



March 2026

*Thunderbird Owners of
New York*

*Thunderbird Owners of New York
Webpage*

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Next Club Meeting

Thunderbird Owners of New York

March 9th, 2026

Arrive early – 6:15 The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

**Bethpage Library
47 Powell Avenue, Bethpage, NY 11714**

April 6; May 4)

Newsletter Message from Allen Leon

As your newly elected President, my mission is to broaden the club's activities and make your experience as a member even more rewarding by building on our solid foundation created by so many of you over the years.

I have arranged events for our member participation, and I am working to enhance our regular meetings to ensure solid communications. As I have done in the past, I will continue to do my part by offering "tech" talks or invite guest speakers each month.

Our club thrives on the dedication of its members. Your participation to help expand our reach by planning collaborative events with neighboring clubs and share your knowledge about our "Baby Birds" within our community.

In closing this brief note, I want you to know that I am extremely excited about the prospects for 2026.

Our focus this year is simple: more driving, more volunteering, and more shared passion.

"I look forward to seeing everyone at the season opener!"

Allen

SECRETARY'S REPORT Meeting Recap February 2026



John Cattonar, Thunderbird Owners of New York Secretary

Meeting notes February 9th, 2026, Thunderbird Owners of New York

For those members who arrived before the official start of the meeting were delighted to find coffee and donuts were available for all our members.

We anticipate that this will provide an opportunity for our members to engage in informal interaction prior to the commencement of our monthly meeting.

Members can gather for coffee and donuts from **6:15 P.M.** until just before our meeting begins at **7:00 P.M.**

Important Housekeeping note: Do not bring any coffee or food into the auditorium.

Our February meeting started at 7:07 with twenty-two (22) members in attendance. Our new President, **Allen Leon**, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the Pledge, our Treasurer, **Jim Mezey**, update the club with a financial report. Currently the club has \$2,011.91 in the bank.

Additionally, Jim reported that TONY has two (2) new members, **Patrick and Helen Bailey**. We welcome the Baileys to our club and look forward to their company at future club events.

We finally have a new Editor, **Sal Perrotta**, who attended our meeting via speaker phone from Florida. Wonderful job on the February Newsletter Sal.

Sal mentioned that he is looking forward to putting out the monthly newsletter and noted that he would appreciate member participation for newsletter content. Your favorite photos, T'Bird related articles and interesting information you would like to share with the membership would be welcome.

Allen suggested that the club purchase a Post Office Box at the Melville Post Office. The annual cost of \$216.00 would be paid by the club. The purchase was voted on and approved by the members.

The PO Box information is as follows:

THUNDERBIRD OWNERS OF NEW YORK P.O.BOX 992 MELVILLE, N.Y. 11747

There was a discussion about the TONY Annual Holiday Party. Several attendees of the February meeting also participated in the holiday party, and they considered it to be successful.

There was a door prize gift offered this year which was a 5 Gallon Bucket filled with useful car products. **Bob Groen** claimed victory.

Pat Scomello and others spoke about the trip to Allentown. Allen reported that the feedback from everyone was positive. It was also reported that the trip home took twice long as the ride took going to PA. The snow slowed the ride but regardless everyone enjoyed the trip.

Allen and the BOD are in final negotiations for TONY in securing the parking lot at Key Food (Kings Park) shopping center parking lot for the annual **All Ford Show** on October 4th this year. We need volunteers for the show and plan to reach out to other clubs who plan to attend the show and invite them to participate as volunteers as well.

This month's meeting included a presentation from **Steve Katsur** who talked about the various tools needed to service our birds and keep them running. Steve maintains a comprehensive collection of special tools and has generously offered to lend them to members upon request. Thank you, Steve. I appreciate your generosity.

The meeting ended at 9:05, with Billy Scalzo winning the 50/50 for \$35.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Happy T-Birding!
JOHN CATTONAR, Club Secretary



From the Club

From: Dennis Benfante



FEATURE CAR OF THE MONTH

It was 1956 and I was walking down Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn when I first saw a sign in the window of the Ford dealership “**NEW FOR 1957 the FORD THUNDERBIRD**”. I do not recall the name of the dealership however I remember saying that someday I will own one of those beauties, and I was only 11 years old at that time.

