the Secretary

Correspondence

General correspondence should be sent to the club President. Submissions to The Wing should be sent to the Editor (see Publication Deadline below).

Nametags

Order through Craig Cuslidge at 209-463-2793.

Advertising

Send all advertising with payment to The Wing Editor. See advertising pages for rates.

Publication Deadline

The Wing is published bi-monthly on the 1st of January, March, May, July, September and November. Submissions must be received before the 20th of the month preceding the issue(s) for which they are intended. E-mail submissions must be in .doc or .docx format and pictures in .jpg format. Hard copy submissions gladly accepted.

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Northern California
Vintage Thunderbird Club



1975 Thunderbird. The largest bird made.
Length 225.6 inches Width 79.6 inches
Weight about 5400 pounds. Engine 460 cu in

THIS WAS A BIG BIRD!

inside
Flight Log –
Horse/Feathers
Rosicrucian museum

Upcoming
Tbirds on the wharf
Delta tour 2