

ThunderEnlightening^{T.M.}

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc.

Thunderbird Specialists



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

ISSUE NUMBER TEN • OCTOBER 1997

CASCO NEWS

YOUR PATIENCE APPRECIATED

Our apology is extended to those of you who did not experience our usual quick turn around on your orders this summer. A bittersweet situation occurred when on one hand our sales growth exceeded our expectations, but on the other hand we were unable to meet the service standards that we feel you deserve.

We have taken steps which will, hopefully, eliminate these unfortunate delays in the future.

Your patience during these trying times was very much appreciated.

PART PROBLEM

The **reproduction sunvisors** available seem to be too loose on the stock visor arms. In our shop, to keep them from flopping, we put a *very slight* bend in the visor arm about 2" from the end and then turn the arm 90 degrees and make another *very slight* bend about 5 1/2" from the end. It works!

THE NEW CLASSIC T-BIRD?

Return of the **two seater T-Bird** seems assured as the rumors fly. The Chicago Tribune has quoted Jacques Nasser, President of Ford Automotive Operation, as saying "We will have a two seater Thunderbird that goes back to the heritage of the '55 -'57 icons; it's just a matter of when because we want to build it off a high volume platform."

We think it would be appropriate for Ford to reveal the details of the new T-Bird to its most faithful following at the 1998 CTCI convention in Dallas.

'57's WITH '58 COLORS

Reader Carl Tate from Livermore California, the owner of a beautiful sun gold '57, points out that our chart of available color options in ThunderEnlightening #8 doesn't include the information on the late '57's using the '58 colors.

For those readers who did not know, the '57 T-Birds were still being built after the '58 production began and some of these "late 57's", manufactured after September 1957, were painted in the '58 colors. These colors are Sun Gold (color code Z), Torch Red (R), Azure Blue (L), Gunmetal Gray (H), and Seaspray Green (N).

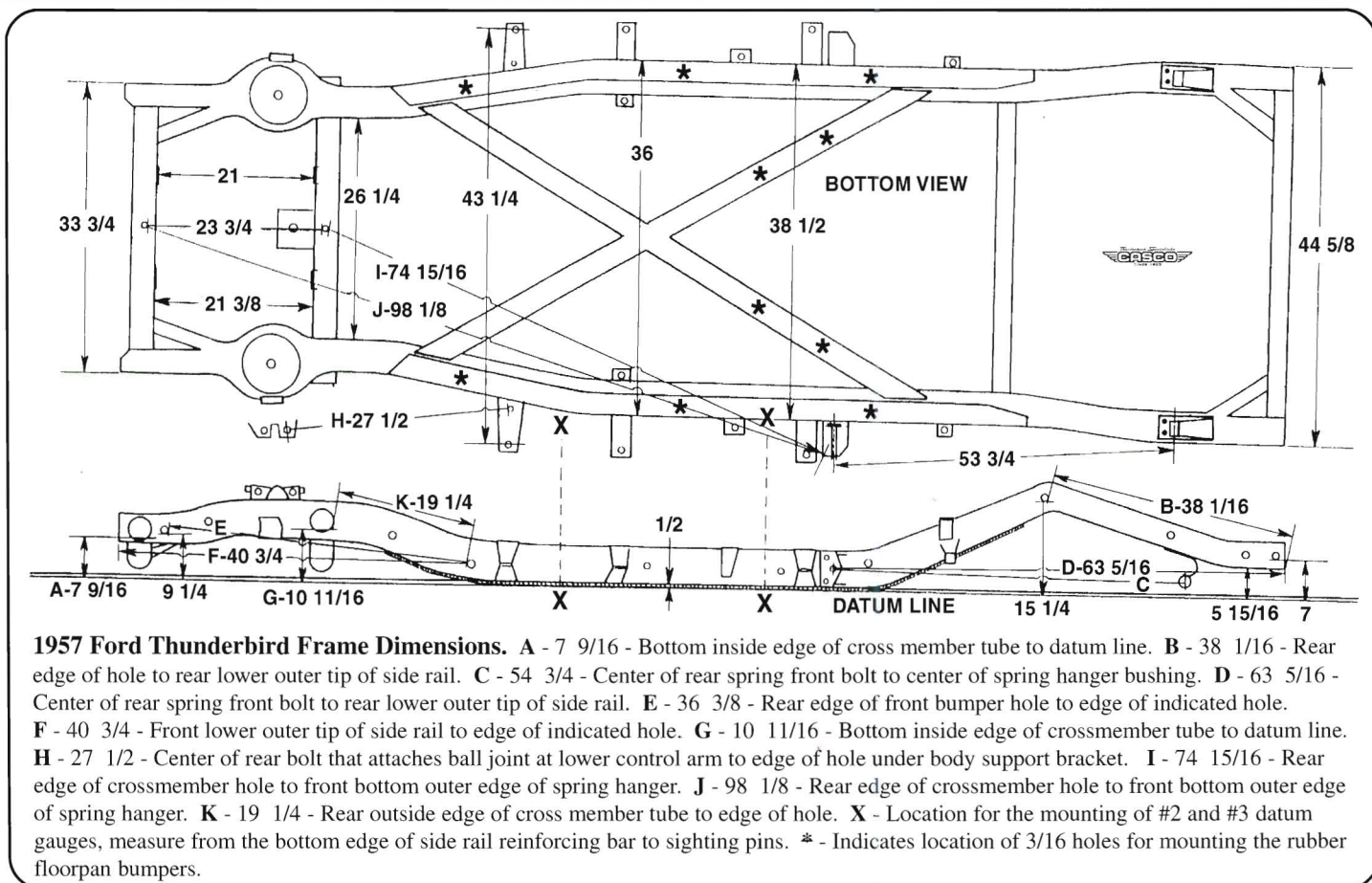
The '57 information we provided in ThunderEnlightening #8 was from the 1957 dealer showroom book. Does anybody have data on the possible color hardtop and upholstery combinations for the very late '57's that they would be willing to share?

