It was bound to happen sooner or later.

My house—three men and a lady—is so full of testosterone that I shouldn’t have been surprised when a real “guy” car showed up out front.

My oldest son turned 19 this week. Could it be a mere coincidence that his great-grandfather’s hand-me-down Intrepid bit the dust just a few days shy of his birthday?

It took a group effort but we managed to surprise Isaac with a supercharged V6 charcoal gray Thunderbird that’s been babied all of its 20-year life.

It wasn’t the red Shelby Mustang with white racing stripes or the powerful white Chevy Camaro that he’s been eyeing. Those sports cars were a dream and more than a little out of the price range for parents of a first-year college student.

The unfamiliar keys inside the red metallic wrapping paper fit something real, however, and the look on his face was priceless when he went trotting outside to find family and friends gathered around a car bearing in-transit stickers.

The red interior will take some getting used to, he said. Other than that, the Thunderbird offers just about everything he wanted in a car: the engine sounds good, the paint and body look great and it came with all of the necessary mechanical terminology to make it attractive to a young man—3.8 liter, 210 horsepower, four-speed automatic. I don’t even know what all that means.

I do know that in his mind, the T-Bird has more muscle than my more feminine Pontiac G6 and

in a drag race on country roads, it will scatter gravel as it blows past his dad’s rough-riding Montero.

Maybe it wasn’t the dream car every young man longs to drive and it probably doesn’t stack up to the “chick magnet” status a new hot rod would have.

Still, the speed, the shine and the boom of the stereo speakers make my little boy’s eyes twinkle.

Happy birthday, son!