

ThunderEnlightening^{T.M.}

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc.



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

ISSUE NUMBER SIXTEEN • NOVEMBER 2003

CASCO BEGINS 35th YEAR

Who knew, back in 1969 when Bill & Sue began selling Thunderbird parts through club newsletters out of their basement, that 35 years later the business would have grown to what is now CASCO? We are home to a Thunderbird parts mail order warehouse, parts manufacturing, restoration facility and, our newest addition, wholesale automotive glass manufacturer. With 18 employees and steadily increasing annual sales, we are also an asset to our local economy. We are proud of our accomplishments and actively participate in our respective churches, schools and civic organizations.

This is all possible thanks to you, our loyal customers who have supported us through the years. Thank you for what you have helped us achieve.

YOUR PARTS DEALER

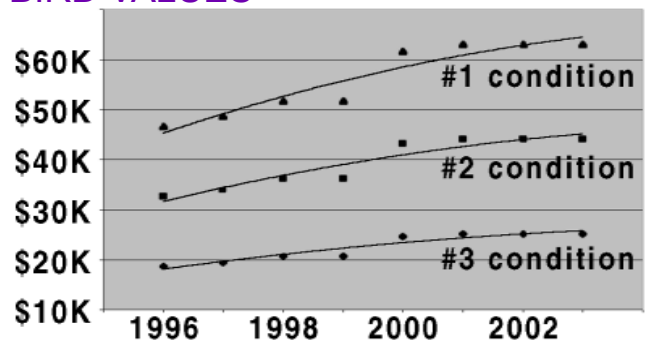
We pride ourselves on always pushing the envelope for new products and services to help you enjoy your Little Bird. This last year alone we invested in tooling costing more than \$22,000 to bring you windshields, visor arms, and all new "no clips" 15" simulated wire wheel covers. Using our existing in-house manufacturing processes we also brought you fuel and temperature gages with sending units, muffler heat shields, and adapter plates that allow using currently available Holley carburetors. Some of these new products are featured on the last page of the enclosed holiday flyer. CASCO may be the leader in new products but we are not alone when it comes to providing new products. Most of the major dealers are constantly working to bring you new and better products. We are able offer these new products because folks like you have supported us for nearly 35 years. Every time you choose to support your specialized parts dealers like CASCO, you are ensuring our ability to invest in the next hard to find part.

CTCI CONVENTIONS

This July we had the opportunity to attend the CTCI Region 1 Convention in Catskill, New York. Upstate New York is an enchanting area to visit, made even better with the addition of all the beautiful Classic Thunderbirds on display. Our hats off to the New York Early Bird Club for putting on a fabulous meet.

Next May, we will be attending the CTCI 2004 International Convention in Miami, Florida. The Classic Thunderbird Club of South Florida is gearing up to host this meet in a beautiful location with a Latin flavor. We look forward to enjoying some Miami hospitality and meeting new and old Thunderbird friends under the Florida sun. If you are interested in more information about this meet, contact the CTCI office at 562-426-2709. Hope to see you there!

T-BIRD VALUES



According to Old Cars Price Guide the Little Bird values have been holding steady for the last few years. When we look back to the values in 1996 we see that the values have risen nearly 35%. The graph shown above uses average values for '55-'57 T-Birds. Not included are adders for 312 engine, hard top, E-Bird, and Supercharged models. If you would like more information on the Old Cars Price Guide visit www.oldercarspriceguide.net

WALT'S WORDS

CHECK THOSE LINES BEFORE YOU INSTALL

Insects getting into your hoses and fuel lines and brake lines is a very common problem, as well as a safety concern. MUD DAUBERS, DIRT DAUBERS, or what ever you call them in your part of the world is your problem. It is a good idea to secure the ends of all hoses and metal lines as you remove them. You may never know when a spider or worm or bug will make a cocoon inside one. Sometimes the problem will not manifest itself until months later when you have a loss of brakes or loss of fuel.

I once found a cocoon restricting fuel at the carb filter screen on a 56 Bird. After questioning the owner he admitted installing new fuel lines supplied by a T Bird parts vender about a year earlier. Obviously the cocoon restriction occurred while in storage.

