

BAY AREA *Thunderbird* OWNERS CLUB

WHAT'S NEW IN BIRDLAND

VOL. 3, NO. 12

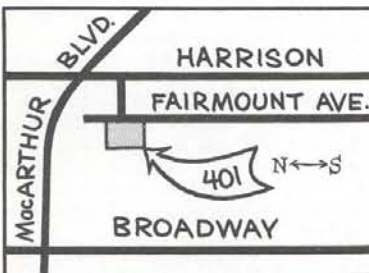
DECEMBER 1960



I would like to thank all you members who attended our Installation Dinner and Christmas Party. Those who did certainly had a wonderful time. Our "Santa Claus" was Gene Andrade who did a pretty good job in distributing the presents - quite a few laughs.

Ray De Costa spoke about our Snow Trip in January. Let's all get behind him in this event and show him that we are going all out to make this an exciting year for events. And let's all show up for our January meeting in the Houston home. Thank you all.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING



First Membership meeting of 1961 will be held at the Wolfe's mansion, 401 Fairmount Avenue, Oakland, on Wednesday, January 18th - 8:00 p.m. Please be on time, as this is the middle of the week and folks have to get up for work the next morning.

If you'd like to work on Membership, your volunteering would cause you to be welcomed with open arms (Elton's, not Jean's). As Vice-President, Elton automatically heads up this committee, and plans a real go-get-em campaign to procure new members. He will be extremely grateful for all the help and/or suggestions he can get.

New Invitation Cards are to be considered. Perhaps you have an idea or two which should be incorporated into them. If so, be sure to come to the meeting. Free coffee and donuts for the needy are promised.

A Rosy Outlook

by ROSE DE COSTA

DONNER SNOW TRIP JANUARY 20, 21, 22

In January we will make like Nanook of the North and Klondike Kate and mush on to Donner Summit Lodge for our first BATOC event of the new year. Departure time is 6:30 p.m. Friday, January 20 - *not one minute later!* - from Hy's Drive-In, MacArthur and Telegraph.

We have found this particular lodge to be quite comfortable and accommodating, with cozy rooms, party room for the evening after dinner hi-jinks (equipped with a piano yet) and a bar with a good-sized fireplace. This little den has a booze vault that bursts at the seams with all the nectar of the gods. These jugs, of course, are kept in reserve in the event of frostbite. The scenery and grounds surrounding the lodge are simply gorgeous, and the chalets and other buildings are painted in gay colors.

No ice cube problems here. You can whip up a bourbon, vodka or gin sno-cone in a matter of seconds. Ain't nature wonderful?

For those of you who are brave enough to take the plunge, there is a ski tow close by, complete with first aid station and res-

cue unit. Also, for a nominal fee of \$1.00, there is a heated garage to nest your Birds.

There are no Saint Bernards available, so I suggest a brandy keg fastened to your person just in case you decide to take a hike someplace.

Evenings can be fun, grouped around the fireplace singing bawdy ballads, telling tall tales, playing pinochle and sipping hot buttered Muscatels.

So drag out your long johns or other winter woolies and mush on to see who can build a better snowman.

(Editor - With this issue we welcome another associate to the staff. Lovely Rose De Costa has graciously consented to abet Fran Larsen and your harassed Editor in putting together "What's New in Birdland" for you. Rose knows her way with a participle, having edited a car publication for the MG club for many years. We feel most fortunate in being figuratively surrounded by two talented lady reporters such as these.)



BAY AREA *Thunderbird* OWNERS CLUB

WHAT'S NEW IN BIRDLAND

- JOE WHITE President
- ELTON WOLFE Vice-President
- DONNA SELL Treasurer
- FRAN LARSEN Recording Secretary
- TRACY ROMIEY Corresponding Secretary
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- ROGER NEISS Editor
- FRAN LARSEN Associate Editor
- ROSE DE COSTA Associate Editor

Meeting Night Jan. 14

As most of you know by now, our General Membership Meetings are going to be held in private homes this year, rather than in restaurants where we were obligated to present a goodly throng at their festive board and bar, usually failing pathetically. Membership being down to about half what it was in 1958, this should work no great hardship on the members who host these affairs. The hosting, of course, is voluntary.

