

NEXT CLUB MEETING: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

7:00 pm, Denny's Restaurant

Valley of the Goats

Newsletter of Cactus GTOs Inc. • Phoenix, Arizona
www.cactusgto.com

April-May 2006



Letter from the Editor

April was an incredible month if you were a Pontiac lover. Between Pontiac Heaven Drags and More VIII and the Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac Show – plus a Pontiac night at the Pavilions thrown in...it was a great time to be driving around in a Pontiac. Look for results from Steve Barcak and his Pontiac Heaven events and the B.O.P. show up on www.cactusgto.com (along with some great photos). New webmaster Scott Svenheim has also freshened up the website. Check it out for club news and events.

Make plans to be part of our last cool cruise before the summer hits - May 13 up the twisty Yarnell Hill. Bill "I Like My Sway Bars Big" McCoy will be leading the cruise...be there!

— *Mark Neumann*

News Notes

• *Come join the Bow-Ties...hey, we don't mean defect...just for a day!*

The First Generation Camaro Club is holding a cruise on Saturday, April 29, to the cool pines of Prescott. The cruise is open to GTO Club members. C'mon out and join us!!!! The group is going to meet at a gas station on the east side of I-17 and Carefree Highway at 8:00 AM. Just early enough to have fun on the way up and still get there around lunchtime. More information: George Wing, 602.751.9128

• *See some cool cars...and get involved in protecting your hobby!*

May's meeting of the Arizona Automobile Hobbyist Council will be held on Monday, May 1st @ 7 pm at the Mel Martin Private Auto Museum, 2140 W. Greenway Parkway, Phoenix. This collection of cars is quite extensive. The current treasurer of the Hobbyist Council knows Mel Martin and has set this up especially for Hobbyist Council members. The Cactus GTO Club is a long-time member of the Council.

This monthly meeting is also for the election of the board of directors for the Hobbyist Council, so if you have an interest in automotive legislation and protecting our hobby, find out what the AAHC is about at this meeting. Refreshments will be provided. Seating is limited, so get there early! For more information, go to www.azautohobbyist.com

• *Let's go racin'!!!* GTO's were made to GO, so we need to clean the carbon - May 19th at Firebird Raceway. If you have never done this before, some of our club members are familiar with what is needed to pass tech inspection and can give you some insight into what to expect. Lining up at the "Christmas Tree" and making a pedal to the metal pass through the timing trap is a real kick. Bring your Goat out to play ☺ Bill McCoy and Thom Mohr can provide details..... Look at it as an opportunity to help support out local tire dealers ☺

Come Cruise With Us!

Yarnell Breakfast Cruise - Saturday, May 13th

Please join us for another "handling run" up the twisty hill into Yarnell to The Ranch House Restaurant - Sunday, May 13th. The scenery along the Carefree Highway is a nice way to start your day, too :-)

You will definitely NOT leave The Ranch House hungry! This is a really neat place but not very big, so seating is limited! Please let Thom Mohr or Bill McCoy know if you are going to attend. Our basic route is I-17 north to AZ 74; AZ 74 east to US 93; northwest on US 93 through Wickenburg to AZ 89 - Yarnell and The Ranch House Restaurant are north on Route 89.

Our main rendezvous point will be: The Denny's at Bell Road and I-17 at 7:30 am on Saturday May 13th and plan to leave by 7:45 am - The Ranch House will be expecting us around 9:00 am.

You might want to continue your fun run up AZ Route 89 to Prescott after breakfast.



From the Driver's Seat...

April 2006

As I write this from my self-imposed exile (recovering from hip replacement surgery), I realize that I've missed out on a very busy month for our club. With Pontiac Heaven, the B.O.P. show and our highway cleanup, April certainly is a busy time for Cactus GTO's and I really have missed being a part of things. Hopefully many of you have been able to take part in and enjoy at least some of these activities in our beautiful spring weather - and take advantage of the club discounts for both events. **A special Thank You to all of you who made the time to help with our Adopt-A-Highway cleanup! Thanks to Kevin Akbari for his leadership on this project once again.**

Our V.P. Bill McCoy has been a great help and I am grateful for his leadership in my absence. He has initiated some interesting plans for later in the year and I think we will have some great news later when things are firmed up a bit more. I hope to get back into action again before too long although I may still be on my walker at the next meeting. By this summer, though, I should be free of both the walker and the limp that has been getting worse this past several years - I'm looking forward to getting my life back again thanks to my new all steel "ball joint" ☺

