



**PAJARITO THUNDERBIRD CLUB**  
of  
**NEW MEXICO**  
Chapter 17 of the CTCL  
**March 2021 Newsletter**  
Volume 21 Number 3



## Pres Says:

March 2021



As we roll into spring it feels like things are starting to improve. Our county is now yellow, restrictions are slowly lifting and lots of people are receiving their vaccines. All this is great news and gives us hope that we will be able to start having club events and gathering very soon!

Last month Jim Bell decided to step back from his duties of managing our local website. I want to thank Jim for all the work that he put into the site and his time spent managing it for us. This has given us an opportunity to get a new Webmaster who is currently helping us to revise the site and update a few things. We will keep you posted when we get it finished.

Lastly, we will be holding an officers meeting Saturday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at my house to discuss several topics including our challenges with CTCL concerning incorporation. We need all officers in attendance so please call me and let me know you can make it and I will give you my address.

Get those cars out of hibernation and let's get ready for cruising season!!

Stay safe – see you soon!!

TRAE WOOD



# Classic T-Birds: The Hollywood Era

by Onyx Conklin

I just finished reading Lauren Bacall's autobiography, *By Myself and Then Some*. It's a fabulous read if you like classic Hollywood. She of course was married to the illustrious Humphrey Bogart and they were friends with everyone from Spencer Tracy to Frank Sinatra. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall at those parties! So, imagine my delight when the dazzling dame writes about Bogie buying them their first classic T-Bird! She is quoted as saying, "It was also the year of the new Thunderbirds (1955) and Bogie, Cooper, and Gable each bought one – middle-aged hot-rodders." So, I went looking and as it turns out quite a number of our favorite 50's and 60's stars owned them. Here is a list of the "whose who" in Hollywood and the gems they owned.



Frank Sinatra – 1955 Thunderbird convertible



Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller – 1956 black



Elvis Presley – 1956 Sports Roadster Thunderbird



Audrey Hepburn and Mel Ferrar – 1956 white hardtop

## Classic T-Birds: The Hollywood Era (continued)



Clark Gable – 1955 Colonial white hardtop



Annette Funicello – 1957 white hardtop



## Natalie Wood and Thunderbirds



A young Natalie Wood (age 17) with her 1955 pink Ford Thunderbird. This was her first car. At the time, Wood was living with her parents in the San Fernando Valley, and was not allowed to drive at night. Her mother managed her career and her father worked as a studio carpenter. She was cast in "Rebel Without a Cause" in 1955. The film's director, Nicholas Ray, had some misgivings about casting Wood in the film. He had not yet cast her when Wood was driving her Thunderbird on her normal route from San Fernando to Beverly Hills. While driving on the edge of Coldwater Canyon, Wood crashed the Thunderbird on Mulholland Drive. The car was damaged beyond repair, and Wood was slightly injured. Nicholas Ray rushed to the hospital when he heard of the accident. Within earshot of both Wood and Ray, her doctor referred to Wood as a juvenile delinquent. Immediately Wood said to Ray, "Now do I get the part?"

In 1957 Wood bought a new Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster. It was a silver blue color but she quickly had it repainted pink. That car still survives today but has been repainted back to its original silver blue color. Other cars we know of Wood owning include a 1963 Buick Riviera and a 1967 Mercedes-Benz 250SL. Both of those cars also survive today.

James Garner told the story of being invited to the premiere of "West Side Story" in 1961. Although starring in "Maverick" at the time--and having appeared in a few films, Garner couldn't yet afford a car worthy of a red carpet arrival. Natalie Wood loaned him her Cadillac.

Other useless trivia---Natalie Wood (born Natalia Nikolaevna Zakharenko) lived with her Russian immigrant parents in Santa Rosa, California (north of San Francisco). The young Natalia was "discovered" in 1943 while she and her mother watched Alfred Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt" being filmed in their hometown of Santa Rosa.