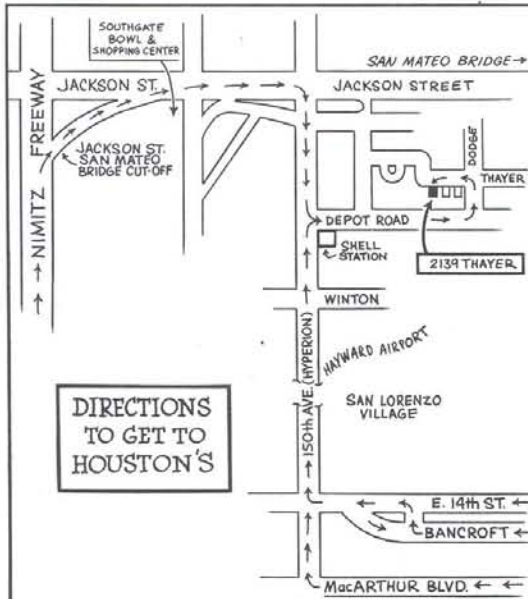
The January meeting will be staged at the home of Bill and MaraLee Houston, 2139 Thayer (see map). The date is Saturday, January 14th, and the time 8 p.m. There are two ways of getting to the Houston Hacienda:

FREEWAY - Take Nimitz Freeway to Jackson Street Cut-Off (which is beyond Hayward Cut-Off, next one after Winston Cut-Off). Keep going right toward San Mateo Bridge. The first intersection you will come to is at South Gate Bowl and Shopping Center. One block further is the second intersection (Hesperion Blvd. and Jackson). Turn right at Hesperion for one long block. The first corner will have a Shell Station and is called Depot Road. Turn left at Depot and proceed for two blocks to Dodge where you again turn left. One short block

and you're at Thayer where you turn left again. If you can't find House No. 2139 now you had better check with your optometrist about a new set of prisms. Should you become lost, remember the phone number - Sunset 2-9372.

E. 14th STREET - If you don't wish to take the Freeway, come out either E. 14th, Bancroft or MacArthur Blvd. to 150th Avenue which becomes Hesperion Blvd. Follow Hesperion past San Lorenzo Village, past Hayward Airport to Depot Road which is marked by a Shell Station. Turn right on Depot, go two blocks to Dodge, turn left for one short block. The first intersection will be Thayer and even your myopic Editor expects to be able to find No. 2139 because it will be accentuated by a large flock of T-Birds by the time he finally gets there.

Our hosts-to-be, MaraLee and Bill, extend a special invitation to all Club members, past and present, to attend 1961's first meeting at their new home. They are also holding "open house" at the same time for their many T-Bird friends, with refreshments being served. Everyone should come to help break in their brand new home, as well as greet the new Board of Officers.



T-Bird Accessories



Everyone can rush right out and trade their little Birds in on two-seaters now. The accessory manufacturers are commencing to produce items for this particular model after a lapse of three years. Of course, the Big Birds have been pretty complete automobiles when Ford was finished with them, a fact which doubtless helped discourage accessory people from getting into the field.

During the days of the Model "T" the parts manufacturers were in their heyday. So many "extras" were being offered then that an owner could outfit his lizzie as completely as the most expensive cars of the day - and out-perform them besides! There were overhead valve set-ups, down-draft carburetors, special springs, balloon tires, sedan-type sides for touring cars, special bodies and hundreds of other items too numerous to mention. Because Ford kept the same basic car year after year, it paid the manufacturers to develop extras that would fit cars being built by the millions with slight, if any, change. To a lesser degree the same held true during the Model "A" and early V-8 eras. No other car has ever been so popular with the parts manufacturers, to say nothing of the lead-footed crowd, as Ford.

It is virtually impossible to buy extras for small T-Birds any more except universal items which fit a number of other cars as well. Manufacturers simply cannot afford to invest time and money in a car no longer being built. Your Editor writes many letters to such people in an effort to keep readers abreast of products available. Without exception, those who once were in the field are now in another business or have converted to more plentiful automobiles. That was the fate of the "Birdnest" rumble seat which was doomed when Ford switched to the Big Birds. The outfit who once made windings for '55 Birds went kaput when the '56 and '57 models came equipped with them. Our friend, Dick Carpenter, who once published a complete catalog of Thunderbird goodies has had to include parts for imports in order to survive.

