

## The Beginning Of The End



### The 1998 Lincoln Town Car - The Third and Last Generation

*Welcome to the Northstar News, the monthly publication of the Northstar Region of the Lincoln and Continental Owners Club. We value your opinions and appreciate your input concerning this newsletter and the operation of the club. This is your club.*

For this month, we were lacking original material for a good feature article for this issue of the Northstar News. We went through some of the back issues of Comments and came across this article about the "all new" Lincoln Town Car for 1998. Town cars have been one of our members' favorites; they provide great comfort and were fairly well-styled vehicles. On the road, they did very well in the mileage department. It was not uncommon to be able to achieve 22 plus miles per gallon at highway speeds. As we all know, nothing is forever, and the end of the line for the Town Car came in 2012 when the last 1,000 cars found their way into the hands of eager buyers. Sadly, most tried, and true Lincoln owners bemoaned the fact that there were no more new Town Cars. Unfortunately, not enough buyers bought them when they were new; much like the dinosaurs of old, Lincoln sort of failed to keep the Town Car technically refreshed. A lot of the technology packages available in other luxury brands failed to make it to Lincoln. The 4.6 Liter engine, while not a bad engine, could have used another 100 or so horsepower to make it a good performer. No Sirius/XM radio package; for my 2004 Town Car, I had to rely on a jury-rigged install that left much to be desired. And navigation packages were also missing from the order sheet. While many buyers may not have cared, apparently enough did, and sales continued to fall from the first-year

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## Trivia from the Internet



Tennessee Ernie Ford  
American Singer  
1919 - 1991

**Ernest Jennings Ford** (February 13, 1919 - October 17, 1991), known professionally as **Tennessee Ernie Ford**, was an American singer and television host who enjoyed success in the country and Western, pop and gospel musical genres. Noted for his rich bass-baritone voice and down-home humor, he is remembered for his hit recordings of "The Shotgun Boogie" and "Sixteen Tons."

Ford was born in Bristol, Tennessee, to Maud (nee Long) and Clarence Thomas Ford. The 1940 census shows that he had an elder brother named Stanley H. Ford. He spent a lot

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## Editors Message

May 2021

Dear friends and Gentle Readers:

It is the beginning of May. Hopefully, we will see some warmer and dryer weather in what should be a beautiful May. We have had a string of cold, rainy days, which have really put a damper on what should have been a nice prelude to the start of summer.

A lot of us have now had the series of Covid-19 vaccine shots. There are still a significant number of folks out there, for one reason or another have put off getting the vaccine or have decided not to. Getting everyone is very important so that the disease doesn't keep spreading. Don't keep putting it off; protect yourself, your loved ones, and your friends. Let us all work together so that everyone can feel safe.

I journeyed out one recent Thursday to meet a couple of long-time friends for lunch. It had been a very long time since I had lunch; we met at a greasy burger joint in Bloomington; I had a great cheeseburger with bacon and some nice crisp french fries. It was the best couple of hours that I have

spent in a long time. I hope that we can get to a point where we can do more of that, especially with some of the members of the Lincoln Club.

It has been 20 years since I began this strange odyssey of mine with the Northstar News. I had belonged to the region for some time, and during that period, we had a couple of editors that managed to put together a newsletter of sorts that came out on a somewhat unreliable schedule. Dick Larson, who was our most glorious leader, would manage to get out a page or two on a somewhat monthly basis. Unfortunately, Dick, who liked to ride his motorcycle, got into an accident with a car that stopped suddenly on the Mendota bridge. Dick came out second best to the car. One of our other members offered to take over the newsletter upon Dick's demise, and she did try for a while. Not a well-organized person, the publication would quite often reach our members after the monthly scheduled events were held. At that point, I decided to take it over, and away we went.

We had a very humble beginning; I went over to Circuit City (no longer in business) and got a very nice laptop and Microsoft Pro office suite. A

little searching online, which was very limited in 2001, turned up nice Lexmark Optra S series printers, black and white, but of good quality and capable of printing about 40 pages per minute. I also was able to buy an envelope attachment for it to print the 6x9 inch envelopes that we mailed the newsletters out. I also signed up for Stamps.com, an online postage program that enabled us to print the addresses and postage on the envelopes in one pass.

The first issue was six pages, printed on both sides, and had a couple of pictures in it. We kept growing and growing. We started doing some of it in color, which was kind of a mess to put together. Some pages were printed on a color printer, and some pages on the faithful Lexmark. I eventually graduated up to a Ricoh medium size office printer that will print everything in color and do some nice other things too. You just keep filling it up with reams of paper, and newsletters keep coming out the other end.

Some 240 issues later, I can report that it has been a lot of fun and a real enjoyable

experience for the most part. Like most adventures, it has not been without some bumps along the way. I have learned much about a lot of different things connected with desktop publishing. I use several software programs that do style correction and grammar correction. No matter how much software I have, sometimes errors will creep into a publication. Marion used to go through it for me, and she tried to catch the big stuff. Now, I am lucky to have her nephew and his wife who provide me with good proofreading and envelope stuffing. So, you can also thank Paul, Nola, and McKenzie Burski for their very kind assistance in helping me grind out this publication every month.

In a way, I am a fortunate person to have something like this newsletter to do every month. It, along with Sweet Olga, gives me some purpose in my life and provides me with a reason to continue each and every day. Along the way, I have been blessed with meeting some very fine people that I am more than happy to call my friends. It just doesn't get much better.

Till next month, David and Sweet Olga, the Samoyed....



Hugz, who lives with Andrea and Don near Portland, Oregon, is a distant relative of Olga's. He is our west coast correspondent, who is supposing to be searching out unique Lincolns for us to write about. But, like all young boys, he would rather play than work. He is shown frolicking in the shallow water at Red Rooster state park, about 40 miles from Portland. He loves the good life.

*Directors Message by Bob Johnson**May 2021**(Continued from page 2)*

of his time in his early years listening to country or western musicians, in person or on the radio.

Ford began wandering around Bristol in his high school years, taking an interest in radio, and began his radio career as an announcer at WOPI-AM in 1937, being paid 10 dollars a week. In 1938, the young bass-baritone left the station and went to study classical music at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in Ohio. He returned for the announcing job in 1939 and did it from 1939 to 1941 in stations from Atlanta to Knoxville. A First Lieutenant, he served in the United States Army Air Corps in World War II as the bombardier on a B-29 Superfortress flying missions over Japan. He was also a bombing instructor at George Air Force Base in Victorville, California.

After the war, Ford worked at radio stations in San Bernardino and Pasadena, California. At KFXM in San Bernardino, Ford was hired as a radio announcer. He was assigned to host an early morning country music disc jockey program, *Bar Nothin' Ranch Time*. He created the personality of "Tennessee Ernie," a wild,

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A month ago, we completed our COVID-19 vaccinations with no effects at all. It sounds like everyone in our age group has been able to get shots, and I have not heard of any ill effects so far, and that is good. It looks as though everyone should be able to obtain vaccine shots by the end of July. Please be a vaccine booster and not a doubter. I have one daughter who does not think the vaccine is safe, and I cannot convince her that it is safe and she should take it. I'm praying that she does not get the COVID as a result.

The results are in, and over 100 friends took the time to help me celebrate my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I really appreciate all the beautiful thoughts you expressed to me via birthday card, email, Facebook, or telephone. Again, I thank all of you.

We are hoping to make a mid-week trip to the Taylors Falls Drive Inn like we did last year. As soon as they open up and the weather cooperates, we will notify you when the road trip to TF will be. For the next three months, we will plan several road trips, so if you have a special place, let us know about it, and we will go there if it works out. We might be able to go into restaurants again by late this fall.