Fast forward to High School graduation and there one was for sale at a local “Auto Salon” fancy name for a used car dealer. It certainly was a beauty, unfortunately out of my reach, financially. Then in 1967 I met Mary and in 1969 we were married and bought our house. You are asking, what does this have to do with a ’57 Thunderbird, well after the house purchase, a “classic car” was certainly out of the question. Then my son Michael came along, he really did not just appear, and I will not go into details, however the same thing happened five years later, when my daughter Janine was born and as they say family first, two kids so no classic car but the dream of owning one was still with me.

When I look back to 1997 my son, Michael, had moved out and was living on his own and in May our beautiful daughter Janine became Mrs. Mark Fazio. With both children beginning new chapters in their lives, and things were looking brighter for them, I began to think that there may be room for a classic car in my garage.

Now I come the part you might have been looking for. One night after dinner I was “surfing the net” and came across Cars for Sale and went in. there were 198 listings for “classics” so I started looking. After few hours and 196 listings there was #197, 1957 Thunderbird for sale. I clicked on and the ad rest is history. The car wound up being available in Brooklyn. Oh man, back to my roots....and just happened to be less than 1 mile from where I grew up. So, arrangements were made for me to see the car. I asked my neighbor Ronnie if I could borrow his battery box for the weekend. Ronnie, being Ronnie asked if I was having trouble and I told him that I was going into Brooklyn to look at a ’57 T’Bird. Again, Ronnie, being Ronnie, asked me if I wanted him to go with me. Wow, a real mechanic going with me, so naturally I said yes. The next Sunday morning off we went to Brooklyn and one week later I was off to Brooklyn again, this time as a passenger in flatbed truck.

Now my (I cannot believe I said my), 1957 Thunderbird is sitting in my garage, but not for long. The next month it was on its way to Ronnie’s shop where it lived for the next 18 months. In the interim I had the opportunity to go to Englishtown where I met Bob Ceraso. I introduced myself and we began to talk. Bob told me about *Thunderbird Owners of New York*, and he encouraged me to attend the next meeting. That is where I met the most fascinating and knowledgeable people I have ever met.

I met people at the meeting whom I considered knowledgeable about Ford Thunderbird. The next thing I knew was Bob Ceraso and Geppie DeSimone came to Ronnie's shop and helped me to put this car in running condition. I was surprised by the support from Bob and Geppie, whom I barely knew. But that is just the beginning... So many of the TONY members were and are still instrumental in getting and keeping my car on the road.

Along my journey of getting my T'Bird shaped up I met Phil Lauro. Phil was so helpful and more than that he was willing to jump in and get his hands dirty. Phil was a real character; he did not let anything stop him from getting work done. Phil and I spent many early mornings and late nights working on my car. Eventually, the goal was achieved, and my 1957 Thunderbird was ready.

Years later, I rebuilt the engine and the transmission. I considered getting the car repainted, however I delayed that project and focused on the braking system. Simply stated the car was not stopping well so I connected with Geppie, and he confirmed that I needed brakes. Geppie installed new front disc brakes and rear brake shoes on my Thunderbird. Additionally, he resolved other issues to ensure that the car operates and stops extremely well.

With the car's core systems working well, my next drive went smoothly. The car ran well and the car stopped when I stepped on the brake pedal. The painting project was at the top of my project list.

There are countless stories I could share with you about the joys of owning a Thunderbird. What I have decided to write about is part of the journey I took to restore my car and the benefits of being in a car club like the Thunderbird Owners of New York.

Owning my "dream car," the 1957 Thunderbird, has been more than just fulfilling a childhood wish—it has been a journey filled with challenges, triumphs, and lasting memories. Through the process of restoring and maintaining the car, I discovered the true value of community. The support and camaraderie from the Thunderbird Owners of New York have been invaluable, turning what could have been a solitary pursuit into a shared adventure. Both the friendships and knowledge I have gained have enriched my life.

Becoming President of TONY was an unexpected honor, but it is the joy of driving the Thunderbird and connecting with fellow enthusiasts that continues to inspire me.

If you are enthusiastic about classic cars, joining a club is not just about vehicles, it is about connecting with a group of people who share your enthusiasm and are always ready to lend a hand.

Dennis Benfante

From: Pat Scomello

A Very interesting Version of the Thunderbird from Pat Scomello Thanks for sharing Pat.

