Have a Story to Tell!

By Stan Leutbecher 1966 Thunderbird

This is a story that began in 1966, when as a young boy I fell in love with the Thunderbird that had sequential turn signals, a tilt away steering column and an instrument panel designed to resemble one in an airplane cockpit. I told everyone that if I was old enough to drive, this was the car I would buy. As the years passed, my dream car eluded me, but my love lived on for this magnificent automobile.

40 years later, while telling a friend about my dream car, he said he knew someone who owned a T-bird like I described, and he was pretty sure it was for sale. He contacted his friend, and we scheduled a day to go see it.

On a hot Sunday in August 2006, three wonderful friends gave up their day of relaxation and joined me on the long trip. Beginning at 4:30am, we drove 300 miles to North Richland Hills to check the car out, purchase it, and return. Slowly, (at least while I was driving with white knuckles on the steering wheel) we drove 300 miles back to San Antonio in a very hot car with a black interior and non-working air-conditioner. The temperature had risen to 103 degrees.

We traveled with a box load of "just in case" auto parts, a tool box, an AAA membership, and a large dose of enthusiasm. Fortunately, we made the return trip without need of the first 3 items. The only mishap was when my friend pulled back the vent levers in the center of the dashboard. Dirt and leaves flew into the interior and all over us. We were dripping in sweat and coated with debris, but that was a small price to pay in my opinion! My new addition was home at 10:30pm that same evening.

The car club newsletter announced the arrival of our newest member to the family, and all came to ooh and aah over my new baby. I have received an enormous amount of much appreciated help since then from many great people.

Yes, this is a love story about a great car, but even more special is the love of my good friends that helped me to get the car and make it into the beauty it is today.