

# ThunderEnlightening<sup>T.M.</sup>

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc.



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

ISSUE NUMBER FOURTEEN • NOVEMBER 2001

## THOUGHTS FROM OUR OFFICE

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11 it has been difficult to focus on normal life. I struggle with the task of now promoting a holiday sale. With US troops actively engaged in war I wonder if holiday sale is even appropriate. But changing our way of life would be letting the terrorists win and would dishonor our troops fighting to preserve our freedom. Thank you to all of our international customers who sent letters of encouragement. Your kind words and support of our decision to strike back is appreciated.

## NEW ITEMS FROM CASCO

### DISK BRAKES

We now stock a disk brake conversion kit for your little bird. We installed this kit in our own restoration shop and were very pleased with the increase in stopping power. The kit includes new dual-bowl master cylinder, dual caliper pistons, rotors, replacement rear cylinders, braided flexible lines, attaching hardware, and specially illustrated directions developed in our restoration shop. Part numbers are DISCM for manual or DISCP for power.

### ALUMINIZED EXHAUST

In response to requests from our customers for a less expensive alternative to stainless steel exhaust systems, CASCO is now manufacturing exhaust pipes out of aluminized material. Aluminized pipes have superior protection against rust over steel pipes. Offered as an alternative to stainless steel, aluminized is half the cost of stainless. CASCO still offers both stainless and our regular heavy gauge steel if you prefer.

Part numbers are same as regular steel with an "A" (for aluminized) added to the part number. Available by the piece or as a set.

### STORAGE TIPS

If you live in an area where your Bird takes a winter nap, here are some suggestions to help make sure she wakes up bright eyed next spring.

■ Add fuel stabilizer and fill the fuel tank. CASCO offers a 32 oz. bottle part# GASSTAB-32. Treats 80 gallons of fuel. Use on 2 and 4 cycle engines. ■ Check the antifreeze level and check to see that the mixture will not freeze at the temperatures you expect to have in your area. ■ Start the engine once a month and let it run for 25-30 minutes. If you have automatic transmission put it in forward and reverse momentarily while the engine is running. Run power windows up and down. Leave the windows down just off the weatherstrip. Move the power seat in all directions momentarily. ■ Unhook the battery. CASCO offers a simple on-off switch for this part# 14301D. ■ Hook up a battery maintainer. CASCO offers these maintenance/storage chargers for both 12-volt part# BAT-UP-12 and 6-volt part# BAT-UP-6.

### WALT NUCKLES

It is with considerable sorrow that we bring word of the passing of long time T-Birder Walt Nuckles.

Walt had a depth of knowledge about Classic Thunderbirds that seemed to be without bound. For the past year Walt took the time to share his knowledge with the T-Bird world through his many comprehensive posts to the Classic Thunderbird List. CASCO has been given permission from his family to reprint some of these posts in our newsletter. For each post used CASCO will make a contribution to the American Cancer Society in Walt's name.

Walt was a friend and he will be missed. Our sympathy is extended to his family and his many close friends in Dallas and around the country.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### PROBLEMS WITH TOP SIDE CLAMPS

**Q.** My front and rear hold down latches functioned properly but the side ones don't lock in place. I have tried different ways without success by tightening and loosening the "J" hook. I've even tried switching sides. Does the top align perfectly over the receiving bracket before locking tight?

**A.** You will find that there are (or should be) alignment pins on each side of the top in the same general area as the side clamps. Most tops are too wide to allow these pins to seat properly into the grooves in the side latch plates. It is because of these pins that the side clamp latch plate are often badly gouged. When installing your top give it a tug toward the center of the car to assure that the pin is seated into the plate. You will feel it seat as the top drops into position. Then you should be able to clamp the side clamp. Do this before clamping the front clamps.

If there is still a problem, then you can loosen the Allen drive set screw in the side of the side clamp and turn the "J" hook in or out to taste. Then tighten the set screw to hold your adjustment.

### IMPROVING ACCELERATION

**Q.** My automatic transmission seems to start in second gear. Aren't the T-Bird transmissions all 3-speed?

**A.** The stock Thunderbird automatic transmissions are 3-speed. However, in the Drive - "D" - position, it does start in second (Intermediate) gear, then shifts to third (High). This is designed for smooth starts and maximum fuel economy.

For maximum acceleration you will want your transmission to start in low gear. To start off in first or Low gear, you have to either manually shift to Low - "L" on the shift selector, or floor the accelerator pedal to force a downshift. If you have the shift selector in Low gear your car will accelerate and stay in low gear until you shift into Drive at which time your transmission will shift into second gear. If after the transmission shifts into second you again drop the shift selector into Low the transmission will stay in second gear until you again move the selector into Drive. This time it will shift into third gear.

You should check to assure yourself that you can't shift into Reverse or Park unless you push the button down on the top of the shifter. You do not want to accidentally go into reverse when power shifting.

### INSTALLING '57 TRUNK LID BUMPERS

**Q.** I recently installed trunk weather stripping on the deck lid of my '57. I have two additional bumpers labeled "rear deck lower corners-57". Where do these go?