## Auto-rack revolution

By the early 1960s, railroads began reclaiming auto traffic from highway trucks with long two- and three-level auto racks on flatcars. Here, new Thunderbirds and other Fords are loaded aboard a Western Pacific tri-level car built by American Car & Foundry





## Happy 56 birthday!

For the 1956 model year, more trunk space was added, the spare wheel was mounted outside (which helped free up trunk space), the exhaust tips were moved to the ends of the bumper, and air vents were added behind the front wheels to improve cabin ventilation. To improve rear-quarter visibility with the removable hardtop in place, "porthole" windows were available as a no-cost option. A 312 cu in (5.1 L) Y-block V8 was added as an option.

Production total for 1956 was 15,631 units, the lowest of all three 2-seater Thunderbird model years. Year Production 1955 was 16,155, then 1956 was 15,631 and finally 1957 was 21,380.

Other 1956 changes:

- 12-Volt electrical system

- New Thunderbird emblem design on exterior

- Deep dish, 3-spoke safety design steering wheel

- First year for front fender vents

- Zippered rear window on convertible top  
(except early 1956 production)

- Port windows on hard top

- Exhaust outlets in rear bumper ends

- Round heater knobs

- Rear spare tire carrier

- Vented gas cap

- Ford Lifeguard Design safety features

- Wing windows on front door

- Ridge under headlamp door



## February 1954

Sixty-Seven years ago Ford Design Studio presents the final clay mock up for the 1955 Ford Thunderbird to Execs.



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### **NEEDS**

Need a 3-speed Manual Trans '57 T-Bird? Either in good or rebuildable. Contact Neil Swartz 310-291-4834

Complete '55 or '57 T-Bird fitted with a non -Y -Block engine powering it. From a different application. I have several Y Block engines that want to find a T-Bird to marry! Contact Allan Hastings 214-608-8993

### **FOR SALE**

FREE CTCI Early Bird collection Vol. 1 #'s 1 & 2, Jan/Feb 1963 through Vol. 58, # 6, Nov/Dec 2020 Arrange something by March 5, 2021. That day to the shredder. Contact Geraldine Nuckels at momnuckels@yahoo.com 972-234-1056

Rear anti-sway bar with mounting brackets, bushings & bolts. Fits a '55 or '56 T-Bird \$75 Contact Allan Hastings 214-608-8993.

T-Bird 56/57 old stock Steering Wheel: Black \$300. Contact Scott McGilvray 214-341-3597

5 Wire wheel covers, 5 small hubcaps with white Centers, and 40 clips with rubber bumpers \$580. Also 4 Ford factory 15" wheels—painted beautiful red \$200. Contact Von Irwin 214-507-0203

4 Wire Basket Hubcaps "without clips" Casco part 1130 \$275. Contact Charlie Difiglia 214-649-9849

4 Tail light bezels for a 1958-59 Squarebird, \$25.00 Also 5 blade fan, measures 18" diameter. 4 Bolt Pattern—fits most T-Birds. \$25.00 Contact Neil Swartz [cuul59@gmail.com](mailto:cuul59@gmail.com) 310-291-4834

Dark Blue stay fast soft top cover, with \$125 Contact Ron Bickel 972-679-7475.

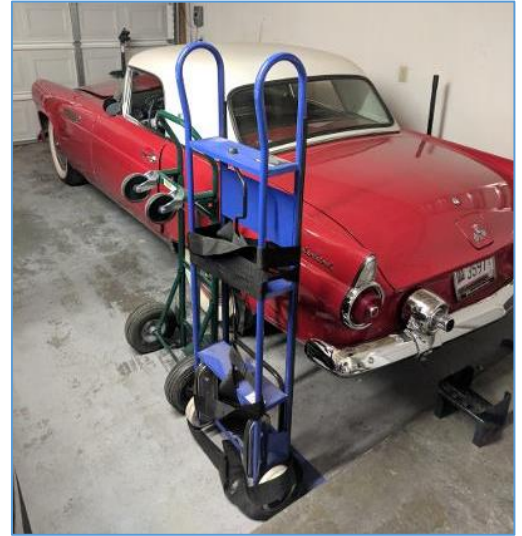


## For Sale Locally:

### Local Thunderbird For Sale:

1955 with Auto transmission, Original wheel covers, wheel well/skirt covers, white wall tires, 12 volt system, new upholstery,. It needs some trim put on, work on the transmission leak (needs gaskets?) , and work on electrical system. Offered for \$20,000.