North Star membership. We have less than 25 members that have as yet to send in their \$20 renewal check. We value each and every member very much, and we would like to continue our relationship as long as possible. Our members contribute in many different ways, and you all help to make the North Star region one of the best in the Lincoln Club. If you know someone who would like to become a member, let me know. I will help you sign them up. And as a bonus, new members receive a year's free membership in the North Star club. LCOC needs more members, help us build our club.

Is spring here? It is time to get our Lincolns out and do some cruising. This year we will have two great driving tours, and our trip to Willmar will be another chance to get your Lincoln out and enjoy cruising down the highway. Our Mark VII convertible is ready to go, but it has to get just a little bit warmer before we put the top down. Seeing all the collector cars on the highway is the best sign of spring.

This May issue of the North Star News will complete 20 Years as the first issue by Dave Gustafson was published on June 1, 2001. Since that time, Dave's main goal was to have the newsletter in member's mailboxes by the first of the month. Dave has met this goal every month, with a dedication that very few of us realize or appreciate. The newsletter is the soul of our communication, and Dave has made a tremendous effort to keep it informative and interesting. I'm personally requesting you to call him at 952-435-1919 and thank him and express what you have liked best about our newsletter. I know that Dave would appreciate hearing from you. We all owe it to Dave to personally call to thank him. Can you do that?

We are still sorting out some problems for the Lincoln Homecoming, but it should be up and running on the web in April. The 2021 eight annual Lincoln Homecoming at Hickory Corners, Michigan, will celebrate and feature two Lincoln Car Shows. The first will be a virtual Lincoln car show, [vlmcmhomecomingmeet.cornerstonereg.com/](http://vlmcmhomecomingmeet.cornerstonereg.com/), which will extend from April 1 to July 28. For the virtual show, your car can be displayed for five months if you enter now. It will have its own People's Choice awards by decade, voted on by all persons registered for the virtual car show. The virtual car show will not be canceled because of COVID, and you can just enter this show if that is all you want to do. If you are going to participate in both the virtual and on-site car shows, you will only pay a \$25 fee when you register your Lincoln for the virtual Car show: then when you register for all the live car show activities, leave the \$25 car fee blank. (only pay car fee if you did not do virtual car show and want to enter a car in live car show only). The second event will be the live one ---the annual Homecoming at the Lincoln Motor Car Heritage Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan, on August 12 - 15. The live show will also have People's Choice awards by decade. All Lincolns registered for the virtual car show will also be registered for the live car show for the one price of \$25; one registration for two car shows. The theme of the 2021 Homecoming is "Marks Through the Ages," which will recognize all Lincoln Continental Marks, from the first in 1940 to the Mark VIII. Although Continental Marks will be the feature in 2021, Lincolns from all eras are welcome. You do not have to be a member of any Lincoln car club to enter; just own your Lincoln to be entered.

As always, keep the journey continuing in our marvelous Lincolns and stay WELL.

*Bob and Mary Johnson*



## *Board Of Directors - 2021*

Title	Name	Phone Numbers	email	Term Ends
Regional Director	Bob Johnson	H(651)257-1715	arborbob41@aol.com	2021
Secretary	Roger Wothe	H(952)473-3038 O(952)583-5339	rwothe@gmail.com	2022
Treasurer	Matt Foley	C(612)280-4930	mcfoley@earthlink.net	2022
Activities Director	Jay White	H(612)559-3219	jay@jwhiteandassoc.com	2021
Director	Bob Roth	H(763)475-1429		2021
Publications/ Membership	Dave Gustafson	H(952)435-1919	davidwgustafson@att.net	2022
Director	Tom Brace	H(651)644-1716	trbrace@comcast.net	2022
Director	Bill Holaday	H(763)402-1171	bill.holaday59@gmail.com	2020
Director	Jeff Eisenberg	(612)521-3537	Jeff.eisenberg@libsontruck.com	2020
Director	Dave Heeren	(952)469-3647	dheeren41@hotmail.com	2022

Members and guests are welcome to attend the Board Meetings. Our meeting location, unless otherwise specified, will be held at Bloomington Lincoln in their conference room. Meeting time will be 6:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month, except December.

Articles and other information for the newsletter should be sent to David Gustafson, Editor, at 308 Brandywine Drive, Burnsville, MN 55337. email: davidwgustafson@att.net

### *The Last Generation Town Car*

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high of almost 98,000 cars in 1998 to the final year of 2012, which saw 1,001 new buyers.

Will there ever be a new Town Car? Probably, not in our lifetime. The market for a large luxury sedan is just not there in the United States. Sad, but true. In fact, most of us will not see a luxury sedan rolling out the door from a Lincoln factory during the remainder of our lifetime. It is all about trucks and sport utility vehicles, the "low hanging fruit" for the auto industry. There is a distant possibility that the Zephyr model will be revived for the Chinese market. Ford/Lincoln can manufacture cars and sell them there because of different market demands. Sedans are still greatly valued by the Chinese. If the Zephyr comes to pass by chance, it will be a proper luxury vehicle and an all-electric vehicle. It is always possible that an all-electric Zephyr might make its way from Beijing to the U.S. in 5-6 years. You just never know. And now for the story about the third generation Lincoln Town Car from the pages of the September/October 1997 issue of Comments.

If you like traditional Lincoln Town Cars, the new 1998 model may take some getting used to. However, its designers and engineers claim many refinements. Lincoln-Mercury Division head Jim O'Connor claims that one drive will convince anyone that this is the best Lincoln Town Car ever.

The first time the name "Town Car" was associated with modern Lincolns was in 1971 when a Town Car option was offered on the 50th Anniversary Lincoln Continentals. The Town Car and Town Coupe option continued to be available on Lincoln Continentals through 1980 when the Lincoln became significantly down-sized.

As a separate series, the Lincoln Town Car made its debut in 1981, accompanied by the Lincoln Town Coupe. This year a new Signature Series was added. Whereas in 1980, a 351 cid. Windsor or Cleveland engine was optional, and the 302 cid, 5.0-liter engine was standard; in 1981, only the 302 engine was available.

The Town Coupe was dropped in 1982, making it a most collectible car now. However, a top-of-the-line Cartier Series was added. For 1983 the lineup remained with few changes.

There were some changes in 1985. These included a more aerodynamic rear-end design and a new rear window treatment. The Lincoln Town Car continued mostly unchanged through 1989. An especially interesting model is the 1987 Sail America Town Car, 2000 produced.

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madcap, exaggerated hillbilly to differentiate himself. He became popular in the area and was soon hired away by Pasadena's KXLA radio. He also did musical tours. The Mayfield Brothers of West Texas, including Smokey Mayfield, Thomas Edd Mayfield, and Herbert Mayfield, were among Ford's warmup bands, having played for him in concerts in Amarillo and Lubbock during the late 1940s.

At KXLA, Ford continued doing the same show and also joined the cast of Cliffie Stone's popular live KXLA country show *Dinner Bell Roundup* as a vocalist while still doing the early morning broadcast. Cliffie Stone, a part-time talent scout for Capitol Records, brought him to the attention of the label. In 1949, while still doing his morning show, he signed a contract with Capitol. He became a local TV star as the star of Stone's popular *Southern California Hometown Jamboree* show. RadiOzark produced 260 15-minute episodes of *The Tennessee Ernie Show* on transcription disks for

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## Northstar Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2021

### BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

The meeting was called to order via a conference call by Regional Director Bob Johnson at 6:30 p.m. Board members attending the conference call were Bob Johnson, Dave Gustafson, Bob Roth, Jay White (Colorado), Matt Foley, Bill Holaday, Jeff Eisenberg, Dave Hereen and Roger Wothe which included all of the Board members except Tom Brace. There were no visitors. The minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda of this meeting were approved.

### DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Regional Director Bob Johnson gave a brief report on COVID-19. He reviewed the membership status of the North Star Chapter. As of March 1, 2021, 94 members have renewed, which was 71 percent of the chapter. He asked that each board member call two non-renewing members and gently remind them to continue their membership. Several of the Board members volunteered to call two or more of the membership who have not renewed. There then followed a discussion of what type of event we could plan for 2021 and when it could take place. The Board members made several suggestions. The suggestions ranged from tours to picnics. Some of the Board members volunteered to check picnic locations and will report back. The 2021 Lincoln Homecoming planning is now in progress, and registration information will be available this month. There will be another Virtual Car Show. The login will be [vlmcmhomcomingmeet.cornerstonereg.com](http://vlmcmhomcomingmeet.cornerstonereg.com). The 2021 Western National Meet in Palm Springs, California, is canceled until May 2022. The Eastern National Meet in Morgantown, Pennsylvania, has been moved to October 20-24, 2021. The 2021 Mid-America National Meet scheduled for September 15-19, 2021, in Springfield, Illinois, has been canceled.

Member Bob Roth has recently purchased a 1958 Imperial coupe which is undergoing mild restoration.

Member Jay White reported that our Facebook account has now received 349 "likes."

Membership and Publications Director Dave Gustafson told the group that he needed more "My Pride and Joy" articles. He will also follow up on those who have not renewed their membership.

Treasurer Matt Foley reported that the current treasury balance is \$3,766.98, with all bills paid.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next meeting will be a conference call on Thursday, May 6, at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Roger Wothe.

## More about the 1998 Town Car

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national radio syndication.

He released almost 50 country singles through the early 1950s, several of which made the charts. Many of his early records, including "The Shotgun Boogie" and "Blackberry Boogie," were exciting, driving boogie-woogie records featuring accompaniment by the 'Hometown Jamboree' band, which included Jimmy Bryant on lead guitar and pioneer pedal steel guitarist Speedy West. "I'll Never Be Free," a duet pairing Ford with Capitol Records pop singer Kay Starr, became a huge country and pop crossover hit in 1950. A duet with Ella Mae Morse, "False Hearted Girl" was a top seller for the Capitol Country and Hill-billy division and evaluated as an early tune.

Ford eventually ended his KXLA morning show and, in the early 1950s, moved on from Hometown Jamboree. He took over from bandleader Kay Kyser as host of the TV version of NBC quiz show *College of Musical Knowledge* when it returned brief-

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For 1990, a second-generation Lincoln Town Car was introduced. This was a much more aerodynamic car than the first generation. The engine was even smaller than the 1980-89 models, 4.6 liters. It was offered in the standard or Executive Series, Signature Series, and Cartier Series. Also, there were some special editions such as the Arnold Palmer model in 1991-92 and the Diamond Jubilee in 1996.

The Lincoln Town Car enters the 1998 model year with an extreme aerodynamic new appearance, enhanced chassis dynamics and all the full-size luxury appeal that has made Town Car the choice of full-size luxury car owners for almost two decades.

All-new exterior and interior designs, substantial upgrades to the chassis, suspension, and brakes, and new customer-driven features move the Lincoln Town Car into the next Century. The changes reflect a more than 80 percent new car from the ground up, including the re-engineered, more rigid frame.

"Arriving in a Town Car has always meant something special," says Jim O'Connor, Ford Motor Company vice president in charge of Lincoln. "Now, driving to your destination is just as special due to Town Car's improved chassis and suspension."

A feeling of refinement, contemporary luxury, and traditional appeal distinguishes the 1998 Town Car from its predecessors.



Twenty-three years later, this 1998 Town Car is still not a bad looking automobile.

**A Contemporary Styling Statement.** From its bold new grille to the hard edge of its taillamps, the 1998 Lincoln Town Car looks significantly different from past models. Still, the luxury statement one makes when arriving in one of America's best-known luxury cars remains the same, according to Lincoln.

The Town Car signature chrome grille hints at classic Lincoln design, while the wraparound headlamps work in concert to

optimize the lighting pattern of the dual beams. A revised "Lincoln Star" emblem resides within the chrome indent of the grille.

Its higher beltline conveys a sleek, high-luxury image, while the absence of the traditional C-pillar window allows for a more flowing design in the rear. A pair of large vertical taillamps flank the bold chrome license plate surround for a touch of European styling.

New bodyside cladding improves lower-body resistance to road debris and stone chips, while larger outside rearview mirrors feature a new fold-away design that allows the mirrors to rotate inward when bumped, making the damage that might occur to a fixed mirror less likely. The aerodynamic design also helps reduce wind noise.

The new styling moves the Lincoln Town Car into the 21st Century while offering Town Car owners an up-to-date package that conveys timeless elegance in its fluid, contemporary design.

**The Comfortable New Interior.** When you step into the 1998 Lincoln Town Car, you will experience a feeling of spaciousness, luxury, and comfort. Upgrades to the instrument panel, an all-new seating configuration, and more practical interior features round out the appeal of the Town Car for long-distance touring.

The new 40/20/40 front seat design boasts two individual seats and a fixed center seating section with a larger, fold-down armrest. With the armrest folded up, the fixed center seat provides comfortable seating for a third front-row occupant. The center armrest is wider, more rigid, and long enough for good arm support regardless of seat and steering wheel position. The interior contains compartments for compact discs and cassettes and a cradle for a cellular phone.

Town Car seats have been redesigned to improve lumbar support for back comfort. Cushions and side bolsters are reshaped, and seat cushions are thicker, improving comfort and reducing fatigue. Trim and seat styles are unique to each series.

A more driver-oriented instrument panel features new analog gauges, a revised information center, and redesigned controls for easier operations. Power seat switches are relocated on the door for easier reach and provide a smoother feel during operation.

New rear heat and air conditioning ducts mean quicker warmup and cool-down times

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ly in 1954 after a four-year hiatus. He became a household name in the U.S., largely as a result of his portrayal in 1954 of the 'country bumpkin,' "Cousin Ernie," in three episodes of *I Love Lucy*. In 1955, Ford recorded "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" (which reached number 4 on the country music chart) with "Farewell to the Mountains" on the B-side.



Ford scored an unexpected hit on the pop chart in 1955 with his rendering of "Sixteen Tons," a sparsely arranged coal-miner's lament. Merle Travis had first recorded it in 1946. It reflected experiences of the Travis family in the mines at Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. The song's fatalistic tone and bleak imagery were in stark contrast to some sugary pop ballads and rock & roll also on the charts in 1955:

*You load sixteen tons; what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt. Saint Peter, don't you call me, 'cause*

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## More 98 Town Car

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for back-seat passengers. A large center arm-rest flips down from the center seating position to reveal dual cup holders.

The 20-plus cubic-foot Town Car trunk offers one of the largest cargo carrying capacities in a full-size car. Whether carrying four passengers and their luggage or a favorite foursome and four sets of golf clubs, there's plenty of room.

**A Surprising New Drive.** Functional changes to the new Town Car help to improve its ride and handling while promoting an overall driving experience that is relaxed and stress-free.

Significant upgrades to the 1998 Town Car are as follows:

- \* A re-engineered full perimeter steel frame and body mounting help provide better body isolation and reduced noise, vibration, and harshness for a quieter interior environment, while the Town Car rolling ride.