**A.** There are two holes along the bottom edge of the deck lid just inboard from the corners. The deck lid overslam bumpers go into these holes. At this point you may have the holes covered with the deck lid weatherstrip. The lip of the weatherstrip gets lifted up at the bumpers and the bumpers are installed under the lip of the trunk weatherstrip.

Looking for the perfect holiday gift??

CASCO Gift Certificates may be your answer!

### SHOP TIPS

#### INSTALLING NEW WHEEL BEARINGS

Sometimes folks who are installing new wheel bearings mistakenly assume that the preservative coating that is on the new bearings is the lubricant - it is not. You do not need to wash a bearing before installation because the preservative is compatible with most lubricants, but you must lubricate the bearing before installation.

The old tried and true method of filling the wheel bearing with wheel bearing grease is to put a small dab of the grease in the palm of one hand and holding the bearing in the other hand forcing the grease through the bearing from the large end to the small end.

Also, a commercially available mechanical grease packer which forces the grease through the bearing can be used. Excess grease should be smeared on the outside of the rollers.

Also, don't fill the space between the bearings with grease. Space is needed to allow room for the excess grease to be thrown from the bearing. Too much grease in the housing will cause excess churning of the grease and extremely high temperatures.

Those who wish to learn more about evaluating and maintaining bearings are encouraged to visit the Timken Tech Tip website at <http://www.timken.com/products/bearings/techtips.asp>

### REMOVING THE POWER SEAT

The seat is bolted to the floorpan by four studs. Under the floorpan are four 3/8" nuts (9/16" wrench size) that must be removed. After removing the nuts, pull seat upwards and tilt it forward. A helper can then remove the retainer pin on the motor drive and disconnect the four wires that go to the motor. The seat can then be removed. The wiring is very simple as there are only four wires to connect and they are color coded. (Red, yellow, green and black) Simply match the colors and reconnect. This and most other operations are covered in the shop manuals in detail.

Glenn Ray - Manager CASCO Restorations

### REPLACING HEADLAMPS

To replace the headlamps on your little bird you will need a medium Phillips screwdriver. Remove the screw found at the bottom of the headlamp door. Being careful not to chip the paint, slightly tilt the bottom of the headlamp door out and then lift the door up and off the car. You can then gain access to the three screws that hold the headlamp retainer. Loosen these three screws and turn the retainer to align the screw heads with the holes in the retainer. At this point the retainer and headlamp are ready to come off. Remove bulb and disconnect headlamp plug. Inspect the wiring for cracks or abrasions. Squirt a little WD40 or similar into the socket to help reduce corrosion. Plug new bulb into wiring harness. You may need to back off the retainer screws more in order to reinstall the retainer. Reinstall the headlamp retainer. Take the car to a qualified technician to have the headlamp alignment properly adjusted. Reinstall the headlamp doors. CASCO offers a variety of headlamp options: regular, halogen, and replaceable element halogen in bright white and bright blue .

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our monthly specials

[www.classictbird.com](http://www.classictbird.com)

## REMOVING THE WINDSHIELD

I have removed many windshields from little birds and have never had one crack, ... yet.

Here are the steps I have used:

1. Remove the trim from the inside of the windshield, including the side pieces and the pieces along the dash. These are just screwed on and removing them exposes other screws for the outside trim.
2. Remove your sun visors (56 and 57 only) and the clips that hold the end towards the mirror.
3. Remove the mirror base by removing the three Phillips drive screws.
4. Remove the small screws that go along the top of the windshield frame that are on the tabs for the top outer stainless piece.
5. Grab the top outer stainless piece and rotate it towards the front of the car to release it from the weatherstrip retaining metal. You may have to pry the tabs over the windshield frame, just be careful to not bend the trim strip.
6. Remove the outer doglegs (the pieces on the side of the windshield).

You have to remove the vertical weatherstrip first. The screws for the weatherstrip are on the inside of the weatherstrip itself. Once the weatherstrip is off, it may expose a couple more screws.

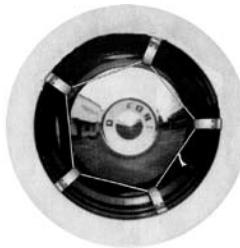
7. LEAVE THE LOWER OUTSIDE WINDSHIELD STAINLESS BELT ATTACHED. This cannot be emphasized enough. It fits into a groove in the windshield seal and will kink if you try to remove it with the windshield installed. It also needs to be installed in the seal before the windshield is reinstalled. This could be a costly mistake.

8. Here's where you have an option. The old seals are often still very pliable and serviceable. You can either sacrifice the seal by cutting it around the inside of the windshield or use a new seal for the re-install, or you can try to save the seal. To save the seal use a putty knife to force the top edge of the seal under the lip of the windshield frame, working a little at a time.

9. Once the seal is either cut or pushed under the top edge, gently and firmly push the top of the windshield out. The bottom will pivot on the seal. If it does not move immediately, try loosening it up by using the putty knife to free it along the inside edge. Install is the reverse. Good luck.