Eric Clifton [eboy3624@gmail.com](mailto:eboy3624@gmail.com) 915-549-4886

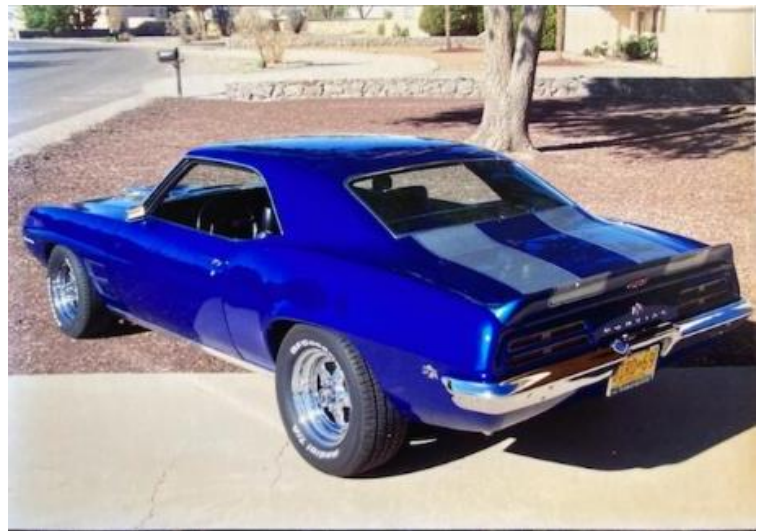




*More For Sale in New Mexico:*

**1969 Pontiac Firebird** with 428 motor, Posi-traction, new 700R4 transmission, 3:73 rear end Carb and 750 Edelbrock Carb. Has original rally rims and Kraeger's Wheels are now mounted. Tach on the hood. Car has won Best of Show in Las Cruces and Deming. Has owned car for 13 years. Price about \$25K, call and see.

Contact Sam or Lori Richards at 575-312-1503 or 575-312-1500 in Las Cruces. Or email: Ldrich7@q.com.



# How long do carmakers have to provide replacement parts for older cars?

By [Daniel Strohl](#) on Aug 3rd, 2020 at 9:00 am

The question arose in the comments to a months-old Jeff Koch post about [loving discontinued car models](#). John from SC asserted that "the federal government only mandates that manufacturers have parts availability for ten years after sale," while Jeff replied that "I am not sure there is any parts mandate from the Feds."



Indeed, we could probably quote any number of gearheads in comments, on forums, or at car shows who swear that there is some sort of mandate, however long it's supposed to last. Or perhaps they go so far as to claim that while the minimum amount of time used to be 10 years, it's now less. But at the same time, we've yet to see anybody point to a specific law that clearly states how long automakers need to supply replacement parts, if at all.

"I don't think there is a regulation I can point to," said Stuart Gosswein, the senior director of federal government affairs for the Specialty Equipment Market Association.

"We hear these things pop up every now and then... but I've never seen a regulation," said Paul Fiore, the director of government affairs for the Auto Care Association, which represents auto repair shops and auto parts retailers. "We feel it's at the manufacturer's discretion."

"I'm not aware there is a standard or regulation," said Wade Newton, the vice president of communications for the Alliance of Automotive Innovation. "The exception might be in safety recalls, but there's very likely not a standard for parts in general."

Some people have cited the fact that other countries (or even some states) do have federal-level requirements for replacement part availability, so if a carmaker that operates in the United States also operates in those countries, by default it has to provide those parts for that amount of time. Other complicating factors that may have led to the supposed 10-year (or 7-year, or 8-year...) rule include pressure from insurance companies that want to make sure the cars they insure can be repaired easily and cheaply, thus ensuring their profit margins; and government contracts to provide, say, parts for postal vehicles or military vehicles that, in turn, require a certain supply of replacement and repair parts.