- \* The new Watt's Linkage rear suspension dramatically improves straight-ahead tracking and stability while improving front-end dive and lift performance during acceleration and braking.

- \* Improved front lower control arm bushings help improve steering precision and feel, giving drivers a new sense of control, especially under severe steering and braking maneuvers.

- \* A more refined steering gear for better on-center feel and response, reduced friction, and smoother steering.

- \* An optional handling package incorporates new mono-tube shock absorbers for increased firmness and improved handling feel while still maintaining a supple ride.

In addition to the suspension upgrades, the Town Car 4.6-liter SOHC V-8 power-train has been refined to deliver 200 horse-power at 4,500 rpm and 265 ft./lbs. of torque at 3,250 rpm in Executive and Signature series vehicles. Cartier series vehicles include a 4.6-liter SOHC V-8 engine with dual exhaust, allowing 220 hp at 4,500 rpm and 275 ft./lbs. of torque at 3,250 rpm.

"One drive behind the wheel of a 1998 Town Car will surprise even skeptics of traditional luxury automobiles," says Jim O'Connor. "Yet even our most traditional, mature customers will appreciate the sophistication engineered into this new Town Car."

## One Great Journey

While searching the back issues of Comments for articles about third-generation Lincoln Town Cars, I came across this rather loveable story about an elderly couple's adventure in going back and forth across the U.S. in a not-so-new Town Car, with 90,000 miles on the clock. Older folks seemed to be deeply enamored with their Town Cars, and this couple was no exception. I am sure that using a little imagination, we can all picture, in our mind's eye, our own Bob and Mary Johnson setting forth on such a journey in about 12-13 years, in Bob's much loved Town Car. From the January/February issue of Comments, the story about the Peebler's magnificent journey.



The Peeblers with their 1998 Town Car.

At first, the Peebler's celebrated their 70th year of marriage the same way they've marked other mile-stone anniversaries: with relatives, over dinner.

However, this year, Harriette Peebler, 90, wanted to put an exclamation point on her seven decades of marriage to Gerald Peebler, 93. A few days after their March 22 anniversary, when the La Mirada couple was enjoying breakfast in their quaint 1924-built home that sits on a cemetery, Harriette turned to Gerald with a proposal: *Gerald Peebler uses a road atlas to point out the route he and his wife, Harriette, used to drive across the country and back this spring to mark their 70th wedding anniversary.* "We've been together 70 years," she told him. "It's time we go on a trip across the States."

Not just any trip, but driving themselves in a preowned, 1998 white Lincoln Town Car with 90,000 miles on it, from California to Connecticut and back —using a paper road map to navigate their way

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## Road tripping with the Peeblers

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*I can't go; I owe my soul to the company store...*

With Ford's snapping fingers and a unique clarinet-driven pop arrangement by Ford's music director, Jack Fascinato, "Sixteen Tons" spent ten weeks at number one on the country chart and seven weeks at number one on the pop chart. The record sold over twenty million copies and was awarded a gold disc. The song made Ford a crossover star and became his signature song.

*The Ford Show* Ford subsequently hosted his own prime-time variety program, *The Ford Show*, which ran on NBC television from October 4, 1956, to June 29, 1961. Ford's last name allowed the show title to carry a unique double entendre by selling the naming rights to the Ford Motor Company (Ford had no known relation to the Ford family that founded that company). The *Ford Theatre*, an anthology series also sponsored by the company, had run in the same time slot on NBC in the preceding 1955-1956 season. Ford's program was notable for the inclusion of a religious song at the end of every show, a tradition he recalled during his days as a cast member on Cliffie Stone's

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through visits with old war buddies, relatives, and friends.

Gerald didn't blink. "Let's go." For the former cemetery operators who spent years in Orange County raising three children and operating a drive-in laundry in Santa Ana, the decision to undertake what at any age is a physically trying adventure was a no-brainer. Nine decades of hard working and clean living have kept the Peeblers active and healthy — and stubborn. When their two adult children raised serious concerns about their planned cross-country trip, they didn't back down.

"When they set their minds to doing something, you might as well forget it," says daughter Jan Smith, 63, of New Haven, Connecticut. "Their minds are set in stone and cemented. That's it."

Their son, Scott Peebler, 58, who lives in a separate home on the 11-acre cemetery he manages, echoed his sister's description. "At first, I tried to talk them into fly-ing, or taking a train or lining up a college kid to drive them. "But they're very independent."

So, on April 4, Gerald and Harriette Peebler settled into the Town Car's tan leather seats and pulled away from their home at Olive Lawn Memorial Park — their belongings in the trunk and a huge country's worth of road ahead of them.

**LOVE IN THE TIME OF ALGEBRA** - They met in algebra class at Coachella Valley Union High School. Gerald Peebler was a senior, Harriette Payne a sophomore. She had delivered milk from her family's farm to the Peeblers, and his parents had laundered clothes for the Payne family, pioneers of the Coachella Valley. But until that algebra class, Gerald and Harriette had never met.

On their first date, he treated her to a movie and a root beer float. After high school, Harriette moved to Santa Barbara to attend college. "He called me and said, 'If you don't come home and marry me, I'm going to move to Florida, and you will never see me again,'" Harriette recalls. "I told him, 'If it's marriage you're looking for, then show me a ring when I come home for Thanksgiving.'" Gerald did.

Four years later, in 1941, they married. The couple settled in Tustin. They lost their first-born child, Chris, 22, in 1969 in Vietnam — two weeks before he was scheduled to return from the war and get married. For 26

years, from 1946 to 1972, Gerald and Harriette owned and operated Peebler's Drive-In Laundry and Cleaners in Santa Ana, the first drive-in laundry to be established in Orange County.

While raising their children, they weren't strangers to road trips. In 1956, the Peeblers packed their children into a used Lincoln and spent five weeks on the road, traveling to Washington, DC, and back. But Gerald and Harriette were relative spring chickens, in their 40s, at the time.

In 1972, after selling their laundry business, they drove a van to Arkansas to visit family and spent 2.5 months there. "I bought a farm with my dad," Gerald recalls.

No trip, however, can compare to the one they set off on in the spring of 2011, a year after they stepped down from day-to-day operations of the cemetery they had run since 1973.

**LIGHT PACKERS** For the trip, they packed lightly. They didn't over plan or overthink things. They also kept a fairly loose schedule. A six-day stay with daughter Jan in Connecticut was the one extended visit in their plans. However, they also worked in several shorter stays with relatives and friends they've known for decades: Harriette's brother in San Jacinto. A 1937 classmate of Gerald's in Phoenix. His war buddy in Kansas City, Missouri. The route was simple, too. They'd head east by driving mostly through southern and central states, and they'd come back home through the north before driving down the West Coast.

Such a big country, they marveled. So many things to see. So many memories to make. They saw a field of deer in Minnesota. They ran across some wild antelope in Montana. And, at a picnic with relatives in Arkansas, they savored root beer, watermelon, and ice cream. The Peeblers find it difficult to choose a highlight of the trip. For them, it all was a highlight.

**GOOD LUCK, CHEAP SHOES** - Good weather followed them. So, too, did good fortune. After breakfast at a local eatery in Wichita, Kansas, the Peeblers mentioned to the server that they were celebrating 70 years of marriage. "Breakfast is on me!" the waitress said as she scooped up the bill. In Arkansas, Gerald misplaced his black dress shoes but was able to find a new pair for \$2 that are so comfortable he continues to wear them daily.