Classic Thunderbird Club International



At least once a year we like to encourage all T-Bird owners to become members of the Classic Thunderbird Club International, aka CTCI. The club publishes a bimonthly publication "The Early Bird" which alone is worth the \$25.00 annual cost of membership. CTCI is a parent organization with almost 10,000 members and over 100 local chapters. It is the only international organization that is 100% dedicated to representing the owners of Classic T-Birds. Membership applications are available from us. Just ask.

The 1998 CTCI International convention will be in Dallas Texas. To register and participate in any sanctioned CTCI event you must be a member of CTCI. So why wait? Join today.



'57 FRAME SPECIFICATIONS

We recently ran across some frame straightening specs for the '57 T-Bird frame. We're hoping your frame won't need to be adjusted but if it does hopefully the information given here will help.

Anybody have similar specifications for the '55 and '56 frames? We'd like to pass that along also.

We are also showing the approximate location of the ten rubber floorpan bumpers. Look for small 3/16" diameter holes in the frame which accept the bumper retaining clips at the locations marked on the drawing with an *.

WORTH REPEATING

Is your Bird on the level? Have you wondered if your T-Bird is too high in the front or possibly too low in the rear? Or too high in the rear? Here are some dimensions from the specification manuals that should help.

First check your tires for proper pressure then put a couple of people on the seat totaling approximately 300 lbs. Now you are ready to measure.

Measure from the ground to the center of the headlights in the front and to the center of the taillights in the rear.

"Proper" according to the spec manuals is as follows:

'55 & '56 Front 28.67"; Rear 22.76". '57 Front 28.07"; Rear 23.30"