To get to the point after this lengthy preamble, the C. P. Hunt Co. of Oakland pres-

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MAXINE HORSFALL

Vivacious Maxine Horsfall spent five days in the Alta Bates Community Hospital during December where she underwent an operation for the removal of a goiter. We are happy to report she got home just in time to open her Christmas presents and is doing nicely now, thank you.

TECH TIPS

by FRANK FICKER

LEAKY FUEL LINE FITTINGS

Inspect the gas line connecting fittings to see that they are tight and dry. A loose fitting between the pump and tank will cause the pump to suck air instead of gas. The symptoms will be similar to those of a

defective pump. Inspect the short, flexible hose leading into the pump. If it has hardened and cracked, it may be leaking air. A tight wrapping with tape may get you going. Even an adhesive bandage may help.

VAPOR LOCK

This is most likely to occur in hot weather, at high altitudes or after hard driving. Symptoms are those of a defective pump or kinked fuel line. Raise the hood and let the engine cool to condense the vapor bubbles. Wet a cloth in the radiator, hold it in the air to cool and apply to the fuel pump and fuel line, especially where the line is close to hot exhaust pipes.

Frivolity at the Installation Dinner

Ray De Costa, 1961 Activities Chairman, gave a resume of his plans for the future following a wonderful dinner at Veneto's Restaurant December 10th. Ray concluded with an inspirational and spontaneous talk directed at the laggards who rarely attend the events that are scheduled, most of whom weren't at the dinner, either. It is our hope that these people will "get the message" through the medium of our paper.

"It is not a new President," said Ray, a new Board, or even a new Activities Head who are going to pick up the Club. That is up to the members individually who must determine to support the Club in whatever activities it plans."

We should all realize by now how discouraging it is to an Activities Chairman who donates gallons of his own gasoline, hours of his time, and a mounting telephone bill in working out the minute details involved in a good activity, only to have 10% of the membership show up. We must go anyway, whether we like that type of event or not, if only to show the Activities man that we appreciate his efforts. We show our gratitude to an outgoing President by a suitable trophy at the end of the year. For two years hand-running, your Editor has received a token of your esteem. But the poor, hard-working Activities Chairman gets little more than an occasional compliment from the Chair. The reward he wants, and seldom gets in this Club, is a darn good turnout at his events.

Ray suggests that when you cannot possibly join the gang at a wingding (because you're getting a divorce, undergoing a hysterectomy, or whatever), that you telephone him as a matter of courtesy, advising him that you will be unable to go. That way he will at least be emboldened to keep trying.

Ray brought out another good point in his discourse. Most of us have been guilty of negative thinking, he says. Let one fellow say, "This Club is going to the dogs,"



"SCENE" AT THE INSTALLATION DINNER AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

1. New President Joe White accepting the gavel from a departing Art Horsfall; 2. Your Editor received a plaque from the Chair for work on this paper during 1960; 3. Art in turn gets a surprise award from a grateful membership for his year in office, said award being a bronze miniature Thunderbird cigarette holder and lighter; 4. "Santa Claus" Gene Andrade handing out the presents, noticeably pausing at the side of our pretty guest to select an especially promising gift; 5. Ray De Costa, Activities Chairman, expounding on some of the trips contemplated in 1961; 6. Joe White and Art Horsfall cracking up over their gifts.

and it will imbue another with the same idea until in no time one pessimistic opinion has snowballed into an avalanche which is all but impossible to halt. "Think positively," he said. "Exert energy toward improving the Club instead of moaning to the high heavens whenever something begins to get a little sour". In other words, do something helpful; don't sit back and gripe.

Invite other people to come to our affairs, even if they only drive a truck. Some of them may like us well enough to want to come again; perhaps 15% of these will even

go out and buy a Thunderbird in order not to miss out on any of the good times Thunderbird people seem to enjoy. Positive-thinking people like this make good members.

The first activity under Ray's aegis is the overnight snow trip to Donner Summit. Let's begin the new year on the right foot by tossing chains into the trunk and tagging right along. Who knows, you may just have the time of your life tussling in the snow with your fellow Birds. I can think of one myself I'd go twice as far to tussle with — and I hate snow!

RACEMANSHIP

IF YOUR LAP TIMES ARE SLOW GET A LOUDER EXHAUST

An experienced practitioner of the "If it won't go, chrome it" school has passed on to us the following tips for the beginning race driver.