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*Hometown Jamboree* live radio and TV show. Ford insisted on ending with a hymn on his own show despite objections from network officials and the ad agency representing Ford, who feared it might provoke controversy. Everyone relented after the hymns receiving overwhelmingly favorable viewer response. The hymn became the most popular segment of his show. He earned the nickname "The Ol' Pea-Picker" due to his catchphrase, "Bless your pea-pickin' heart!" He began using the term during his disc jockey days on KXLA.

**Later years** In 1956, he released *Hymns*, his first gospel music album, which remained on *Billboards* Top Album charts for 277 consecutive weeks; his album *Great Gospel Songs* won a Grammy Award in 1964 and was nominated for several others. After the NBC show ended, Ford moved his family to Portola Valley in northern California. He also owned a cabin near Grandjean, Idaho, on the upper South Fork of the Payette River, where he would regularly retreat.

From 1962 to 1965, Ford hosted a daytime talk/variety show, *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show* (later known as

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## More Travels...

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One night, in a tiny town in Wyoming, the retired Air Force gunner and aerial engineer and his wife found themselves in need of a room. But the town's lone six-bedroom motel was sold out. After asking around, the Peeblers heard about a spare room behind a bar that was available for only \$45 a night. The two beds suited them well. After all, Gerald snores, so he and his wife are used to sleeping in separate beds.

Even getting lost in New York for a few hours was no big deal for the Peeblers. "Let's leave," Harriette told Gerald in New York City. "There's too much traffic." And so they drove, on and on, until they pulled up to their home on May 23 - ending a 50-day odyssey that totaled 9,057 miles. "Believe it or not," Gerald says, "we hardly turned on the car radio the entire trip." Adds Harriette: "We didn't even have one flat tire."

**TOUGH TO REACH** - Throughout their journey, the Peeblers kept in touch with their son and daughter - sort of. "Dad's notorious for not having his cellphone on," Jan Smith says. A GPS device Smith bought for him in Connecticut wasn't much help. Gerald failed to keep it charged, so it was only briefly used. Still, the Peeblers managed to keep their children apprised of their whereabouts every couple of days or so. "I'm proud of them," Smith says of their adventure. "I am in awe."

Scott Peebler, at first, was worried about his parents' safety. However, having lost his wife, Vicky, to cancer at age 54 nearly five years ago taught him a lesson. "I look at life differently," Scott says. "I used to feel in control. I didn't want my folks to do this by themselves, but I realized it was something they wanted to do and that we are not in control of things, so why worry?"

Indeed, Gerald and Harriette know too well that nothing lasts forever. As they enjoy their golden years in La Mirada, tending to their landscaping, cruising the grounds of the cemetery in their golf cart, and caring for their chickens, they say they will keep their eyes open for their next adventure - and try not to worry their children too much.

"I'm glad they got to do this," Scott Peebler says. "It's nice they're still together and that they enjoy each other's company." Says Gerald, with a twinkle in his eye: "We advise everyone to take a driving trip to see and feel this good old USA before they get too old to drive."

## A New Zephyr?

**Lincoln Zephyr Reflection Concept Debuts At Shanghai Auto Show.** By Brett Foote, Ford Authority, an online news service.



Zephyr Reflection Concept

The Zephyr name has a long history with Ford Motor Company, originally debuting as a line of luxury cars back in 1936, used by Mercury in the late 1970s and early 1980s for a number of vehicles, and later coming back as a concept car that spawned the production 2006 Lincoln Zephyr that was soon renamed the MKZ. Now, the name has surfaced once again on the Lincoln Zephyr Reflection concept, which debuted today at the Shanghai Auto Show alongside the new Ford EVOS. The Lincoln Zephyr Reflection preview car is designed to showcase the best of Lincoln's global design expertise in a vehicle produced solely for the China market. The all-new Lincoln Corsair plug-in hybrid (PHEV) also made its debut as Lincoln's first locally produced new energy vehicle (NEV). Lincoln also officially launched Lincoln ID, a single ID that enables customers to log in across Lincoln's digital ecosystem.

"Our global momentum is building, and we continue to lean into the strength of our world-class vehicles and Lincoln Way experiences," said Joy Falotico, president, Lincoln Motor Company. "Lincoln's strategy for growth in China is firmly rooted in our deep understanding of the discerning Chinese consumer. Their desire for sedans is the inspiration behind this progressive and distinctive vehicle for China and underscores our commitment to the China market."

The Lincoln Zephyr Reflection "teaser" model serves to preview the latest expression of Lincoln's Quiet Flight product DNA and hints at the future of Lincoln's design philosophy, and signature features ahead of the production model's debut later this year. Consumer demand for luxury sedans in China is strong, and

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*Hello, Peapickers*) from KGO-TV in San Francisco, broadcast over the ABC television network. In 1968, Ford narrated the Rankin/Bass Thanksgiving TV special *The Mouse on the Mayflower* for NBC. At the beginning of the special, the mouse narrator, William the Churchmouse, was a caricature of Ford, in keeping with a Rankin/Bass tradition. Ford was the spokesman for the Pontiac Furniture Company in Pontiac, Illinois, in the 1970s. He also became the spokesman for Martha White brand flour in 1972.

Although he left his own TV show, he went on other shows like *The Dolly Show* and on *Barbara Mandrell* and the *Mandrell Sisters* in the early 1980s.

Ford left Capitol Records in 1975. By that time, the quality of his country albums had become uneven, and none of his releases were selling well. He would never record for a major label again.

As a navigator and bombardier in World War II, Ford's experiences led to his involvement with the Confederate Air Force (now the Commemorative Air Force), a warplane preservation group in Texas. He was a featured announcer

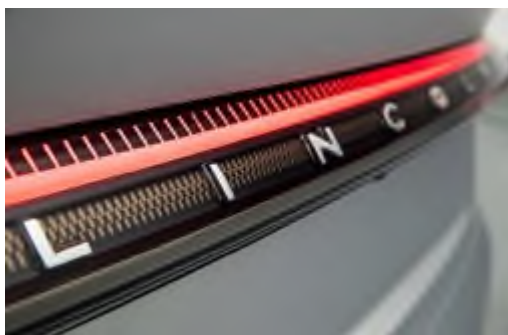
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## Zephyr Concept Car

(Continued from page 9)

the Zephyr Reflection will provide Chinese consumers with a unique vehicle designed just for them.

Mao Jingbo, president of Lincoln China, added, "we gathered Lincoln's global wisdom and Chinese design talent to create the Zephyr Reflection specifically for a more youthful, Chinese customer segment. With a dynamic and futuristic exterior design and a lightweight interior, the Zephyr Reflection embodies the current digital era with advanced, intuitive technology that redefines American luxury."



The Zephyr Reflection rear view.

The Zephyr Reflection's striking, modern aesthetic is designed to emotionally connect with and captivate younger customers. Its signature Lincoln grille features a starburst pattern that cascades across the front fascia. Moving to the side, the signature Lincoln star flows seamlessly to the flush door handles, while colors like satin silver, tinted chrome, and copper accents will be available.

"Our global design team leveraged deep insights from our talented team in China and carefully considered the discerning expectations of our young and affluent Chinese clientele," said Kemal Curic, design director, Lincoln. "The result is an evolution of our Quiet Flight product DNA. Quiet Flight has already proven to be a key differentiator for Lincoln globally, and now, showcases our drive for innovation while addressing the evolving needs and wants of China's new generation."

When entering the Zephyr Reflection, a sequence of welcoming lights activates, including the full-width tail lamp and headlamps. The Lincoln star lights up, and the welcome mat takes on a flowing, dynamic effect.

The Zephyr Reflection marks the debut of Lincoln's coast-to-coast screen composed of a digital cluster and panoramic center screen. Nearly all the buttons in the console are equipped with intelligent surfaces, an innovative digital design where the key icons only appear when activated.

