

Submitting Photos/Articles for The Thunderbird Scoop

Submitting a story, pictures or a series of articles about Ford Thunderbirds or your experiences with them is highly encouraged: the Scoop is, in effect, your magazine about T-birds and should reflect our members' varied interests in the restoration, modification, history and technical aspects of them. We rely very heavily on contributions of our members for the articles that appear in the Scoop. Here are some guidelines that will help you in getting your photos or story in print for all of us to see.

COVER PHOTOS: There are several ways cover photos are used in the Scoop. The primary use is to show some of the best T-birds our members have from around the world. This includes selecting timely, seasonal photos which we can use to emphasize each of the seasons. After all, why would we want to put a car with fall foliage in the background on the front of the March-April issue? Some members will use the changing of seasons to highlight their car and increase their chances of it reaching the cover of the Scoop.

The cover photo is very important as it's the "face" of the magazine. As such, more scrutiny is paid to what goes on the cover than any other part of the publication. There are minimum requirements that must be met, including:

1. FRONT COVER: To be eligible to be used on the front cover, the photo must be in a vertical format, meaning it must be taller than it is wide. This means when you take a picture of your T-bird, you'll need to rotate the camera. The car should be in the middle of the frame, not at the very top or very bottom - we need these spaces open for the headline, logo and issue dates.

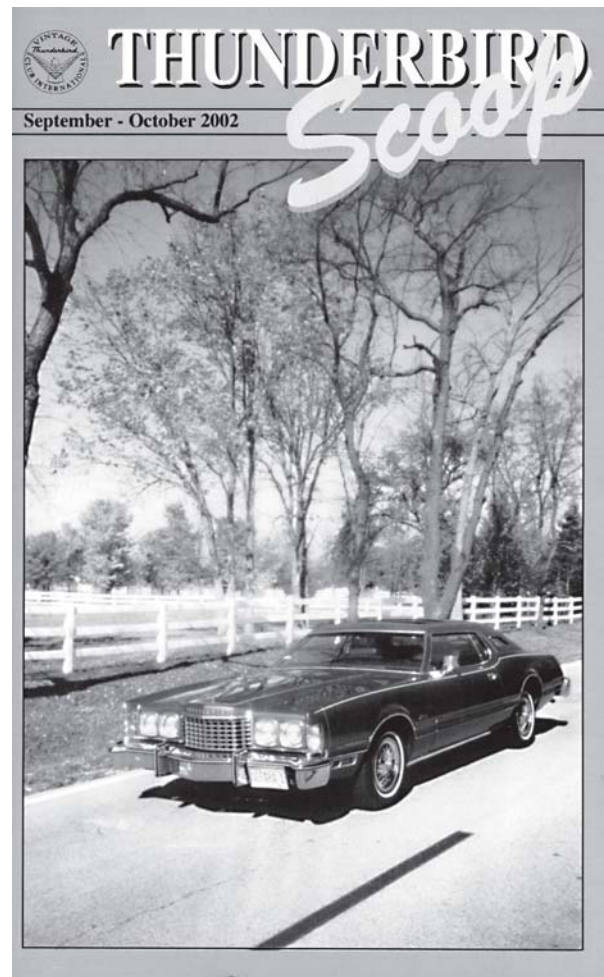
2. BACK COVER: Photos submitted using a horizontal format (wider than they are tall) are considered for the back cover or for inside

black-and-white use. This is typically what we get when Owners Surveys are returned or when pictures are submitted. Again, seasonal photos are more likely to be used in appropriate issues, such as a T-bird in a snow setting for Nov-Dec or Jan-Feb, or a T-bird in a field of blooming flowers for March-April, etc.

3. SUBJECT BACKGROUNDS: There are plenty of subjects that can be used for back-grounds: airplanes, interesting scenery or buildings... the possibilities are endless, but it's the details that are most important. The biggest mistake people make is not taking time to actually LOOK at the scene they're creating. Professional photographers are very careful to stage a car so that trees and telephone poles do not "grow" out of the car, and minimize distractions or eliminate

DIGITAL/ELECTRONIC PHOTOS: This is relatively new territory for most of us, but we are seeing some trends which need to be addressed.

1. Don't expect any of the cheaper digital cameras to provide cover-quality photos! Most low-medium-end cameras have a resolution of far less than the resolution we really need for good, clean, detailed pictures. If your picture looks like it has saw-toothed images, we can't use it. The megapixel of your camera must be 2.5 and above and the photo must be taken on the highest resolution setting on your camera, that's the setting that gives you the least amount of photos on your card.