2026 Ford Thunderbird Coupe - Muscle Meets Luxury Like Never Before!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJeZMuGmNrY>



The 2026 Ford Thunderbird

Experience the return of an American icon with our exclusive deep dive into the all-new 2026 Ford Thunderbird. In the video noted in the links below, you can explore the bold modern design that brings heritage and innovation together, examining every detail from the aggressive front grille and distinctive LED headlights to the sleek side profile and stunning rear styling. Step inside and discover a cabin that blends classic!

Thunderbird luxury with innovative technology, featuring premium materials, advanced infotainment, and the latest driver-assist features. We will uncover what is under the hood—from the twin-turbocharged V6 to the rumored high-powered V8—discussing the impressive performance and driving experience that make this coupe a true grand tourer. Learn about Ford’s commitment to comfort, safety, and technological excellence, and find out how the Thunderbird stands out against luxury rivals with its unmistakable American spirit.

With official pricing expected to start around \$60,000 and a debut set for 2026, the Thunderbird is ready to reclaim its place at the top of the luxury coupe segment.

Do not miss this expert review of a legendary nameplate reborn for a new generation.

[#2026fordthunderbird](#)

Video: <https://youtu.be/xBZqm86lGNE?si=eXVZ-R9fhWBzDcpG>

From: Allen Leon and Faith Cardone February Breakfast and a visit to a Melville Detailing Shop











From: Pat Scomello, Reprint from Web Site <https://www.autoguide.com/>

Ranking The Best Ford Thunderbirds of All-Time

Published by Mike Schlee: February 7th, 2026.



It is time once again to discuss a legendary marque and affix a letter grade to a selection of vehicles falling under that model name. The topic of today's post is the legendary Ford Thunderbird. The T-Bird, as it was affectionally known, may be the second most recognizable model name in Ford's history, after the iconic Mustang of course. Over the span of 50 years, eleven generations of Thunderbirds came and went: some legendary, others completely forgettable.

Below we have taken a sampling from each generation of Thunderbird and graded them based purely on our own thoughts and feelings. The grades mean nothing and are completely arbitrary. I fully encourage you to tell me what we got wrong and how you would grade them instead. Have some fun with it. Do we love the Super Coupe too much? Let us know!



1957 Ford Thunderbird Grade: A+

Many consider the *first-generation Thunderbird* as the icon for the nameplate, and it is hard to argue that point. Each year of the first-generation, car is slightly different and picking a favorite is a matter of personal preference. For me it has to be the 1957 model that could come with a supercharged V8 making 340 hp.



1960 Ford Thunderbird Grade: B+

The second-generation Thunderbird differed from the original car as it was much larger and could now include a rear seat. Like the first-generation car, the second-generation car differed slightly each year. I am personally a fan of the 1960 model with the triple taillight on each side of the rear of the car.



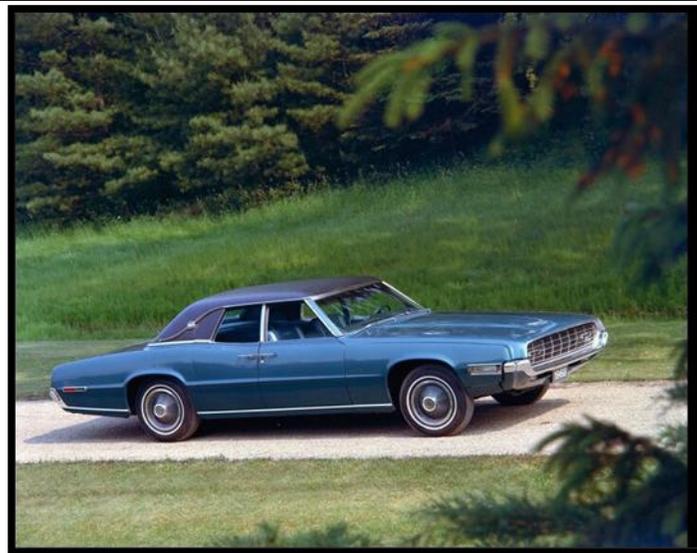
1962 Ford Thunderbird Sports Roadster Grade: A-

The third-generation Thunderbird continued the tradition of lasting for three model years. It furthered the themes of the second gen car as a large personal luxury coupe and convertible, with even more premium content added. For the 1962 model year Ford introduced the Sports Roadster which fitted a fiberglass tonneau cover over the rear seats, turning the giant convertible in a pseudo roadster.