ELECTRICAL LEAKS

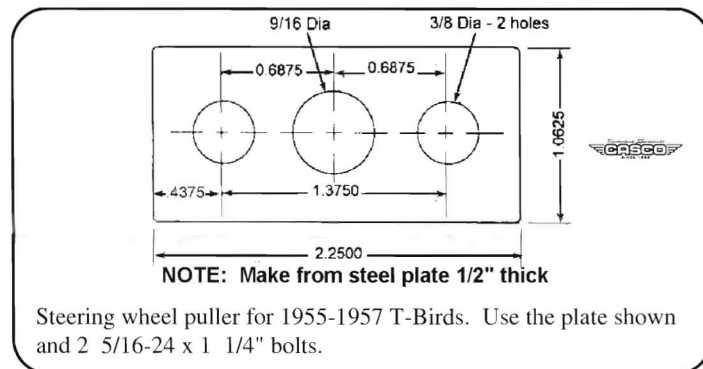
Electrical leaks, an unwanted current flow, can occur due to worn or damaged insulation, corroded connections or excessive dampness. There is nothing more annoying than jumping into your T-Bird in full anticipation of an enjoyable drive and finding the battery too low to start the car. If you think you have an electrical leak that is running down your battery here's how to find it:

- 1) Turn off everything that uses electricity.
- 2) Remove the battery cable that goes to the starter solenoid from the battery.
- 3) Connect a multimeter set to measure DC volts between the battery terminal and the cable. If it reads battery voltage there is leakage.
- 4) Switch your meter to read DC amps (start on the highest range to prevent damage to the meter) and measure the current flow. If the reading is 1 amp or more then quite likely there is something still turned on. Any current flow between 1 amp and .01amps is a major electrical leak. Less than .01 amps is a minor leak.
- 5) If a leak is detected first clean the battery terminals, battery top, and battery cables, then one at a time remove fuses and disconnect wires until the current drops to zero. When it does you've found the source of your leak.

SHOP TIPS

❑ Remove your hubcaps once or twice a year before washing your car. Not only will you get the wheels clean but you can check the front wheels for grease leakage from the front wheel cups. This early detection may save you from serious front wheel bearing problems down the road. Thanks and \$30.00 gift certificate to Gary Minkin, Granada Hills, California.

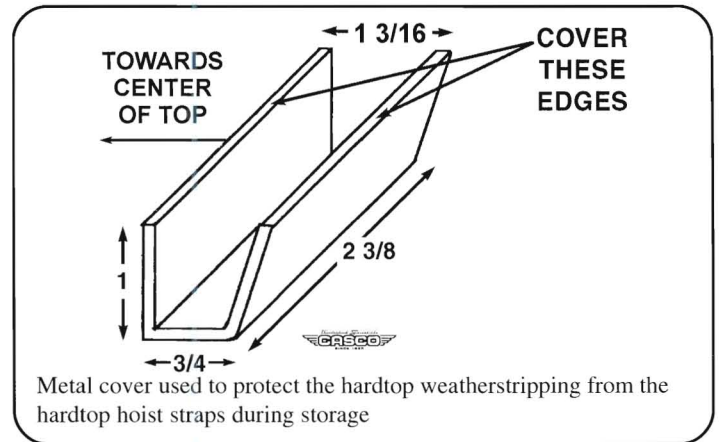
❑ If you are painting a small or odd size part that has a machined surface, is difficult to mask off, and you don't want paint on that surface you can simply cover that surface with a light coat of petroleum jelly or grease before painting. After the paint dries simply wipe off the machined areas. Thanks and a \$30.00 gift certificate to Dennis Shenk, Garrett, Indiana. (We've also used this technique to paint the black and chrome trim plate on the '55 horn ring. Ed.)



❑ Removing the steering wheel requires a puller to break it free from the shaft. If you have access to a drill press you can easily make the puller above to do the job (see sketch). The 1/2" hole in the center is for clearance for the horn wire. Don't skimp here and leave this hole out, unless you remove the horn wire you will damage it!

Once you have the puller here's the procedure.

- 1) Disconnect the battery.
- 2) Remove horn ring - '55 - 2 screws from behind the wheel; '56 & '57 push in & turn counterclockwise.
- 3) Loosen 15/16" steering wheel retaining nut until it is even with the top of the threads on the steering shaft.
- 4) Position steering wheel puller over nut on shaft, make sure puller does not interfere with horn wire, and install 5/16-24 x 1 1/4 bolts into threads in the steering wheel.
- 5) Tighten bolts uniformly until the steering wheel breaks free from the tapered splines on the shaft.
- 6) Remove bolts, puller, 15/16 nut and steering wheel.
- 7) To reinstall steering wheel locate key way on shaft and match with keyway on the wheel, put wheel onto the shaft and install 15/16" nut. Tightening the nut will re-seat the wheel back onto the shaft.