Oh yeah - this experience with my 2-wheeled conveyance (walker) has left me puzzled about the attraction some of our club members have toward motorcycles. Experience with my two-wheeler has not proven all that exciting - I just don't understand the

This month's newsletter issue features an extended club roster so we can all keep in touch with one another better. By "extended" I mean that I've included the names of some recent club members who for whatever reason are not current with their dues but are still friends we'd like to keep in touch with. Also, I have taken the liberty of being the first test case for a "Get to Know..." feature we would like to run from time to time. We hope that many of you will feel free to share a bit of history about yourselves so that we can get to know one another better. A list of possible topics appears later in this newsletter and I do hope that many of you will take a few minutes to tell us about yourself. My apologies if I run too long on this first attempt.

Mark your calendars for May 13th when we will make another run up Yarnell hill for breakfast. This is a real test of your car's handling (and your passenger's equilibrium) so don't miss it. Well, that's all for now...

— Thom Mohr

Pontiac in the News

The pain continues at General Motors. GM lost \$10.6 billion last year! They currently have \$64 billion in unfunded healthcare obligations. Unfortunately, it seems our favorite car maker is not making a lot of progress in improving their sales. Last month their sales were down about 4%. Let's hope that the sales slump is due partly to deciding not to sell so many cars at low profit levels. Apparently, they have decided to cut the special incentives that made up so many of the sales in the past and have implemented pricing that is more competitive on a day-to-day basis. GM has also decided to cut the number of cars they sell at low margins to the car rental companies. Maybe by dumping fewer cars into the fleet market it will help them sell new cars through the dealer network. One of their problems has been seeing many of their customers buy used rental cars instead of new cars. Time will tell if this strategy will work to improve their bottom line.

Many of you have probably been watching as GM sells off its non-auto businesses. They've sold off their GMAC commercial division and it looks like the remaining home mortgage business is in the process of being sold. These were the two most profitable divisions of GM. They've sold off their shares in Isuzu. Rumors have it that they would like to sell off Saab if they could find a buyer but that's not likely to happen. Much of the money they are receiving from these sales would be used to fund employee buyouts of retirement plans. There have been rumors that Holden could also be sold. If that were to happen it would be very detrimental to the future possibilities of a 2008 or 2009 GTO. Holden has been the designer of the current GTO and are supposed to be working on the next generation GTO. Stay tuned on that issue. Apparently, Toyota could be very interested in buying Holden.

So what happens to GM after they've sold off their profitable subsidiaries and they can't get their car/truck divisions to start increasing market share and making money again? The future doesn't look good. Currently it costs GM about a thousand dollars a car more in retirement and medical benefits than it does for Toyota. They obviously have to reduce these expenses if they are to stay in business. Can they produce cars that the American consumer wants to buy? The answer is yes. Just look at how well the Chrysler 300 has been selling. Ford knows how to make a Mustang that sells. The consumer is dieing for unique or interesting styling. Can GM make the grade? Let's hope so. What's wrong with retro styling? After all look how popular the old cars are to us baby boomers. Many of us would love to see a new updated version of a popular car from earlier days. That's an advantage Detroit has over all the imports, their heritage. The imports don't have one.

GM and Ford are struggling against the Japanese car makers while Korean brands such as Kia-Hyundai are growing leaps and bounds. Once the Chinese makers start shipping cars to the U.S. the future looks even worse for GM and Ford.

Rick Wagoner, GM CEO, appeared on "Face the Nation" Sunday April 9th, to assure the public that they will get their act together after cutting costs over \$8 billion in the last year with help from the UAW and by recently cutting white collar management positions. Let's hope they cut some the layers of management/red tape that keeps them from bringing out fun cars.

GM has made buyout offers to 131,000 employees at GM and Delphi to take a cash offer if those employees accepting the offer will agree to drop their retirement and medical plans. Delphi provides GM 40% of the parts it uses to manufacture its vehicles. Delphi is currently in bankruptcy and could face having its employees go on strike as they try to get them to take very large pay cuts. GM has 1.1 million retirees currently receiving benefits. President Bush has stated they need to work their problems out by themselves as we continue to let foreign makers take over our car manufacturing industry. Something this country cannot afford to allow to happen if we expect to remain a strong country in this world. Wagoner said that he did not see declaring bankruptcy as a solution. Wagoner made one profound statement, "what is happening at GM reflects what is happening in the U.S. economy in general." Let's hope it all works out. I fear that some day we will all wake up and realize that we don't own our own country anymore because we gave it all away to other countries under the guise of fair trade.