Of course, it's usually not up to the carmakers themselves to provide the replacement parts; rather, it's up to the suppliers, and as many have noted, the contracts between the automakers and the suppliers often specify that the parts the supplier is manufacturing need to either be on hand or be readily available for a certain amount of time. While there may be industry timespan norms for those contracts, by no means does that mean every carmaker must supply every part to build a car for any amount of time after the car was produced.

Or, at least, that's what we've been able to find so far. If you're dead sure there is some sort of federal mandate to supply replacement parts for some period of time, we'd like to hear about it in the comments along with the specific statute.



## Tech Tips

### T-BIRD RUNNING TOO HOT?

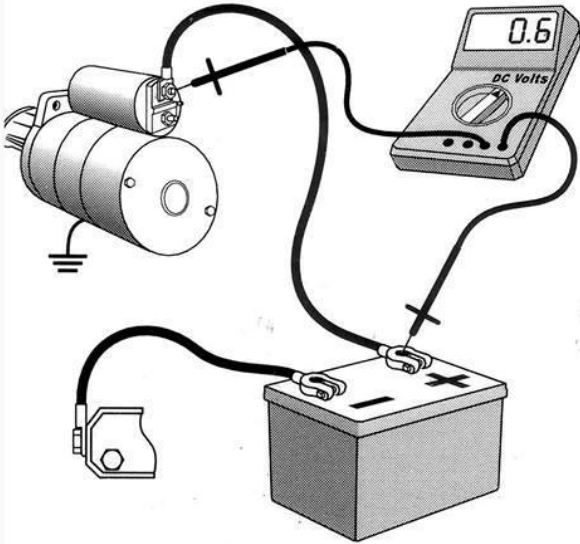
By Thunderbird Owners of New York

Everyone seems to always be worried about the T-Bird running too hot in the summertime. There are a few things that can be done to solve the problem, that's if there is a problem. 1. You can install an aftermarket temperature gauge and bypass the dash gauge. 2. Check to make sure there is a 1" spacer behind the water pump. It is possible that in the life of the car, a passenger engine was installed that doesn't require a spacer. 3. Install a new thermostat 160 degrees. 4. Install a 6 blade fan. 5. Make sure the fan fits mid-way into the shroud – (engine placement seems to vary quite a bit.) If it doesn't, you can buy a spacer of a different size to move the location of the fan. This is the spacer that goes between the fan and the water pump. 6. Improve air flow, block the hood scoop, remove the 2 mud shields down on the frame and make sure the little round access panel behind the grill is in place. 7. Make sure you're getting a good spark advance. This needs to be checked with a timing light. Many times the vacuum diaphragm goes bad. This will make the engine run hot. 8. Check that the heat riser on the right exhaust manifold is opening easily. If it stays closed, or partially closed it makes the right engine bank run hotter than the left. 9. Another thing you can do is to install an electric pusher fan in front of the radiator. It's not a hard job to do and it doesn't show at all.

All of the above will work as long as your engine block is not all loaded with rust and your radiator is clean of "sludge".



## Voltage Drop Test Starters



### STARTER VOLTAGE DROP TEST (+) SIDE

- Batteries must be fully charged 24.5 - 25.2 v
  - Disable fuel or ignition
  - Voltmeter (+) lead to battery (+)
  - Voltmeter (-) lead to starter B+ stud
  - While cranking, record \_\_\_\_\_V/Drop
- Should NOT exceed 0.6 Volts**

### STARTER VOLTAGE DROP TEST (-) SIDE

- Voltmeter (+) lead to starter case
  - Voltmeter (-) lead to battery (-)
  - While cranking, record \_\_\_\_\_V/Drop
- Should NOT exceed 0.3 Volts**

## I'M SO OLD THAT

I HAVE DIALED A ROTARY PHONE (THAT DIDN'T HAVE AN ANSWERING MACHINE),  
RECORDED A SONG THAT I LOVE OFF A TRANSISTOR RADIO ONTO A TAPE RECORDER,  
WATCHED A BLACK AND WHITE TV (WITH LESS THAN 10 CHANNELS) THAT HAD FOIL ON THE RABBIT EAR ANTENNAS, TAKEN A LONG WALK WITHOUT COUNTING THE STEPS, AND EATEN FOOD THAT I DIDN'T TAKE PICTURES OF.