Other notable features include speakers that flow away from surfaces, a minimalist multi-function knob and a futuristic steering wheel. The coast-to-coast screen combines three advanced screens that offer unique functionality for the driver and front passenger. The split-screen creates the effect of an ultra-wide, smart display where both sides can be adjusted independently, offering the driver relevant information and the front passenger entertainment options and other information.

The Zephyr Reflection also features Lincoln's new digital Human-Machine Interface (HMI) language – Constellation. The Lincoln-exclusive Constellation theme inspired by the night sky actuates the young generation's dream of exploring the universe and accentuates the calming effect of the horizontal designs in the cabin. The new Lincoln Constellation features three exclusive themes – Normal, Sport, and Zen – allowing customers to choose the interior theme that reflects their mood. Constellation stars take on flowing, dynamic effects, even when doing something simple like turning on the air conditioner.

"Lincoln's success is not accidental but a result of our 'Luxury in Your Own Way' brand philosophy," said Anning Chen, president, and CEO, Ford China. "People, trust, and courage are the three keywords representing Lincoln's localization success in the China market. I am thrilled to see Lincoln driving insights for a new chapter as a challenger."



Dash of Zephyr Reflection Concept.

Unfortunately, the Zephyr Reflection will not be sold in North America. As reported previously, the automaker currently has no plans to sell sedans in the region any time soon following the discontinuation of the Lincoln Continental last year.

Editor's note: Although Lincoln presently claims that it has no intention to sell the Chinese version of the Zephyr here in the United States, I would be willing to bet that within five years we will see a fully electric version of this car in dealer's showrooms, and it will sell well.



## The Lincoln - Mercury Breezeway Option

(Continued from page 10)

and celebrity guest at the annual CAF Airshow in Harlingen, Texas, from 1976 to 1988. He donated a once-top-secret Norden bombsight to the CAF's B-29 bomber restoration project. In the late 1970s, as a CAF colonel, Ford recorded the organization's theme song "Ballad of the Ghost Squadron."

Over the years, Ford was awarded three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for radio, records, and television. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984 and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1990.

Out of the public eye, Ford and his wife Betty contended with serious alcohol problems; Betty had the problem since the 1950s and emotional issues that complicated both their lives and the lives of their sons.

Though his drinking began to worsen in the 1960s, he worked continuously, seemingly unaffected by his heavy intake of whiskey. By the 1970s, however, it had begun to take an increasing toll on his health, appearance, and ability to sing, though his problems were not known publicly. After Betty committed suicide in 1989 because of prescription

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By Francis Kalvoda, with a little help from the internet....

Ever since my parents bought a 1963 Mercury Monterey Custom in October 1962, I have been a fan of the Breezeway rear window. Last summer, I visited LCOC member Roger Zink in Bismarck, North Dakota, who had just purchased a 1960 Lincoln Continental Mark V Convertible a day earlier. The 1958-1960 Continental Convertibles featured a power-retractable rear window, a feature found on no other convertible. I told Roger I need to write an article about this unique 'better idea' from Lincoln-Mercury. Besides my memories and observations, Mac's Motor City Garage posted an article on the internet in August 2014, which is the main source for this article.

Mac's Motor City Garage explored a popular feature in its day: the functional retractable rear window on 1963 through 1968 Mercurys, known as the Breezeway. While the Lincoln-Mercury Breezeway was certainly a clever and useful feature, it can't really be considered totally original. Early on in the auto industry, coupe body styles often included an opening rear window glass, both for ventilation and to allow communication with rumble seat passengers.

Lincoln-Mercury's smart repurposing of the feature for '50s-'60s car buyers has a short but interesting history, and it continues to fascinate car enthusiasts to this day. Here's a fond and brief look back.



As it was named, Breezeway Ventilation made a first brief appearance on a Mercury production model with the 1957 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser. But the Cruiser proved to be a slow seller, and both the car and the feature were soon discontinued in 1958. While I attended St. Cloud State College in the 1960s, I walked by daily and admired a red and white 1957 Turnpike Cruiser parked in a faculty parking lot.

The operating rear glass next popped up at Mercury's senior sibling division, Lincoln, where it was standard on the 1958-1960 Continentals, including the convertible. Known here simply as a retractable rear window—the Breezeway term was not officially applied—the glass operated electrically via a control switch in the driver's armrest.

Breezeway was reintroduced at Mercury in 1963 in a major way, including a big marketing campaign. This national magazine ad illustrates the multiple Breezeway benefits. The retracting

glass, and the trendy reverse-slope Z-line roof that enabled the feature, were offered on both two-door and four-door styles, pillarless hardtop and post bodies, and in all three trim lines: Monterey, Monterey Custom, and S-55. All told, there were eight different Breezeway models. My parents purchased an ocean turquoise Monterey Custom four-door sedan in October 1962. It is pictured here. When they bought a 1968 Mercury Park Lane in November 1967, I purchased their '63 and enjoyed it until August 1971.



In 1964, for buyers who preferred a conventional sweeping roofline and fixed rear glass, there was a second complete line of Mercury two-doors, and four-doors called Marauder. Here I am at 17, ready to drive a new 1964 Mercury Park Lane, four-door hardtop Marauder in the Hutchinson Water Carnival parade. I was the state champion in the Minnesota Jaycee Safe Driving Rodeo sponsored by Lincoln-Mercury. In August, my parents and I traveled to Washington D.C. in our '63 Mercury, where I placed eighth in the nation.

When Mercury got all-new sheet metal for 1965, the Breezeway models were reduced to four-door sedan only in three trim levels: Monterey, Montclair, and Park Lane. While Breezeway sales were promising at first, with over 92,000 units sold in 1963, by 1965, the volume had slipped by half to 46,000 units.

When the Mercury line was redesigned for 1967, including the roofline, the retracting rear glass was very nearly left behind. Shown here is the final gasp for Breezeway Ventilation on 1967 and 1968 four-door sedans—the glass could be lowered a total of two inches to provide a little added air circulation. Fewer than 6,000 units with the option found buyers in 1968, and then it was discontinued for good. So what happened to Breezeway? What killed this totally sensible and once-popular feature? The long and the short of it: air conditioning.



## 1998 Lincoln Town Car Review

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drug abuse, Ernie's liver problems, diagnosed years earlier, became more apparent, but he refused to reduce his drinking despite repeated doctors' warnings. His last interview was taped on September 23, 1991, by his long-time friend Dinah Shore for her TV show and later aired on December 4. Ford received posthumous recognition for his gospel music contributions by being added to the Gospel Music Association's Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1994.

Ford was married to Betty Heminger from September 18, 1942, until her death on February 26, 1989. They had two sons: Jeffrey Buckner "Buck" Ford (born January 6, 1950); and Brion Leonard Ford (born September 3, 1952, in San Gabriel, California), who died on October 24, 2008, in White House, Tennessee, of lung cancer, aged 56. In 1980 Ford lived in the Smoke Tree neighborhood of Palm Springs, California.

Less than four months after Betty's death, Ford married again. On September 28, 1991, he suffered severe liver failure at Dulles Airport, shortly after leaving a state dinner at the White House, hosted by then-President George

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Revamped Flagship talk of the Town by Dave Boe. From the internet.



A 1998 Town Car showing it's best face.

