



## **New Jersey Open Road Thunderbird Club**

### **Chapter 41 - Classic Thunderbird Club International**



# *The Thunder Heard*

## **Memphis EXTRA**

### **NJORTC DOES MEMPHIS**

CTCI International Convention

Memphis, Tenn

August 22-25, 2012

Memphis was great!!! Definitely one that will be remembered for a long time and one which all following conventions will be compared to. The weather co-operated, even the high temperatures that everyone feared did not come to pass and there was a welcome break in the humidity. There was some rain on Saturday morning but this mostly cleared by the time the driving tour to Graceland got on the road.

We had 32 members that attended and 13 cars entered in the show. Most drove to the convention and while a few had some problems, all were easily fixed.

Facilities were first rate and the indoor show area was a sight to behold with all the different colored TBirds gleaming under the arena lights.

One of the highlights was the TBird driving tour to Graceland on Saturday. Close to 150 cars made the tour. The police blocked off all the roads from the staging area to Graceland, including main arteries and interstate highways. I think the police had a ball with this duty as they sped up and down the highways closing off entrances. While at Graceland, 5 cars were chosen at random every half hour to have their pictures taken in front of Elvis' house by a professional photographer. Five of our cars were chosen, three in the first round alone. A great memento for the trip. Going back, the roads were blocked off again and the cars were escorted to Beale Street where they were put on display. The tourists really got an eyeful.

The activities that the host club set up included tours of the Rock & Soul Museum which highlighted Memphis' music history from the Blues to Rock and Roll to Soul. Across the street was a Gibson Guitar store/factory which was open and a certain member went in and pretended to play some of the guitars. No names, but he has a position in CTCL. This tour also included a tour of Sun Studios (a National Historic Landmark) where a number of artists started their careers, including Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Roy Orbison. This studio is still being used today. The best part of the music tour there were no time constraints. Transportation ran all day so one could spend as much time at the locations as they wanted. Other activities included the Mississippi River Museum, an "Ask the Experts" Q & A, a Welcome Party and a Swap Meet that had quite a few vendors.

For Elvis fans, there was a tour of his house (1st floor only) and grounds (this was separate from the driving tour) and his Convair airplane. This tour also included a dinner in the building that houses many of Elvis' vehicles (including the famous pink Cadillac). On Friday, when the judging was complete, there was a riverboat dinner cruise on the Mississippi River aboard a stern wheeler riverboat.

One of the side trips not part of the official program was the duck walk. At the Peabody Hotel, there are 5 ducks that walk down every morning to a fountain in the lobby and in the afternoon they walk up to an upper floor for the night. Quite a sight.

As usual, the convention ended with a banquet where the awards were announced. NJORTC members walked off with a good share of the awards, which included a Gold Award for our newsletter.

Getting around Memphis was easy and local transportation included horse drawn carriages and trolleys which most of the members made very good use of.

### Activities



The duck walk on the red carpet



Clang, Clang Clang goes the Trolley



Relaxing at the Peabody Hotel

### Memphis Fact

In 1820, the population was 364

Today it is over 650,000







**Mississippi River Riverboat**



**Riverboat Dinner**



**The unnamed guitar player**



**Memphis has a lot of nicknames**  
**Bluff City (for the bluffs it was built on)**  
**Home of the Blues**  
**River City**





Graceland- Elvis's Home



The "Lisa Marie" Elvis's Convair

Preparing for the Judging







Memphis is the 18th largest City in the United States.



## Hard at Work - Judging



## The Driving Tour

As was mentioned above, around 150 cars entered the tour - both Concours and Touring cars entered. The day (Saturday) started out with a drizzly rain. As only quarter tanks of gasoline were allowed inside the hall, everyone had to get gas for the tour. Luckily, there was a gas station (the only one) nearby and he must have really made out. Then the cars all met at a designated staging area. By the time everything was set to go, the rain had mostly stopped and the roads were drying out. The co-operation from the City of Memphis and the Sheriffs department was fantastic. All intersecting roads and entrance ramps that were on the route were closed for TBird traffic. The same for the return trip to Beale Street.



Lining Up



The Memphis Belle (B-17) was housed in Memphis after WWII. It is now undergoing restoration and will be stationed in the Air Force Museum



The Escort





Gotta have my ice cream



Beale Street



## Awards



### **The Thunder Heard newsletter - Gold Award**

**Bob Belli - Gold, Concours Non Original**  
**John Bolger - Gold, Concours Non Original**  
**Bill Downing - Gold, Concours Non Original, Sr Status**  
**Frank Gloss - Bronze, Concours Non original**  
**Donna Jessie-Gold, Concours Non Original**  
**Rich Martin - 1st place, Hoods Up Touring**

**Wendy Meehan - 2nd Place, Touring**  
**Charles Musto 2 cars**  
**Gold-2 cars, Concours Original**  
**Gold Medallion - 2 cars**  
**Excellence in Authenticity 2 cars**  
**300 Perfect Score, 1 car**  
**John Pyrros - Gold, Concours Non Original**

## **Enroute and Return**

For the most part, the trips out and back were uneventful. The weather was sunny and warm with only a few showers the first day,. The cars took the trip in stride - 1,100 miles one way. No wrong turns except for those going into the motels on the way out and back (second group) . There were a couple of incidents - Bill Downing found a leaking oil filter adapter just before starting out the second day. With in an hour, it was all fixed thanks to Bill Hyde and sealer from Henry Semmler. Frank Gloss had his engine quit on him the third day going out and had to be flatbedded in. It turned out the problem was a \$5.00 distributor condenser. On the last day of the trip back, Bill Downing discovered he had no brakes when starting to leave. Fortunately, just refilling the master cylinder solved the problem and he had good brakes all the rest of the way home (didn't lose a drop). The second day going back, Pat has one of his infamous flat tires. He put on the spare and all was well. Wendy & Mike, who had done extensive mods for the trip, had teething problems, but was always there.





**1st day - start off point**



**One of many gas/bathroom stops**



**1st night's stop**



**Bill's car under repair**



**On the Road**



**Fixing those "teething" problems**





Okay - we got it this time!!!



What? Me get my hands dirty -I'm the Pres

### Miscellaneous



Bob's Birthday Monday - Shelly had cake waiting at the hotel



After 2,200 miles, back home







**Ok - which is the real Pat - Cloning gone too far?**



**Elvis - meet Arlene**



**Judging & Being Judged**



**Graceland Gravesight**



**Beemer - He went to Memphis too. Very well behaved and lived in the Peabody with the ducks**



**T-Bidders were very welcome in Memphis**



## **TBirds that Caught my Eye**



**56 with retro Bird Accents**



**Same 56 with Retro engine**

**Hemmings Blog had a article about Memphis- one of their photos had our cars in it. Go to <http://blog.hemmings.com/>**

**As I said, Memphis was a blast. A long ride but worth it.**

**I want to thank Joanne, Donna, Frank and Sandra for sending me pictures for this special issue.**