"Have you ever noticed  
that anybody driving  
slower than you is an idiot,  
and anyone going faster  
than you is a maniac?"

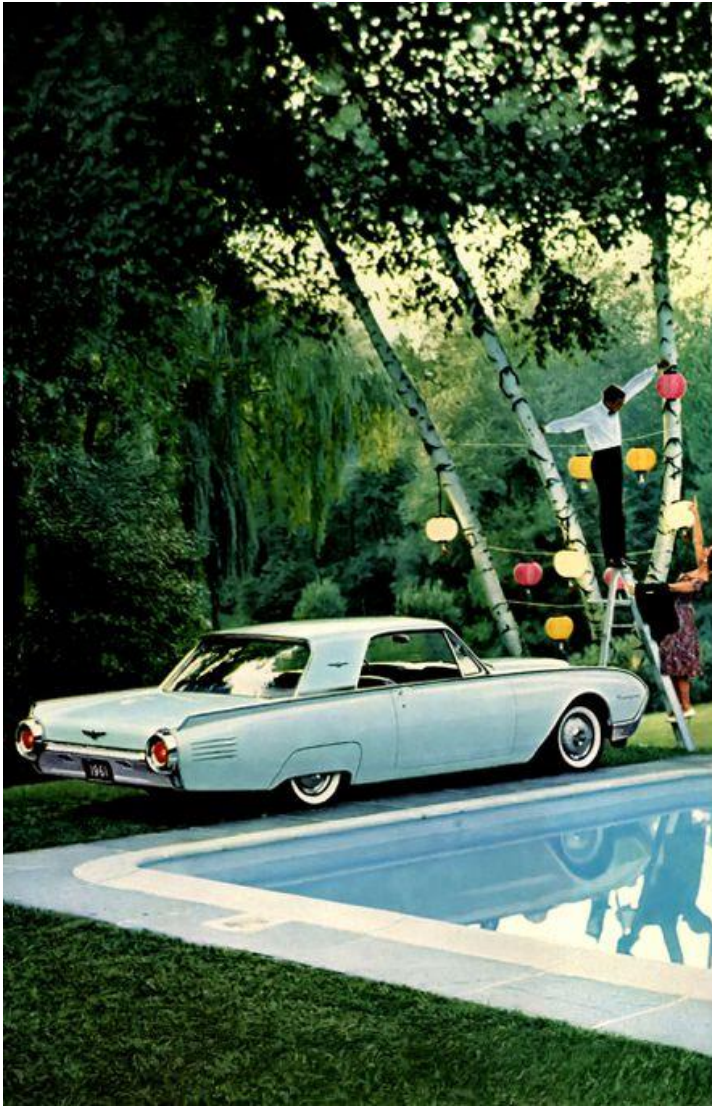
- George Carlin

**Don't expect me to stop  
if u break down on the  
road. U were warned  
about ur cars warranty  
expiring.**

**I am too old to live under  
socialism. I am addicted  
to luxuries like toilet  
paper, electricity, food,  
clean water and shoes.**



## Showcasing terrible places to park any car:



PRESENTING THE 1961

# Thunderbird

UNMISTAKABLY NEW... UNMISTAKABLY THUNDERBIRD

*Here is the finest expression of the Thunderbird spirit, unquestionably Thunderbird in its classic lines and sparkling performance—not a hair rider nor a tenth of an inch longer—yet a Thunderbird so uniquely new that it stands alone in the fine-car field.*

With its quicksilver elegance and flashing sports car grace, the Thunderbird has established itself as the trend car of our times.

The dramatically beautiful new Thunderbird for 1961 preserves all of the features that mean Thunderbird—the classic Thunderbird size and distinctive styling, the 4-passenger luxury, the sports car handling, the dazzling performance, the famous console.

