

ThunderEnlightening^{T.M.}

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc.



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

ISSUE NUMBER ONE ● APRIL 1990

WELCOME to the primere issue of ThunderEnlightening. It is our intention to print this newsletter monthly for our customers.

CASCO manufactures and sells parts and does restoration work exclusively for 1955-1957 Classic Thunderbirds. As a result of these activities we gather a lot of information which we feel would be valuable to our customers. This newsletter will be, hopefully, a good vehicle to share some of this knowledge.

If you have a comment or suggestion about ThunderEnlightening please let us hear from you.

CTCI NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 1990 CTCI National Convention will be held June 25th through the 29th at the Williamsburg Hilton in Williamsburg, Virginia. If there is any way that you can be there we highly recommend it - especially if you've never attended a CTCI national event. You must be a CTCI member to participate. I understand that CTCI members have completely filled the Hilton and alternative hotels are filling fast.

For registration information contact Betty Siever, 17408 Siever Court, Germantown, MD 20874. Phone (301) 428-0014.



CTCI

The Classic Thunderbird Club International is the only national (international actually) organization that represents the Classic 1955, 1956, and 1957 Ford Thunderbirds.

The club publishes a bi-monthly publication "The Early Bird" which is alone worth the cost of the membership (\$25.00/yr.).

CTCI is recognized by Ford Motor Co. and it is through the efforts of CTCI that we are still able to get many little bird parts from Ford. Try getting 30 year old Corvette parts from GM.

With almost 10,000 members worldwide this is an organization to which all classic T-Bird owners should belong. Membership applications forms are available from CASCO or write to CTCI at P.O. Box 4148, Santa Fe Springs CA 90670-1148.

PARTS PROBLEMS

Rear Quarter Panel prices have ballooned to ridiculous levels. Listed in the parts books as still available from your friendly Ford dealer, the list prices in the March 1st Ford price list have jumped from \$1887.53 each to \$3417.75 each for 55/56's and from \$1159.52 each to \$2331.75 each for 57's.

We're sorry but we are not going to participate in this foolishness - rear quarter panels are no longer available from CASCO!

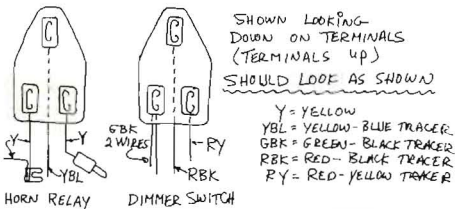
Door Weatherstrips are still a bit too stiff with the result being doors that shut hard and tend to "kickout" at the bottom rear. The new reproduced weatherstrips are better than the old Ford stock but still require some trimming to make them work properly. In our shop we trim the weatherstrips from the back until a dollar bill will just not slide through when the door is fully closed. A long slow process but well worth the effort.

Turn Signal Switches Part # 13341 are made with the switch post too small to work properly. The switches we now sell have been modified with a sleeve and retaining clip to solve this problem. If you have a switch that has not been modified we offer the sleeve kit by itself for \$1.95. Order Part # 13341A.

MORE PARTS PROBLEMS

□ **Canvas Convertible Top Coverings** have been a disappointment to some T-Bird owners because the standard black canvas tops fade so quickly. We have added black, tan, and blue convertible top coverings in the much more durable StayFast material to eliminate this problem. More expensive but it is much more resistant to fading.

□ **'57 Main Wiring Harness** part # 14401B are still coming through with the connectors reversed on the horn relay and dimmer switch plugs and some non-original lamp sockets.



The plugs should look like those in the sketch. We have found the center terminal to be ok but the two outside terminals to be reversed. This problem can be fixed by either cutting the wires or by slicing open the plug, switching the terminals, and gluing and plug back together.

The socket problem has to do with the sockets used for the speedometer lights. The deep sockets being supplied are a bit too long to allow the use of the originally used type #57 bulbs. The fix for this is to simply replace the #57 bulbs with #1445 bulbs.