❑ Fred Leth-Steensen from Alamogordo, New Mexico reports that to fully protect your hardtop weatherstrips install these plates (see drawing) over the side and rear weatherstrips where the hoist straps will contact. Fred made his plates from 3/32" thick aluminum, however any thin metal will work. Fred also recommends covering the top edges with plastic "Dip & Grip" (normally used to cover hand tools) or a strip of duct tape. Silicone would work also. Thanks and a \$30.00 gift certificate goes to Fred.

❑ T-Birder Tom Woodman of Lincoln, Nebraska reminds us that when tightening the exhaust manifold bolts be sure to tighten them uniformly and torque them to the proper 23 - 28 ft. lbs.

Failure to tighten uniformly or over tightening can cause the manifold mounting ears to break off. This is particularly true if you are using gaskets between the exhaust manifold and the head. Thanks and a \$30.00 gift certificate to Tom.

TECH TIPS

SEE SMOKE? Smell like rubber burning? Check for exhaust leaks between the LH exhaust manifold and the down pipe. If the gasket develops a leak the extremely hot exhaust gases will be blowing directly on the flat rubber steering column seal (part #3513). Rubber scorching has occurred on your editor's personal T-bird and we recently heard of this actually causing the rubber to break into active flame.

REAR MAIN SEAL REVISITED

Reader Norm Uselton, Richmond, Illinois, said he had installed many rear main seals and they always leaked. Finally he removed the engine, line bored the block and turned the crank and he reports that he has been leak free for two years. He feels that the crank was "jumping around" causing the seal to fail... Thanks and a \$30.00 gift certificate to Norm.

TWO GREAT RADIO DEALS



Some of our customers have told us that they really would like to have an AM/FM radio in their Bird but they don't care about playing tapes.

If you are one of these folks here's a deal for you. CASCO is now able to supply you with an electronic tuning AM/FM radio that will fit right into your dash with features such as 4 way fader, seek, scan, tone control, local/distance, clock and 18 watts of output with amber backlit digital display for the very special price of \$95.00 plus shipping. Part #TBS-FM



And for those who want to be able to play cassettes we also have an excellent offer. We are able to supply a Jensen AM/FM/Tape radio with chrome face, 4 way fader, bass boost, 24 station presets, seek, scan, tone & balance, local-distance, clock, green illumination and 40 watts of power for just \$135.00 plus shipping. Our part # for this radio/cassette is TBS1JC

These are limited time offers - we cannot guarantee that these low prices will be available after 1/1/98.

CASCO NUMBERS

Orders: (614) 622-8561 or (800) 374-0914

Fax: (614) 622-5151 or (800) 513-5806

Technical Help: (614) 622-9700

WANT MORE? Buy one of these radios and CASCO will allow you \$75.00 for your complete original Classic T-Bird radio even if it isn't working. Call our order line for complete details.

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This publication is prepared and published by Classic Auto Supply Co. Inc. for the owners of 1955, 1956, & 1957 Ford Thunderbird automobiles. It is provided without cost to its current active customers.

Readers are encouraged to submit shop tips and articles for publication. Each submission printed will earn for its author the gratitude of Classic T-Bird owners around the world and a \$30.00 gift certificate from Classic Auto Supply Co. We reserve the right to edit any submission.

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NEW ITEM

Every serious concour participant with a '57 will be pleased to know that CASCO can now offer the



original type Schrader

tire valve extention. We're talking exact here. No air chuck ridges, Schrader name & part number, parts are bright nickel plated, they are correct in every detail.

We've seen these at swap meets for more than \$100 per set of 4. CASCO price is \$12.50 each or only \$39.95 for a set of four. Part numbers are 1705 for one, 1705AK for set/4. Prices are plus shipping.

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