At the same time it features such remarkable advances as the optional new Swing-Away Steering Wheel. Door openings are higher . . . and wider. The windshield projection has been removed. You move in and out with a wonderful new freedom.

A new high-performance Thunderbird 390 Special V-8 brings you even more of that famous Thunderbird spirit—as standard equipment. New Cruise-O-Matic Drive, new Power Steering and new Power Brakes (also all standard equipment) function as a precision team for a new high in automatic driving.

Advanced engineering is a major reason Thunderbird has the finest resale record of any luxury car. It is the reason your Ford Dealer is extending his warranty to 12,000 miles or one full year, whichever comes first.

See your Ford Dealer. Let him show you a copy of his warranty—and discover the unmistakably wonderful Thunderbird for 1961.

1961 version Ford Motor Company.



The Steering Wheel moves over to welcome you in. A touch of your hand as you enter the car and the optional new Swing-Away Steering Wheel moves aside ten inches. You take the driver's seat easily. Incidentally, you can drive only when the wheel is safely locked in normal driving position.



The dazzling new  
Thunderbird Convertible

Unique in all the world





A view of 2nd Street, downtown Albuquerque, 1907 and 2017.





## A local Car story:



*HRM Special, a '57 Ford with factory supercharged engine, was driven to victory by Jerry Unser. Trail of dust shows wide approach to get extra room for tight corner.*

road to the top of Pikes Peak is one of the more important phases of successfully competing in this race and with practice scheduled to start at 4:30 a.m. on the 24th of June, time was growing short. So, Jerry shoved off at midnight on the 20th with a 1200-mile tow ahead of him. Wally Parks had volunteered me to be Jerry's chief grease monkey for the race but I couldn't leave town until I'd finished my magazine work, so it was the 22nd of June before I shoved off. Thus started two weeks of the longest days Jerry and I had ever known.

When I arrived in Colorado Springs, Sunday evening, the 23rd, Jerry had already been through a whole series of crises but even so, had the car almost

ready for practice the following morning. When the DePaola mechanics were put out of business by the AMA ruling, they were just completing work on the car Jerry was to race but had not quite finished the job. DePaola turned the car over to Jerry believing that it was ready and with time running out, we made only minor examinations before starting the trip. Among the near catastrophes that occurred between California and Colorado were the near loss of a front wheel on the race car, the lower front A-arms loosened up, causing weird sensations while towing, a steering link fell off causing the front wheels to go spread-eagle and finally, the tow car had a blowout, but fortunately on a de-



*300 horsepower engine gets that extra boost from a special centrifugal supercharger. Air intake for cleaner comes through the grille in front of windshield.*

# CLIMBING

By Ray Brock

*Record-breaking car and driver, Jerry Unser. Jerry gave large share of credit for performance to Firestone tires, Mobil products and Lodge spark plugs. Time was 15:39.2.*





The Official flag of 2020

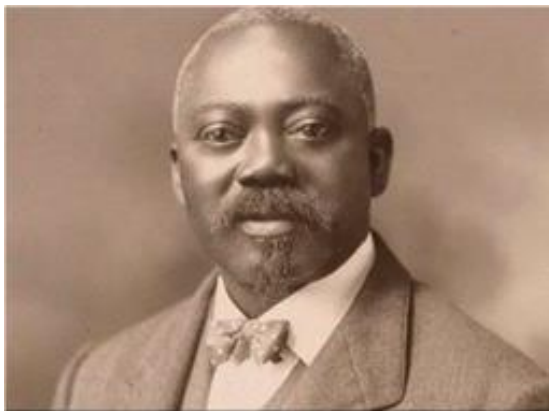


IF 2020 WAS A CAR



"The Constitution is not a document for the government to restrain the people: it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government."

Patrick Henry



THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR IN THE CIVIL WAR WAS SGT. WILLIAM HARVEY CARNEY WHO, DESPITE BEING SHOT IN THE FACE, SHOULDERS, ARMS, AND LEGS, REFUSED TO LET THE AMERICAN FLAG TOUCH THE GROUND.