Thanks and a \$30 gift certificate to Bruce Anderson, Delaware OH

## WIRE WHEEL CLIP TIP



There will be emergency occasions when you need to drive your car and don't want to be bothered with replacing the wire wheel covers and the clips. Here's a tip for keeping those clips on when no hubcap is in place.

Loop a solid, not braided, wire through the hooks as shown and twist to secure. This will keep a constant pull on the clips and will prevent them from working out as you drive. This technique is intended for emergency use only and is not recommended for general driving.

Thanks and a \$30 gift certificate to David Trucksess, Burnsville MN

## ADJUSTING THE PASSING GEAR LINKAGE - '56

The Adjustment procedure for the passing gear linkage is not in the 56 shop manual. If you own a 57 shop manual all that information is in there. You might consider obtaining the 57 manual as it is a much better manual and has a complete Fordomatic transmission section.

The procedure starts with inserting a 1/4" drill or 1/4 rod into the moveable part of the linkage and then pushing it deeper into the stationary bracket of the linkage to position it a a fixed position. You may need to remove the carb linkage and the passing gear rod in order to insert the drill into place. Once the passing gear linkage is locked into the correct adjusting position with the drill bit adjust the carb linkage to position the carb to it's throttle stop. Next while pulling up on the passing gear rod from the transmission adjust the threaded bracket to obtain a length that will allow the pin to be inserted but with no slack. Now adjust he the bracket on the end of the passing gear rod three turns longer and connect to it's respective position on the kick down linkage. Now drive the car and check to see how it shifts. If the shifts are too soft, make the rod longer by 1/2 turn increments. If the shifts is too harsh make the rod shorter by 1/2 turn increments. Walt Nuckles

## OIL PRESSURE WARNING LAMP

The oil pressure-warning lamp is just that, a warning lamp. Any time that it comes on and stays on while the engine is running there is a chance that the engine has no oil pressure and the engine will be damaged. As it turns out the circuit is quiet unreliable and it can come on and stay on for many reasons. I once damaged an engine severely because I did not want to believe in it's warning. I had only about 2 miles to go in order to get home and took the chance. The oil pump drive rod had twisted in two and I really didn't have oil pressure. Too bad that I ruined all the bearings in the engine. Fortunately the oil pressure warning lamp usually fails because it stays on due to the wire going to it shorts to ground. This is usually easy to fix at least temporarily by wiggling or repositioning the wire. A much more serious failure is when the lamp never comes on. This condition is most often caused by a defective oil pressure sending switch or simply the wire off the switch. If you were to have a real oil pressure failure during a time when the circuit is dysfunctional you are very likely to damage the engine. The oil pressure warning lamp and the generator warning lamp should be observed to glow every time you turn the ignition switch through the on position and they should both go off after the engine has started. Every operator of these cars should be alert to check the warning lamps every time you start the car. Walt Nuckles

## NOISEY WATER PUMP

The water pump noise as you describe is not normal. Is it possible that the water pump pulley and the balancer pulley are touching each other during part of the revolution on the pulleys. That is a common problem.

When installing a water pump, especially on the 57, the water pump should be positioned as upward as possible before tightening the bolts that mount it. Even with this precaution the pulleys just clear each other. Walt Nuckles

Thanks to the Walt Nuckles family for permitting us to share Walt's T-Bird knowledge. For this privilege, CASCO has made a contribution to the American Cancer Society in Walt's name.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL THE GANG AT CASCO

Nancy, Glenn, Kathy, Dale, John, Shawn,  
Donald, Joe, Jay, Jeff, Betsy  
Boni, Sue, Don, Mike, Jim, Eric

### HOLIDAY SPECIAL FROM CASCO

SPECIAL SAVINGS ON SHIPPING on all orders shipped between November 22 and December 31, 2001. During that time period CASCO will charge only **\$6.00** for all shipments made by standard UPS surface within the continental United States. This special does not apply to wheels, brake drums, rear springs, tires, or used parts. This is our holiday gift to you.

#### CASCO NUMBERS

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## ThunderEnlightening™

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc. Thunderbird Specialists  
 SINCE 1969

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

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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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### PART (INSTRUCTION) PROBLEM

#### 18495MK MANUAL HEATER CONTROL

This kit was originally developed to replace the rare and expensive original vacuum controlled temperature control. After supplying this kit for at least nine years we learned that when the valve is off there is still some heat from the heater.

We discovered that the valve is somewhat directional. You can't blow through it backwards with your mouth but if you apply pressure from, say, a water or air hose you can get the thing to flow backwards even when it is "shut off".

The directions we used to supply with the kit said to install the valve in the hose running from the heater core to the manifold. Hewson Lawrence of Arizona pointed out that the hose running from the water pump to the heater core connected to the water pump on the INLET side. The water flows FROM the intake manifold through the heater core and INTO the inlet side of the water pump and so on. And now it makes sense that you will get some heat even before the radiator thermostat opens.

The moral of the story is "question everything". The directions we now supply with the manual heater kit have been corrected, the valve is installed in the hose that runs from heater core to the *inlet* side of the water pump.

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