UPS RAISES RATES

Effective February 12th UPS raised their surface shipping rates by 4.4%, 2nd Day Air by 6.3%, and the COD Service Charge from \$2.75 to \$3.30.

CASCO will absorb the increase in surface shipping costs but will have to pass on the increases for Air and COD to our customers who request these services.

MISCELLANEOUS SPECIFICATIONS

□ **Fuses** Not sure which fuses got where? The following should help.

	6 VOLT	12 VOLT
Clock	AGA 3	AGA 1
Radio	SFE 14	SFE 7½
Map Light	SFE 9	SFE 7½
Heater Motor	SFE 20	SFE 14
Turn Signal	SFE 9	SFE 7½
Overdrive	AGC 30	AGC 15

□ **Is Your Bird On The Level?**

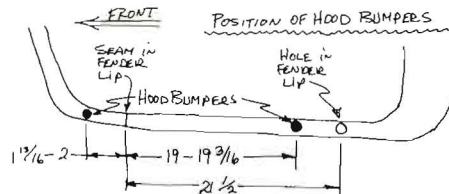
Have you wondered if your T-Bird is too high in the front or possibly too low in the rear? Or too high in the rear? Here's some dimensions from the specification manuals that should help.

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

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

"Proper" according to the specification manual is as follows in inches.

	Front	Rear
1955 & 1956	28.67	22.76
1957	28.07	23.30



□ **Position of Hood Bumpers** 1955

T-Birds did not come from the factory with hood bumpers but both 56's and 57's did. This sketch shows where the bumpers were located. The variation in dimensions is variation measured on original unrestored cars. All dimensions are in inches.

NEW PRODUCT

Mechanical Brake Light Switch

Have you noticed that you have to put quite a bit of pressure on the brake pedal to get the brake lights to come on? We have. This can usually be fixed for a while by replacing the pressure sensitive switch in the brake line system. We're not sure why but it seems that these switches very quickly degrade to the point where more and more pressure is required to lite up the tail lamps.

After many frustrating years of dealing with this problem our technicians have developed a modern brake light switch system which operates in parallel with the original hydraulic system. The mechanical switch and brackets are virtually out of sight and installation requires no drilling of holes. How nice and comforting it is to know that just a touch of the brake pedal will activate the brake lights.

The complete kit consisting of the switch, wiring, brackets, hardware and installation instructions is \$29.95. Order part # 13480MK.

NEW CONCOURS RULE BOOK

CTCI is coming out very soon with a new concours rule book and it's going to answer a lot of questions regarding proper paint colors, finishes of hardware, etc.

The rules themselves are essentially unchanged. However, it does take a few more points than it used to reach the gold, silver, bronze plateaus for non-original cars - this to keep the percentages the same as for the original classes.

The new book will be in a full sized 8½ x 11 format with full sized print, so us old guys can read it. It will include judging sheets, and will have an extensive section on proper colors and finishes. It will be the closest thing we have to a restoration detail manual.

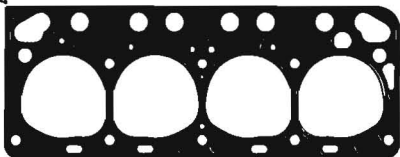
And for CTCI members it's FREE! Write to CTCI for your copy. For you non-CTCI members (shame on you) CASCO will have copies available at a yet-to-be-determined nominal cost.

TECH TIPS

□ **Engine Oil Priming** If you want to prime your bearing surfaces or simply check for proper oil flow here's how to run your oil pump without actually starting the engine. 1. Tape a 1/4" socket onto the end of a 1/4" drive extension. The tape is so you won't lose the socket inside the engine. 2. Remove the distributor and put the socket onto the end of the oil pump drive shaft. 3. Put the other end of the extension into the chuck of an electric drill. A 3/8" or possibly 1/2" chuck will be required. Run the drill in reverse (counter-clockwise) direction. It may be necessary to "bump" the engine with the starter to align the oil holes in the camshaft with the holes in the block. If you get good oil flow out of the rocker arms you have a good indication that the pump is working properly and that the passages are open.