1966 Ford Thunderbird Grade: A

The fourth-generation Thunderbird is one of the most recognizable cars in the model's history thanks to its many appearances on television and film. Being the mid-sixties, the Thunderbird couldn't escape the muscle car madness that was gripping North America and included an optional 428 cubic inch V8 for 1966.



1968 Ford Thunderbird Grade: B+

The fifth generation took the Thunderbird in a new direction, focusing much more on luxury rather than performance. Big brawny V8 engines could be had, but this was not a muscle car. The styling was a love or hate affair for most. But even if it is not your cup of tea, it was unique.



1974 Ford Thunderbird Grade: B-

By its *sixth generation*, the *Thunderbird* had become a 5,000-pound behemoth of a car. To match its immense size and overweight weight, a monstrous 460 cubic inch V8 was available in 1974. I do like the styling of this car, but it was missing that special element of previous models.



1978 Ford Thunderbird Diamond Jubilee Edition Grade: C

If excess were a car, this is it. *The Diamond Jubilee Edition* crammed every available option into the Thunderbird and then some. It skyrocketed the price of the car into the stratosphere. But regular sixth-generation Thunderbirds were well received and sold like hot-cakes. The car is just underwhelming to me.



1980 Ford Thunderbird Grade: D

This was the low water mark for the Thunderbird franchise. Significantly smaller than the previous model, the ***eighth-generation Thunderbird*** did not catch on with consumers, and for good reasons. It was mediocre in every way.



1987 Ford Thunderbird Turbo Coupe Grade: B+

With the ***ninth generation Thunderbird***, things began to turn around; especially with the Turbo Coupe. Powered by the 2.3-liter turbocharged engine found in the Mustang SVO, power was up to 190 hp in 1987 for the big two-door Thunderbird. Styling for this car was well received, and sales were significantly up over the previous generation.



1994 Ford Thunderbird Super Coupe Grade: A-

I may be biased as this was the Thunderbird I remember most from my impressionable teenage years. But the ***Gen 10 Super Coupe is the modern Thunderbird***, the epitome of the franchise in recent times. By 1994 the car pumped out 230 hp and a massive 330 lb-ft, paired to a five-speed manual transmission. Also, that sleek styling has aged well.



2002 Ford Thunderbird Grade: C

The eleventh-generation Thunderbird attempted to cash in on America's obsession with retro-designed cars during the early 2000s. Ford succeeded with the Thunderbird featuring many visual cues of the early models and sales were strong for the first year of production. But a high price tag and ho-hum performance kept buyers away over the next few years before the car was axed.

From: Sal Perrotta:

Newsletter Car QUIZ

All Ford Quiz

Complete this quickly.

1. In what model year did Ford introduce the Country Squire station wagon?
 - A. 1950
 - B. 1955
 - C. 1957
 - D. 1959

2. What feature set the 1955-56 Ford Crown Victoria apart from the Fairlane Victoria?
 - A. Two tone paint
 - B. Stainless steel band over the roof
 - C. Quad headlights
 - D. Leather seats

3. For the 1957 model year, Ford introduced what half-pickup/half-car vehicle to the market?
 - A. Interceptor
 - B. Galaxie
 - C. Ranchero
 - D. Torino

4. The 1955-57 Ford Thunderbird coupes were noted for what distinctive styling feature?
 - A. Side exhausts
 - B. Quad headlights
 - C. Round "opera windows"
 - D. Padded leather roofs

5. For what model year did Ford introduce the Galaxie 500?
 - A. 1956
 - B. 1957
 - C. 1958
 - D. 1959

6. What Ford model, introduced in 1950, featured a distinct two-tone paint scheme?

- A. Sunliner
- B. Crestliner
- C. Mainline
- D. Customline

7. In what model year did Ford first offer automatic transmission in its cars?

- A. 1950
- B. 1951
- C. 1954
- D. 1955

8. Which of the following was NOT one of the names Ford used to designate a series of the 1958 Edsel?

- A. Citation
- B. Pacer
- C. Corsair
- D. Fairlane

9. This luxury car, produced by Ford for 1956 and 1957 model years, was painstakingly hand-built and carried a list price of \$10,000. What was this car?