It must always be remembered that racing is psychological warfare of the highest type, and that some thought must be given to a modus operandi in case the beginner finds he isn't as fast as he seemed to be getting on and off the freeway.

1. Steal tech inspection stickers from other cars before you go racing. They'll make your car look well-traveled. And never take a tech inspection sticker off.

2. Before race weekend, spend a little time sunbathing with your racing goggles on.

3. Wear your racing coveralls for a week before the races and spend a little time rolling around on the garage floor — this makes it look as if you do your own work on the car.

4. Your car should be immaculate, especially the engine, as this makes it ap-

pear as if it has just been put back in. But remember to ding the front end with a ball-peen hammer, no matter how good a wax job you've got on the rest of it.

5. Char the right cuff of your driving coveralls before you flame-proof them.

6. Install driving lights with red lenses for brake lights. This'll give you a little more room in the turns.

7. Make certain your pit crew have worked out an unreadable code — whether it gives you any information or not, it will confuse the opposition.

8. Appear at Drivers' Meetings in com-driving costume — and this includes an extra pair of goggles hung around your neck

with pre-shattered lenses.

9. As a last resort you can always fill your driving gloves with raw hamburger — a startling and impressive effect when you remove the gloves. Personally, we think that attending a Drivers' Meeting with a hanky clinched firmly in your teeth is going a little too far, but this is up to personal taste.

— by Rose De Costa

ACCESSORIES

— Continued from Page 2

ently handles the "Re-Klin-O-Lounge", an attachment for two-seated Thunderbirds which enables the front seat passenger to tilt her seat backward in a number of restful positions. This provides comfortable relaxation and even sleep on long trips without interfering with the forward adjustment as originally designed. The Re-Klin-O-Lounge is made of high quality steel, chrome plated for long lasting beauty. Obviously not recommended for the driver's side.

The complete kit sells for \$17.50 and includes installation instructions. C. P. Hunt will handle the installation for you for an additional \$7.50.



my untold story... PART 4

People on the whole - Edna, the children, relatives - appear satisfied that we are not devoting too much space to our harlequinade each month, although we do hear an occasional demurrer that "the last chapter was pretty good, but not so good as the first one". What am I supposed to do? Re-live episodes of my life for their approval? Weren't two years in the 1st grade enough?

If I live to be 15 I'll never forget 1926. That was the year I jumped and vaulted in a city-wide track meet of 8th-graders at Columbia University (now Portland U - or P.U. for short). Winners were to receive 4-year high school "scholarships" at Columbia; I was eliminated from both events among the vanguard, most of whom had never heard of either sport* before. (One year later I was to become a paying sophomore at Columbia anyway.)

On my way out of the huge pavilion I saw a stray 16-pound iron ball and decided for health's sake (watch that nasty lisp) I ought to take it home and develop my physique

NEISS BIRD AILING

What happened to the Neiss Thunderbird at Christmastime shouldn't happen to a Corvette.

Recent engine tune-ups had failed to quiet a particularly noisy valve, besides not doing much to make the engine perform smoother. The mechanics had just about convinced us that we were just too finicky when the engine developed a pronounced "tick-tick" on starting one cold morning. We limped across the bridge to a San Francisco garage where all of the recent symptoms were found to be caused by a broken valve-lifter which had grown progressively worse until the cam had worn down, causing that particular valve to raise only part way. For your information, a new high-lift cam sells for \$75.

Naturally, a complete engine dismantling was in order, and several other lifters were found to be either broken or nicked. Fortunately, an inspection of bearings and cylinder walls revealed no particular damage, despite the pieces of broken metal turned loose inside the pan.

As if this weren't enough, we have something to remember New Year's for, too. After the new cam and lifters were installed and the other essentials replaced, thieves broke into the garage the night before the car was to be finished, and stole all the rest of our high-speed equipment - the two 4-barrel carbs, intake manifold, distributor, loom and valve covers. These items being special, replacement will undoubtedly have to come from Dearborn at a price that would provide the ransom for an East Indian potentate.

It would be appreciated if everyone would kindly refrain from wishing any of the Neisses happy holidays this year.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE! Five 15-inch Baroni Chrome Wire Wheels - \$200. (\$150 exchange) Call Art Horsfall at ANDover 1-8500.