□ **Cigarette Lighter** Many of the original cigarette lighter sockets had a safety circuit breaker on the back which can be reset. If your lighter doesn't work look at the back of the socket. The circuit breaker has a small hole in the back. Push a small nail or wire into this hole until you hear the breaker reset with a snap. It will then be reset and as good as new. Replacement sockets were supplied with a thermally activated fuse and, unfortunately, these can't be reset.

THIS CORNER MUST BE AT THE TOP FRONT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ENGINE



□ **Head Gaskets** If your engine has been rebuilt lately and it seems to be running hot check to see if the head gaskets were installed properly. All y-block head gaskets are made with three rounded corners and one square corner. The square corner MUST be at the upper front on both sides of the engine for proper coolant flow.

ORIGINAL INVOICES

The original invoices are available for very late '55's (serial number 232214 and on) and all '56 and '57's thanks to the efforts of American Road Thunderbird Club members who years ago salvaged them from destruction by Ford. To get yours send a data plate rubbing, a xerox copy of some positive proof of ownership, and a check or M.O. for \$25.00 to TARTC Invoices, P.O. Box 424, Dearborn, Mi. 48121. Allow 6-8 weeks.

QUESTIONS? SHOPTIPS?

Do you have a question you'd like to see answered in "TE"? Drop us a line and ask. If we can answer the question and if it's of sufficient general interest we'll include it in some future issue.

Have a good T-Bird oriented shop tip that you'd be willing to share? We'd love to pass it along. Each one used will get you a \$20.00 CASCO gift certificate.

PRODUCT FEATURE OF THE MONTH

The Mechanical Heater Control System has become popular because the vacuum operated heater system is rapidly becoming a bigger and more expensive problem due to the shortage of vacuum and water control valves.

Basically, here's how the original vacuum system works. When you slide over the top lever on your heater control on the dash for more heat you open a vacuum valve located under the dash mounted on the heater plenum. Opening this vacuum valve allows the vacuum to pass on to the water control valve located on the intake manifold in front of the carb. When vacuum is applied to the water valve it opens and allows the hot water from the engine to flow through heater hoses and heater core thereby providing heat to the passenger compartment. There is a bi-metallic strip on the vacuum control valve which senses the temperature in the cockpit and automatically controls the vacuum to the water valve thereby controlling and stabilizing the temperature.

Sounds good but the problems start when the diaphragms in the two valves fail resulting in vacuum and/or coolant leaks. Since these valves are no longer being produced there is a shortage. Shortage equals expensive.

CASCO technicians have developed a foolproof mechanical heater control system kit that solves the problem of getting heat when you want it and no heat when you don't want it at a fraction of the cost of just a water control valve.

With the CASCO mechanical system the water valve on the intake manifold is replaced with an elbow fitting and a cable controlled in-line valve is placed in the heater hose. With our mechanical system when the slide on the dash is moved toward more heat the cable control simply opens the mechanical valve and allows more hot water to flow into the heater core. Simple and very effective. Our part number for this complete kit with installation instructions is 18495MK. Price is \$40.00.

APRIL UNADVERTISED SPECIALS

FUEL PUMP - NEW DOUBLE
ACTION - SAVE \$3.00
Part # 9350 \$26.95 ea.

SHOCK ABSORBERS - FRONT &
REAR - SAVE \$4.00/SHOCK
Part #'s 18124 & 18125..... \$16.95 ea.

OUTSIDE DOOR HANDLE CAST-
INGS - SAVE \$5.00/PAIR
Part # 22400AR..... \$34.95 pr.

SEAT COVER SETS-ALL STOCKED
COLORS - SAVE \$20.00
Without Embossment..... \$159.50 ea.
With Embossment 179.50 ea.

THE SPECIAL PRICES ABOVE APPLY TO ALL ORDERS RECEIVED BETWEEN 4-1-90 AND 4-30-90.
NORMAL SHIPPING CHARGES APPLY.

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795 High Street, P.O. Box 810 Coshocton, Ohio 43812

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage

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