

January 2023

I hope all members had a nice holiday and look forward to seeing you this spring at our annual event planning meeting. I never paid much attention to this series of Thunderbird, though distinctive, I feel Ford diluted the exclusivity of this series of Thunderbird from previous generations. With a chassis dating back to 1972, many incarnations of Ford cars were produced with this chassis, the Cougar XR7, from 74-79, the Torino and Ranchero from 72-79, the Mark IV and Mark V from 72-79 and the Gran Torino Elite from 74-76, the car the Thunderbird replaced from 77-79. With a total of 318,140 produced in 1977, Ford meant their goal of selling more Thunderbirds, with a total of 955,032 from this generation of Thunderbirds. 1976 had a production number of 52,935 while the 72-76 generation had a total production of 299,146 for the 4 years of this series. The basket handle Thunderbirds of 77-79, sold 3 times as many as the previous generation. There were many reasons for this: lower cost, more parts inter-changeability from other Ford lines, smaller and better gas mileage than the 72-76 versions. I remember looking at a new 78 and did not like the gaudy looking straps on the trunk, a one year only option for 78. The performance of this car was anemic. This car listed for around \$5500. I remember looking at a fully loaded 76 lipstick edition and it listed

for nearly \$7500. While looking at the 78, there was a diamond jubilee edition for \$10000. Our club president Roger Noll owned a 78 Diamond Jubilee and reported gas mileage in the high teens. I chose to drive my high mileage 72 Mark IV for 2 more years. In 1980 I purchased a 79 Chrysler 300 for half its list price, this was when Chrysler was facing its 1st bankruptcy. In my college days I bought a 79 Cougar xr7 to flip, this was a nice car with a 302 and was whisper quiet, I quickly sold it. A few members of our club have this generation of T-bird. These cars make excellent hobby cars and our reasonable cost wise to enter the hobby. Consider the following: Does not require premium fuel or additives, good examples exist at reasonable prices, safety, comfort, and good gas mileage, reliable and easy to maintain, parts availability is reasonable, doesn't have expensive computers, relays or modules, low taxes and insurance, A fine car to drive to club events when condition of weather, distance, or comfort is desired. Happy Motoring!