Your resident GM economist
Bill McCoy

MEET OUR MEMBERS

We often hear that one of the best things about the Cactus GTO's club is meeting other members and their families. There are some really nice folks and quite a few new members involved in our activities but never enough time to really get to know them. It was always popular when the newsletter featured a story about some member so we're thinking of doing it on a regular basis. There's a reason that each person joined and we'd like to know your story. Don't worry about the format, it can be a few lines or as much interesting information as you'd like to share. Just write and we'll put it in shape for the newsletter. We'll get your OK before we publish it. Here are some possible things that you could tell us:

1. Members of your family, wife, kids ages, interests.
2. When/where you got interested in GTO's (or other cars)
3. Describe your car(s) and other interesting cars you've had
4. Is there something special you're looking for, a favorite? Why?
5. Your occupation, other interests & hobbies
6. What can you offer other club members? (skills, parts, tools, advice, "show & tell" a collection, a place for a club party, car storage space etc.)
7. Your favorite club events
8. Things you'd like to have the club do, ideas for future activities
9. Are you looking for particular car, parts or help with something?
10. Experiences that others may enjoy hearing about...you all have them! Stories about your childhood, places you've been, people you've met (especially with your car).

Just e-mail your info (don't forget to include your name) to Elly MYLLE1 @juno.com or mail it to 5546 Shangri-la Scottsdale 85254 or bring it to the next meeting you attend.

Page 4 of 7

Getting To Know...

A new series on Cactus GTO Club members and their cars

Getting to know...our club president, Thom Mohr

I guess you could say that I've been interested in cars a long, long time. Perhaps it was being raised in western New York farm country where you needed a car to go anywhere and there was no place to go to get anything fixed if it broke down - no money to have it fixed either. As a result I began learning about how cars worked and how to fix 'em early on. I bought my first car when I was twelve years old - \$25 from the junkyard I used to hang around - it was a butt-ugly '37 Chevy 4 door sedan with no brakes. By that summer I was the only kid I've ever known with my own 1/3 mile dirt oval race track out in our "back 40". Since the '37 had no brakes, I learned the art of power slides pretty well ☺

My car-collecting tendency started early - about a year later I bought a 5 window Model A coupe with rumble seat. Long range plans for the "A" included a progressive build up from a '48 Merc flathead powerplant to a '57 Chrysler hemi. I bought the flathead and had the hemi set aside at the junkyard where I was a "regular" by now, college required cash so my plans for the "A" hot rod were never realized ☹ as it was sold for a good profit after putting a lot of sweat equity into it.

While there were many memorable cars in my youth (for various reasons - often associated with excessive speed, beer, girls, etc.), I had always like Pontiacs, although we never had the money to own one. Pontiacs first caught my eye with the new styling and V8 power of the '55 models. Then there was a fuel injected '57 that prowled the neighborhood and was a source of much envy. When I went off to college, I got a ride in to campus with a friend in their family's beautiful red '60 Bonneville. Those two cars really made a big impression that has remained to this day. I shared rides to and from college with the older brother of our club's current Treasurer and when I wasn't admiring his aqua & white '56 Pontiac 2DHT, I noticed that he had this tall blonde sister...the '56 Pontiac is long gone from my brother-in-law's life, but Elly is still part of mine.

Fast forward through college, a '52 Ford, a move to Connecticut, work at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, an interest in SCCA road racing, a '66 Mustang (which I still have), marriage and my first exposure to GTOs. A couple guys at work had tri-power 4-speed GTOs that I really admired and another had a Tempest Sprint OHC convertible that was pretty cool, too. I was pretty well committed to working at road race events, though, and the narrow, twisty back roads of New England kept me more into the sporty car mindset until years later here in Arizona (after a few years work with Ford Motor Company in Michigan).

After moving here in 1980, and going to work at the Garrett Turbine engine company, a friend told me about a family down the street who had a GTO that had been in the family since new. The current owner was restoring it but finding that time, money and workspace issues were forcing him to sell. A real Pontiac aficionado at work went out to look at the car with me and we found a really nice numbers matching gold '67 - everything checked out and it ran great. After a couple weeks of phone calls back and forth and haggling with a reluctant seller we struck a deal. I drove to work one day - got a ride out to this guy's place, exchanged cash and proceeded to drive it home. As I rumbled into the driveway, Elly's head poked up above the back gate with a puzzled look on her face (she has that look a lot with things involving me). "Ah.... What's this?" she asked. Oh, yeah... I had neglected to mention the car to her...