Background: The four-door, V/8-powered Lincoln Town Car evokes images of luxury and opulence. Ford Motor Co. revamped, reengineered, and redesigned its flagship Lincoln-division offering for the 1998 model year. The luxury sedan's exterior is much less boxy this season, with more rounded nuances. Overall length decreases by about 3.5 inches, and trunk volume is slightly less than last year. But interior dimensions, including head and legroom, remain the same. Town Car looped off excess bumper overhang to trim Town Car. The rear-wheel-drive, well-equipped Town Cars began arriving in dealerships last November. Many limousine companies employ Town Car's services because of its good-sized trunk and six-passenger seating.

New for 1998: The long list of 1998 model-year enhancements includes standard leather seating surfaces, all-speed traction control now standard, larger, more effective front brakes, and an improved suspension and chassis providing a firmer ride and quieter interior. Rear heat and air conditioning ducts are new too.

Trim Levels and Price: Town Car offers three different trim levels at three different price breaks. The Executive, the least-expensive Town Car offering, has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$37,830. The Signature checks in at \$39,490, while the most opulent Cartier starts at \$41,830. All prices include the destination charge. This year, the Signature edition includes its first-ever Touring Sedan option, which adds chrome alloy wheels, upgraded suspension, increased horsepower, and upgraded leather upholstery. Ford Motor Co. provided us with a Signature Touring Sedan edition with extras, including a trunk-mounted compact disc changer and heated seats. The bottom line totaled \$41,785. Starting prices on both

the Signature and Cartier Series have been reduced from 1997 prices.

Engine: Both the Executive and Signature series feature a refined, electronically-fuel injected, 4.6-liter, V-8 powertrain this model year delivering 200 horsepower. The Cartier and Signature Touring Sedan include a 4.6-liter V/8 with dual exhausts, increasing horsepower output to 220.

Safety features: Reduced-force front dual airbags, remote keyless entry, child-safe rear door locks, anti-lock brakes, all-speed traction control, and five-mile-per-hour bumpers all come standard. Town Car can be driven a short distance to the nearest service center for needed repairs in the unlikely event of coolant loss. Town Car also incorporates the SecuriLock anti-theft system, which prevents engine operation without a specially coded ignition key.

Standard equipment: Town Car comes well equipped with many amenities standard. Air conditioning, rear-window defroster, cruise control, tilt steering wheel, premium stereo sound system with a cassette tape player, power windows and door locks, heated power side-view mirrors, four-wheel disc brakes, and intermittent windshield wipers are standard fare in all trim levels.

Options: A power moonroof is a \$1,515 option in Signature and Cartier models. Heated front seats and upgraded audio center are options in the Signature addition only. A trunk-mounted compact disc changer adds \$585 to the price.

Exterior: Town Car incorporates all-new sheet metal and extensive chrome highlights, providing a slightly 1950s nostalgic flavor. The most noticeable update is the rear roof line, which includes a 90-degree, boxed angle but is now more rounded, creating a more contemporary look. The revised front grille incorporates vertical chrome bars with the rectangular Lincoln Star logo at the apex and a headlight design that wraps around to the side fenders. Taillights increase in size, too, this season. Like the 1998, full-size Ford Crown Victoria, Town Car now includes larger, 16-inch tires, which replace 15-inch versions standard last year. Larger tires improve road-hugging characteristics, especially during wet road surface conditions. The four exterior strap-like door handles are also chrome enchanted. Outside side-view mirrors are body-colored and fold-in (breakaway de-

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## More Town Car Review

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H. W. Bush. At the airport, Ford and his second wife Beverly made their way into the terminal. Just outside the doorway to the Admirals Club, he fell to his knees, bathing the marble tiles gracing the entry with nearly a quart of blood; critically weakened, he was rushed to HCA Hospital in Reston, Virginia, just a few miles from the airport. That's the description of the day Ford lived just three weeks before his death on October 17, 1991. He'd complained of stomach pains on the way to the airport with his second wife, Beverly, from a hotel after dining with then-President George Bush and first lady Barbara Bush. He'd suffered two nearly identical attacks three years before.

Ford died of acute liver failure as a result of his alcoholism at H. C. A. Reston Hospital Center, in Reston, Virginia, on October 17. Ford was interred at Alta Mesa Memorial Park, Palo Alto, California. His second wife, Beverly Wood Ford (1921-2001), died ten years after Ernie; her body was interred with his.

*From the internet...*

(Continued from page 12)

sign) if the Town Car rides too close to immovable objects. The radio antenna is molded into the rear window. Exterior color choices include the following clearcoat metallic colors: light blue, medium charcoal blue, medium charcoal green, medium gold, midnight gray, bright toreador red, silver frost, light prairie tan, and cordovan. Clearcoat colors include black and vibrant white.

Interior: The stereo system is centrally located on the dashboard. The digital clock is part of the radio frequency display (Cartier editions have a separate analog clock.) Our steering wheel was home to secondary volume and station selection radio controls as well as cruise control functions. Headlights activate from a dashboard dial right of the steering wheel but illuminate automatically when windshield wipers are in use. The left-hand side turn signal indicator is also home to windshield wiper activation. The revised instrument cluster incorporates a circular, centrally-located analog speedometer (instead of a digital version) surrounded by compass, fuel gauge, and other readouts. Circular trunk and fuel-door release buttons are found on the driver's door. Also located on the two front doors are forward-and-back power seat controls. Town Cars with the heated seat option also have these controls on the driver's door. A series of toggle-like buttons control fan speed, direction, and temperature settings. Below this rectangular ventilation center is a pullout ashtray and cigarette lighter tandem, home to two cup holders. When in use, cans or cups block easy access to temperature controls.

Seating comfort: Since the automatic transmission shifter is located on the steering column, floor space opens up save for the floor hump running down the center. Leather seating surfaces are standard fare in all Town Car trim levels. Front seating incorporates a 40-20-40 design and an armrest that folds up if a front center passenger is on board. Even though Town Car's roof design is more rounded than angled, there's plenty of headroom in front and back. Three adults can fit in the back, although the relatively high placement of back seat temperature vents could make things a bit breezy for anyone sitting in the middle for any length of time.

Dimensions: Wheelbase: 11717 inches  
Overall length: 215.3 inches Width: 78.2 inches Height: 58.0 inches Curb weight:

4,020 inches Front headroom: 39.2 inches Trunk: Even though the trunk is slightly smaller in size this season, it's still huge in comparison to most rivals. The deep design could accommodate four golf bags if needed.

A back shelf adds storage options and is also where the spare tire sits. Trunk volume measures 20.6 cubic feet down from 22.3 last year.

Target audience: Town Car buyers are skewed to the mature end of the age spectrum appealing to empty-nest couples over 60 years of age and professionals and executives in their 50s.



The somewhat cavernous interior of the Town Car provides ample room for 6 people.

Fuel economy: Both V/8 engines produce identical gas mileage estimates of 17 miles per gallon city and 25 mpg highway. While not great, it's in line with many V/8-powered sedans. The fuel tank holds 19 gallons of regular unleaded gasoline (down from a 20-gallon tank last year.) Premium fuel may also be used if so desired. The locking fuel door is found on the driver's side back fender and includes a tethered cap attached to the car.

Final thoughts: If Town Car were human, the argument could be made this year's version lost some weight and is a bit more trimmer and peppier than last year. It also moves smoother with less bounce because of enhancements. Rear-wheel drive provides the car with better balance since many transmission components are located in the rear rather than near the engine. Traction control is an essential feature in rear-wheel-drive cars since it helps control wheel spin during inclement weather conditions. Ford Motor Co. is the only domestic manufacturer currently assembling large, six-passenger rear-wheel-drive sedans.

## 1998 Lincoln Town Car - New Car Test Drive

From the New Car Test Drive site via the internet. Published November 1999.