- A. Continental Mark III
- B. Continental Mark II
- C. Continental Mark I
- D. Continental

10. Ford was the second manufacturer to offer what safety feature in its cars, starting with the 1955 models?
hint: Nash was the first (1949)

- A. Air bags
- B. Seat belts
- C. Turn signals
- D. Shatterproof glass

***March
Quiz Answers***

<i>Question Number</i>	<i>Answer</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>B</i>

From: CTCI: ARE YOU A MEMBER "NOW WOULD BE A GREAT TIME TO



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Are you a former member of CTCI? Yes No If Yes, what is your former CTCI membership number? _____

Sponsored or referred by _____ CTCI # (if known) _____

From: Allen Leon Reprinted from Hemmings Motor News



Back-to-Basics Brakes

Keeping it simple with a factory-style Ford front disc upgrade

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY McGEAN

It's long been common practice for fans of muscle-era cars to upgrade the four-wheel drum brakes, typical of that period, to front discs. For years, doing so required sourcing parts from donor vehicles, though finding the needed items from junkyards has become increasingly difficult.

Thankfully, the aftermarket stepped up to reproduce many of the items that have vanished from the salvage market, which was a great help to us as we looked to add front discs to a classic 1964 Mercury Comet. Ford Motor Company didn't offer disc brakes for the cars built on its compact platforms during the '64 model year, though it did make front discs an option for the '65 Mustang. Given how popular early Mustangs have been for decades, it's no surprise that all the brake parts are readily available as brand-new items. The '64 Comet we were working on has the same suspension architecture as the

'65 Mustang, so those discs are a bolt-on upgrade.

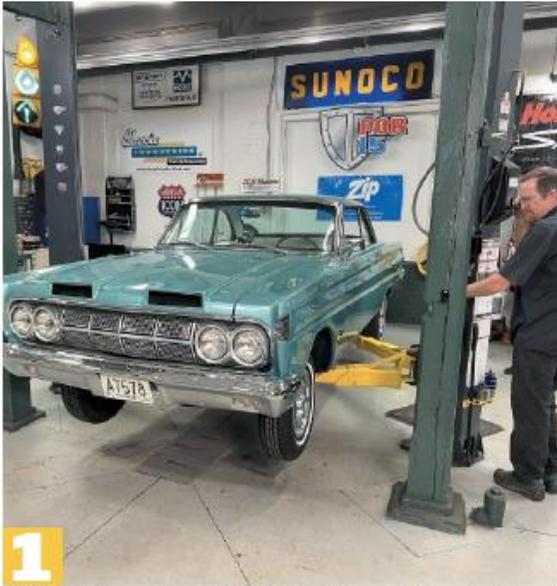
Of course, these days, owners of early Mustangs and related models have myriad choices when upgrading their brakes, with offerings going well beyond what the factory ever dreamed of providing back in the '60s. However, for this project, the Comet's owner wanted to be able to retain the stock 14-inch steel wheels so that he could reinstall its factory wheel covers, which replicate the look of chrome reverse wheels.

Very few contemporary brake kits will clear 14-inch wheels, though the original '65 Mustang discs were intended for wheels of that size. We went to Summit Racing to do some shopping and landed on a kit from Leed Brakes that included everything we needed—rotors, calipers, mounting brackets, bearings, hoses, and all associated hardware. What really

appealed to us was that this kit included a dual-circuit master cylinder and proportioning valve, and was intended to be used without a power booster. That was important because the Comet's original firewall braces are welded in and don't leave much room for a conventional booster. Plus, the car owner simply preferred to stick with a manual setup.