Moral to this story, check all lines and hoses before installation each and every time without fail. It will save you lots of grief later.

Just imagine what damage might occur if a cocoon from a transmission cooling line were to restrict a transmission heat exchanger, or even worse, get all the way back to a valve body of the transmission while on a journey across country.

Walt Nuckels CTCl # 861

ADJUSTING VALVE LASH

Y-Block enthusiast, let's talk valve lash. As y-blocks have no hydraulic lifters, it is necessary to adjust the tappets quite often. Unfortunately, the use of a feeler gauge is satisfactory only if the rocker faces are in good condition. If the rocker faces have wear pockets, from contacting the valve stem, the use of a feeler gauge will provide results which are little better than calculated guessing, as the gap will always be greater than the thickness of the feeler gauge due to said condition.

About fifty years ago when solid lifters were most common, a tool was developed for adjusting valve lash, utilizing a dial indicator, called a P&G Valve Gapper. These tools were supplied with specific adapters for different makes of engines, including y-block Fords, by P&G manufacturing co. of Portland, Or., but to the best of my knowledge they no longer exist. This is the finest tool ever developed for adjusting solid lifter equipped overhead tappets as anyone who owns one would testify.

For those of you without the luxury of such a precision

tool, may I suggest a very satisfactory method alternative to feeler gauges anyone can perform without special tools.

The tappet adjust screw is 20 threads per inch thus 1 full turn represents .050" of linear travel. It works just like a micrometer. Multiply 1 turn of travel times existing rocker ratio. Example, .050" X 1.54 = .077". As you can deduct, one full turn of the adjust screw used in a 1.54 ratio rocker will represent .077" of tappet clearance. Now divide one turn of tappet clearance i.e., .077" by 60 as in the 60 minuets of a clock face. This number is $.001283 = 1$ minute of clock face rotation. Thus 15 minuets of rotation will = .0192" Very close to .019" which is the specification for valve tappet clearance on 292 and 312 engines. 15 minutes clock rotation = 90 degrees rotation, an increment most auto enthusiast can easily estimate quit closely.

Get into the engine, with the lifter all the down obtain some tappet clearance then carefully rotate the adjust screw clockwise to obtain .000" valve lash. Just touching but not depressing the valve. Now rotate the adjust screw counterclockwise 90 degrees. The resulting clearance should be very, very close to .019" regardless of rocker arm face wear.

If adjusting 1.43 ratio rockers rotate the adjust screw 16 min. of rotation ccw. to obtain .01906" clearance. Very, very ,very close.

In order to determine the ratio of said rocker, observe the # on the side. 1.54 rockers are marked ECG 6564-B2 or -B1. I am led to believe any rocker with a B1 or B2 suffix will be a 1.54 ratio rocker and all those without suffixes will be 1.43 ratio.

Walt Nuckels

Walt Knuckels had a depth of T-Bird knowledge that seemed to be without bound. In the year before his death Walt shared his knowledge with the T-Bird world through his many posts to the Classic Thunderbird List. We thank Walt's family for permitting us to share his knowledge. CASCO has made a contribution to the American Cancer Society in Walt's name.

FREE CLASSIC T-BIRD CLASSIFIEDS

Did you know that you can advertise your Classic T-Bird on the internet without charge? A FREE service to T-Birders, CASCO has made space on its web page for individuals (sorry, no businesses) to advertise their 55, 56, and 57 Thunderbirds for sale. Also available is space for "Classic T-Birds Wanted" ads. Check www.classictbird.com for details.

SHOP TIPS

REPLACING THE HARDTOP REAR WINDOW GLASS

To install a rear window glass onto the hardtop first check the glass retaining weatherstripping for any signs of cracking. Cracking at the lower corners is often seen and if any signs of dryness or cracking are observed the rubber should be replaced by new.

The Soft Trim & Sealer manual calls for the application a non hardening sealer – readily available from any glass shop – to the groove in which the glass will be placed however many restorers use no sealant with excellent results.

With rubber seal in hand look for the seam where the seal is put together. Line this up with the center of the glass at the top. Making sure the groove for the trim is facing out, stretch the seal around the glass while pushing the seal in the glass groove. It may be hard to start and hard at the end and pop off a few times.