2. If sending pictures on a disk or CD-ROM (send us only copies, we can't guarantee we'll be able to return them!), it will help us if digital photos are submitted in a jpeg (.jpg) and untouched in the original size that the photo was taken. Your editor will size and configure the picture.



ARTICLES: Along with pictures, articles are also wanted from members. We especially want tech articles on things like dual master cylinder conversions, electronic relay conversions for convertibles, repair/restoration features... even the simplest of things is worthy of some kind of ink. Is there something that worked for you or a trick you learned when restoring your T-bird? Pass it on, and take some pictures of how you did it as well.

If you do submit how-to or restoration articles, we would like pictures related to the subject to be included with the submission. If you can provide copies of pages from shop manuals or parts books that can help to illustrate what is needed, include these also so that we can add them to the text and photos.

Don't worry about spelling and grammar that's the editor's job. If there is a question related to what you wrote (or intended to write), we will need to have a phone/fax number or e-mail address to forward our question.

Provide references to parts books, shop manuals, etc. if you can. We want to make sure proper credit is given when due, and also allow members to which reference materials are used, such as the '60-'64 Ford Car Parts/Accessories Text & Illustrations Catalogs, sales brochures, etc.

If you can, please submit article text in typewritten/printed form, as sometimes longhand can be very hard to decipher. Book publishers have strict guidelines regarding double-spacing of lines for proofreader markups, but we're not that picky. Main thing we need is clean, legible copy.

GETTING PUBLISHED: How long does it take for an article to get published? This depends on how much material must go into each issue of the Scoop. Certain issues are loaded-down with information related to upcoming events, such as printing registration forms for Regional and Inter-national Conventions, or providing coverage/ reports about past Conventions. We always attempt to provide one or two features from members in each issue, and are always wanting more of them, such as people or traffic in the background (remember; the car is the focus of the picture). Proper lighting is also very important.

It may be easier to tell you what we will not print on the cover: a car with trophies stacked around it; a car with people posed around it; a car parked in the middle of a show with other cars (especially if they're not T-birds!); a car with a "for sale" sign in the windshield. Pictures out of focus or with poor color rendition are also automatically thrown out.

4. LIGHTING: Too many pictures are sent to us with BAD lighting, and the solution is very simple. When you take a picture of your car, the sun should be behind you so that as you're looking at it, the sides are lit up and not in shadow. A really big problem with T-birds from the early-mid 1960s is that because the lower bumper/grille angles back under the car, the details are lost to shadow - this is especially bad if you make the grave mistake of taking your picture facing the sun, which only makes the shadow problem worse (not to mention fighting off the glare from the sun).

When's the best time to take pictures? Professionals say early-mid morning or late afternoon-early evening, when the sun is low in the horizon and can better illuminate the lower parts of the car. Taking



pictures during the middle of the day, when the sun is high overhead, will result in the lower portions of the car being in shadow while the upper portions are over lit to the point where they create glare off the paint.

One hint to help with taking pictures of your car is to get some additional floodlights to brighten up the underside of the body/grille/bumpers. A remote flash can also be used to provide light to the undersides. You'll be amazed at the difference this will make for your picture.

5. FOCUS: We can't use out-of-focus pictures, so take the time and set things up right the first time. If you're using a fixed focal length camera, experiment with it until you find the right distances which will allow the details on the car to show crisp and clear. Use a tripod to mount the camera on, and consider a cable release for the shutter if your camera is set up for one. Get a stepladder and take some pictures at various heights rather than just standing in the driveway: it's the more-interesting angles that are the most popular in print.

6. CONTRAST: As important as lighting and focus is contrast, how well the car stands out against the background. You don't want a dark green or black car to blend in with the row of hedges behind it: instead, a light-colored rock wall or a brightly-lit horizon (sun to your back, remember?) may set it off. Likewise, a white or light-colored car may want that row of trees in the background to make it "pop out" in the picture.

SUBMITTAL: Okay, you spent a few hours taking pictures, took them to the photo lab of your choice and had prints made to send in. First off, get double prints: because of the number of pictures we get, it's impossible to return them all -we'd never get anything done with the Scoop. Second, before you sent your picture in, write on the back with a felt-tip photo-marking pen (one which won't let the ink smear on the paper or leave an impression on the face of the paper like a ball-point pen will when you press down to write) or grease pencil your name, VTCI #, year/ model of car, and where the picture was taken. This will help us to identify the picture as attached letters and notes often times get separated. If you have a story to go along with the picture or other interesting info for the caption, attach this to the photo (but don't staple it to the picture).

Pictures and stories are to be sent to:

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