As a bonus, thanks to the design of the '65 Mustang's optional disc brakes, we did not have to change the Comet's spindles—Ford designed caliper brackets that mount to the drum-brake spindles, and the rotors install directly in place of the drums. When we were done installing the Leed Brakes kit, the Comet looked like it might have come from the factory with the front discs. This may have been the simplest front disc conversion we've ever done—check out the photos and captions to see the process. 🛠️

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1



2

1. This 1964 Mercury Comet Cyclone left the factory with four-wheel drum brakes, and while the car's owner wanted to upgrade to front discs, he also wanted to retain the factory wheel covers used on Cyclones that give the look of a chrome reverse wheel. Of course, to retain the 14-inch wheel covers, he would have to use 14-inch wheels, and that severely limited the number of disc-brake setups we could use. **2.** Though the '64 Comet did not offer front disc brakes as an option, the 1965 Mustang did, and those brakes are still readily available from the aftermarket. Since the early Mustang and this Comet share suspension architecture, the Mustang brakes are a bolt-on for the Comet. This kit from Leed Brakes is essentially a reproduction of the parts used for the disc brakes that were optional on the '65 Mustang, with 11-inch vented rotors, four-piston, cast-iron calipers, and the required mounting brackets and splash shields. The exception is the upgrade to a dual-circuit master cylinder and adjustable proportioning valve.



3



4

3. The installation begins with removal of the stock drum-brake assemblies. The brake hard lines will be reused, so we took care not to damage the fittings when disconnecting the flex hoses. The disc brake kit includes new flex lines for the calipers. **4.** Once the plumbing is disconnected, removing the four bolts that fasten the backing plate to the spindle will allow the entire brake assembly to come off with the shoes, springs, and wheel cylinders still in place.



5. This bracket is a key element in making this disc swap so simple. Rather than requiring new spindles to accommodate the discs, as is often the case with American cars of this period, this caliper bracket mounts to the existing spindle using the drum-brake backing-plate bolt holes. The cast caliper bracket is a reproduction of the one Ford used for the early Mustang. **6.** The caliper bracket mounting bolts also secure the included splash shields, so the shields need to be put in place during this step. The callipers mount toward the front with this setup. **7.** The kit includes new wheel-bearing sets, and after driving the new races into place, the rotors are mounted to the original spindles. These rotors are essentially a new, stock replacement for a '65 Mustang part. **8.** The callipers in this kit are cast-iron, four-piston units that use a fixed mounting—they do not slide. Here again, the callipers are brand-new versions of the ones offered on the '65 Mustang. The set in the kit came "loaded," meaning they already had a set of pads installed. We slipped them over the rotors and bolted them to the brackets. **9.** The flex hoses used with these callipers thread directly into each caliper body, so they must be installed before the line is connected to the hardline on the chassis.



10

10. Our conversion kit was intended for a few different Ford applications, so it included some fittings and such that we did not need. Among them were these hardline adapter fittings, which would merge the disc-brake flex hoses with the hardlines on some drum-brake cars. For this Comet, the hardlines connected directly to the new flex hoses.



11

11. One of the things our car owner wanted to change in the brake system was the master cylinder—like most cars of the period, this Comet used a single-circuit master. These work fine when everything is in order; however, if a leak develops anywhere in the system, before long, the driver will find zero braking available. Our disc-brake kit included a dual-circuit master from a later Ford application.



12

12. We were pleasantly surprised to find that our stock-style disc-brake kit included an adjustable proportioning valve. This one will mount neatly right underneath the master, but before putting it on, we needed to mount the pressure switch that activates the brake lights, which was also included.

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13



14



15



16

13. The Comet doesn't have much room around the master cylinder thanks to welded-in braces that tie to the shock towers. Fortunately, the dual-circuit master we're using will still fit, though adding a power brake booster would have posed a problem. **14.** The brake kit also included a new "pigtail" electrical connector for the brake-light switch. The Comet was using the same type of switch with the drum-brake setup, but someone before us had cut off the factory connector and was using universal spade terminals, so the new pigtail came in handy. **15.** As mentioned previously, the disc-brake conversion kit from Leed was intended for a few different Ford applications of this period, so there were some items we didn't need, but we were impressed that the kit was so complete. **16.** With the installation complete, the stock-type front discs don't look out of place on the Comet, even though they were never offered during the '64 model year. We did find that the factory 14-inch drum-brake wheels contacted the callipers, so we had to use a different pair. Ours came from a later Mopar application, but the correct Ford-style 14 x 6-inch disc-brake steel wheels are available from a variety of sources brand-new, including Coker Tire's Wheel Vintiques.

SOURCES:

Coker Tire / Wheel Vintiques
866-516-3215
cokertire.com

Leed Brakes
716-852-2139
leedbrakes.com

Summit Racing Equipment
800-230-3030
summitracing.com



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