If the new Town Car is any indication of Lincoln-Mercury's intent to change minds about what a luxury car should be, then they are well on their way toward attracting a new group of buyers. Lincoln-Mercury wants to keep all of its current customers — they give the Town Car one of the highest loyalty and repurchase rates in the industry. But, at the same time, the division wants to use the new Town Car to attract buyers away from other domestic and Japanese luxury brands. Lincoln-Mercury plans to do this with fresh styling and a greatly improved driving experience achieved through better handling, better brakes and a more controlled ride quality.

The Lincoln Town Car is 85 percent new for 1998. While the designers, engineers and product planners have maintained the interior space and trunk space of the previous, boxlike Town Car, they have thrown away the rectilinear design, the square corners and some of the formality of the car. In its place is a new shape that owes something to the Jaguar, something to the Bentley, and quite a bit to Ford's New Edge design philosophy.

**Walkaround** - There are four versions of Town Car to choose from: the \$38,500 Executive series sold primarily as a fleet car, the \$40,150 Signature Series and the creme de la creme \$42,500 Cartier series. When adjusted for equipment, these prices average \$975 less than the price of the 1997 Town Car.

While each of the three basic series is progressively more loaded, the car is essentially an American-idiom luxury car with all that that implies: rear-wheel drive, V8 engine, smooth, quiet ride, seating for six, trunk room for four sets of golf clubs, and lots of comfort and power amenities. From its jewel-like headlamps and traditional grille back to its chrome license plate surround and massive corner-mounted taillamps, the Town Car has been carefully rethought for the trip into the 21st Century, but it's only fractionally smaller than the old barge. It's 3.7 inches shorter, and more than two inches of that is taken from the front overhang.

The most exciting news is the Signature Touring Sedan, which we drove. The Touring package comes with the more powerful 220-horsepower V8 engine with dual exhaust, larger 235/60R-16 tires on unique 16-inch alloy wheels, a special torque converter, a 3.55:1 rear-axle ratio for quicker acceleration, and revised springs, shock absorbers and stabilizer bars designed for a more sporting ride and handling feel. With more than 20 special parts designed to improve performance, the Touring package is worth every cent of its \$500 cost.

**Interior Features** - Just about everything inside the car is new and improved, from the door panels to the instrument panels to the radio face to the switches and controls. The electronic instrument cluster of old has been eliminated. In its place is a new, smaller cluster featuring a centered speedometer flanked by fuel and temperature gauges. The old radio face has been replaced with larger and easier to use buttons and controls. Below is the control center for the climate control system. Nothing is difficult to reach or understand, and the controls are not crowded together.

Front and rear passenger compartments are huge. A new rear pillar design makes the rear seat cozier than the old car without being smaller. The big, thick seats are comfortable and the power front bucket seats offer lumbar support and two-position

memory. For safety and convenience, the steering wheel contains buttons for cruise control and the sound system.

**Driving Impressions** - Even with the Touring package, 3.55:1 rear-axle ratio and 220 horsepower on tap, the Town Car Signature Series lacks the strong performance of some of its competitors. With its 282 cubic-inch engine, it just doesn't get away from a stoplight like a \$40,000 car should these days. It's not that it's slow, but its chief competition has 275 horsepower, a palpable increase.

Transmission feel and function are greatly improved over the 1997 Town Car, with shifts that take only 0.6 seconds as opposed to 1.2 seconds in the old car. The fourth gear overdrive can be switched off for climbing and descending long grades.

What most veteran Town Car owners will notice on their first drive are the vastly improved steering and suspension. Ford has redesigned the steering system with more expensive components—replacing bushings with bearings, for instance—that give improved steering precision and feel. The air suspension system boasts new twin-tube shock absorbers; and the Touring Package comes with shocks that are 50 percent larger for a less floaty, less jarring ride. Another more expensive solution is the rear suspension that uses a new Watts linkage between the axle housing and the frame designed to improve both handling and ride quality—usually mutually exclusive goals. The trailing arms have also been redesigned to be parallel to the frame. All this adds up to a much more pleasant ride. The 1998 Town Car feels glued to the road. Handling is much more predictable in lane-change maneuvers, without the momentary indecisiveness that characterized the old car.

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**Summary** - Lincoln's new Town Car is an appealing choice with its huge cabin and trunk and bulletproof engine and transmission. The new styling looks sexier than the previous model from all angles. And the Town Car looks even better when you consider that prices are about the same as last year. In a world of front-drive cars, the new Lincoln is a traditional rear-wheel-drive American luxury car. We predict the new Town Car will be a big hit. And we think the success of the Touring models will surprise Lincoln-Mercury.



# *Preview of Coming Events*

## **For 2021**

Three major Lincoln Car shows being planned for 2021. Due to the pandemic and the various unknowns associated with the disease management, we cannot be absolutely certain that there will be Lincoln shows as presently scheduled for calendar year 2021. As of March 1, 2021, the following sanction Lincoln club meets are scheduled:

LCOC Eastern National Meet, Morgantown, Pennsylvania, Changed to October 20-24.

Please check the Lincoln Club website from time to time for the latest information concerning the above events.

The 2021 Lincoln Homecoming, is scheduled to be held August 13-15, at Hickory Corners, Michigan. The theme will be, "Marks Through the Ages" 1940 To 1998.

The Lincoln Motor Car Foundation website will display the most current information as soon as it becomes available. Speaking for the foundation, David Schultz, LMCF chairman. "We're looking forward to seeing Continental Marks from all eras," and "That includes original, restored and customized Continentals. Owners need not be members of a Lincoln club to join in on the fun.



## **For Sale**

**1967 Continental Convertible** Two owner car with only 85,000 miles. Service records since 1977. Arctic White with newer correct leather interior and ivory top. Always pampered and maintained with original 462 V8. Stainless steel exhaust and top mechanism works fine. Award winner in Touring/Original at 2012 and 2018 Mid-America National Meet. **\$39,000 Call Jon Cumpton at 612-859-1483.**

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Issues are in PDF format and may be printed on your color printer.

# North Star Activities

## Lincoln of Bloomington, the place to go to for your next Lincoln

Spring is here and it may be time for a new car. If you are in need, stop our good friends at Lincoln of Bloomington. They have a very good selection of both new Lincolns and excellent, well cared for used vehicles. If they do not have what you want, they will try to find whatever you want to meet your needs. Our friends at Lincoln of Bloomington have supported our North Star club over the years, and we would appreciate it if you could support this fine business. For either sales or service, they will do their best for you.



### For Sale - 1983 Continental Mark VI

Original Gold and Cream paint. A Kentucky car that has always been garaged kept. Never driven during winter. Very solid body, no rust anywhere.

Features the very smooth running 5 liter fuel injected V8. Will do 23 mpg

on the highway. Has all the usual Lincoln extras, keyless entry, analog gages, excellent leather seating, AOD transmission. New battery, new fuel pump, new fuel tank, new TRW coil springs, shocks, tires and lots of other good stuff too. Please call for more details. 93,600 miles. This is an extremely well cared for Mark VI. Open to offers near \$7,000. Call Marlin at 763.452.0390 email: [Life@wellnesspro.co](mailto:Life@wellnesspro.co)



### For Sale 1979 Lincoln Mark V

Shows under 37,000 miles, two-owner car.

Diamond Blue metallic paint, rare color for 1979. Matching blue leather interior. Has moon roof and all other accessories Lincoln offered in 1979. Always garaged, never driven in winter. A

great car for either touring or showing.

No dings, dents or scrapes. Have all maintenance records and factory manuals. Fairly priced at \$14,500/best offer. Call Maxine at 320-269-7547 Minnesota.