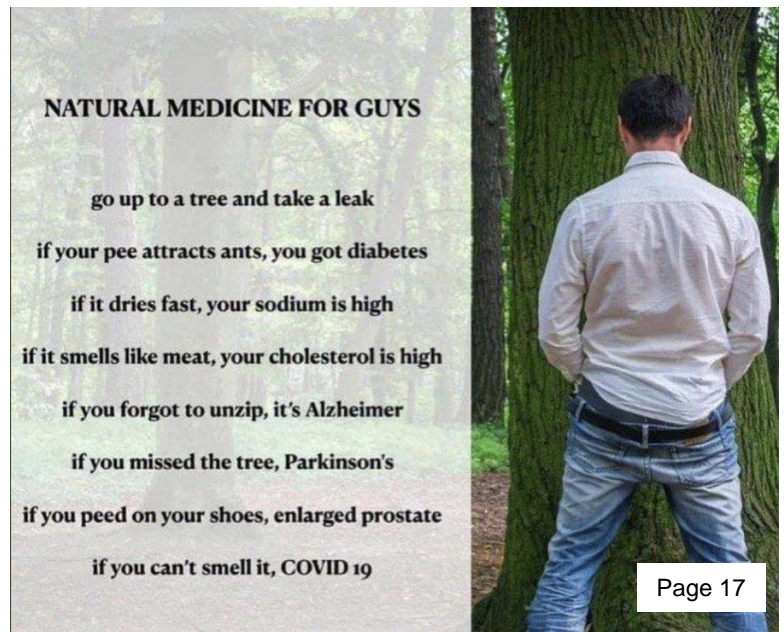
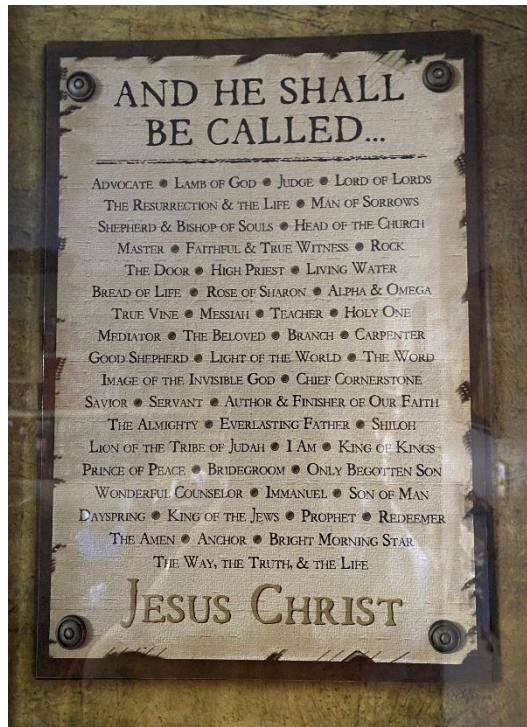
### INTERESTING OBSERVATION

1. The sport of choice for the urban poor is **BASKETBALL**.
2. The sport of choice for maintenance level employees is **BOWLING**.
3. The sport of choice for front-line workers is **FOOTBALL**.
4. The sport of choice for supervisors is **BASEBALL**.
5. The sport of choice for middle management is **TENNIS**. And...
6. The sport of choice for corporate executives and officers is **GOLF**.

### THE amazing facts are.

The higher you go in the corporate structure, the smaller the balls become.

There must be a boat load of people in Washington playing **marbles**.







**Blonde at the Super Bowl**

Of all the blonde jokes, this one has to be one of the best - because it makes football make sense!

A guy took his blonde girlfriend to the Super Bowl game. They had great seats right behind their team's bench.

After the game, he asked her how she liked it. "Oh, I really liked it," she replied, "especially the tight pants and all the big muscles, but I just couldn't understand why they were killing each other over 25 cents."

Dumbfounded, her boyfriend asked, "What do you mean?" "Well, they flipped a coin, one team got it and then for the rest of the game, all they kept screaming was... 'Get the quarterback! Get the quarterback!' I'm like...Hellooooooo? It's only 25 cents!"

*MyHoneyPlace.Com*