I can't recall how I first heard about Cactus GTOs, but when I did I thought I ought to join so that I could learn more about the car, find parts, etc. That was at least 15 years ago and I have been a part of this great group ever since. I imagine a couple of you "old timers" may even recall the first club event that I ever was involved in and might remember what I drove that day on the Toys for Tots run to Wickenburg...

While I never surprised Elly with any of the other toys in my collection (accumulation, actually), it has grown to include a '55 Chevy Belair that is part way through becoming a hot rod,

the '66 Mustang which I hope to re-do (faster) for a third time, a '63 Falcon convertible with a new powertrain awaiting my attention, my '67 GTO, a '69 Camaro convertible "project" and my lifetime project... a '35 Chevy 4 door that only lacks about 5 years of hard work to become the street rod I'm hoping to share with my several grandsons.

Cactus GTO - Monthly Meeting Minutes - 03/29/06

Meeting called to order 7:00PM by Bill McCoy @ Denny's – Thom out w/ surgery

Introduction of attendees – 20 members in attendance – everyone discussed their first experience with a GTO.

Treasurer's report – Scott for Elly via email

Checking – \$697.06

Savings – \$7822.35

Membership News – Need to renew ASAP

Secretary's report – Minutes – Scott S.

Communications – Website update - Scott doing the website now - Mailing newsletters to all members again. Suggestion made for newsletter articles on members personal GTO experiences.

Breakfast Cruise to Tortilla Flats – good showing, 12 cars present

Activities -

April 1-2nd – Pontiac Heaven/Drags – Steve to re-tag trophies not used from last year by Cactus GTOs – Categories/Classes.

April 8th – Cruisin' OFF Central on Jackson, between 1st and 4th.

April 9th – BOP show, Murray handed out flyers/sign up sheets and took the final pre-registrations. Club will pay \$15 for one car. Event will have t-shirts and posters for sale...92 cars pre-registered so far.

April 15th – Adopt a Hwy clean up. Meet at the Campbell's for breakfast 7Am...leave for cleanup 7:45-8:00 am. NOTE: Club still owes Tim Smith \$20 for last years picker purchase.....!!! See website for further details.

May 13th or 21st – Yarnell breakfast Cruise??? Details to follow?

Bill passed out Cruise / events survey. Suggestion to do a Firebird Drag (Friday) night by Tim Smith. Yarnell, Bisbee, Marina Restaurant at Sahuaro Lake, Dinner at Pinnacle Peak, all discussed as ideas.

June - Christopher Creek Breakfast cruise....???

Other Business / Miscellaneous –

2006 Club Dues DUE!!!

Calendars – Last call – Ones donated to Military, Dave S. ??

Hobbyist Report – Mark N, discussed car show and legislation pending – other happenings around the US.

Bill McCoy reported on items found on Ultimate GTO site.

Payson Car show, April 28th-30th

Mark D. gave a die cast model update.

50/50 won by Mark Gacy. Die cast raffles won by, Kevin A., Debra D. and Mark N.

Meeting adjourned – 8:30PM

—*Scot Svenheim, Secretary*

KEEP OUR CLUB ON THE RIGHT TRACK!! 2006 yearly dues are needed to keep club activities on track. Your \$12 annually helps the Cactus GTO club fund this newsletter, cover our donations to charity, and pay for special events. IT'S YOUR CLUB - HELP SUPPORT IT! Go to our website at www.cactusgto.com to download a membership form

Your Cactus GTO Club Officers - 2006

President: Thom Mohr • thomohr@globalcrossing.net • 480.991.6106

Vice President: Bill McCoy • mccoy@skymall.com • 480.777.9620

Treasurer: Elly Mohr • 480.991.6106

Secretary: Scott Svenheim • scottsvenheim@cox.net • 480.464.8422

Board of Directors

Jim Zeivel • Bob Paris • Dave Salerno • Mark Neumann • Tom Burton • Dan Huskisson

Technical Advisors

Gordie Cowan (602.867.4328) • Carl Sikes (480.981.7612)

Valley of the Goats

Editor: Mark Neumann • newsmark@cox.net • 602.653.5074

Printing/Mailing Team: Thom Mohr, Scott Svenheim

Cactus GTO Webmaster: Scott Svenheim

www.cactusgto.com

Please add to your roster and WELCOME our newest member:

Mark & Debbie Engelsman

1151 N.Fir St.

Chandler, AZ 85226

Mark is a member of GTOAA and has a '67 GTO hardtop

e-mail: MarkTopAgent@yahoo.com

480-961-5042