For Sale - Dick Nagle's Green '56 T-Bird. Contact Art Horsfall for details, AN 1-8500.

through shotputting. It presented no small problem, as I was wearing only track jersey and shorts at the time. However, I stowed the shot in my shorts and managed to carry off the crime rather well, if I do say so myself.

I also tried my hand at basketball in '26, my efforts being outstanding for their mediocrity. But a seed was sown, and a few years later I was performing on some pretty fair teams, about which you will read more anon, so resign yourself.

In my graduating class of five boys, I was outstanding at least for being the best artist of the group, as well as poet laureate. One of my poems of that era reads as follows:

My teacher is so very nice,
I always take her good advice;
She's just as soft as bunny fur -
I think I'd like to sleep with her.



In 1926 I was four-wall handball champion of the school, which just about sums up my grade school accomplishments. I entered Aquinas High that September, although we had planned on my going to Mt. Angel Seminary, a boarding school about 75 miles away. It was finally ruled too costly by Pater Familias, who also expressed some concern that my presence there might tend to corrupt the more impressionable novitiates.

Freshmen were eligible for the Aquinas varsity, there being but 100 students in the entire school - all boys. But Pa had ideas of an art career for his eldest son (lettering signs in his grocery store), so I had to pedal my - er - bike right home after school in order to don apron and sleeve guards for my daily sinecure in the store.

With a small student body and no girls to cheer them on, the school was, understandably, the doormat of the entire city of Portland when it came to athletics. Our

* Or the word "vanguard".

† Really BVDs, if you must know.

‡ Leading to the expression, "Short Shots", since used in every high school journal.

varsity competed on unequal terms with the freshman teams of the other schools and receipted for some pretty brutal pastings. Aquinas had two fine four-wall handball courts, however, and I found myself playing as a freshman in the finals for the school championship against a 200-pound senior, who waxed me in two straight games.

The school literally collapsed between semesters, a demise certainly not abetted by a hobby of collecting screws I had picked up from an itinerant mountebank. Some people with nothing better to do collect coins. Others save used stamps. But my leitmotif was the collection of wood screws (foolled ya!). From a desk or door hinge I would remove all but two screws with my trusty pocket screwdriver, leaving the bare minimum to keep the unit together. Perhaps we had a windier summer that year, I do not recall, but the school failed to open its doors the following September and I ended up at Columbia Prep just as the gypsy said I would 'way back in paragraph one.

But, most interesting of all, 1926 was the year my father purchased his one and only automobile, a new Chrysler 40 Touring which he still owns. Walter P. Chrysler had taken over the Maxwell Motor Car Co. a year or so before and this year he introduced a line of incredibly beautiful automobiles. Maxwell had been producing sturdy, dependable cars for more than a quarter of a century, and Chrysler retained its good features while adding touches here and there, mainly in styling, to make his new car the rage of the motoring world. Everyone was talking about the new Chrysler, much more than people did in 1955 when Ford brought out the first Thunderbird.

There were four series of engines, the 40, 50, 60 and 70, with the first being the low-priced four cylinder job. I never rode in one of the larger Chryslers, but our car was so smooth you couldn't hear the engine idle. A marble placed on a flat portion of the hood would not roll off when the motor was running!

Pa was 43 years old at the time and had never driven anything more refractory than a spirited cob. Donning his pith helmet (sold to him by a portable toilet salesman who lisped), he took to driving like a duck takes to water - frozen water. We all took our lives in our hands when we went driving with him during those first few years, and, naturally, there was no option available, such as staying home. "Pitfalls that beset a young boy, tra-la, tra-la." Little time was wasted on conversation, either. We were all too busy fingering our beads.

Pa never threatened Eddie Rickenbacker or Barney Oldfield, but he didn't crack up his beautiful Chrysler, either. Why he didn't, I'll never tell you, as traffic signs meant little to him . . . they were meant for the other fellow. In pulling out of a parking spot, he'd stick his hand out the little flap in his side-curtain and step on the gas. He didn't look to see if the road was clear - it was supposed to be! Woe to the driver with the temerity to play bluff with him at an intersection. I used to listen enthralled to the lush stream of invective he could command, marvelling at his ability to interthread every third word with one of the breezier copulative verbs.

Next: *Learning to Drive*