Once the rubber is on the glass, put the stainless trim into the groove on the rubber seal. Do not use any sealer where the trim is installed or in the groove where the assembly will be installed to the top. Now you have a complete window unit again to install on the hardtop. Put a length of heavy string – we use string that is about 1/16" in diameter - into the outer groove around the window seal overlapping the ends of the rope in the groove by a foot or so and sticking out of the weatherstrip at the top.

Now you and a helper are ready to install the glass assembly. Set the window assembly into the hardtop opening at the bottom. With bottom trying to go into place, you go inside of top while your helper on the outside holds the glass assembly in place. You will pull the string around the window first one side and then the other while your helper applies gentle pressure. You will see the rubber seal being pulled into the hardtop, sucking the window into place as you pull the string. You should have no problems but if you do just remove the assembly and start over if you need to.

INSTALLING THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT REPAIR HARNESS

I just completed installing the engine compartment repair harness on my '57. If anyone is interested in doing this in the future, here is the way I did it.

First disconnect and remove the battery. Remove the

loom retainer and grommet that holds the harness in place at the firewall. To give myself a little working room, I removed the existing harness from the first clips on the firewall and inner fender. Next, I peeled about 6-8" of the black wrapping from the old harness, starting at the firewall and working out into the "Y".

I decided I was going to cut the harness approximately 4-5" from the firewall; so at this spot, I stripped a little insulation off of each wire, one by one. After exposing each bare wire, I did a continuity check on that individual wire to determine exactly what it connected to. I then tagged that wire on the firewall side of the bare insulation and tagged that same wire on the new loom. I ended up with all the wires tagged on the old loom as well as the new one.

Next I cut and stripped each wire on both the old and new loom, then started connecting them together one by one. Before each connection, I slipped on a heat shrink; then as soon as the connection was made and checked for security, I installed the heat shrink over the connection. I did this until all the wires were connected. Then I wrapped them with black electrical tape and pushed them into the firewall hole and under the dash. I ended up with a bulge about the size of a quarter and 6-8" long, but it is under the dash and not visible.

I then connected all the wires to the appropriate places in the engine compartment. The new harness comes with a complete 10 ga. wire that runs from the regulator to the light and ignition switch and also a hot wire that goes to the cigarette lighter. These wires did not need to be spliced - they are direct connections.

It wasn't hard to do and looks a lot better, not to mention being a lot safer since some of the 45 year old wires had been patched up, especially on top of the intake manifold for the coil, temperature sending unit, etc. These were all brittle from being exposed to the heat.

Hope this helps somebody if they are thinking about installing an engine compartment repair harness.

Dave Tulowitzky, Port Charlotte, FL

Be sure to check out our MONTHLY SPECIALS, found on page 72 of our catalog and on our website: www.classictbird.com

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

For T-Birds that are not used regularly we recommend the following maintenance schedule:

Annually Change oil & filter, lube all fittings, add oil to the distributor cup, clean battery terminals, replace plugs, check belts & hoses - replace if any indication of frayed or soft, clean oil bath air cleaner or replace air filter, replace fuel filter element, check points - replace with new condenser if pitted.

Three years Adjust valves, change antifreeze coolant.

Five years Change auto trans fluid, replace wiper blades.

CASCO NUMBERS

Orders: (740) 622-8561 or (800) 374-0914

Fax: (740) 622-5151 or (800) 513-5806

Technical Help: (740) 622-9700

E-Mail: sales@classictbird.com

Webb: www.classictbird.com

HOLIDAY SPECIAL FROM CASCO

SPECIAL SAVINGS ON SHIPPING

on all orders shipped between

November 27 and December 31, 2003.

During that time period CASCO will charge a maximum shipping & handling of **\$9.95**

for all shipments made by standard UPS surface within the continental United States. This special excludes any items which are normally billed at actual shipping costs.

Looking for a stocking stuffer? Get a CASCO gift certificate. Gift Certificates are available in any denomination and are always in stock!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL THE GANG AT CASCO

*Nancy Glenn Amy Richard Shaun
Austin Joe Cindy Jeff Brad Betsy
Brii Sue Don Dave Jim Eric*

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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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